5-2006

# Chaordic Ministry: Structuring Church Ministry for the Emerging Culture

Warren D. Schatz

GEORGE FOX SEMINARY

# CHAORDIC MINISTRY: STRUCTURING CHURCH MINISTRY FOR THE EMERGING CULTURE

A DOCTORAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

WARREN D. SCHATZ

MAY 2006

PORTLAND, OREGON

# Dissertation Acceptance Certificate

## Warren Dale Schatz

Date: March 6, 2007

Title:

Chaordic Ministry:
Structuring Church Ministry
for the Emerging Culture

*We the undersigned certify that we have read this project and approve it as adequate in scope and quality to complete the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry in Leadership in the Emerging Culture Degree*

Signature — Date: 03/06/07

Signature — Date: 3/9/07

George Fox
Evangelical Seminary

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank for helping me through this project. First, I would like to express my appreciation to the congregation of Grace Evangelical Bible Church. They have been exceedingly patient and gracious with a young pastor and his new ideas. Also, I have been extremely blessed to work with such an incredible group of elders and staff at Grace Church. We have worked together, argued together, and laughed together many times over the last four years. Thank you for your support and friendship, it has meant (and continues to mean) a lot to me. I would also like to express my thanks to my group of 'readers' who have given many hours reading through my initial drafts. Thank you to Todd and Linda Erickson, Henry Easu, and Grace Toews for your ideas and input. Lastly, I am grateful for the love and support of my family. Randal and Raelyn, don't worry, Daddy is just about done his homework. Thank you to my wonderful parents, who have helped out in so many ways, from watching the kids to packing and moving, to the many home renovations. I really couldn't have done this without you. Most of all, to my wonderful wife, Becky, who has given so much behind the scenes. Thank you for your loving support and encouragement during those times when I felt like giving up. In some ways, it has been a long four years, but we are almost to the end.

## Abstract

Many churches are struggling to adapt to changing needs and characteristics of people in the twenty-first century. For decades churches operated by developing standardized programs to reach large groups of people with relatively homogenous needs. The fragmentation of culture into ever-smaller affinity circles means that people often have very different and unique needs from each other. Further, fragmentation has also affected the character and pattern of lifestyles in the emerging culture. There is no longer any standard pattern of work, recreation and home life. Each family has its own needs and its own schedule. This means people no longer have the time or energy to be involved in programs that do not fit their own schedule and do not meet their specific needs.

Churches have begun to grapple with the problems this creates and there is much talk of change; of equipping the laity and of being creative in ministry to name just two recent topics of interest. Efforts to implement these changes often encounter great stress as they run into the established patterns of ministry structure. All the good intentions and great effort to change ministry will not succeed unless the environment these ministries occur in, the church structure, is changed with them. The challenge the church faces is trying to find a ministry structure that allows the church to meet the needs of this fragmented and diverse culture and still provides the stability and direction the church needs to remain a unified and energized group.

Grace Evangelical Bible Church is an example of one of those churches struggling to adapt to this new world. Grace Evangelical Bible Church in Abbotsford, B.C., Canada, has been encountering difficulties in its ministry. Over the last ten years the number of people serving and attending its major ministries has been falling. The leadership has spent many hours trying to determine the cause of this problem and to refine its program offerings. One problem is the organizational structure of Grace Church. It is unable to adapt to the changing needs of people in the twenty-first Century.

This paper proposes that the leaders of Grace Church need to move from an organizational structure focused on controlling ministries targeted at large groups of people to a church structure that focuses on creating an environment that allows micro-ministries to develop, based on the gifts and passions of the people within the congregation.

Chapter 1 introduces the problem and sets the context for its solution. The current situation of the various ministry tracks at Grace Church is presented. The chapter outlines the current organizational and ministry structure along with congregational values about programs. The chapter concludes with a discussion concerning the importance and limitations of local church structure.

Chapter 2 will demonstrate how four cultural shifts are creating an environment for which the organizational structure of Grace Church is ill prepared. The chapter will show that the organizational structure needs to be re-designed for this new environment.

Chapter 3 will outline the biblical principles that are the foundation of the local church. These principles show a more open and empowering (or less controlling) style of local church structure, which is in line with the priesthood of believers and lay driven ministry. The chapter will demonstrate how a network-oriented structure is well-suited to Paul's metaphor of the Body of Christ, and it will allow for the widest development of the gifts of the Spirit amongst the laity. The chapter will also address the theological implications behind the modern church's need for control.

Chapter 4 will examine Christian history for examples of movements that blossomed when control was not a primary determination of structure and where organic structures were used. This will include a review of the historical tension that has existed between the institutional church and lay-driven movements.

Chapter 5 will address material on how organizations are adapting to the changing environment. New insights from the field of complexity science will demonstrate how organizations can be viewed as complex adaptive systems. The self-organizing properties of complex adaptive systems will be applied to the task of structuring the local church. This will show how micro-ministries could provide a structure that is agile enough to keep up with the rapid changes in the emerging culture.

Chapter 6 would offer a new model of church organizational structure for Grace Church. It will outline how Grace Church could move from being structured for control to a structure that cultivates an environment that empowers and equips people to minister out of their unique gifts and passions. It will demonstrate through the science of self-

organizing systems how such a network structure could stay unified and connected, without direct control.

CONTENTS

Appendices

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## The Problem

Harry stirred the sugar into his coffee and looked across at his long-time friend. Harry's many years as Pastor of Grace Church could be seen in the frown on his face. He looked over at his friend, Bill, who owned the coffee shop they were sitting in. They had been meeting for years to talk about their mutual love and concern for the church.

Harry began, "I guess I'm a little confused. The reason that people aren't participating in church ministries is because they don't like programs?"

"Yes," Bill replied. "Look around you." Bill's gaze swept around the coffee shop. "Look at the diversity of ages and kinds of people. From teenagers to us fifty something's. Over there you have two construction workers grabbing their coffee before heading out to the worksite. Over there you have two businessmen sorting out a contract. Over there a group of friends, just talking. What do they all have in common?"

Harry frowned. "Other than coffee? Not much that I can see."

"Exactly!" said Bill. "If I were to ask you to help me build a coffee shop to meet all their needs what would you say? Could you do it?"

Harry's frown deepened. "I'm not sure. What does that have to do with my church ministries?"

"Everything." Bill replied. "Harry, describe your church for me."

Harry thought. "Well, we are an average kind of church. We have about 220 in attendance and are largely a working person's church. We have lots of small business people, trades people, farmers and the like. Mostly middle class and mostly white. Almost everybody has finished high school and a lot have been to some form of college or trade school. Overall, a pretty conservative group, big on family values, conservative theology. Strong history and tradition as well. Our church has been around for fifty plus years. We still have some charter members."

Bill leaned closer to Harry. "Let me ask you another question; if I came to you and said I felt led to start meeting with some guys here at the coffee shop once a week, what would you do?"

"Well," said Harry, "I'd get you in touch with Fred, who heads up our Men's ministry. He would meet with you, help you find curriculum, have you attend the men's council. Then Fred would bring the idea to our Church Ministries committee who would look it over and then bring it to our Elders Council."

Bill smiled. "So eventually, everything comes from the top down, right?"

A little confused, Harry responded. "That's our job as a leaders isn't it? To know what is going on, to look after things, make sure everything is done right?"

Bill's smile grew larger. "Sure, and to do that, you have a very careful and detailed process don't you? Everyone knows how the whole system works?"

Harry thought he knew where Bill was headed. "Of course. I could show you our organizational chart."

Bill waved him down. "I'm sure you could, and I bet it looks like a pyramid. But let me ask this, why?"

"Why what?"

"Why would I need to ask Fred, who in turn asks the committee, and the committee asks the Elders?"

Harry was again confused. "Well, the church needs to make sure that the ministry is run well, and that what you would teach is scriptural. To do that, we have to know what is going on."

"Why?" Bill asked.

"Why what?"

"Why do you need to know what is going on?"

"Well, somebody has to, don't they?"

"So," Bill went on, "your entire church structure is really set up to control what happens?"

Harry shifted uncomfortably. "Maybe, but we can't have people running around doing whatever, can we? There needs to be accountability. You have to know what is going on in your coffee shop, don't you?"

Bill answered, "It all depends on what you mean by 'knowing'. You see those books on the shelf over there?"

"Yes."

"How about that stack of board games over there?"

"Yes."

"Did you notice the art work we have on the walls?"

"Yes." Harry said. "I did notice that, it's kind of strange; what were you thinking?"

Bill laughed. "Actually, I didn't think about it at all. One day my assistant manager told me her roommate was an artist and thought her art would look good on our walls."

"And you didn't go look at it first?" Harry asked.

Bill shook his head. "No I didn't. You see, I hired Jenny, I trained her, I know she loves this place so I just said to go right ahead."

Harry looked around. "And the other stuff?"

Bill answered. "April, one of my clerks, noticed people bringing books to read so thought adding some books would help them feel comfortable. She brought in the books, set up the shelves, and so on. Another day, Mark noticed a group of teens playing cards, so he went to some garage sales and brought in the games."

"And has it helped?" Harry asked.

Bill chuckled. "My banker says it has. Now let me ask you, why do people come here for $4.00 coffee when they could go to a local diner and get it for 75 cents?"

"You know," said Harry smiling, "I've always wondered about that."

Bill spread his arms. "Atmosphere. See, I don't really do anything, but by letting my staff run with their natural talents and ideas, my staff have created an atmosphere that encourages people to do their own thing. All we do is provide the place, the coffee and a

few tools. The people do the rest. And it's amazing how many different people take advantage of it."

Now Harry was curious. "How would we do that in a church?"

Bill became serious. "What if your church worried less about providing ministries for large groups that they can control, and instead spent more time creating an environment that encouraged people to do their own ministry? What if, instead of one education time like Sunday School or even small groups, you allowed and encouraged people to design, build and run their own education processes? What if you became less concerned with control, and more concerned with turning people loose? What if you took your pyramid and turned it into a pancake?"

"But how would that work?" Harry wondered. "You would end up with people scattered all over the place. Some might go to a small group, others to a Bible study, others to a friend's home."

"Exactly," Bill said. "And all over the place is right where your people are. Plus, although your ministries would most likely be smaller, you would have more of them. And I'm betting that since these ministries would arise naturally from people they would feel informal, authentic, and less like a program."

"But they would still be programs, wouldn't they?" Harry asked.

"Of course," said Bill, "but they wouldn't feel like it. They would be kind of non-programmed, programs."

Harry sunk back into his chair. "Honestly Bill, the idea seems interesting but I have no idea how to do that. Let's face it, churches are very comfortable with controlled structures. I don't even know what a church like you're describing would look like."

Bill shrugged. "Neither do I, but maybe what it looks like doesn't matter. What I do know, as well as you, is that what worked in the past isn't working now. People are more spiritually hungry, more desperate to learn and grow but somehow what the church is offering doesn't fit."

"That's certainly true." Harry said ruefully.

"Then what do you have to lose?" said Bill. "Maybe it's time to make a shift. Why don't you try to go from a church that focuses on control and reporting, to one that focuses on letting people do what God has called them to do? Maybe it's time to go from large-group department-store style ministries to specialized, smaller boutique-style ministries."

## Ministry Decline at Grace Church

This fictional narrative describes the situation Grace Church has been facing over the past several years. Leaders, including staff, elders and heads of various ministries have grown increasingly frustrated as they have poured hours of effort into their various ministries only to see attendance continue to drop. They have taken surveys, evaluated programs, changed schedules and anything else they could think of to make their programs better but none of it has had much effect. Not only has attendance dropped but leaders have found it difficult to recruit volunteers to serve and make ministry programs

happen. In the last five years this has resulted in a slow, but steady decline of the number of ministry programs offered to the congregation at Grace Church. Once the Women's Ministries had three weekly programs. Now it is reduced to offering quarterly events. At one time the church held several community- focused events such as a Fall Family Festival, but it no longer has the people or energy to hold these. The programs for children have been especially hard hit. Five years ago the church had a Sunday School prior to the main worship service, plus full programs for children during the worship service. It also had two mid-week programs, one on Tuesday morning and a Games After School program later in the week. During the summer the Family Fun Week or Daily Vacation Bible School was an annual tradition. By 2005, the Sunday School had been discontinued, both mid-week programs dropped and the Family Fun Week has not been held for two years.

During this time the leadership of Grace Church has not been idle. They have poured hours into evaluation, strategizing, communication forums and recruitment drives. Ministries have tried different programs and varied curriculum. Program schedules have been adjusted time and time again to try and make them accessible. As the number of volunteers dropped, ministries were downsized in order to strengthen remaining ones. Despite all this effort the decline has continued, and the church is unsure why its efforts have not been successful.[1] The elders have uncovered a number of issues that lie behind this decline. These include, but are probably not limited to, poor communication, disunity and a lack of cohesive identity. These will need to be addressed if Grace Church is to

[1] See Appendix I for charts showing the relative decline in Sunday service attendance.

return to health. But one other important issue has been overlooked. Leaders experiment with programs, curriculums, leadership development, vision planning, communication plans, theology, philosophy, and countless other things, but all these change efforts happen inside the same basic organizational structure that the church has used for over fifty years. The leaders of Grace Church, and other churches struggling in the twenty-first century, have failed to realize that the problem is not just with the individual program offerings, but with the way the entire ministry of the local church is organized and structured. George Cladis writes "The late twentieth century has been marked by a severe decline in the influence and effectiveness of traditional churches and a sharp rise in new entrepreneurial congregations. The decline represents a crisis in traditional churches that can be summed up in two categories: spiritual and organizational."[2] Leaders are busy re-arranging the pieces of the puzzle hoping to find a fit, not understanding that the nature of the puzzle itself has changed. Redesigning organizational structure may not be the only fix required at Grace Church but it is a critical one.

**Ministry Structure: A Hidden Obstacle**

Organizational structure is so embedded within churches that it is rarely seen, let alone considered as a serious problem. Thomas Bandy describes the problem this way:

> Churches are addicted to habitual, self-destructive behavior patterns *which they do not even recognize!* No matter how well-meaning, sincere, spiritually sensitive the church is, members still cannot bring themselves to admit or see the inner addictions that dictate church life and mission. No matter how earnest or energetic they become to plan their future, they

[2] George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), ix,x.

> always seem to return to the same old ways. . . . No programmatic change will overcome addiction. Only systemic change will overcome addiction. [3]

While organizational structure may not be the most important issue within a church, it is significant, especially when it comes to implementing change. Snyder and Runyon state: "The power of the gospel is in the wine, not the wineskin, but by recognizing the key role of wineskins, we begin to realize the possibilities for a healthier church."[4] Churches have sought revitalization through various efforts, models, and conferences only to see their efforts crash to a halt when they hit the rock of organizational structure. Sue Mallory writes: "The point I want to emphasize is that neither systemic nor cultural change can occur apart from each other. Mess with a culture, and the system will grind to a halt; alter a system, and the culture will react." [5] Thomas Bandy describes the reason:

> The organization that lies behind the system is the engine that achieves the purpose of the system . . . so long as the system remains the same, it will not matter how radical a congregation might attempt to be in restructuring the board, or rewriting the mission statement, or redesigning the constitution. In the end, the system will mold the organization to match its own purposes. This is why many congregations devote enormous time and energy to restructuring and re-missioning, only to discover several years later that *nothing has changed!*[6]

---

[3] Thomas G. Bandy, *Kicking Habits: Welcome Relief for Addicted Churches* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 15.Emphasis his.

[4] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 61.

[5] Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 56.

[6] Bandy, 117. Emphasis his.

Historian and theologian Howard A. Snyder agrees, "Only a small percentage [of structure] is part of official church polity. Yet it is precisely this traditional, only half-perceived part of church structure that is most rigid, most resistant to change and often the most deadening to the Church's life."[7] This failure to recognize the importance, or even the existence of, organizational structure has contributed to the growing irrelevance of the church in society. Snyder adds, "In many areas the Church today is encased in rigid institutional structures which have impeded both growth and cultural relevance. Perhaps eighty per cent of such structures are not formal and official, but simply traditional and cultural."[8] When it comes to the liturgy, the decision making process, to the ideas about clergy and even evangelism, "much of this is simply tradition with no biblical roots."[9]

Church organizational structure refers to the "forms and patterns", the way of being and doing, of a local church.[10] It is the "pattern of relationships throughout the congregational system" and can be "thought of as the way of life that normally functions below the group's awareness."[11] Herrington et al. define structure as the interrelated parts that "include the congregation's history, context, ministries, leadership, identity and vision. Structure may be expressed through attitudes, actions, values, and beliefs. Structure…is not limited to the church's organizational hierarchy, but also includes its

---

[7] Howard A. Snyder, *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), 65.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 61.

[11] Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change a Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 146, 147.

predictable ways of thinking and behaving."[12] Structure has a formal component; offices, committees, procedures and policy, and an informal component made up of traditions, practices and values. While churches of different traditions may vary in the specifics of their structures many share the same underlying values. These lead to church structures that are mechanistic in origin and characterized by central control and regimented activity, administered through offices or committees, all governed by strict adherence to process and protocol.[13]

Church leaders are discovering that such structures make it more and more difficult to cope with the rapid changes of the twenty-first century. George Cladis states, "Traditional methods of doing ministry, in most cases, simply do not communicate across the chasm that has opened between the modern world in which leaders and organizations are required to do something entirely new."[14] Bill Easum and Thomas Bandy are more direct: "There was a time when machines, like bureaucracies worked effectively. That era is now past, and the church is perhaps among the last cultural institutions to admit it."[15]

---

[12] Ibid., 147.

[13] Bill Easum and Thomas G. Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 122.

[14] Cladis, 29. He goes on to say: "Although this causes much stress and strain for the traditional churches, the good news is that in many areas the changes required work to reform the church to a more biblical model."

[15] Easum and Bandy, 123. Howard Snyder and Daniel Runyon suggest people often have difficulty separating the gospel from its structures. They say, "History reveals a massive tendency in the church to confuse the wine with the wineskins. . . . Christians continue to confuse the dynamic life of the gospel with the human-made structures that contain and often constrict it." Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 61.

As Grace Church, along with many other churches, continues to seek new ways of fulfilling its mission in the twenty-first century, an examination of its organizational structure needs to be included. "The structural formation of the church in North America for its mission must be a disciplined, intentional process . . . churches should place their organizational processes under the scrutiny of Scripture to see where they need to repent and be transformed."[16]

**Organizational History of Grace Evangelical Bible Church**

The life of Grace Evangelical Bible Church began on February 3, 1946 when a group of Mennonites who had moved west to settle in the Abbotsford area, gathered to discuss beginning a new church.[17] The early members designed an organizational structure that fit well with their environment. This environment's roots in modernity, along with the restored stability following World War II, suggested an organizational structure that emphasized correct procedure and control. The organizational structure was built around committees, with each committee and its members organized and developed along set rules. In addition, the structure was geared to providing large-scale programs to meet the needs of the majority of people.

The first organizational meeting of the new church, held on October 28, 1946, reveals many elements that reflect the stable and controlled environment of the age. The

---

[16] Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Craig Van Gelder, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 237.

[17] Early Minutes, February 3, 1946 Grace Evangelical Bible Church Historical Records Abbotsford, BC.

minutes record that though there were only eight members, all business was handled in a formal way. The first order of business included the election of a leader and an assistant. After this, a motion was made to begin a choir, which, after a positive vote, meant the nomination and election of choir director and organist. Following the choir, further nominations and elections were held to form a three-member trustee committee, ushers and a correspondent for the denominational newsletter called the Gospel Tidings.[18]

As the church grew and expanded new challenges were met with the expansion of the structure. This included the formation of new committees, nominations and elections. In the fall of 1950, when there was a desire to enlarge the Sunday School program, the church's response was to form an "extension committee" made up of the Pastor, Sunday School Superintendent, one church council member and three members at large.[19] Congregational involvement was also a valued function. In 1950, there was some question over who would lead the choir. The minutes from the Annual meeting record that although the choir voted on a candidate, this action was overturned, and the congregation at the next annual meeting would instead elect the choir director.[20]

Over time this focus on procedure, control, committees and elections led to a growing machinery of committees all working to oversee the life of the church. In 1953, the list of those elected to various positions included Sunday School Superintendent,

---

[18] Early Minutes, Ibid.

[19] Early Minutes, Ibid.

[20] The minutes of the meeting state: "The election of the choir leader by the choir was declared void by the three candidates. It was then moved and seconded that the choir leader be elected at the annual meeting." Early Minutes, Ibid.

Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Sunday School Treasurer, members of the Advisory Board, members of the Trustees, Gospel Tidings Correspondent, Dining Room Supervisors, Ushers, Yard Masters, Mennonite Central Committee Representative, Burrard Bible Camp Representative, and Church Secretary.[21] This complicated machinery was created for the specific purpose of providing oversight and control of virtually all the activities of the church. The Annual Report of the Church Council in 1963, spells out the aim of the church's organizational structure:

> The work of the council is to carry out the business of the church. This is not only in money matters but has to do with the carrying out of the work in various departments of our church. To be able to carry out this function the council is made up of representatives from various departments of our church who then reports [*sic*] the activities and projects of their department at our meetings. In this way the council is able to view the various activities from an overall perspective and is then in a better position to give direction and leadership where needed. The council has met 14 times in the past year to carry out its duties. [22]

By 1963, the general frame of the church's organizational structure had been cast. Five standing committees governed the church: Church Council, Christian Education, Christian Service Committee, Trustee Committee and Music Committee. Several auxiliary groups including Men's Fellowship, Women's Mission Society, Youth

---

[21] Grace Evangelical Bible Church Annual Report 1953, Ibid. The Sunday School Superintendent, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, and Sunday School Treasurer all served in the Sunday School department. The members of the Advisory Board assisted the pastor. The trustees were responsible for finances, building, and maintenance. The Gospel Tiding Correspondent was responsible for submitting material for the denominational newsletter. The Dining Room Supervisors looked after all work in the church kitchen. The ushers were responsible for greeting people and for the collection of the offering during the Sunday service. The Yard Masters looked after the outside of the church facility. The Mennonite Central Committee Representative represented Grace Church on the Central Committee. The Burrard Bible Camp Representative represented Grace Church in the administration of Burrard Bible Camp. The Church Secretary was responsible for taking the minutes of all meetings and for church documents.

[22] Grace Evangelical Bible Church Annual Report 1963, Ibid.

Fellowship and Be Ye Doers carried out further ministry. There were also several other groups including the billeting committee, Gospel Tidings Correspondent, Dining Room Supervisors, Yard Men and Youth Supervisor. Based on the requirements of the constitution, a best guess is the organizational structure required a minimum of thirty people and could include up to forty or sixty people, to keep the church functioning.[23]

When 1987 arrived, some changes had been made to the organizational structure of Grace Church. In response to persistent conflict within the committees, an Elders Board was created to take on responsibility for oversight of the church at large, replacing the previous church council. The church body at the annual meeting elected the Elders Board, and the Elders, along with the senior pastor, assumed leadership of the church. As drastic as this change was for many in the congregation, it did little to alter internal workings of Grace Church. As the Annual Report of 1987 shows, the weekly activities of the church were still overseen by a large group of committees, sub-committees and appointments. The five standing committees of Christian Service, Missions, Trustees, Deacons and Music were still responsible for their areas. In addition, a Christian Education department had developed with its own set of officers. In all, sixty-eight different people were involved in the various committees of Grace Church, and there were still a few positions left vacant.[24]

---

[23] Grace Evangelical Bible Church Constitution 1963, Ibid. See Appendix 2 for a list of the many people involved in the structure of Grace church in 1968. Appendix 3 presents the organizational chart of the church as presented in the Constitution.

[24] Grace Evangelical Bible Church Annual Report 1987, Ibid.

This committee-heavy structure worked effectively in the era following the Second World War. It was a time of stable and consistent growth. People were used to working in large groups and were comfortable within organizational boundaries. There was a lot of energy and many volunteers willing to serve in such roles. But as society shifted through the 1960-1980s these many positions became harder and harder to fill. At present the organizational structure of the church has changed little on paper but in practice it is a much different story. Attendance has steadily declined for the last six or seven years, falling from an average Sunday attendance of over 400 down to the current average Sunday attendance of 190.[25] The ministry staff has been downsized from three and a half full time staff to two. The months preceding the annual meetings are filled with frantic energy as the nominating committee and elders desperately search for people to fill empty positions on the committees. As related above several key programs have suspended ministry due to a lack of volunteers and participants. People are less willing and/or less able to help. Those that are interested in serving have little appetite for being involved in committees and meetings.

The elders of Grace Church realize that, in addition to other problems, the organizational structure of Grace Church is not able to adapt and provide ministry opportunities to the people it is trying to serve. People's schedules and busy lifestyles make it more and more difficult for them to attend large-scale programs. In a report from Statistics Canada on life satisfaction Frederick and Fast write, "Many Canadians feel they just don't have time to accommodate both paid and unpaid work in a busy schedule. They

[25] See the chart in Appendix 1.

may also feel that neither their family nor their job is getting the best."[26] Dale Jackson, commenting on a recent poll that found workers in Canada were not taking all their allotted vacation time, writes "globalization has stretched the work day to 24 hours, the work week to seven days, and the work year to 52 weeks. Even when we're on vacation we keep our cell phones and pagers handy to service a never-ending work cycle."[27] A 2001 bulletin put out by Statistics Canada reported 64% of all Canadians were experiencing high to moderate life stress.[28] Another bulletin by Statistics Canada notes that among a survey taken in 1994/1995, "Time pressure was particularly common, with 44% of Canadians reporting they were trying to do too many things at once."[29] The bulletin goes on to say "stress has become a common theme of modern life, as individuals attempt to cope with pressures at home and at work that, for many, are overwhelming."[30]

People with limited time and energy show more interest in doing ministry, than in attending meetings or serving on committees. At the same time the type of people attending Grace Church is growing more diverse with far ranging interests and needs. People with limited time and narrow interests find standardized programs aimed at a wide audience less and less relevant to their life. As time pressures increase people only have a

---

[26] Judith A. Frederick and Janet E. Fast, *Enjoying Work: An Effective Strategy in the Struggle to Juggle?* (Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2001), 8.

[27] Dale Jackson, "Hey, Take Some Time Off," http://gold.globeinvestor.com/servlet/ArticleNews/commentarystory/GIGOLD/20050818/jackson18/home/home?back_url=yes (accessed 22 August 2005).

[28] *Health Indicators* (Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2001) . http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-221-XIE/00601/high/stress.html (accessed 22 August 2005).

[29] Margot Shields, *Stress May Be a Precursor to Poor Health* (Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2004), Health Bulletin.

[30] Ibid.

short window of opportunity to be involved and grow less patient with following extended procedures to gain permission to begin serving. The elders believe that it is time for Grace Church to re-examine the assumptions and principles that lie behind its ministry organization and philosophy, with a view to designing a structure that more adequately serves the needs of people in the twenty-first century. The elders need to find a structure that is both flexible and diverse. They desire a structure that is able to react and adapt quickly to its rapidly changing environment, and yet is able to offer a multitude of options to a community with different interests, needs and schedules. Grace Church needs a structure that encourages the development of a whole network of specialized ministries rather than one that relies on the development of a few large department sized ministries.

## The Importance of Structure

Organizational structure is an important issue for those churches trying to do ministry in the emerging culture. Structures can be viewed in a skeptical manner. Christian Schwarz notes that some churches tend to see them as "unspiritual" while other churches view them as the "very essence of the church of Jesus Christ".[31] While structures are not the essence of the church they should not be ignored as either unnecessary or unbiblical, for "the scriptural record makes abundantly clear that the church must have structures, and that the way these structures are formed is integral to

[31] Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 28.

the church's witness."[32] Howard Snyder adds, "It is sociologically naïve to say the Church is no sense an institution. Any pattern of collective behavior which has become habitual or customary is already an institution."[33] Neil Cole states, "The structure should not be seen, yet the results of it should be evident throughout the body. Organization must be secondary to life and must exist to help support the organic life of the body. Organization can support emerging life; it can never start it."[34] Greg Ogden describes the relationship between the church and its structure:

> Although the church as institution does not describe its essence, the church must have an institutional aspect. The human body illustrates the need for order within the organism. Within the human body are four life-support systems that are essential to its health. . . . To apply this analogy to the church, the institutional aspects should similarly serve the organism of the church to facilitate its life-flowing energy. It will come as no surprise, therefore, that in the same passage where Paul defines the essential nature of the church as organism, the body of Christ, he also affirms the necessity of institution or order . . . if 1 Corinthians 12 were read in isolation, we might conclude there is no need for a defined leadership structure or policy guidelines within the church...But Paul makes it clear that there must be order in the organism. In 1 Corinthians 13 and 14 he outlines the principles of order to govern the chaos created by the Corinthians' abuse of freedom and mismanagement of spiritual gifts...this is all to say that in spite of the absolute priority we must give to the church as organism, there is a real need for the institutional elements of leadership, policy and structure.[35]

---

[32] Guder, 224.

[33] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 63.

[34] Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2005), 125.

[35] Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 46-47.

Christian Schwarz doesn't see spirituality and structures as existing in conflict but rather in cooperation. In his research Christian Schwarz found that "functional structures" is one of eight essential qualities for church health.[36] For Schwarz, spirituality and structures are two "poles" that operate together.[37] He writes, "The two poles are in a reciprocal relationship. The dynamic [spiritual] pole always creates organization (structures, institutions, rules, or programs). The purpose of this organization is, in its turn, to develop further the dynamic pole."[38]

The world is made up of organizations and they exist because they help people achieve their goals. Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal write, "We are born, raised and educated in organizations. We work in them and rely on them for goods and services. We learn in schools and universities. We play sports in teams. We join clubs and associations. Many of us will grow old and die in hospitals or nursing homes. We build organizations because of what they can do for us." [39] These organizations can become either positive tools or negative obstacles. Bolman and Deal continue:

> Like an animal's skeleton or a building's framework, structural form both enhances and constrains what organizations can accomplish . . . formal structure has a positive impact on morale when it helps get our work done. It has a negative impact when it gets in our way or simply makes it easier for management to control us. Stereotypical images of machine

---

[36] Schwarz, 28.

[37] Ibid., 85.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Lee G. Bolman and Terrance E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997; reprint, 2d ed.), 7.

> bureaucracy confuse two very different kinds of machines—machines designed to de-skill work and those designed to leverage users' skill.[40]

Structure is not just about names and boxes on some organizational chart but it is about finding a way for the local church to carry out its witness to the world. Guder et al. state, "The primary organizational challenge for the church is to find ways to structure the life of the particular communities so that they can carry out faithful witness in their places, always in responsible connection to the entire church around the world and cultivated by the ecclesial practices that God's Spirit provides."[41] Structure is not the essence of the church but it is essential. Howard Snyder writes, "The structure is not the Church, just as the wineskin is not the wine. But the structure is necessary in order for the Church to live and serve in space and time. Every Christian fellowship must have a culturally appropriate way of doing things at a certain time and in certain places."[42] If structure is poor then the good intentions of people will be frustrated. If structure is ignored leaders will be constantly wondering why no amount of effort seems capable of producing lasting change. Peter Senge comments, "Structures of which we are unaware hold us prisoner."[43] He goes on to say, "The reason that structural explanations are so important is that only they address the underlying cause of behavior at a level that patterns of behavior can be changed. Structure produces behavior, and changing

---

[40] Ibid., 39.

[41] Guder, 234.

[42] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 138-139.

[43] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency, 1990), 94.

underlying structures can produce different patterns of behavior."[44] Poor structure can hinder the work of a faith community and can actually stifle God's work. Loren Mead writes:

> The shells of the old structures still surround us even though many of them no longer work. Some of the structures are institutions, some are roles, some are mind-sets and expectations. At one moment they mediate grace to us and at the next they block and confuse us. Sometimes some of them actually support and nourish us, while others get in the way of the new structures we need. *Our task is no less than the reinvention of the church.* It may take several generations. We will not see the end of it, but we must begin now.[45]

Howard Snyder says:

> Two other hindrances, which relate especially to the nature and structure of the Church, are the unbiblical traditions and rigid institutional structures. These were two of the factors found in Judaism, which necessitated the formation of a church distinct from Judaism when Christ came. Speaking to the scribes and Pharisees Jesus said, 'You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition' (Mt. 15:6). On another occasion he said, 'New wine must be poured into new wineskins' (Lk. 5:38). On both occasions he was referring to the traditions and structures, which had grown up in Judaism and were actually stifling God's work.[46]

Church leaders seeking to equip their churches for ministry in the twenty-first century must spend time evaluating and altering their church organizational structure. They must also recognize the unique boundaries placed upon the Church by its nature as the people of God.

---

[44] Ibid., 53.

[45] Loren B. Mead, *The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1991).

[46] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 119.

**Boundaries of Organizational Structure**

As leaders seek to evaluate and reform organizational structure they must be aware of some dangers inherent in the exercise. First, leaders must not confuse the organizational structure of the church with the essence or substance of the church. Guder et al. state:

> A missional ecclesiology will always include organizational forms, but one should not see these as the essence of the church. Organization needs to serve, not determine the nature of the church with its duality of being both divine and human. . . . We must establish clearly the church's nature and ministry before we proceed to design organizational forms to concretize both in a specific cultural context. Unless we do so we may fall subject to the illusion that managing the organization is equivalent to being the church.[47]

Snyder agrees:

> It is critically important . . . to be clear that the essence of the Church is people, not organization; that it is a community, not an institution. The great divide in contemporary thinking about the Church is located precisely here. Biblically, the Church is the community of God's people, and this is a spiritual reality, which is valid in every culture. But all ecclesiastical institutions . . . are not the Church. Rather, they are supportive institutions created to serve the Church in its life and mission. They are culturally bound and can be sociologically understood and evaluated. But they are not themselves the Church. And when such institutions are confused with the Church, or seen as part of its essence, all kinds of unfortunate misunderstandings result, and the Church is bound to a particular present cultural expression.[48]

This task, of differentiating between the structures called to serve the church and the essence or reality of church, is critically important because it is so easy to blend or

---

[47] Guder, 71-72.

[48] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 60. See also Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 63 where they write "Structure is important in the church as in all life. Every creature has some kind of framework. Even a tiny cell has highly complex structure. But structure must be compatible with the system in which it is found."

blur the boundaries between the two and lose sight of the Biblical idea of the Body of Christ. Snyder and Runyon spell out the danger:

> The church is a mystery partly because of its unique spiritual-physical genetic structure. Yet throughout history, church leaders and theologians have often reduced the wondrous mystery of the church to more easily grasped human-size models—the church as a building, a hierarchy, an institution, or even a political force. The New Testament sense of the church gets lost in such approaches. Historically, whenever the church has failed to make a culturally transforming impact, one reason has been an insufficiently biblical model of the church. . . . Unless we are biblically and theologically clear about what we mean by "church" at its most foundational level, we will end up doing what the church has always done at its worst: putting new wine into old wineskins.[49]

There is much that business, sociology and other fields can teach us about how the structures of the church work, but they are utterly unable to teach us how to be the church. In the end, "We must be clear about one thing: Such church structures are to serve the life and mission of the church—nothing else. Because we so seldom think theologically about the church, we tend to blur the distinction between the church as Body of Christ and our human-made structures." [50]

A second danger is the tendency to assume that one particular church structure is the only true organizational structure of the church. In chapter three we will see that the New Testament is surprisingly silent on specifics of organizational structure, focusing instead on broad principles. Furthermore, history shows that the church has existed in a multitude of different organizational forms. "The church has given rise to literally thousands of institutional structures, which, sociologically, are close kin to other human

---

[49] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 35, 62.

[50] Ibid., 71.

organizations, corporations and bureaucracies."[51] The leaders of Grace Church did exactly this in devising the structure of the church and now must adapt those structures to their new context. Churches examining organizational structure need to be constantly reminded that there is no universal structure that should be adopted by everyone nor should any one structure be thought of as permanent and unchangeable. The task of leaders is to evaluate their organizational structure within the context of the nature and mission of the church, being willing to adapt structure while being uncompromising on the task, mission and character of the Body of Christ. Church leaders can succeed in this task by evaluating their structure on two different axes. Church leaders need to develop an organizational culture that is both based on the principles of Scripture and is suited to its own cultural context. Sue Mallory says, "When we think of the church body in a particular place, the specific shape she takes in that community must be a combination of the culture of that community and the values of Scripture."[52]

**Structure: Biblically-Based**

The starting place for evaluating organizational structure for Christians is with the Word of God. The church may adopt and learn from many sources in the world but if it is to remain true to its King its structure "must be biblically valid. That is, church structure must be compatible with the nature and form of the gospel and of the Church as biblically

---

[51] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 63.

[52] Mallory, 169.

presented." [53] Schwarz adds, "Effort and energy should be invested in ensuring that the institutional pole of church life is in harmony with God's principles, so that the organic pole can develop unhindered and healthy."[54] The book *Missional Church* outlines the task this way:

> The structuring of the church for mission in North America must similarly be a profoundly scriptural process. Our disciplined use of a missional hermeneutic should shape and guide the continuing formation of the church in our changing society. In this social context, the sciences of organizational development and management are important aspects of the culture with which the biblical formation of the church interacts. This interaction is subject to the scrutiny of the scriptural witness. The structural patterns of the missional church in the New Testament must guide the continuing organizational formation of today's church. Yet at the same time we must reject every form of organizational fundamentalism that claims absolute biblical authority for a particular polity.[55]

Scripture is our starting place for looking at structure but this does not mean that all shifts in culture will clash with Scripture. Some of the shifts in culture might help us see a more biblically sound way of thinking about church structure. George Cladis notes that postmodern organizations are moving toward a participatory, team-based approach because they fit the culture, but that "churches should become team based because it is the right thing to do theologically and biblically."[56] Cladis says some of these new approaches to structure may actually be "more biblically and theologically sound than the

---

[53] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 141.

[54] Schwarz, 99.

[55] Guder, 228.

[56] Cladis, 135. He goes on to assert, "The similarity between this reform and both corporate reforms and cultural changes in society should not prevent us from making the reform or from learning from our secular organizational counterparts." Ibid.

leadership models traditionally used in congregations."[57] Because of this we will begin our search for a more effective organizational structure in chapter three with a look at the principles found in the Scriptures.

**Structure: Culturally-Relevant**

Churches are both divine and human in nature and exist in a particular cultural context. This suggests that a church must be organized along scriptural lines but it must also be organized to fit in and work within its local cultural context. "Every ecclesiology is developed within a particular cultural context. There is but one way to be the church, and that is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting . . . all ecclesiologies function relative to their context."[58] Snyder agrees, "On the basis of this biblical witness the Church in every age forms those wineskins which seem most compatible with its nature and mission within its cultural context. . . . Church structure must be culturally viable. It must be compatible with the cultural forms of the society in which the Church finds itself."[59] The task of structure is to "enable the missional community to function faithfully in its specific cultural context. To put it another way, the structures of the church are to incarnate its message in its setting. In its visible form, the church is to demonstrate the . . . instruction, 'by this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'"[60]

---

[57] Ibid.

[58] Guder, 11.

[59] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 139-141.

[60] Guder, 227.

Being both divine and human, the church will inevitably find tension in trying to structure itself both biblically true and culturally relevant. This should not cause it to shrink back from the task. Howard Snyder writes:

> The Church, after all, will always be in tension with the surrounding culture. But we must take pains to make sure that this tension comes from the antithesis between light and darkness, not from the incompatibility of cultural forms. Where possible, the Church should structure itself along the lines of other structures of a given culture. But this calls for discernment, as it can be done only to the extent that biblical faithfulness is not compromised. The Church cannot uncritically take over structures from its surrounding culture any more than it can uncritically import them from outside. But it can evaluate each structure for its biblical and cultural validity.[61]

This is the task that this paper sets out to begin. The goal is to discover the principles by which God seeks to establish His community, which will be developed in chapter 3. With these as our foundation, chapter 4 will examine four shifts in our culture to determine what kinds of structural forms will be most effective within our changing society. After reviewing how the Church handled this organizational task in different historical periods in chapter 5, chapter 6 presents a new way of looking at how churches can structure their ministries to be true to Scripture and more workable in the twenty-first century. The churches' task, as it is for the church in every age and culture, "is to find the visible organizational form that is worthy of its calling to be the witness to Christ in that particular place."[62]

---

[61] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 142.

[62] Guder, 232.

Before beginning this examination, the first question to ask is: Is there enough evidence to show that current church structures need changing? Have the current organizational forms of the church lost their effectiveness in our world? Has society changed so much or are we simply in danger of chasing another fad? These are the questions that are answered in chapter 2.

# CHAPTER 2

# EMERGING CHALLENGES TO TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

It's the end of the world as we know it
It's the end of the world as we know it
It's the end of the world as we know it and I feel fine.

R.E.M.

## Traditional Church Culture Missing the Mark

Before embarking on a re-construction of church structure, it makes sense to discover if such a project is necessary. Is it possible that all of the talk of change is overdone and that with a little patience things will return to normal, and people will once again be served by the same church structures that served their parents and grandparents?[1]

This is a fair question but the changes cascading through Western culture are creating a new paradigm, which begs for new ways of thinking and acting. This paradigm represents a new world with different values, beliefs and perspectives than the world in which Grace Church developed. This new world, often termed the emerging culture, is an environment for which the traditional church is ill prepared. This new world has resulted

[1] More than one uncomfortable church member has made this argument. One suggested that when youth grow up they will conform (his word) to the way church is to be done. Another fairly knowledgeable church member believed that postmodernism will have no impact on the church.

in a "collapse of church culture."[2] Ron Martoia states, "The days are long past when arising on Sunday morning to dress in Sunday best and arrive at church prim and proper was the standard and assumed experience of the average American."[3] In the emerging North American culture, the church is on "life support" and is "living off the work, money, and energy of previous generations from a previous world order."[4] George Cladis agrees: "Old style church organizations are having a difficult time adjusting to the postmodern world".[5] Churches cannot afford to ignore these cultural changes because "churches that do not shift the way they operate in the postmodern world tend to have a difficult time surviving."[6]

The church is in a world that is resistant and hostile to its mission because, "The culture from which the church has been dominantly informed and formed has positioned the church to be either antagonistic or ineffective in the emerging global scenario."[7] It is reaching the point where even Christians find the church environment an uncomfortable one. Reggie McNeal writes, "A growing number of people are leaving the institutional church for a new reason. They are not leaving because they have lost faith. They are

---

[2] Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2003), 1.

[3] Ron Martoia, *Morph! The Texture of Leadership for Tomorrow's Church* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003), 15.

[4] McNeal, 1.

[5] Cladis, 21.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Erwin Raphael McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001), 43.

leaving the church to preserve their faith. They contend that the church no longer contributes to their spiritual development. In fact, they say, quite the opposite is true."[8]

While this changing culture affects many aspects of the church's life, it poses significant challenges for how churches organize themselves to do ministry. The structure and organization of the church was designed to work in a modern world that seems to be disappearing. Len Sweet states, "In the modern world denominational pipes channeled the living water to the thirsty. But the delivery system created by denominational machinery is coming undone. Either the pipes have gotten rusty, corroded and clogged or else the piping is so leaden and inflexible it is unsuited to this new world."[9] Lee and Bolman's words, although directed toward business, also describe the reality the church faces:- "The challenge of finding the right way to frame our world has always been difficult, but it has become overwhelming in the turbulent and complicated world of the late twentieth century. Forms of management and organization serviceable a few years back are obsolete."[10]

## Our Changing World

The key is not in change itself, but in the speed and type of change. We have entered what some have called an "age of discontinuity" or "age of cultural

---

[8] McNeal, 3.

[9] Leonard Sweet, *Aqua Church: Essential Leadership Arts for Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture* (Loveland, CO.: Group Publishing, 1999), 28.

[10] Bolman and Deal, 5.

turbulence".[11] McManus writes, "Everything is moving faster. We live in a world defined by speed. We get there faster, get it faster, and want it faster . . . what once was considered fast is now normal...generations change faster than ever before."[12] Peter Senge says, "Perhaps, for the first time in history, humankind has the capacity to create far more information than anyone can absorb, to foster far greater interdependency than anyone can manage, and to accelerate change far faster than anyone's ability to keep pace."[13]

In many ways the church was unprepared for this acceleration of change and complexity and is struggling to keep pace. "As the church was building on values that affirmed stability, security, predictability and standardization, the era of change seemed to catch us by surprise."[14] Thomas Bandy agrees, "Culture is changing so quickly, with such diversity, in so many simultaneous directions, and using so many learning methods, that church groups organized around traditional principles can't keep up."[15]

McManus describes what happened this way:

---

[11] McManus, 64.

[12] Ibid., 63.

[13] Senge, 69. Peter Senge notes that many organizational processes and tools fail to work in the emerging age because they were designed to handle detail complexity. He defines detail complexity as complexity of many variables; however, today organizations face dynamic complexity which he describes as "situations where cause and effect are subtle, and where the effects over time of interventions are not obvious . . . when the same action has one set of consequences locally and a very different set of consequences in another part of the system . . . when obvious interventions produce nonobvious consequences." Ibid., 71.

[14] McManus, 64.

[15] Thomas G. Bandy, *Christian Chaos: Revolutionizing the Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 11.

> Over the past forty years, the communities around many churches have changed dramatically, yet the church has stayed the same. Somewhere in the community's transformation, the church disconnected. And since the transition began incrementally, the local congregation was either unaware or unconcerned. The church must acclimate to a changing world, or she will destine herself to irrelevance or even extinction.[16]

Current Church structure arose in a context that favored a specific kind of organizational structure. Churches generally assume that hierarchy, property, location, conflict, centralized control, ordination, clergy, seminarie,s and denominations are all "normal or natural for Christianity."[17] This focus on control, rules and process makes sense in stable environments; however, the current environment is anything but stable and so a whole new kind of organizational structure is being formed. Lee and Bolman write:

> Recent years have witnessed remarkable inventiveness in designing structures to emphasize flexibility, participation, and quality. Dramatic changes in technology and the business environment have rendered old structures obsolete at an unprecedented rate, spawning a resurgence of interest in organizational design. Pressures of globalization, competition, technology, customer expectations, and workforce dynamics are causing organizations worldwide to rethink and redesign structural patterns.[18]

The church, although not a business, is not immune to the forces shaping our culture. Some of the challenges the church is facing can be met by the formation of new, more contextually-suited organizational structures. The church needs to rethink its structures to determine if they are still valid or if the new environment has rendered them

---

[16] McManus, 17.

[17] Bill Easum and Dave Travis, *Beyond the Box: Innovative Churches That Work* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003), 8.

[18] Bolman and Deal, 39.

irrelevant. Many shifts could be examined; however, four cultural shifts will be evaluated for their impact on how churches are organized and structured.

**Shift 1: From Homogenous Culture to Fragmentation**

Producer: Your place or mine?
Consumer: If you're going to argue, forget it.
Stanley M. Davis, *Future Perfect*

The organizational structure of the traditional church was built in a world where, by and large, people shared much of the same values, attitudes, thought patterns and behaviors. E.R. McManus writes that communities in the 1950s and 60s could be "characterized by a few emerging and identifiable patterns: homogenous, educated and white collar."[19] Even the immigration patterns of North America preceding World War II were based on the desire to keep the communities predominantly white and European.[20] Thus, churches were created in a world of sameness. Often the concept of unity was mistaken for uniformity. Christian Schwarz writes, "It is a tragedy that for many Christians the ideal of unity has often been married to the concept of a monopolistic system.".[21]

This homogeneity had a significant impact on how churches organized themselves. Thomas Bandy describes the effect on the church:

> Church leaders could rely on people having much the same attitudes and behaving in much the same ways as they did ten years earlier, and as their parents did before them. At the very least, church leaders could predict

---

[19] McManus, 30.

[20] John G. Stackhouse Jr, *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 48.

[21] Schwarz, 74.

> that seniors would think and behave this way, and youth would think and behave that way, and so long as we balanced the official board with the two or three basic generations all would be well.[22]

The church's organizational structure developed to support and reinforce this homogeneity. Bill Easum and Thomas Bandy state:

> [The modern church structure] assumed and encouraged, an institutional membership that was homogenous. Generally, speaking, church participants looked remarkably alike. They shared the same racial, cultural, or language orientation. They lived in similar economic contexts. They came from similar professional or educational backgrounds. The organizational machine permitted enough diversity to "spice" the institutional consensus of the church, but never enough diversity to change the identity of congregation.[23]

This homogeneity allowed churches to develop very standardized structures and programs. Herrington, Bonem, and Furr write:

> The pastor was the chaplain-manager of the congregation and was working to reach people who were like the current church members. Most of the programs used by the church were initiated, developed and marketed by national denominational entities. These programs were standardized so that all congregations within the denomination could use them, regardless of size, local community, or congregational demographics.[24]

Brown and Armour put it this way: "For the most part, churches have long enjoyed the luxury of 'one-size-fits-all' programming. Each Bible class tended to look like the one next door. Every worship service had a nearly identical structure to the one

---

[22] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 38.

[23] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 124.

[24] Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 115.

the week before. All committees and ministries were tasked and managed in much the same way."[25]

This standardization, along with relatively stable environments, also led to churches valuing stability over innovation. Len Hjalmarson describes this as "temple spirituality":

> At the center of our collective lives was a building: settled, immobile, and with predictable forms. It was a spirituality of the center, where religious life was influential and expected. It was a spirituality for the familiar places, well-traveled paths and a way of life that was not strongly in contrast to the dominant culture. It had an established priesthood, mostly well trained professionals who did the spiritual work for us.[26]

When people gained a passion for a new idea or ministry, churches sought to recruit them to serve on official committees and to put them in the right place.[27] This allowed for close management and an avoidance of risk, which for traditional bureaucratic cultures "is a sacred principle."[28]

This stable and homogenous environment allowed churches and denominations to develop large-group programs, with the full expectation that these programs would effectively meet the needs of the majority of people within the congregation. The structure emphasized the control and management of these relatively few, large-group oriented, and standardized programs.

---

[25] Michael C. Armour and Don Browning, *Systems Sensitive Leadership Empowering Diversity without Polarizing the Church* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1995), 125.

[26] Len Hjalmarson, "Toward a Missional Spirituality—Spirituality for the Road," http://www.allelon.org/articles/print.cfm?id=125 (accessed 19 October 2004).

[27] See Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 129. See his chart on pages 126 and 127 for an example of how traditional structure can control or stifle new ideas.

[28] Sweet, 93.

Today, this homogenous world is a creature of the past. The emerging culture is characterized not by large groups of homogenous people but by an increasing number of small affinity groups. The emerging culture is not really a singular culture at all, but a disparate collection of small micro-cultures. As Stackhouse observes, "Instead of a multicultural culture, there has emerged a multiplicity of cultures that strains the unity of society that comprises them as each focuses upon its own good according to its own lights."[29] The emerging world "revels in the riches of niches" and there is no longer any one 'in' group, but rather a world where the group has "demassified [*sic*] into affinity communities."[30] Thomas Bandy and Bill Easum describe this change well:

> The cultural units of continuity are becoming ever smaller in the twenty first century...today mass migrations, the immediate dissemination of information, and the exploding individualism of people blur national identities, disrupt regional continuities and fragment neighborhoods...there is no longer a single 'public' to which the gospel must be proclaimed; there are innumerable 'publics'...a new generation emerges every three years—not every thirty years.[31]

Culture today now "bears the distinctive mark of fragmentation."[32] Grenz and Franke state we are "living in the midst of a widespread fragmentation and perhaps even disintegration that appears to be affecting all dimensions of Western culture."[33]

---

[29] Stackhouse, 35.

[30] Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 165.

[31] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 68,70.

[32] Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 4.

[33] Ibid.

Evidence of this fragmentation abounds in many different aspects of our world. An example of ethnic fragmentation is found in my son's elementary school where the families of the children attending the school speak fourteen different languages. Fragmentation can be found in economics and marketing. Modern industry was built on the idea of mass-producing standardized products for large markets. Over the last few decades the focus has shifted on targeting production for ever-smaller market niches. Today, "the productive focus must increasingly be ad hoc, or specific to the particular customer and the situation; as a result, market segmentation or orientation of the business toward identified customer groups with similar characteristics is reaching the limits of its usefulness."[34] An example of this can be found in the commercial radio industry. Commercial radio was built on the idea of mass marketing of music to large groups. Yet, the fragmentation of our culture into smaller affinity groups is forcing communication companies to change strategies. Instead of marketing to large groups, music companies are marketing to the small, niche market. Michael Gold, a senior analyst with SRI Consulting/Business Intelligence says, "If people don't like fragmentation, tough luck."[35]

Chris Andersen describes how digital retailers such as Amazon.com and Netflix are able to market to the masses and specific and small market niches through recommendations and indicators. He notes that the average Barnes and Noble carries only those titles predicted to sell to markets large enough to cover the cost which is about

---

[34] S. L. Dolan, Garcia S., and Auerbach A., "Understanding and Managing Chaos in Organisations," *International Journal of Management* 20, no. 1 (2003): 28.

[35] Richard Martin, "Would You Buy the Future of Radio from This Man?" *Wired*, October 2004.

130,000 book titles. At the same time "more than half of Amazon's book sales come from outside its top 130,000 titles." He calls this the "long tail" and quotes a music industry consultant who says, "The biggest money is in the smallest sale."[36] Netflix discovered that they could make money by marketing movies to small groups that larger stores just couldn't carry, and so learned the lesson of "embrace niches."[37] The long tail marketing strategy means you can "treat consumers as individuals, offering mass customization as an alternative to mass-market fare."[38]

This fragmentation can also be found in what Daniel Pink calls "the well curve."[39] He writes, "Although bell curve distribution is still considered normal, a surprising number of economic and social phenomena now seem to follow a different arc. Instead of being high in the center and low on the sides, this new distribution is low in the center and high on the sides. Call it the well curve."[40] He cites examples such as size of organizations, size of countries, consumer goods and hotel chains to show that the trend is not toward the large, homogenous middle, but to the diverse ends. He writes, "The implications are huge: insurers, marketers, and policy-makers may be basing decisions on faulty premises about what is normal. They're assuming a vibrant center—Middle

---

[36] Chris Anderson, "The Long Tail," *Wired*, October 2004, 174.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 177.

[39] Daniel H. Pink, "The Shape of Things to Come" http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.05/start.html?pg=2 (accessed 6 July 2005).

[40] Ibid.

America, middlebrow tastes—when the action has migrated to the edges. The 180 from bell curve to well curve has turned their logic on its head."[41]

The implications are equally significant for churches designed to meet homogenous needs. Brown and Armour state, "When pressed to identify the greatest source of tension in today's church, leaders offer a surprisingly consistent answer. The primary culprit, most say, is diversity: too many people with too many different ideas about how things ought to be done."[42] They continue:

> Urbanization and technology have served up an unprecedented range of personal options, leading to highly individualized lifestyles. Diversity reigns supreme, from our choice of foods in the dairy case to our choice of jobs in the marketplace to our choice of entertainment on weekends. With personal tastes so varied, is it any wonder that we disagree on the way to 'do church'?"[43]

Michael Slaughter describes how our culture has moved from mass market to mass personalization and its impact on the way church is done:

> Our culture today is increasingly one of personalization. Technology has gone from broadcast to narrowcast. Television and radio as forms of mass communication are now competing with the more personal and interactive internet...everything about our culture is becoming more personalized...during the age of modernity, great revivals were based on broadcast. The idea was to assemble large groups of people to hear a great presenter, from Jonathon Edwards to Dwight L. Moody, Luis Palau, T.D. Jakes and Billy Graham. In more recent years, the evangelists have used radio and television waves to broadcast their message to the masses. The internet is the epitome of speaking to the individual –when you want, what you want, where you want to go...Business understands that it cannot focus on the masses. It has unlearned the starting point of attracting

---

[41] Ibid.

[42] Armour and Browning, 11.

[43] Ibid., 15.

> crowds and replaced it with meeting individuals at the point of their felt needs in the now.[44]

A church designed to deliver standardized programs to large, homogenous groups cannot meet the needs of our fragmented culture. Gifford and Elizabeth Pinchot write, "A system that manages work from any distance by setting uniform procedures and issuing simple orders cannot deal with the fact that we no longer face a uniform or simple world. Increasingly often, uniform answers are not responsive to the diversity of inputs and outputs required."[45] Lyle Schaller says:

> [It is] no longer possible to design a program, edit a hymnal, produce a curriculum series, offer a study program, train a youth minister, outline the format for a corporate worship service, fashion a church growth strategy, design a staff configuration, or recommend a system of governance that will meet the needs of every congregation.[46]

Bob Hyatt describes the problem well:

> One of the great lies of modern society is 'one size fits all'. With the disparity in people's sizes increasing (read: many of us are getting bigger and bigger), 'one size fits all' is becoming less and less true. The same holds true for the church. For years, in addition to buying the specious 'bigger is better', we have been addicted to one-size-fits-all mentality in the church. It's called 'programs'. The problem is, people aren't 'one size fits all'...and that's why programs are so awful. They assume just that. Here's *the* way to enter our community. Here's *the* way to work into leadership and grow in your relationship with God here. Whether I am a young suburban/middle class, well educated female or a Vietnam vet from

---

[44] Michael Slaughter and Warren Bird, *Unlearning Church: Just When You Thought You Had Leadership All Figured Out!* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2002), 38-39.

[45] Elizabeth Pinchot and Gifford Pinchot, *The End of Bureaucracy and the Rise of the Intelligent Organization* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1993), 7.

[46] Lyle E. Schaller, *The Interventionist: A Conceptual Framework and Questions for Parish Consultants, Intentional Interim Ministers, Church Champions, Pastors Considering a New Call, Denominational Executives, the Recently Arrived Pastor, Counselors, and Other Intentional Interventionists in Congregational Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 24.

> inner city Detroit, most churched tend to assume that my spiritual needs and progress will be strikingly similar.[47]

Instead of focusing on the masses, churches must "focus on personalized pathways of discipleship that meet individual needs, rather than one-size-fits-all programs . . . the emphasis is not so much on gathering crowds as speaking to individuals."[48]

Speed, adaptability and creativity are essential if churches are going to be able to find ways to reach all these personalized needs. Michael Slaughter warns, "Whether we like it or not, if we're going to survive and compete in the twenty-first century, we must deal with today's commodities of value: speed and information. Everything in today's culture says they are the must-have essentials for success. They are essential to survival, both in the business world and the church, from the workplace to the marketplace."[49] Hjalmarson writes:

> The temple culture is collapsing, pushing us away from Temple spirituality toward a mobile spirituality – a spirituality of the road. In times of transition we become flexible and mobile or we become irrelevant. As we lose the center ground, we need a spirituality for exiles and a spirituality for the margins…the inertia of large temples is like the cruise ship traveling 25 knots; God cannot quickly take us in new directions. For this reason God is allowing Temple religion to fall down while raising up small groups of people who are not tied to tradition and who are not afraid to venture to unknown places.[50]

---

[47] Bob Hyatt, "The Problem with Programs (or Bigger Is No Longer Better)" http://www.the-next-wave.org/stories/storyReader$507 (accessed 19 January 2005).

[48] Slaughter and Bird, 35, 38.

[49] Ibid., 143.

[50] Hjalmarson.

Len Sweet describes this speed and adaptability as "leading the target." "Just as in skeet shooting you have to lead the target. If you aim your gun at the target, by the time your bullet gets there, the target has moved. Aim at today, and you will be caught up in the daily and miss the mission."[51]

Traditional churches must alter their structures from those that provide standardized, large-group programs to those that have the speed, adaptability, and responsiveness to match the diversity of the world. Without these changes, the church will simply cease to be relevant to most people.[52]

**Shift 2: From Managing for Control to Managing for Creativity**

One of the central beliefs during the modern period was that the world was knowable, predictable and controllable.[53] This belief promised that "we could shape, and even remake, the world to suit our purposes".[54] In order to do this, organizations needed leaders to control their environment. "The real contribution of an organizational leader is to bring stability and continuity . . . success is measured by predictability and order."[55]

Bill Easum and Thomas Bandy describe the effect on the traditional church:

---

[51] Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Manana: Is Your Church Ready to Seize Tomorrow?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 16.

[52] "If people do not perceive our services, events, and programs to be relevant, they will not attend or at least not prioritize church involvement." Gene Appel and Alan Nelson, *How to Change Your Church (without Killing It)* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2000), 27.

[53] Some other causes of this emphasis on control will be discussed in chapters three and four.

[54] Stackhouse, 25-26. He goes on to say, "Mastery and control become key implications of the modern mind." 26.

[55] McManus, 134.

> The whole point of any church organization, whatever its form, was *to control!* Organizations ensured consensus in opinion, and conformity in behavior. That control might be exercised diplomatically or dictatorially, and it might establish boundaries for experimentation that were narrow or broad, but the whole point of an organization was control.[56]

Bill Easum, in another work, puts it more bluntly:

> Established churches worship at the feet of the sacred cow of control. Control takes many shapes; our insistence on controlling everything that happens in our congregations and denominations; our desire to coordinate everything that happens, or to know about everything before it happens, or to insist on voting on every new issue or ministry; a parlor that few people use; a gym floor that must be kept scratch free; a kitchen that no one can use but designated persons; money that belongs to the Trustees; an official body that has to approve every decision.[57]

The result was "the addiction to accountability through management."[58] Thomas Bandy defines this style of management:

> This is the destructive habit of multiple layers of overlapping supervision, designed to reduce risk, avoid mistakes, and maintain control. Initiative and experimentation are curtailed...offices multiply so that no one has much control over anything, and more time is spent in coordination meetings than productive mission. As bureaucracy expands, even the smallest actions are postponed until nearly unanimous agreement has been achieved. The more significant management becomes, the more insulated the organization is to change.[59]

---

[56] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 112. Emphasis theirs. They also say, "The issue of control dominates the agendas of the institutional churches disappearing in the contemporary pre-Christian era. Church organizations are in constant anxiety about their inability to ensure responsible behavior by leaders and participants, and about their inability to match the frantic pace of cultural change." 111.

[57] Bill Easum, *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers: Ministry Anytime, Anywhere, by Anybody* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 9.

[58] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 128.

[59] Ibid., 127.

The twentieth century saw a remarkable change in the education and skill level of people. Alan Roxburgh describes what has happened. "People became better educated and the technological-information revolutions no longer required unskilled and uneducated workforces but just the opposite. A result was the emergence of a highly educated information society which displaced the older manual worker society of the previous period."[60] This change "brings an increase in the expectations and capabilities of employees to be treated as mature individuals with their own performance criteria. Such autonomous, flexible, and committed workers are capable of articulating their own values and translating them into creative initiatives."[61] Bolman and Deal describe the impact on organizations:

> Human resource requirements have changed dramatically in recent decades. Many lower-level jobs now require high levels of skill. A better-educated workforce expects and sometimes demands more discretion in daily work routines. Increasing specialization of knowledge has professionalized many functions. Professionals often know more than their supervisors about technical aspects of their work. Socialized to expect autonomy, they prefer reporting to professional colleagues...changes in the workforce put additional pressure on traditional hierarchical forms. Combined with changes in technology and increasing emphasis on symbolic approaches to organizational control, dramatically different structural forms are emerging.[62]

With the advent of technology and especially the internet, information is no longer controllable by any central authority. Len Sweet writes, "We are living in a world where, for the first time in history, children do not need authority figures to access

---

[60] Alan Roxburgh, *"Traditional vs. The Emergent Church: Struggling with Structure and Looking for New Forms* http://www.allelon.org/articles/print.cfm?id=148 (accessed 19 October 2004).

[61] Dolan, Garcia, and Auerbach, 28.

[62] Bolman and Deal, 56.

information. Our children have new and different ways of acquiring and accessing, deciphering and digesting information."[63]

This has a huge impact on the church. In the emerging culture, people are seeking the freedom to act on their ideas and opportunities. Margaret Wheatley writes, "In all forms of institutions, Americans are asking for more local autonomy, insisting that they, at their level, can do it better than the huge structures of organizations now in place."[64] People simply do not have the patience to wait for their gifts, ideas or talents to be recognized by the institution. Robert Webber writes that many "in traditional church settings are becoming increasingly frustrated with church bureaucracy. This frustration has lead many younger evangelicals to leave churches that are run like businesses to lead start up churches where they don't have to deal with committee structure and controlling bureaucrats."[65] E. R. McManus agrees:

> The problem in many of our congregations is not that we've chosen a wrong strategy or have an irrelevant style but that we have an unhealthy culture. It should not be a surprise that if we enter many congregations, we could see how the uniqueness of the human spirit and the potential God has placed in each individual is being wasted...we have seen at least three generations reject the community of the church in pursuit of an ethos that would value their uniqueness and creativity.[66]

---

[63] Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 13.

[64] Margaret J. Wheatley, "Goodbye, Command and Control," in *Leader to Leader: Enduring Insights on Leadership from the Drucker Foundation's Award-Winning Journal*, ed. Frances Hesselbein and Paul M. Cohen (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 151.

[65] Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 151.

[66] McManus, 108.

The church must learn to release the creativity and giftedness of its people and this means a dramatic change in organizational structure. Brian McLaren demonstrates the new attitude toward structures and control, "Having control is pretty boring when nothing is happening. It is much better to have structures that first encourage something to happen! Envy those who have so much happening that they are legitimately worried about things getting out of control! The question in the new church will not be, how can our structures control, but how can they be catalytic?"[67]

Changing the focus of structures from controlling to creating will be a difficult task for many churches. It means giving up cherished values of stability and predictability for risk and failure. Len Sweet describes the challenge:

> Can the culture of the church change from a safety-first, risk-free to risky, frisky innovation and unplanned experimentation? Can the church arrange its life differently than it has in the modern world? Only if it can give up the 'M' word—management—and give up control of our lives, give up command and control of our ministries, give up command and control of our churches, to God.[68]

To do this churches and their organizational structures will have to "cease crushing the imaginative and energetic self-starters in its midst."[69] Instead, in ecclesiastic ecosystems, people at the lowest levels must be given every decision-making power and entrepreneurial boost to rise to the top; creativity in all staff, including those at the lowest level, must be given free reign; teams must be encouraged to be self-organizing; power

---

[67] Brian D. McLaren, *Reinventing Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 106.

[68] Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 97-98.

[69] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 95.

and authority must be shared by everyone.[70] In the emerging world, leadership and structure is not about controlling people but in releasing them.[71]

**Shift 3: From Long Term Planning to Quick Reaction**

> It isn't good enough to be moving in the right direction—if you're not moving fast enough you can still get run over.
>
> Will Rogers

The emphasis on homogeneity and order in church structures made sense in the modern era. These structures were born into the industrial age, "a world of slow incremental change."[72] The modern era was characterized by balance, equilibrium, order, regulation, and stability.[73] This does not mean that change did not happen, for of course the world is always changing, but that large scale change happened over a long time span that allowed organizations time to slowly adapt to them. In this environment, churches came to assume that mission and strategy could be "forecast in measurable, incremental, linear steps" and that strategy is "best implemented by a central office distant from the mission field."[74] It led to a strong emphasis on centralized, long term planning and on not making changes without plenty of analysis and oversight.[75] This central management fit well with the twin goals of standardization and control.

---

[70] Ibid., 187.

[71] Ibid., 188.

[72] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 19.

[73] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 24.

[74] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 31.

[75] Thomas Bandy writes, "There is one species of animal that is even slower than a tortoise, and that is church management." Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 41.

But the world has changed. "Somewhere in the middle of the twentieth century all of this changed. Change occurred, not in incremental steps, but in random, episodic, discontinuous, quantum leaps."[76] Change "now happens exponentially in front of our face but beyond our comprehension or control."[77] The key to functioning in this new world is not careful control but rather speed. Len Sweet writes, "Everything takes place in the itch of an instant, the ick of the moment, the fingersnaps of Internet time."[78] This speed requires organizations to not only move faster but to move in different directions and areas with quickness and agility. Sweet goes on to say that what is "new in this New Economy is not a speed that does what you have always done but faster. Rather it is doing faster than ever before things you have never done before."[79] Further, he says, "Leadership is the ability to turn on a dime in a new direction."[80]

Traditional church organization, with its focus on control and planning, is lost in this new world of speed and change. "The result of this discontinuous change has been disastrous for established church leaders. Ministries and styles of leadership that once appeared to work well no longer produce the desired results."[81] Len Sweet describes it well when he says, "The amoebic maneuverings of church culture contrast sharply with the volcanic drive and cyclonic energy of [postmodern] culture where things change

---

[76] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 20.

[77] Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 90.

[78] Ibid., 88.

[79] Ibid., 87.

[80] Ibid., 88.

[81] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 21.

overnight."[82] Traditional church structures simply cannot react and respond quickly enough in this rapidly changing environment. Bolman and Deal outline the issue facing the church:

> Organizations operating in simpler and more stable environments are likely to employ less complex and more centralized structures. They rely on authority, rules, and policies as the primary vehicles for coordinating the work. Organizations operating in rapidly changing, turbulent, and uncertain environments need much more complex and flexible structures.[83]

If the church wishes to continue to assist its members in fulfilling their calling in this world of speed and change it will have to develop structures that are able to move and react with quickness and agility.

### Shift 4: From Positional Authority to Relational Authority

In the modern era, with its notion of the universe as a machine, people placed a large value on loyalty and trust in authority, whether in leaders (pastors) or in institutions (denominations).[84] Alan Roxburgh describes the historical reasons for this trust:

> Early modernity essentially said to the emerging individual: 'if you give your loyalty to the new emerging institutions and structures of society then these very structures will give you the freedom and the good things in life you want.' This promise was a) accepted by most and b) for most of the 20th century was also delivered by the new institutions and structures. The key point to remember is this central promise: Personal, individual development and freedom will best be achieved by giving loyalty to these new institutions.[85]

---

[82] Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 89.

[83] Bolman and Deal, 57.

[84] "Their foundational concept stemmed from that modernist notion of the universe as a machine. One did one's duty as a cog in the machine for the sake of the machine's . . . success." Cladis, 25.

[85] Roxburgh.

The last part of the twentieth century has seen this trust in positions and institutions questioned, challenged, and overthrown. In part, this distrust of institutional authority began during the Baby Boomer generation. Jay Conger describes what happened:

> The Baby Boomers saw the vulnerability of authority. They witnessed a failed war in Vietnam, the assassination of two Kennedy's and Martin Luther King Jr., the disgrace of a president after Watergate, the OPEC oil crisis, and environmental disasters like Three Mile Island. To this generation, authority looked unreliable and, often, just plain wrong. Unlike their parents, they thought it reasonable to challenge authority directly. Their college years were marked by scenes in which students took over college administration offices to protest what was seen as an unfair war in Vietnam—challenges to authority that were largely unimaginable to the Silent Generation.[86]

This changing attitude towards authority has continued to grow in the emerging culture. Roxburgh writes, "Some fundamental changes are afoot in our culture. It's not just churches, as institutions being questioned and opened to suspicion. The 20th Century's loyalty to organizations and systems that made culture so stable and easy to navigate in North America has quickly disappeared."[87] Conger suggests, "Historical forces are shaping Generation X to be less loyal to organizations and, therefore, to traditional authority than even the Boomers have been."[88] George Cladis agrees, "Postmodern society distrusts large bureaucracies. The 1980s and 1990s reveal a

---

[86] Jay A. Conger, "How Generational Shifts Will Transform Organizational Life," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 20.

[87] Roxburgh.

[88] Conger, 22.

dismantling of these large management structures."[89] Kanter writes, "As hierarchies are de-emphasized, the formal authority derived from hierarchies is less important than professional expertise in gaining the respect required for influence and leadership."[90]

Jackson Carroll describes the impact on churches, "What once seemed to be citadels of order, security, and timelessness—and thus a firm foundation for the authority of clergy who lead them—have, for many people, lost their aura of invincibility and absoluteness."[91] For many people today, what matters is not positional authority, embodied by a title or institution, but the quality of the relationship. George Cladis describes this new reality:

> In the modern world, credentials and titles meant more than they do in the postmodern world. Although educational and professional accomplishments are still important and required for many careers – even positions in churches – they carry less authority with the average church member...postmodern people recognize the right of others to lead them more on the basis of trust and relational credit than titles and credentials...the postmodern world wants to know the heart of its leadership. Words like *authentic* and *genuine* are being used to describe effective and able leaders.[92]

Len Hjalmarson describes this as the decentralization of authority, where "authority becomes less about position and role, and more about relationship and

---

[89] Cladis, 25.

[90] Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Restoring People to the Heart of the Organization of the Future," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 141.

[91] Jackson W. Carroll, *As One with Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 34.

[92] Cladis, 21. Italics in original.

identity."[93] Len Sweet agrees, "The postmodern reformation fundamentally reframes questions of power and control and redefines authority. In the modern era, power was understood as a relationship of authority. In the postmodern era, power is understood as an authority of relationship . . . authority figures have lost their authority."[94] Conger says, "All of these forces are creating a new generation of leaders who will shun the stereotypical commander's role. Instead, we will see a more informal, team-based leadership role emerge among them. They will share responsibility more easily, communicate more frequently, and challenge the hierarchies of their organization more comfortably."[95]

This shift from positional to relational authority is one more challenge for traditional church structures. People no longer trust the structures that were designed to help them. Once again, if the church wishes to be of help to its members, it must re-think its approach and organization. George Cladis writes:

> The postmodern distrust of bureaucracies and favoring of broad networks of relationships is wrecking havoc in traditional church denominations. The large, centralized denominational offices and structures are now archaic, and people have lost confidence in them. The change to smaller, leaner organizational structures is difficult and painful.[96]

---

[93] Hjalmarson.

[94] Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 186.

[95] Conger, 21.

[96] Cladis, 25.

## Conclusion

These four shifts in culture, intended as illustrative rather than exhaustive, have created an environment filled with challenges for traditional churches. As Herrington and others write, "The environment in which we serve has shifted dramatically. The church should no longer be seen as a stable institution, but rather as a dynamic organism in a rapidly changing mission field."[97] Coming from an age of homogeneity, stability, control, long term planning, and respect for institutional authority, churches are ill equipped to minister in a world where people have little time and patience for bureaucracy. People are willing to give their time and energy only to projects and programs that have immediate relevance to their life, and they demand that institutions and leaders earn their trust through relationships. This environment has significance on many aspects of church life, but they have particular significance on how churches organize themselves for ministry. Len Sweet writes "Organizational structures that are flexible, flappable, and fast are equations for success."[98] Bolman and Deal outline the impact on structure:

> Uncertainty and turbulence press organizations to develop more sophisticated architectural forms. New specialties and roles are required to deal with emerging problems. More specialized and diversified structures require more elaborate, flexible approaches to vertical and lateral coordination. Uncertain environments demand high levels of flexibility and adaptability. Many traditional managers, steeped in the tradition of the pyramid, struggle to adapt to strange new forms. In these, structural design is more emergent than prescribed, chains of command are flat rather than multi-layered and coordination arises mainly from a dense network of horizontal relationships rather than from top down decisions.[99]

---

[97] Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 115.

[98] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 98.

[99] Bolman and Deal, 52.

Brian McLaren describes the challenge churches face when he states, "We need an ecclesiology that is streamlined, simple, and less exhausting and time consuming . . . we need to go back to the drawing board and conceive of new approaches to structuring church life."[100]

Margaret Wheatley describes the challenge:

> It makes me wonder how we will design our organizations in the future. As we struggle with the designs that will replace bureaucracy, we must invent organizations where process is allowed its varied-tempo dance, where structures come and go as they support the process that needs to occur, and where form arises to support the necessary relationship.[101]

But this is easier said than done. Wheatley speaks to business but churches face her questions as well. Snyder and Runyon ask, "How do we create structures that move with change, that are flexible and adaptive, even boundaryless, that enable rather than constrain? How do we simplify things without losing both control and differentiation? How do we resolve personal needs for freedom and autonomy with organizational needs for prediction and control?"[102]

As the church wrestles with these and other questions, both within its Scripture and culture, perhaps an answer can be found in the abiding symbol of the digital age, the network. Howard and Runyon point the way:

> Globalization accents the role of images and brings a new focus on linkages, connections, and patterns of relationship. Significantly, the

---

[100] McLaren, 107.

[101] Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organization from an Orderly Universe* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 68.

[102] Ibid., 8.

> global model is more organic than mechanical, more flowing and flexible than fixed and final. This suggests for the future a new sensitivity to networks and patterns that hold things together, perhaps countering the postmodern tendency toward diversity and disintegration.[103]

Chapter 3 examines Scripture, to determine the Biblical principles by which God's people live and organize themselves.

---

[103] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 149.

# CHAPTER 3

# BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH STRUCTURE

Oh give me your pity!
I'm on a committee,
Which means that from morning to night
We attend and amend
And content and defend
Without a conclusion in sight.
We confer and concur,
We defer and demur,
And reiterate all of our thoughts.
We revise the agenda
With frequent addenda
And consider a load of reports.
We compose and propose,
We suppose and oppose,
And the points of procedure are fun;
But though various notions
Are brought up as motions,
There's terribly little gets done.
We resolve and absolve;
But we never dissolve,
Since it's out of the question for us
To bring our committee
To end like this ditty,
Which stops with a period – thus.

Leslie Lipson, "The Committee"[1]

[1] This poem was given to the author of this paper through an elder at his church who works for a strata management committee. The poem, entitled "The Committee" is attributed to Leslie Lipson at http://motd.ambians.com/quotes.php/name/linux_songs/toc_id1-1-31 (accessed 27 December 2006). Other websites attribute the poem to anonymous.

**The New Testament: Principles Over Specifics**

Throughout church history, the New Testament has been used "to justify almost any organizational structure from episcopacy to utopian community."[2] Many have searched for the one true form of the church but the pages of the New Testament refuse to present one. Instead, the New Testament presents different solutions to different problems in different contexts. The "New Testament makes clear that no one church form existed in that concept. The early church was developmental in character and found expression in a number of different organizational arrangements."[3] Greg Ogden writes:

> In spite of John Calvin's insistence that the Lord himself had 'instituted' four offices within the church – pastor, teacher, elder and deacon – many scholars contend that the New Testament does not portray a unified and uniform church order. The biblical picture resembles more a diversity of function and form at different stages of development in the church community. Form has great flexibility in order to accommodate the function of the body organism.[4]

Brown outlines a number of questions regarding leadership that are hard to answer with any certainty. He asks, "Were there different levels of leadership within local churches? Did all leaders have titles and were the titles uniform? Was it a formal office held for a set or long period of time? What precisely did leaders do? Were they

---

[2] Thomas G. Bandy, *Road Runner: The Body in Motion* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 34.

[3] Guder, 68.

[4] Ogden, 148.

appointed by Paul, or elected by local community or did they come forward based on sense of giftedness and calling?"[5]

This flexibility reflected the diversity of the earliest congregations. Snyder and Runyon describe the situation in the early church:

> The church is not only one; it is also many. It is manifold and diverse. Consider the diversity of the first Christian congregations (Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth for example). Note the biblical passages celebrating the ethnic, socioeconomic, and class diversity of the church (for example, 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:23-29; Col. 3:11). The New Testament highlights not only the unity we have in Christ but also the diversity that makes this unity so miraculous. Unity in spite of great diversity is one of the most amazing things about the early church. Further it seems legitimate to apply the 'one body, many members' teaching of 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 to the universal as well as the local church. The church, locally and globally is *both* one and many.[6]

While the New Testament may be short on specifics regarding organizational form, it does reveal some consistent patterns and principles that are foundational to the church and should impact how the church is organized today. Designing an organizational form for the church in the emerging culture "requires the church to start with biblical and theological foundations before proceeding to designing organizations or assessing the viability of our present denominations."[7] This chapter outlines these Biblical principles of church structure.

---

[5] Raymond E. Brown, "Episkope and Episkopos: The New Testament Evidence," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 329.

[6] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 24. Italics theirs.

[7] Guder, 69.

**A Different Model: The Church as Organism Not Machine**

Examining the principles of church structure found in the Scripture will require that the hidden assumptions of church organization be opened up for evaluation and criticism. Too often, "congregations approach organization with assumptions that they never raise to conscious scrutiny."[8] And often these assumptions are carried into the church from the changing workplace, an experience with government or volunteer charities instead of arising from the pages of Scripture. Elton Trueblood suggests, "We must make a conscious effort to disabuse ourselves of views which are so widely held that they are assumed without argument or even unconsciously."[9] One such assumption that needs to be challenged is the idea that the church is hierarchical and machine-like in nature. This model, which has shaped so much of the ministry of the modern church, needs to be replaced with a model that is truer to the vision of the New Testament. Elton Trueblood reminds us that "it cannot be too strongly pointed out that there was *no* Christian hierarchy when Christ gave the Sermon on the Mount and told the little group that they could be the preservative to keep civilization from decay."[10] Bandy finds it significant that the one thing Paul does not do when he addresses the problems in the Corinthian church is to "impose a hierarchy of authority, a bureaucracy of management or prescriptive mandates and job descriptions that precisely define what everyone can or

---

[8] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 31.

[9] Elton Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1961), 26.

[10] Ibid., 26-27.

should do."[11] Snyder agrees when he writes that "biblically it would seem more valid to understand the Church as the community of God's people rather than as hierarchical institution . . . certainly biblical figures such as the people and the flock of God, the body and bride of Christ, and the community of fellowship of the Holy Spirit have priority over other less specifically biblical models."[12]

One new model is to view the church as an organism rather than a machine or even an organization. Greg Ogden writes, "The church is not a human organization that has contracted by common consent to keep alive the memory of a great man, Jesus Christ. On the contrary, the church is a divine organism mystically fused to the living and reigning Christ, who continues to reveal himself in a people whom he has drawn to himself."[13] Howard Snyder suggests this organic model is closer to the evidence of the New Testament. He writes, "In fact, the New Testament description of the Church as the messianic community undercuts the very basis of any institutional/hierarchical view and puts ministry on a charismatic/organic basis."[14] McManus suggests, "The church in her essence is a living system. Whenever we see the church through the template as an organization, we begin creating an institution. When we relate to the church as an organism, we begin to awaken the apostolic ethos, which unleashes the movement of

---

[11] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 16.

[12] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 40.

[13] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 30.

[14] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 86.

God."[15] The differences between an organic view and the institutional view are summed up in table 1. Table 1. Summary of Differences between an Organic and an Institutional View of the Church.

| Factor | Organic View | Institutional View |
|---|---|---|
| Starting Point | The Body of Christ—the church is the whole people of God in whom Christ dwells. | Leadership Offices in the Church—the true church is found where word of God rightly proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered. |
| Ministry Direction | Bottom Up—the church's ministry is shaped by the gifts and callings distributed by the Holy Spirit. | Top Down—the ministry is the province of the ordained offices of the church. |
| View of Lay Ministry | All ministry is lay ministry | Supplements and is secondary to ordained ministry. |
| Conclusion | One people/one ministry | Two people (clergy/laity) two ministries. [16] |

[15] McManus, 14.

[16] Table adapted from Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 76.

Organic images for the church can also be found in the teachings of Jesus. His parables and stories often featured organic metaphors taken from nature and agriculture to illustrate the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6, 9, 13; Mark 4; Luke 12). It could be that Jesus used these examples simply because of the agrarian context in which he lived. Christian Schwarz, however, suggests that this doesn't go far enough. He suggests that while the organic metaphors suited the context, they also revealed the types of images Jesus favored to reflect the reality of God's Kingdom. Schwarz writes, "If Jesus were walking among us today, He would hardly replace these parables from nature with parables from the world of computers, such as 'the Kingdom of God is like a computer program—your output depends on your input.' Technocratic illustrations like this would miss the secret of life."[17]

Howard Snyder also points out that Jesus specifically "rejected both religious and political hierarchical models for his followers."[18] Drawing on such passages as Matthew 20:20-28 and Matthew 23:1-12 he notes such non-hierarchical phrases such as "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave" (Matt. 20:25-27) and "Nor are you to be called 'teacher' for you have one Teacher, the Christ" (Matt. 23:8,10 NIV). This language suggests that "hierarchical arguments and titles that create distinctions among believers are called into question. Christ's followers are seen as brothers [and sisters] and fellow servants."[19]

---

[17] Schwarz, 8-9.

[18] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 39.

[19] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 39-40.

Organic language is not limited to the words of Jesus but runs throughout the New Testament. Snyder examines passages such as 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:5-8, Ephesians 4:1-16, Matthew 18:20, and 1 Peter 4:10-11 and concludes that the church "is not structured the same way a business corporation or university is, but is structured like the human body—on the basis of life. At its most basic level it is a community, not a hierarchy; an organism, not an organization."[20] Snyder and Runyon point to the body language of 1 Corinthians 12 and suggest that the church was organized around relationships and not hierarchy. They write, "The 'first apostles, second prophets, third teachers' of 1 Corinthians 12:28 is not a hierarchy. Paul's whole point in 1 Corinthians 12 is the organic relationships in the body, not the hierarchical relationship of the Roman legions."[21]

Greg Ogden also finds organic imagery in Ephesians 1:22-23. He writes, "The church as the living organism of Christ is further underscored in Paul's cosmic statement in Ephesians about the place of the church in God's eternal scheme. Paul concludes with a flourish: 'and he [God] has put all things under his [Jesus'] feet and has made him [Jesus] the head over all things for *the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.* '"[22]

To summarize, Snyder writes:

> [A]n institutional or organizational model is based on hierarchy, delegation of authority, impersonal relationships and formality. This is a

---

[20] Ibid., 57.

[21] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 108.

[22] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 31. Italics his.

> legitimate form of human organization admirably suited to some kinds of endeavors, but it is not a proper model for Church structure. All biblical figures for the Church suggest a charismatic and organic, rather than institutional, model: tree, vine, flock, family, nation, household, and even the living growing 'holy temple'. Legitimate institutional elements must be subordinate to the charismatic nature of the Church.[23]

**Grounded in God's Triune Nature**

This organic imagery of the church was not a creation of the early church or apostles. Rather, it was drawn theologically from what they knew of God's own nature. Early in the history of the Church John of Damascus used the word 'perichoresis' to describe the triune nature of God.[24] The word, made up of two Greek words meaning around and dance, together indicate a circle dance or a dance with partners all around. George Cladis describes the significance of this image as it relates to structure of the church. He writes, "A perichoretic image of the Trinity is that of the three persons of God in constant movement in a circle that implies intimacy, equality, unity yet distinction, and love."[25] Shirley Guthrie also describes this relationship when she writes, "The oneness of God is not the oneness of a distinct, self-contained individual; it is the unity of a community of persons who love each other and live together in harmony."[26]

Theologian Miroslav Volf describes the significance of this relationship for the church. He writes, "The symmetrical reciprocity of the relations of the Trinitarian persons

---

[23] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 66-68.

[24] See Cladis, 4.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Shirley C. Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine* (Louisville, KY: John Knox/Westminster Press, 1994), 92.

finds it correspondence in the image of the church in which all members serve one another with their specific gifts of the Spirit in imitations of the Lord and through the power of the Father. Like the divine person, they all stand in a relation of mutual giving and receiving."[27]

This is not to say that God, and by implication nature, is without functional order. Snyder and Runyon note:

> While vertical hierarchy is rejected as contrary to the gospel and as arising from human sin, hierarchy in the broad sense of the word of ordered inter-relatedness seems true both theologically and scientifically. There is in the universe a basis for valuation and distinction. But this is not a vertical hierarchy. It is not based on power, money, race, gender, intelligence, charisma, or religiosity. It has an ethical and spiritual basis, for we live in a moral universe. It is grounded in that awesome synergy of love and justice that the Bible names holiness, and which theologically is comprehended in the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity is not hierarchy, but is holy community without confusion or conflict. God is fully one and fully three, and the resolution of that seeming contradiction is found in the mystery of divine Personhood.[28]

This understanding of God's relationship with himself presents a challenge to the traditional model of church based on hierarchy and status. Snyder and Runyon continue:

> The Trinity is the opposite of hierarchy. The church's ministry including its leadership, is non-hierarchical. The deep theological grounding of this is in the Trinity itself, not some philosophical egalitarianism. The Trinity and the very nature of the material creation God has made show us that we should conceive of the church and its ministry in organic, relational terms, not in mechanical-hierarchical ones. The church is not so much a rational organization or a social machine as it is a complex organism . . . the Trinitarian nature of the church is built into the church's very DNA.[29]

---

[27] Quoted in Cladis, 219.

[28] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 132.

[29] Ibid., 56.

Instead of seeing individuals existing in various levels or strata, the perichoretic model presents the individual members of the church living interdependent lives. The church literally becomes both many and one. Cladis writes:

> The perichoretic model of God calls into question the traditional hierarchies of power, control, and domination that have formed the basis for church leadership in the past . . . the perichoretic symbol of the Trinity is more helpful to the church living in the postmodern world. Although, we, as the creatures of God, are not equal to God, the divine community of the Trinity provides a helpful image for human community that reflects the love and intimacy of the Godhead. Hierarchical distinctions in human community give way to a sense of the body of Christ, with each part equal and important (1 Cor. 12-14). The individual persons of the church are distinct parts yet are bound together in a common sharing and loving relationship.[30]

The nature of God in the Trinity provides for an organic view of the church but it is not the only pointer in this direction.

## New Testament Metaphors

More evidence for an organic model is found in the metaphors used in the New Testament to describe the church. Thomas Bandy notes that the earliest metaphors the church used to describe its community were organic in nature. He notes that this language stood "in sharp contrast to the institutional or ritual metaphors pagans used to describe their own cults, shrines, and sacred places."[31] Neil Cole adds that:

> Most of the metaphors and explanations of the Kingdom of God and the Church in the New Testament use natural concepts for identification and description: The body, the bride, the branches, the field of wheat, the mustard seed, the family, the flock, leaven, salt and light. When the New

---

[30] Cladis, 5.

[31] Bandy, *Road Runner: The Body in Motion*, 64.

> Testament uses a building as a metaphor of the Church, it is quick to add that it is made up of living stones (1 Peter 2:5).[32]

While space prohibits a thorough examination of these metaphors a brief review of several are helpful to forming a new understanding of the church of Christ.

## The Body Metaphor

The body of Christ is one of the more common metaphors used to describe the church in the New Testament (see especially 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12). Bandy explains:

> Paul tells the Corinthians that there is the "body," with many parts, in which the lesser members are paradoxically treated with the greatest honor (1 Cor. 12:12-26). The mission author of Ephesians identifies the church as the "body of Christ," one body and one Spirit, knit together and saved together (Eph. 1:23, 4:4-6, 15,16, 30-32). Another . . . author quotes one of the earliest songs of the Gentile church celebrating Christ as the "head" of the 'body'( Col. 1:18, 2:16-19).[33]

The use of the metaphor goes beyond simple analogy. The wording of 1 Corinthians 12:12 suggests that Paul might end with the phrase, "for just as the body is one and has many members, and all are members of the body, so it is with the church." Paul concludes with more dramatic wording; however, when he ends with the phrase, "so it is with Christ." Ogden suggests that "by interchanging Christ with the church, Paul is telling us that the church is nothing less than the living extension of Jesus here on earth. The church and the resurrected, reigning, and living Jesus are inseparable. Jesus mediates his life through the church."[34]

---

[32] Cole, 36.

[33] Bandy, *Road Runner: The Body in Motion*, 65.

[34] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 43-44.

Paul uses the body metaphor to describe the relational nature of the church. Greg Ogden notes, "The Apostle Paul ingeniously selected the image of the human body to convey the organic manner in which the church is to function."[35] Campbell, commenting on 1 Corinthians 12-14 writes, "The church is Christ's body, and all the members of the church, like the other parts of the body, are interdependent and necessary to one another."[36] The body metaphor captures the idea of multiple members, each with their own distinct purpose and function, working together for the greater health of the body. Bill Easum describes the essence of the body metaphor:

> The body of Christ, like the human body, is a network of a variety of autonomous cells called spiritual gifts. Each gift is autonomous and different, yet functions on behalf of the entire body, not the person with the gift. Individual members of the Body of Christ find their fulfillment, not as their ministry makes them feel good but when their ministry contributes to the health of the Body of Christ.[37]

Ogden agrees:

> The church functions as an organism when those who make up the body of Christ seek obediently to fulfill the role God has assigned to them. The analogy of the human body is very helpful in understanding the way the living organism of the church is to function. The human body is beautifully coordinated when each part functions according to its design. The central command post, the head, sends the signals through the nervous system, which activates the bodily parts. These bodily parts have no will or their own . . . so the Body of Christ harmonizes in perfect coordination with the head when each person seeks to exercise the gifts that have been assigned to him or her.[38]

---

[35] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 30.

[36] R. Alastair Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, ed. John Riches, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1994), 107-108.

[37] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 45.

[38] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 36.

This aspect of the body imagery does not fit well within the hierarchical, control-focused structures of the modern church. Marva Dawn notes:

> [H]ow rarely it is understood in the Church that we are really all together in one body in Christ, and each member has a different function! To our great loss, the idea of unity in diversity in the Christian community is often talked about as a nice theory, but rarely put into practice. We all can see how wonderful the pictures of the Scriptures are, but the friction comes when we try to put them into tangible relationships and structures.[39]

Bill Easum believes that the meaning of the body metaphor runs counter to the control and coordinate philosophy of modern church structure. "Imagine a human body where all of the parts must 'get permission' before they can function. Or a healthy body telling a kidney or heart to quit functioning on behalf of the body. Or a lung having to get permission before it can breathe? These parts of the body function automatically without any help from the brain. So it is with most members and ministries of the body of Christ."[40]

Southern and Norton see the body of Christ and human body as analogous in several key areas. First, both are living organisms. Second, both are formed around the same basic structure of cell. The human body with physical cells, and the body of Christ by team/committee/small group cells. Third, the cell contains (or should contain) the genetic code of the entire organism. In the human body this is held in the DNA of each cell, and in the body of Christ held in the mission, purpose and values of the small group. Fourth, growth and health in both are directly related to the genetic information encoded

---

[39] Dawn, 77.

[40] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 45.

in the DNA of the cells. Fifth, the DNA of each is expressed through specialized systems that make up the organization of the entity. The human body is organized around such systems as nervous, digestive and vascular systems while the body of Christ is organized through systems of care, nurture and equipping. Finally, Southern and Norton even see similarities in the physical make up of the DNA. The DNA of the human body appears as a double helix (double stranded spiral) connected by hydrogen bonds while the DNA of the body of Christ appears as a similar double helix made up of mission and vision connected by core values.[41]

The body metaphor is important in forming a new understanding of the church as organism rather than organization but it is not the only one. Several other metaphors also reinforce this organic view of the church.

## Peculiar People

Throughout the Old Testament, God's focus was on the formation of a special people or nation that would serve him and be his witness to the world. In Exodus 19:5,6 God says, "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (NIV). In the New Testament this theme is picked up and expanded beyond the political nation of Israel to apply to all those who have placed their faith in God. "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of

[41] Southern and Norton, 4.

darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Pet. 2:9-10 NIV).

There were other metaphors of an institutional nature available to the writers, both in Jewish culture (Temple, Synagogue) and in Greek culture (Temple), but they chose instead the organic metaphor of a spiritual people. Instead of hierarchy or separate classes of members they chose a metaphor that emphasized the interdependence and equality of all. Speaking on the Greek word "*laos*" (people) Robinson notes, "Certainly the people of God or God's laity in the New Testament are expressions which include the whole Christian family, and certainly the priests of God . . . include all church members."[42] Robinson sees the same emphasis in 2 Corinthians 6:16, "For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people'" (NIV). Robinson writes God's intention is to form all people into his "special or peculiar people."[43] Howard Snyder says "this concept of peoplehood is firmly rooted in the Old Testament and underlines the objective fact of God's acting throughout history to call and prepare a 'chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God' (1 Pet. 2:9; compare Ex. 19:5-6)."[44]

---

[42] William Robinson, *Completing the Reformation: The Doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers* (Lexington, KY.: The College of the Bible, 1955), 17-18. This concept of peoplehood will be explored further below.

[43] Robinson, 17.

[44] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 58.

## Vine and the Branches

Another organic metaphor used for the church is found in the words of Jesus in John 15. Jesus states:

> 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. (John 15:1-5 NIV)

In this metaphor Jesus emphasizes the vital connection between himself and his church. Thomas Bandy writes:

> The power of the vineyard metaphor is that as branches are grafted onto the True Vine, the organic fluids of the branch and vine are shared. The life-giving "sap" of the True Vine flows into the cellular structure of the branch, enlivening every molecule so effectively that the skin of each plant literally joins together to become one plant. Christ does not function like a "head." There is no carefully considered decision. There is no carefully plotted strategic plan in this joining of organisms to become a single organism. There is simply a flow of spirit.[45]

## Living Building

Another metaphor for the church is found in Ephesians 2:19-22 (NIV):

> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the

[45] Bandy, *Road Runner: The Body in Motion*, 66.

> chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Here Paul takes a static metaphor of a building and gives it an organic twist. Ogden writes, "Paul cannot think of a building simply in terms of an inanimate structure. He often fuses his understanding of the church as that life-animated body in whom Christ dwells with his image of building and comes up with the mixed metaphor of a 'living-building'".[46] Robinson notes that this building is inclusive of all Christians, not just a professional ministry. He writes, "All are built into it, both *kleros* (clergy) and *laos* (laity). Its character as a holy temple is not destroyed by the fact that the laity form a part, for the laity are the clergy, for all are priests to officiate in that temple."[47] The Apostle Peter also uses the living building metaphor in 1 Peter 2:4-5. "As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (NIV).

## Bride of Christ/ Sheep and Shepherds

Other metaphors used in the New Testament include the Bride of Christ (John 3:29; Rev. 19:7), and the sheep and shepherd (John 10). These also reflect an organic understanding of the church.

---

[46] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 79.

[47] Robinson, 63.

## The Structure of the Early Church

The next issue is how the early church applied this organic understanding into its own structure. What patterns or principles can be found in the way the early church structured itself? The most basic level of structure has to do with the division of clergy and laity.

### Clergy and Laity in The New Testament

In any contemporary discussion of church organization two terms, clergy and laity, dominate the conversation. These terms have very specific meanings in the modern church. Gillespie writes, "Today, 'the laity' signifies the secular notion of 'nonprofessionals' in distinction from those who are specially trained or skilled, a concept derived from the religious idea of 'ordinary believers' in distinction from those who by training and office are set apart as 'clergy'".[48] The term laity has become a negative word. Ogden notes laity "has a pejorative ring. It has come to mean either what you are not or what you cannot. It means you are not clergy . . . it also means you cannot – for a layman is an unqualified, nonprofessional who lacks the necessary training in an area requiring expertise. The clergy are the experts; the laymen are the 'are not'".[49] This tendency to identify the ministry of the church with the ministry of the clergy "is a theological disaster. For the *laos* then delegates the ministry, primarily if not exclusively,

---

[48] Thomas Gillespie, "The Laity in Biblical Perspective," in *The New Laity*, ed. Ralph D. Bucy (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1978), 14.

[49] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 73.

to the 'clergy' and relegates the 'laity' . . . to the role of a supporting cast."[50] Greg Ogden adds:

> The phrase, "I am just a layman" has so worked itself into our psyches that we have developed a quite clearly first- and second-class Christians in the kingdom. First class are those in full time Christian service, especially those cross cultural missionaries or pastors. Then there are the rest who do filler roles because paid professional can't do it all. We have developed a hierarchy of worth.[51]

While this may describe the current situation, is this separation between clergy and laity supported in the New Testament and in the structure of the early church? Alexander Faivre answers the question emphatically:

> The Christian who goes back to the origins soon discovers there is no question of "lay" in the New Testament. There is no trace of the term! There is not even a trace of any reality that could be transposed and put in parallel with our contemporary phenomenon of the "laity." On the contrary, most of the elements that we use to help us to define the laity today as a specific category are quite absent from the New Testament, at least when the laity is being explicitly contested.[52]

John Yoder agrees. He writes, "There is no concept of 'laity' in the negatively defined sense, as 'those with no ministry'. The people (*laos*) includes all the ministries. The bishop is a member of the laity just like everyone else. The use of the word 'lay' to mean 'non-minister' is heretical and arises only generations later."[53] Sweet adds, "There is no biblical ordering of the church into 'clergy' and 'laity'. Only 'ministers' which one

---

[50] Gillespie, 17.

[51] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 4.

[52] Alexandre Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church*, trans. David Smith (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 3.

[53] Yoder, 14.

becomes at one's baptism, and those set apart and ordained for the equipping of the saints for their ministries."[54] Robinson comments that "the two words *kleros* (clergy) and *laos* (laity) appear in the New Testament, but, strange to say, they denote the same people, not different peoples . . . the only priests under the Gospel designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood."[55] Finally, Howard Snyder writes:

> The New Testament simply does not speak in terms of two classes of Christians—"ministers" and "laymen"—as we do today. According to the Bible, the people (*laos,* laity) of God comprise all Christians and all Christians through the exercise of spiritual gifts have some "work of ministry." So if we wish to be biblical, we will have to say that all Christians are laymen (God's people) and all are ministers. The clergy-laity dichotomy is unbiblical and therefore invalid. It grew up as an accident of church history and actually marked a drift away from biblical faithfulness.[56]

The word clergy is derived from the Greek word, *kleros* meaning "lot." Originally this word referred to the instrument used when people would draw lots. For example, the soldiers casting lots over Jesus' clothing (Matt. 27:35), or to the lot cast by the disciples to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:17, 25-26).[57] Over time it also came to mean the result or outcome from the drawing of lots; hence, it is applied to Judas when he takes his own life. [58] As time went on this meaning was extended to mean "share" or "inheritance." This meaning is also seen in Acts 26:18 as Paul rebukes Simon the Magus

---

[54] Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 218.

[55] Robinson, 17.

[56] Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 94-95.

[57] Robinson, 21.

[58] Faivre, 6.

and says, "You have no part or lot in this matter." In Acts 26:18 in his defense before King Agrippa, Paul states that Jesus sent him so the gentiles could eventually find a "lot" ("place" in NIV). Similarly, it is used in Colossians 1:12 to refer to "inheritance."[59] In Galatians 3:29 this idea of inheritance is applied to all those who are in Christ. In the New Testament, *kleros* does not refer to a sub-set of God's people or to a special class of leaders, but rather "more richly refers to the inheritance all the saints receive in Christ."[60] Faivre writes, "The term *kleros* is applied not simply to ministers, but to the whole of the believing people . . . the inheritance was a joint inheritance, shared equally between all heirs. The people experience their vocation as believers collectively. The lot which God had promised since the time of Abraham and distributed in Christ was not divided unequally."[61] Yet somehow, the meaning of this word has been reversed. John W. Kennedy says, "Through some strange etymological perversion, from a word which indicated the great unity and privilege of the church as a whole, there has been derived a word which means practically the opposite, and is used to denote a class of people with special privilege within the church itself."[62]

The word "laity" comes from the Greek word, "*laos,*" meaning "people." In the Septuagint, where *laos* is closely associated with Israel, it loses its general meaning of "crowd or population and takes on the sense of a specific people, a people not in 'mass'

---

[59] See Robinson, 21.

[60] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 91.

[61] Faivre, 7-8.

[62] Quoted in Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 90.

but in 'union' because of the unique call of God."[63] Gillespie believes "it is this theological meaning of *laos* which passes from the Old Testament, by way of the Septuagint, into the New Testament when the term is used with reference to both the Israel of the Old and the new Israel, the Christian community."[64] Commenting on the language of 1 Peter 2:9-10, Gillespie notes, "The traditional titles of honor ascribed in the Old Testament to Israel as the *laos* of God are applied without reservation to the Christian community."[65] Ogden agrees when he writes that the special relationship Israel had with God in the Old Testament "is transferred to the church, which was purchased at the price of Jesus' blood . . . out of all the people (*ethnos)* of the earth, there is a special people (*laos*) who are God's called-out people."[66] This usage, referring to the people of God as a whole rather than lower class sub-set, is completely the opposite of the way the word is used in the modern church. Gillespie notes that the modern meaning of laity is "altogether excluded by God's call to the entire *laos* to serve him as a 'kingdom of priests.'"[67] In this sense, the church does not have a priesthood but is itself a priesthood. A priesthood that "is always spoken of corporately, never individually. . . . The New Testament never implies this priesthood is to be confined only to the ministry of presbyters, bishops, or deacons."[68]

---

[63] Gillespie, 14-15.

[64] Ibid., 16.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 92.

[67] Gillespie, 15-16.

[68] Allen C. Guelzo, "Are You a Priest?" *Christianity Today*, September 16 1991, 36.

Through the process of time, a reversal in the meanings of these words has taken place from their use in the New Testament. Words once intended to refer to the whole now are used to refer only to parts. Robinson writes, "In the New Testament church the position of clergy and laity was practically topsy-turvy in relation to what it is today."[69] Robinson continues, "So we can see that all Christians are God's laity (*laos*) and all are God's clergy (*kleros*). Any distinction we make between clergy and laity cannot clear the laity from being ministers of the gospel nor from being responsible for being God's clergy."[70] All those in the church are pictured as sharing together in the life and work of the church. At the same time, this picture is not intended to imply anarchy or chaos. The record of the New Testament does not show a church operating in random wildness. It shows a church with a definite, if simple, form anchored around some key leadership positions.

## Leadership in the New Testament Church

While there continues to be much debate about the exact nature of the structure of leadership within the New Testament church, the evidence suggests the early church was structured around two primary leadership positions.[71] Brown writes, "There are two

---

[69] Robinson, 21.

[70] Ibid., 20.

[71] John Elliot writes: "Continued debate over the origin, shapes, and historical development of ministry and order in the early church appears to be as much an inevitability as death and taxes. Perhaps this is to be expected with an issue in which all ecclesial communions have such pronounced self-interest in justifying their own ecclesial orders. At the same time, the diverse and numerous exegetical, historical, social and theological factors involved combined with the less than fully clear nature of the literary sources, virtually guarantees a plethora of differing reconstructions, none of which has led yet to an overall consensus." John H. Elliott, "Elders as Honored Household Heads and Not Holders of 'Office' in Earliest Christianity," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 33, no. 2 (2003): 78. At the same time he also sees the earlier structure as being more fluid and only evolving later to a more hierarchical position. "While the church in

offices set up for the pastoral care of the community, a higher office and a subordinate office."[72]

The first position, often seen as the primary leadership position, is referred to with three different words. The most used word is elder *(presbuteros)*. This word occurs sixty-six times in the New Testament and has a wide range of meanings. It can refer to age; meaning an old person or one who is older than another. It can refer to forefathers, city officials, and officials in Judaism. Josephus used the word to refer to old people, envoys, elders and ambassadors, and deputies.[73] It is used in Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; and Titus 1:5 to refer to officials in the church.[74] David Mappes states, "When referring to a local church, *presbuteros*, in the New Testament functions as a title for its spiritual leaders."[75] Elders were found in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11:30; 15:2-6, 22;

---

later centuries, under the pressure of increased population and geographical dissemination, and diversity of teaching and practice, eventually assumed the form of a centralized and hierarchically organized structure, this was hardly the case in the first two centuries, which were marked by a diversity of leadership roles and functions, with little homogeneity, and no centralization of authority." Ibid., 81.

[72] Brown, 333. There is continued debate concerning the origin of these offices, and even whether they truly constituted formal "offices". For a different perspective into this debate, which is outside the scope of this project see Elliott, Campbell, and David W. Miller, "The Uniqueness of New Testament Church Eldership," *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (1985). David Mappes suggests the word includes both meanings. "To hold the office of elder requires meeting certain office qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-7). Gifts and ministries, however, are broader than one's 'office' or position. In fact, one may employ gifts in ministry without holding a church office." David Mappes, "The New Testament Elder, Overseer, and Pastor," *Bibliothecra Sacra* 154 (1997): 169.

[73] David Mappes, "The "Elder" in the Old and New Testaments," *Bibliothecra Sacra* 154 (1997): 86. He also notes that in Josephus it more frequently to refer to a ruling body rather than just elderly people.

[74] Ibid., 85.

[75] Ibid., 86.

16:4), Galatia (Acts 14:23), Ephesus (Acts 20:17; 1 Tim. 5:17), Crete (Titus 1:5), Asia Minor (1 Pet. 5:1), and in other Jewish Christian assemblies (James 5:14).[76]

Overseer (*episkopoi)* or bishop is another word found in the New Testament related to church leadership. The noun form of this word comes from a word that means to watch or look over. The verb form means to look at, take care of, oversee, and care for.[77] David Mappes suggests Josephus used it to refer to one who oversees or administers the affairs of another and that its basic meaning "implies general or specific oversight by political, religious, communal, military or municipal individuals."[78] Further, he believes that "in church leadership it designates those who are recognized officials providing spiritual oversight to members entrusted to them."[79] It is found in Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7; and 1 Peter 2:25. In the first four of these references the word refers to local church leaders, while the reference in 1 Peter 2:25 refers to Jesus as the overseer of believers.[80]

It is interesting that the word "pastor" is only used once as a title for leadership (Eph. 4:11), but it is used numerous times to describe the activity of elders and overseers

---

[76] Ibid.

[77] Mappes, "The New Testament Elder," 163.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., 164.

[80] Ibid., 162. In these four references he believes the word is a technical title for a leader and not just a descriptive term of leadership function.

(John 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 9:7; 1 Pet. 5:2).[81] The basic meaning of the word is "to shepherd," and it speaks of the duty of the leader to "feed, guide and protect the sheep."[82]

In various passages (see Titus 1:5-7; 1 Tim. 3:1; 5:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3), Brown suggests these words are used interchangeably for each other, indicating that they all refer to the same leadership position, rather than three different ones.[83] David Mappes, looking at the same passages, agrees and says the words "refer to the same office and individuals who hold those offices."[84] In Acts 20, Paul summons the elders of the church and tells them the Holy Spirit has appointed them as overseers. Likewise in Titus 1, Paul is speaking to leaders he first calls 'elders' and refers to as 'overseers' a few verses later. Mark Johnson explains that all three terms define "but one man [*sic*] or one office" and that each of them defines a different aspect of the role.[85] He suggests that elder describes the maturity and dignity inherent in the role. Overseer describes the function of the elder, of one who gives "oversight of a local congregation" and pastor describes the style of that oversight as one who "leads and cares for the flock of God."[86]

Like so much concerning the details of the structure of the early church, the New Testament is vague about the exact nature and duties of this elder/overseer/pastor. As

---

[81] Ibid., 164. See also Brown, 335. Brown says, "the image of shepherd appears frequently for the presbyter-bishop . . . and so his supervising authority was like that of a shepherd over sheep, feeding, guiding, and protecting."

[82] Mappes, "The New Testament Elder," 167.

[83] Brown, 333.

[84] Mappes, "The New Testament Elder," 165.

[85] Glenn Johnson, *Marks of Great Churches: Defining the Church God Blesses* (Manila: Action Philippines, 1999), 63.

[86] Ibid.

Brown notes, the pastoral epistles are concerned with "only the qualifications, not the activities" of the leaders.[87] 1 Timothy 5:17 and Titus 1:9 indicate that teaching and protecting the church from false doctrine were part of their duties. Similar to Johnson, Mappes sees the duties of the elder reflected in the three-fold designation. "The office of elder involves the functions of shepherding, guiding, and teaching."[88]

It is important to note that these titles and descriptions also speak to the kind of authority these leaders carried in the early church. The titles of elder/overseer/pastor are as much a description of their function as they are titles of status or authority. Mappes writes, "The ministry of an overseer is at the same time an office to hold and a task to perform."[89] The New Testament does not make a strong distinction between title and role. Paul mingles both office and gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 where the title and role of apostle and prophet are "juxtaposed with the gifts of administration, teaching and others."[90] Hamilton writes:

> It has been discovered that, while the elders have definite authority, they exercise it by leading, not pushing the flock. They are caretakers and guardians, sensitive to every need of the body and willingly responding with effective help. Always alert to the forces that endanger the integrity of the church and its members, the ever-present elders stand qualified and ready to deal with these forces in the power of the Spirit. They are not absentee lord, but are shepherds actively working with the flock around them.[91]

---

[87] Brown, 335.

[88] Mappes, "The New Testament Elder," 169.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., 173.

[91] William B. Hamilton III, "An Investigation into the Primary Evidence Pertaining to the Function of Elders in the New Testament Church" (Masters Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 19.

The other leadership position seen in the New Testament is that of "deacon" or "servant" (*diakonos*). At its root the word means service, ministry. or mission. The personal noun form of the word is, therefore, translated as servant, minister, or deacons.[92] Precisely defining this term, as used by leadership in the New Testament church, is complicated because the word is used in both a general and technical manner. In a general sense, the word is applied to all Christians as they are called to serve Christ. It describes anything a Christian does for Christ. In this sense, the word does not refer to a specialized class of ministers but rather demonstrates how all Christians were charged with serving in ministry. Robinson writes, "Every Christian is called to *serve* Christ. He [*sic*] is in the ministry."[93] Fraser adds that the essential idea of "deaconing . . . is the ministry of servanthood which is to be carried out by every member of the kingdom of God."[94] In Acts 6, *diakonos* refers to the work of both the Apostles' service of the word and in the deacons' service of food distribution. Ogden writes, "Both are ministries without a qualitative distinction."[95] Elton Trueblood sums it up well: "The ordinary member believed that he [*sic*] was called to ministry quite literally as was the Apostle, for just as there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, there is one hope of your calling."[96]

---

[92] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 61.

[93] Robinson, 18.

[94] Richard Fraser, "Office of Deacon," *Presbyterion* 11, no. 1 (1985): 14.

[95] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 61.

[96] Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation*, 28.

The word is also used in a more technical sense, and "became in time the title of an office in the local church."[97] While it is unclear where the deacons of Acts 6 fit into the leadership structure, the rest of the New Testament suggests the office of deacon was a secondary level of leadership.[98] The deacons appeared to act as assistant or subordinate leader to the elders. Campbell writes, "In relation to those who assist, *diakonoi* are subordinate, but in relation to others they share in the authority of the one whose assistants they are."[99] The title servant is appropriate as deacons are those who serve both the people at large, and more specifically, the elders of a congregation. Fraser describes the nature of the office. "The office of deacon is an office of service, and is spiritual in nature . . . to help the flock of God to mature in its servanthood, particularly in reference to its public ministry. It is of the nature of the office to be of assistance to the elders and to the flock in general."[100]

The New Testament presents a church made up of a community of servants, who all see themselves as equal in terms of value and in terms of responsibility to serve. This community or body is then guided and equipped by a two-fold group of leaders broken

---

[97] Campbell, 132.

[98] See both Brown and Miller concerning the usage of *diakonos* in Acts 6. Brown notes the assumption that the deacons of Acts 6 are comparable to the deacons mentioned in the Pastorals is "erroneous." He suggests these were not a lesser office to Elder but were rather Hellenist elders. He writes, "They seem to have been the top level administrators for the Hellenist Christians, who not only supervised the distribution of common goods but also preached and taught" (as seen from Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 and Philip's activity in Acts 80). Brown, 326. Miller agrees, "There are also several good reasons for equating the seven of Acts with some of the Elders of Acts 11:30. Two of the seven, Stephen and Philip, have ministries that relate better to those of an elder than to those of a deacon." Miller: 324.

[99] Campbell, 134.

[100] Fraser, 19.

into the positions of bishop/overseer/pastor and deacon. This structure bears little resemblance to the standard organizational plans found in the church today. John Yoder asks if any of the New Testament literature make the assumptions found in modern church structures. He asks if there is any evidence for a structure with one particular office, in which there should only be one or a few individuals, for whom it provides a livelihood that is unique in character due to ordination, central to the definition of the church and the key to her functioning. In answer, he writes, "The answer from the biblical material is a resounding negation."[101] The question then is what principles can be derived from this earliest of church organizations that can be applied to the organization of the church in the emerging culture?

**Organizational Principles for the Church: Universal Ministry**

The clearest principle that arises from a study of the New Testament is that of a universal ministry. Universal ministry refers to the idea that the duties of the church, its ministries, are not limited to a paid or professional subset of Christians but are the duty and responsibility of all believers. Elton Trueblood provides a definition:

> All Christians must be in the ministry, whatever their occupations, because the non-witnessing follower of Christ is a contradiction in terms. If we take seriously Christ's first group order, the command to let our light shine, we dare not let the witness be limited to a small group of the professionally religious. Therefore the ministry of Christ must be universal. It must be universal in three specific ways. It must involve *all places;* it must involve *all times;* it must involve *all Christian persons*, male and female, lay and clerical, old and young. There is no possibility of a genuine renewal of the life of the Church in our time unless the principle of universal witness is accepted without reservation...the number one

[101] Yoder, 6.

> Christian task of our time is the enlargement and adequate training of our ministry, which, in principle, includes our total membership. This is a large order, and one which often seems discouraging in prospect, but we cannot settle for anything less and yet be loyal to the idea of Christ's revolutionary company.[102]

The principle of universal ministry is built on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.[103] This doctrine holds that "each member of the Christian community is authorized through Jesus Christ to exercise personally the priestly privilege of direct access to God."[104] This doctrine speaks to access to God and of a ministry on God's behalf. Gillespie writes, "Every member of the new covenant participates officially in its priesthood, enjoying both direct access to God through Christ and a mediating ministry before God in behalf of the world."[105] 1 Peter 2:9 captures the essence of the New Testament view of ministry: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (NIV). In this verse, Peter speaks not of a specialized priestly class but of a whole people called to a priesthood of God. Marjorie Warkentin speaks to this kind of language:

> It is simply staggering in view of the background of these New Testament writers, steeped as they were in the priestly system of the Old Testament, that never once do they use the term *hierus* [priest] of the Christian

---

[102] Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, 57. Italics his.

[103] "The New Testament doctrine of ministry rests therefore not on the clergy-laity distinction but on the twin and complementary pillars of the priesthood of all believers and the gifts of the Spirit." Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 95.

[104] Gillespie, 27.

[105] Ibid., 28. Robert Webber agrees. "The pre-Constantinian view of ministry, recovered by the Reformers but since lost in most Protestant churches, is the priesthood of all believers. Every man and woman is a minister." Webber, 120.

> minister. The Aaronic analogy for ministry lay obviously at hand. But they refused to use it. It is hard to overrate the significance of this point when they did use it of the whole Christian community.[106]

John Yoder describes the implications:

> The work of Christ is described in Hebrews as the abolition of the priesthood. The perfect high priest, fully obedient among His brethren, by sacrificing Himself, puts an end to the recurrent functions of all priesthood, and gives us all access into the holy place . . . thus Revelation 5 and 1 Peter 2 take up the mosaic phrase 'a kingdom of priests' to designate the *abolition* of the distinct priestly role.[107]

Robinson notes a similar broadening in the meaning of "calling" within the New Testament. He writes, "The New Testament is full of expressions referring to 'calling,' 'being called,' 'to be called,' and they always refer to *all* Christians and not to what we style 'ministers.'"[108] Ministry, or service, in the New Testament is not limited to one special class of Christians, nor is it limited to those who are in official positions of leadership. Rather, the entire body of Christ is called to the ministry or service of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers implies with it an office of all believers. Abraham Kuyper writes, "For this reason our fathers devoutly spoke of an *office of all believers.* In Christ's Church there are not merely a few officials and a mass of idle, unworthy subjects, but every believer has a calling, a task, a vital charge."[109]

---

[106] Quoted in Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 87.

[107] Yoder, 16. Italics his. See also Guelzo, 36. Also see Greg Ogden, "There is a radical reorientation in the New Testament. The office of the priest is eliminated as it pertains to a select group of people. This is based on the physical sacrifice of Christ, the ultimate high priest. Jesus fulfilled and completed the role of priest in his substitutionary death (see Heb. 7:27)." Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 87.

[108] Robinson, 19-20. Italics his.

[109] Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (Chatanooga, TN.: AMG Publishers, 2001), 203. Italics his. Robinson adds: "All were called to be 'ministers', that is, into the Christian 'ministry'. It was not something which applied only to apostles, bishops, presbyters, pastors,

At its most basic, the principle of universal ministry holds that the ministry of the church is the responsibility of all who belong to the church. Wayne Cordeiro expresses this well, "God's full time ministers are everywhere! We are all ambassadors. We are all ministers. Each one of us—not just pastors and evangelists—is called to represent him in the world."[110] Michael Slaughter adds, "The Christian movement is not based on a professional organizational model. God designed Christianity to be an organic movement of unpaid servants."[111] Another author reminds us again "of the New Testament's insistence that there is no such thing as a Christian without a ministry . . . ministry belongs to the whole people of God through their union with Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit."[112]

Ephesians 4:1-14 is an important passage when talking about universal ministry. In Ephesians 4:7-8 all Christians are given a gift to be used in serving others. This is not just delegation of some tasks to some people, but is Christ's way of working in the world. Yoder writes, "The work of Christ is characterized as consisting in distributing gifts to humankind . . . assigned to all by the one Lord who fills all, is thus itself an aspect of Christ's saving work and of His rule on high. It is not merely a way to be more efficient

---

prophets, evangelists or even deacons." Robinson, 18. Ogden writes, "Nowhere in the Bible can a priesthood within a priesthood be defended. The holy presence of Christ is in the whole body. Each one in whom Christ dwells is a channel through whom he mediates his presence. To lift up a few is to denigrate the whole. Each person bears a charism of God's action and all together make up the dwelling place of God." Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 79.

[110] Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 39.

[111] Slaughter and Bird, 149.

[112] Guelzo, 36.

in sharing the work."[113] Following this, in Ephesians 4:11, 12 Paul outlines the way the various gifts are to work together. Those in leadership are not called to do the entire ministry but to help in the sharing of the ministry among all. Campbell writes, "The concern of the paragraph . . . is not, of course, with church organization but with the growth of every member in Christ-likeness and the consequent unity of the whole Body. Every member has a part to play in bringing this about, for each has received a 'grace'".[114] Campbell points out that in the major passages discussing spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12, Eph. 4) the focus is not on outlining a ministry hierarchy but on how through the interplay of all the gifts the body will be built up. About the leaders he writes, "what is important about them is that they are those that bring God's word through which the saints will be equipped, the work of the ministry discharged and the body as a whole built up."[115]

Donald Bloesch provides a description of this universal ministry and its importance to the church today:

> We need to be reminded that every Christian as a priest and king is directed to some special calling and ministry within one ministry of Christ…it seems that every Christian is directed to a particular form of service within the one body, and this means that he will be endowed with particular gifts that will enable him to fulfill his calling. A church where the charismatic gifts in all their variety and wonder are not in evidence is something less than the church founded at Pentecost. A church where the priestly role is restricted to the office of the pastor or bishop is a church where the Spirit has been quenched and grieved. All believers are called to

---

[113] Yoder, 15.

[114] Campbell, 109.

[115] Ibid., 110.

> be priests and kings with Christ, and this means all are given the privilege of interceding and sacrificing for their brethren.[116]

Most modern structures hindered rather than freed this universal ministry. In the place of a mobilized and equipped body there exists today a large number of passive and uninvolved bodies. Elton Trueblood writes, "Perhaps the single greatest weakness of the contemporary Christian church is that millions of supposed members are not really involved at all and, what is worse, do not think it strange that they are not . . . most alleged Christians do not now understand that loyalty to Christ means sharing personally in His ministry, going or staying as the situation requires."[117] Greg Ogden shares, "I have come to the conclusion that the church has unwittingly adopted an institutional self-understanding that has led to a two people/two ministries structure . . . we have taken biblical words that apply to the whole people of God and through the lens of institution have restricted them to apply only to a select group of people, primarily the ordained clergy."[118] Perhaps the current cultural shift presents a window of opportunity to create new forms of organization that are dedicated to the principle of universal ministry. As the church works towards developing an organizational structure for the emerging culture it can seek to create a structure that allows all the members of the body to find and fulfill

---

[116] Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology: Life, Ministry and Hope*, vol. II. (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979), 109.

[117] Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, 38-39.

[118] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 57.

their unique service for Christ and where the total membership accepts the "responsibility of being official representatives of Jesus Christ in daily life."[119]

## Organizational Principles for the Church: Gift Based (Charismatic) Community

The reason that ministry or service can be given to all is because the all have been given the gifts necessary to carry out the work of the church. Ephesians 4:7 states: "To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (NIV). This verse and others (Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10) state that all believers are given a special grace-gift to enable them to serve others.[120] In Greek they are called "*charismata.*" "The term derives from the Greek word for grace, *charis*, and thereby signifies gifts that come from and reveal God's grace, God's unlimited and undeserved love."[121] The texts in Ephesians, Roman,s and 1 Corinthians all emphasize that these spiritual gifts are not restricted to the clergy or professional minister but are distributed throughout the body to all its members. Bloesch writes, "What is important to recognize is that all believers share in the ministry and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ through the charisms they have received."[122] This gifting, along with the body metaphor, reinforces the idea of universal ministry and places less emphasis on hierarchy or position. The two most significant texts

---

[119] Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, 39.

[120] Marva Dawn uses the term "grace-gifts," described as gifts "given to us by grace and serving as vehicles through which God's grace is poured out to others." Dawn, 112.

[121] Ibid., 93.

[122] Bloesch, 109.

dealing with spiritual gifts (Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12) are written to specifically counteract the notion that there is a hierarchy of value of spiritual gifts within the body. Greg Ogden states "Each one of us is given a ministry through the spiritual gifts we have been assigned. No gradation or hierarchy of value or importance is placed on the members of the body. That does not mean we are equally gifted, but it does mean we refuse to place degrees of status on the members of the body. For every part is needed in ministry if the life of Jesus is to be manifested on earth."[123] Another author adds that an "identifying feature of the charismata is their universal distribution . . . in the community as the body of Christ; there are no members without a charisma. Thus the division into those who serve and those who are served is ecclesiology unacceptable."[124]

This has led to the description of the church as a charismatic community. In this context, charismatic does not refer to churches that make wider use of sign gifts such as tongues, miracles, and healing. Charismatic, in this sense, refers to the idea that the New Testament church was structured based on the grace-gifts found within the body rather than on office or hierarchical positions. Karkainnen writes, "A good case can be made for the charismatic structure of the church on the basis of the New Testament data . . . one of the most striking features of Paul's understanding of the body of Christ is that each passage in the Pauline letters in which the concept is expounded at some length envisages it as a charismatic community."[125] Campbell agrees, "Christ is the head of the church and

---

[123] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 99-100.

[124] Karkkainen, 151. See also Yoder, 14-15.

[125] Karkkainen, 150.

his authority is recognized in the exercise of gifts of the Spirit. Everything rests on these *charismata*, which are the direct gift of Christ to his church."[126] Greg Ogden also suggests, "The church is fundamentally a charismatic community, for the *charismata* (grace-gifts) have been distributed and assigned to all in Christ."[127]

A charismatic view of the community has several key implications structure. First, it emphasizes the interdependence and mutuality of church members. All are dependent on the grace-gifts given by God to others. Second, a charismatic view recognizes the number of gifts is flexible and not fixed. Marva Dawn suggests that the different combinations of gifts listed in the key texts (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4 and 1 Pet. 4) are meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive and "by no means exhaust the various manifestations of God's power at work through individuals."[128] Third, it emphasizes that every member of the body should see themselves as an active member. In a charismatic community, "ministry should not and could not, by definition of 'body,' be limited to a few."[129] Fourth, the charismatic community displays a wide variety and diversity of gifts. Donald Bloesch writes that:

> The gifts of the Spirit are distributed to the whole community of believers, but not everyone receives the very same gift. The Spirit chooses to work through some members of the body of Christ in a different way than through others. The charisms are not uniform but multiform, and therefore

---

[126] Campbell, 7.

[127] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 100.

[128] Dawn, 94.

[129] Karkkainen, 151.

> there is a diversity in ministry even though there is a oneness in mission."[130]

John Yoder believes that the diversity of gifts found in the New Testament is not accidental but "theologically imperative."[131] He writes:

> The conclusion is inescapable that the multiplicity of ministries is not a mere *adiaphoron,* a happenstance of only superficial significance, but a specific work of grace and a standard for the church . . . the apostolic call is to each to be the most uniquely oneself. Not only should one not despise the other, not only should all work in unity like the organs of a healthy body, but each is invited to sharpen his or her distinctiveness (1 Pet. 4:10; Rom. 12:3, 6ff). Harmony and diversity are not in tension but complementary.[132]

Abraham Kuyper also notes the critical importance of this charismatic structure as he writes about the Body of Christ:

> Take, for example, the body. It must be protected against injury; blood must be carried to muscles and nerves; venous blood must be converted into arterial; the lungs must inhale fresh air, etc. All these activities are laid upon the various members of the body. Eye and ear keep watch; the heart propels the blood; the lungs supply the oxygen, etc. And this cannot change arbitrarily. The lungs cannot watch; the eye cannot supply oxygen; the skin cannot propel the blood. Hence, *this division of labor is neither arbitrary, by mutual consent, nor a matter of pleasure, but is divinely ordained, and this ordinance must not be ignored.* Hence the eye has the office and gift of watching over the body, the heart of circulating the blood; the lungs of supplying fresh air, etc.[133]

The organizational structure of the church must take its charismatic nature seriously. Greg Ogden writes. "[The] biblical emphasis is not on the 'omnicompetent'

---

[130] Bloesch, 108.

[131] Yoder, 14.

[132] Ibid., 17.

[133] Kuyper, 195. Italics mine.

pastor but a 'multigifted body'" and there "the emphasis in our churches must be on the gifted community . . . we are all channels through whom the Holy Spirit works to bring strengthening grace to others in the body so that we grow together in Christlikeness."[134]

Research has shown that a focus on spiritual gifts is of critical importance to church health. In his survey of over 1,000 churches worldwide, Christian Schwarz found that "none of the eight quality characteristics showed nearly as much influence on both personal and church life as 'gift oriented ministry' . . . the discovery and use of spiritual gifts is the only way to live out the Reformation watchword of the 'priesthood of all believers.'"[135] On the negative side, a neglect of gift based ministry can hurt the health of the church. Bill Easum states, "Running the church, instead of exercising their spiritual gifts, is the primary reason lay people never have enough time to minister to one another and the world."[136] Ultimately, the goal of structure is to assist the church in fulfilling its mission in the most effective way possible. To do that, structure must assist people in developing their gifts to be used for the greater health of the body of Christ. Christian Schwarz writes:

> The gift-oriented approach reflects the conviction that God sovereignly determines which Christians should best assume which ministries. The role of church leadership [and structure] is to help its members to identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries. When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, they generally function less in their own strength and more in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus ordinary people can accomplish the extraordinary![137]

---

[134] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 75.

[135] Schwarz, 24.

[136] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 65.

[137] Schwarz, 24.

**Organizational Principle for the Church: Ministry by Teams**

Although all ministry in the church is based on the spiritual gifts given to individual members of the body, this does not mean that ministry activity is intended to be an individual or solo event. The organic images of the church, the interdependence of its parts, and the variety of its gifts are intended to demonstrate that ministry happens when the different members of the body work together. The body works when its parts collaborate together. In the language of the twenty-first century, the body works when its parts work together as a team.

Leonard Sweet writes:

> The Christian tradition is team-work obsessed. The doctrine of creation trumpets a God who shares creative power with us, who insists we be co-conspirators in our own story, collaborators in our emergence . . . the very doctrine of the Trinity is based on a relational God living in community both within and without...A collaborative model is at the heart of Christian faith. Jesus himself was teamwork obsessed. He spent his entire ministry not founding local communities or growing a mega-following for himself, but building a handful of itinerant disciples in first-century Palestine into a great team that could create a culture of perichoretic love. He called out his disciples in many cases in teams. He sent out his disciples always in teams.[138]

The concept of teams may seem more suited to the corporate world of the twenty-first century; however, the only thing new about the concept is the terminology. As George Cladis says:

> The church has known the power of God working through collaborative groups long before the postmodern management and business world discovered the power of even secular teamwork. Yet . . . we let it slip

[138] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 191-192.

> away. We exchanged Paul's notion of the church as the body of Christ for a clergy-centered parish model of ministry that usurped the role of the laity.[139]

The New Testament has several examples of team-based ministry. At Antioch, in Acts 13 there is the ministry team of Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul. Paul often mentions his team members in many of his letters. Easum and Davis state, "Teams are biblical. . . . There were times Paul's teams changed as he mentored and released individuals to return to places he had already been. Paul was a team builder as he sought to build up the kingdom."[140]

As already noted above, even leadership in the New Testament was carried out in teams. David Mappes recognizes that references to leadership (elders/overseers/pastors) were most often in the plural. Speaking of 1 Timothy 5:17, Mappes suggests, "Those who labor in preaching and teaching are plural. There are several teaching elders, not just one."[141] Greg Ogden agrees, "Biblical ministry is predicated on plural, not solo, leadership. One-person ministry violates the body concept because it views the pastor as the solitary leader. In the Bible, elders in the local church are always referred to in the plural, with the exception of reference to the function and qualifications of a bishop (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7)."[142]

---

[139] Cladis, 91.

[140] Easum and Travis, *Beyond the Box*, 28.

[141] Mappes, "The New Testament Elder," 173.

[142] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 227.

In a church described by organic imagery, built around interdependent relationships, living out its ministry in diverse forms and led by groups of leaders, a team orientation must become part of the organizing structure. Sue Mallory states it well:

> You will not have a local church based on the biblical model without some kind of team mindset. The word *equipping* immediately assumes a team model—those who do the equipping and those are being equipped. One group needs the other. They form a team. Once you begin to look in Scripture for the guidelines and images of what Christ has in mind for his body, you will be struck by how often the pictures are corporate, not individual. Individuals have certain significant roles in the body, but no individual is the body. When we are in Christ," as the Bible so often expresses it, we are *in* with a whole lot of other folk! We are meant to be a team.[143]

**Organizational Principle for the Church: Empowering Leadership**

It may seem paradoxical, but because the church's ministry is made up of a gifted laity working in multiple and diverse ways, leadership is of vital importance. But this organic body requires a specific kind of leadership. The church requires servant leaders who are intent not on doing ministry but equipping the gifted to do theirs. The role of leadership is to "equip and deploy God's people in ministry . . . to help men and women practice any ministry to which they are called."[144] Elton Trueblood explains:

> Universal ministry is a great idea, one of the major ideas of the New Testament, but the hard truth is that it does not come to flower except as it is nourished deliberately. Indeed the paradox is that the nourishment of the lay or universal ministry is the *chief reason* for the development of a special or partially separated and professionalized ministry . . . the only way in which this can be done is by the education of a gifted few, whose chief vocation is the liberation of the ministerial and witnessing power of

---

[143] Mallory, 22.

[144] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 97.

> the many. The major ministry of the pastors and teachers as made clear in Ephesians 4:12 is the equipping ministry.[145]

Stevens gives us a definition of leadership for the church. "Christian leadership is the God-given ability to influence others so that believers will trust and respond to the Head of the church for themselves, in order to accomplish the Lord's purposes for God's people in the world."[146] Leadership is often viewed in terms of power, authority, and the ability to influence people to support the leader's cause. The focus of church leadership is almost completely the opposite. It is not about ruling, directing, or managing for the leader's benefit, but serving those in the body so they can accomplish God's work. "The older idea was that the lay members were the pastor's helpers, but the new and vital idea is that the pastor is the helper of the ordinary lay members in the performance of their daily ministry in the midst of secular life."[147] Christian Schwarz states that leaders "concentrate on empowering other Christians for ministry. They do not use lay workers as 'helpers' in attaining their own goals and fulfilling their own visions. Rather, they invert the pyramid of authority so that the leader assists Christians to attain the spiritual potential God has for them. These pastors equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that God wants for them to be."[148]

---

[145] Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, 63-64. Italics his. Robinson also looking at Ephesians 4:12 says "The official minister's chief job is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry." Robinson, 21.

[146] R. Paul Stevens and Phil Collins, *The Equipping Pastor a Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership* (New York: The Alban Institute, 1993), 109.

[147] Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, 63. See also Stevens and Collins, 2. He writes that "Pastors are not called to get people to assist them with their ministry; rather, that pastors are called to assist the people, the laity, with their ministry both in the church and in the world."

[148] Schwarz, 22.

The word "equip" in Ephesians 4:12 derives from a word *katartizo,* which means to mend, perfect, or repair. It does not necessarily imply the fixing of something damaged, but can speak of moving something or someone towards perfection.[149] It is the word used in Matthew 4:21 to refer to the "repairing of nets." When referring to people, Leonard Sweet suggests that it means "to make someone what they ought to be. Equip doesn't mean to fix the nets yourself, but to enlist and empower others to do what God is calling them to do"[150] Greg Ogden suggests the word is used for three main functions. It can mean "to mend/restore,", "establish/lay foundations," and "train."[151] Thus, "an equipping ministry is one that assists each member of the body of Christ to function in accord with his or her God-given assigned function."[152]

Ogden goes on to suggest that Jesus used this style of leadership. "Jesus' model teaches pastors that one essential way to carry out ministry is to invest in a few who in turn can be equipped to invest in others."[153] John Howard Yoder agrees, but suggests the seeds of this serving leadership lie even further back in the biblical record. He writes:

> The beginning of the defining of churchly roles as service was the ancient Near Eastern usage according to which the human king was the servant of the divine king. The "Suffering Servant Songs" of Isaiah 42-53 reflect this usage, but transform it by applying it to the human servant's fate of defeat and suffering. . . . It is this redefinition of Jesus' role as serving not only God but his disciples, whom he now calls "friends" and "brothers," which

---

[149] W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1996, compact disc.

[150] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 187.

[151] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 134-136.

[152] Ibid., 152.

[153] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 163.

> Jesus gives the disciples as model for their own roles, when they are still thinking about "which of them would be greatest." . . . thus redefining the role of the Anointed he redefines every role in the community, that is, he redefines the very meaning of role.[154]

This reinforces the idea that biblical leadership is about serving or giving of oneself for the betterment of others. Ogden writes, "The raison d'etre of pastors is to die to self so that members of the body can come alive to their ministry. So the rediscovered role of pastors in our day is not to do ministry for those who are passive recipients of their care, but to empower the body through the avenues of the pastors' individual gifts and to call forth every person's potential for ministry."[155] Southern and Norton state, "True leadership, then, is sharing of oneself. It means giving of one's time, talent, and energy in helping people to a better life. It's not about recognition or payment . . . it's an act of total unselfishness."[156] Greg Ogden outlines how empowering leadership is different from common ideas about leadership and authority. First, empowering leadership holds that the people in the highest positions of authority have the greatest obligation to serve. Second, leadership is rooted in relationships not coercion. Motivation is generated by modeling and intimacy, not the force of fear of judgment. Third, leadership seeks to support not control others. Hierarchical leaders often fear those who might surpass them and so seek to suppress those who might outshine them. An empowering leader is able to come alongside others to help them realize their potential even if that means the leader must give way to the one being led. Fourth, empowering

---

[154] Yoder, 67.

[155] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 16.

[156] Southern and Norton, 135.

leaders shine the spotlight of recognition on those with whom they share leadership. They find satisfaction in the growth and accomplishments of colleagues. Fifth, empowering leaders are wary of titles and trappings of status. They attempt to remove the hierarchical status language of senior, associate, and assistant. Instead, they prefer functional language that simply describes what the one does. Sixth, empowering leaders know their authority is recognized on the basis of their character in Christ, not on the position or office that they hold.[157]

Empowering leadership, because it is focused on investing in others, has tremendous potential for growth. Instead of concentrating on administration and details, empowering leaders concentrate on "discerning individual 'charisms'" that can be "equipped and released to build up the whole body of Christ."[158] Christian Schwarz writes:

> Leaders who realize their own empowerment by empowering others experience how the 'all-by-itself' principle contributes to growth. Rather than handling the bulk of church responsibilities on their own, they invest the majority of their time in discipleship, delegation, and multiplication. Thus, the energy they expend can be multiplied indefinitely. This is how spiritual 'self-organization' occurs. God's energy, not human effort and pressure, is released to set the church in motion.[159]

The church in the emerging culture would benefit from this kind of leadership. Greg Ogden writes, "I believe we need to shift from the *teacher/caregiver* to an *equipping leader* model of pastor. Whereas the teacher/caregiver inadvertently tended to

---

[157] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 176-177.

[158] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 31.

[159] Schwarz, 23.

foster dependency of the congregation on the pastor, the equipping leader model assists the people of God to grow into full adulthood as disciples and ministers of Jesus Christ."[160] He goes on to suggest the metaphor of player-coach best captures the idea of the empowering leader. He writes, "An equipping leader is fundamentally a player-coach. A coach has a game plan, a vision of how the game can be played. He or she also is vitally concerned that all the players on the team are valued for their contribution and growing in their giftedness so that they can make the maximum contribution to the whole team."[161] David Hopkins agrees, "If the term were available to the ancient Greek language, I do not doubt that New Testament writers would gladly compare a pastor's role to that of a coach. Coaches challenge their athletes. They cheer them on (Hebrews 12). They know their athletes better than anyone. . . . Pastors should challenge and motivate people in such a way that each individual takes ownership of the Church."[162]

The structure of the church in the emerging culture must allow for these organizational principles. It must allow for multiplicity in ministry, plurality of leadership, diversity of gifts and a universal form of ministry. These are the "constants" of New Testament ministry.[163] The church, as the body of Christ, needs to find a

---

[160] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 12.

[161] Ibid., 165.

[162] David Hopkins, "Superman Is Dead: No More 'Hero-for-Hire' Clergy," *Next Wave*, April 1999, http://www.next-wave.org/apr99/superman.htm (accessed June 23 2004).

[163] Yoder, 90-91.

structure that will be "highly relational, will provide context for growth and discipleship, and will be adaptable to different contexts and changing circumstances."[164]

But why is such organizational change necessary? How did these organizational principles get lost? The next chapter will examine briefly the various forces that shaped overall church organization throughout its history to demonstrate that the church exists in a constant tension between the forces of cultural institution and spiritual liberation.

---

[164] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 40.

# CHAPTER 4

# FORMAL VERSUS INFORMAL SERVICE: MINISTRY STRUCTURE IN CHURCH HISTORY

## Renewal Movements and Church Structure

The two thousand year history of the Christian church is marked by many periods of renewal, revival, and reform.[1] The causes of these various renewal movements are often complex, arising from cultural, historical, and theological concerns.[2] Many of these renewal movements also highlight tensions regarding how the church is structured. Snyder and Runyon write, "Much can be learned from the ways in which God's Spirit has repeatedly renewed the church throughout history. Renewal movements offer helpful material for church structure."[3] These renewal movements shed light on the tension within the church between instituionalism and gift-based ministry. Renewal movements often involve a change in the relationship between the clergy and laity. John Howard Yoder writes, "In most forms of dissent and reform since the Middle Ages, some element of criticism of the restriction of ministry has been involved."[4]

This chapter will examine several of the key renewal movements in the history of the Protestant church to examine how these movements changed or attempted to change

---

[1] While some scholars make distinctions between revival, renewal and reform movements, for the purposes of this chapter, all three words will be used interchangeably.

[2] See for example Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN.: Kingswood Books, 1994).

[3] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 80.

[4] Yoder, 37.

the role of laity within the organizational structure of the local church. The chapter begins by exploring how renewal movements expose the tension between formal and informal ministry within the church. This tension is illusrated by describing how the role of the clergy and laity evolved in the early church and into the Patristic age. After briefly examining the Montanist controversy, the chapter will focus on the renewal movements of Europe (Reformation, Pietism, Moravianism, and the Welsh Revival) and North America (Methodism, the Great Awakening, Pentecostalism) to see how these affected the organizational structure of the church. Following this some attention will be applied to the movement to which Grace Church belongs, the Fundamentalist/Evangelical movement.

**Renewal Movements and The Laity**

Renewal movements occur for many reasons but often they also focus on the ministry structure of the church. Over time there is a tendency for ministry structure to become formal and institutional in character and many renewal movement arise to challenge this pattern and its effects on the church as a whole. As institutionalism begins to take over, the church finds it difficult to stay focused on its purpose and mission. Instead the needs of the institution, and the clerical class it supports, begin to take primacy over spiritual needs. McDow and Reid describe what happens:

> The church becomes spiritually impotent as it adapts its standards in order to be compatible to the world's standards. In these instances, worship services lose their power, Christians lose their vision and spiritual inertia weaves its ways into the very existence of the church. Changes within the church become more difficult. Church programs become the purpose of her existence as agendas consume time, talents, financial resources and energies of the people. In this spiritual condition, a maintenance ministry

> syndrome becomes the unwritten purpose statement of the church. The church tends to drift with the tides of society and the fads of human ingenuity. Indeed, the church becomes the institution to be served instead of God's institution to serve.[5]

These conditions create a ripe ground for renewal and revival. Donald Bloesch writes, "A church where the priestly role is restricted to the office of the pastor or bishop is a church where the Spirit has been quenched and grieved."[6] While renewal and revival often present direct challenges on a theological front they often also put tremendous pressure on the organizational form of the church. In many occasions this pressure leads to the creation of new organizational forms because "institutional forms seem inadequate to people in revival, and new denominations are often birthed.".[7] Stackhouse adds, "The history of R/R shows that movements intent on bringing new life to a group—even a group with a heritage of R/R—often prompt schism instead. The new wine splits the old wineskins, and new wineskins must develop."[8]

These pressures develop for two main reasons. First, whether or not the doctrine of the priesthood of believers is specifically addressed or not, renewal movements often have laity involved at a much deeper level than the norm at the period of time they occur. Riss writes, "Women and lay people have found a greater place for leadership during

---

[5] Malcolm McDow and Alvin L. Reid, *Firefall: How God Has Shaped History through Revivals* (Nashville, TN.: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997).

[6] Bloesch, 109.

[7] Richard M. Riss, *A Survey of 20th Century Revival Movements in North America* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 6.

[8] Stackhouse, "Revival and Renewal - We All Want It Don't We?" 128.

times of revival than at other times in the history of the church."[9] Second, most renewal movements are based upon small groups of lay people meeting together for Bible study, prayer and sharing outside the formal activities of the local church. Snyder writes, "The emphasis and practice of some form of 'more intimate fellowship' for prayer, Bible study, and personal sharing, and the practical expression (not always articulated) of the priesthood of believers through ecclesiastically unordained or 'lay' leadership were fundamental to many of the major revival movements."[10] In his review of the major revivals in Protestant Christianity Earle E. Cairns writes:

> The laity played an important part in revival of all these eras. Howel Harris, H. N. Hague, and Dwight L. Moody were laymen. John Wesley, Theodor Frelinghuysen, and Hauge used lay preachers to help carry their work. The laity in the Clapham Sect in England sponsored many voluntary missionary, Bible, and reforming societies. Wilberforce and Buxton carried on anti-slavery activity as laymen. Their helpers, Sharp, Macaulay, and Clarkson, were laymen. Hannah Ball, Hannah More, and Robert Raikes, famous in Sunday school work, were lay people.[11]

These changes did not go unchallenged by the existing church order at the time of the renewal or revival movement. The creation of small groups, and the use of laity were often seen as a serious threat by the existing church structure. Snyder writes

> The formation of intimate renewal communities within the larger church . . . raises fundamental questions of ecclesiology. It is usually seen as implying a negative judgment on the spirituality and sometimes the legitimacy of the larger church community structure. Therefore tension and controversy often arise precisely over this issue. And since such renewal communities or subcommittees often become the context for the

---

[9] Riss, 6.

[10] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 33.

[11] Earle E. Cairns, *An Endless Line of Splendor: Revivals and Their Leaders from the Great Awakening to the Present.* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1986), 235.

emergence of new, unauthorized leadership, the question of unordained or "lay" leaders is a closely related issue.[12]

Leaders of renewal movements did not intend to create schism from the existing church structure but almost invariably, due to the conflict and tension, they found their movements breaking away to form new sects and denominations, with corresponding new organizational structure.[13] This pattern of increasing formalism sparking renewal can be seen even in the Early church and in the Montanist controversy.

**Institutionalism in the Early Church**

As the church moved into its second century of life, it began to move away from its organic nature and become more institutional in nature. Over time universal ministry was gradually replaced by a "creeping ritualism and formalism" where the "dominance of spirit (*charisma*), in early Catholicism was transferred to the office of the hierarchy."[14] As the church moved towards a more structured and formal organization, it's very character and nature began to change. Donald Bloesch writes, "Gifts that are not used will atrophy, and this is what happened when sacerdotalism replaced the priesthood of all believers, and formalism usurped the charismatic fellowship of love (*koinonia*) that characterized New Testament Christianity at its best."[15] This meant that the "flexible, more or less fluid New Testament pattern of team eldership evolved in many places over

---

[12] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 33.

[13] Ibid., 32. He writes, "Pietism, Moravianism, and Methodism were movements within large established communions. These movements and their principal leaders . . . did not intend to start new sects, but to revitalize the established church. Yet they touched off dynamics which either resulted in or threatened to produce separate denomination."

[14] Bloesch, 123.

[15] Ibid., 109.

the first two centuries into a three part hierarchy of bishop, presbyter-priest, and deacon."[16]

This gradual shift towards institutionalism is evident when comparing the writings of some of the earliest church fathers with those who followed after them. The emphasis on universal and gift-based ministry can be seen in the writings of authors such as Justyn Martyr and Irenaeus. Faivre points out that "from the first New Testament texts until Irenaeus' treatise *Against Heresies*, that is, from 40-180 A.D., the word 'lay' occurred only once. . . . This means that there was more than a century and half of Christianity without 'laity'".[17] Regarding Justyn Martyr, Faivre writes:

> For Justin, there was no division between Christians, no antinomy between clergy and laity and not even a difference between the priest and the Christian. . . . Justin's real originality is to be found in the radical nature of this affirmation that all Christians are priests. In the writings of this master, the idea of priesthood is always applied exclusively to Christians as a whole and never to one particular type of minister. Neither in the *Dialogue* nor in the two *Apologies* is there any reference to a ministerial priesthood superimposed on or added to the universal priesthood of all Christians.[18]

Similarly, Irenaeus does not speak of any priestly class or special ministers over the church. Faivre writes, "Despite the very high status that he gives to the notion of the spiritual disciple, Irenaeus seems to reject the idea of distinguishing between Christians.

---

[16] Howard A. Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Academic Books, 1989), 18.

[17] Faivre, 28.

[18] Ibid., 31.

He does not recognize the terms 'clergy' and 'laity' and gives all the disciples priestly rank."[19]

This situation did not last long. Faivre suggests that two forces began to push the church towards a divide between laity and clergy. The first was the influence of Gnostic tendencies to have a normal and superior order of disciples. The second was the increasing need to protect the church from heretical influences.[20] The seeds were laid even in the thoughts of Irenaeus who thought the church could be protected from heretics by believers being "at one with good presbyters, who were responsible for a correct interpretation of the scriptures, and in whom the succession from the apostles and the charisms of truth were to be found."[21] The result was that presbyters became the masters for Christ's disciples. The problem was they "were soon to become the clergy."[22]

The "first hint of a professional ministry that became synonymous with the ministry of the church occurred in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch (between A.D. 98 and 117)."[23] Campbell notes, "Ignatius repeatedly calls for obedience to the overseer, the elders, and the deacons, yet makes clear the overseer's supremacy."[24] The movement towards institutionalism can also be seen in how later writers were forced to defend the earlier ideas of ministry. As the hierarchical institution developed writers such as

---

[19] Ibid., 36-37.

[20] Ibid., 40.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 44.

[23] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 89.

[24] Campbell, 218.

Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen felt the need to resist this movement. Faivre writes, "Both Clement of Alexandria and Origen felt the need to assess and to define the place of the clergy, which was increasing in numbers and importance in the spiritual world as they understood it."[25] Throughout their writings "they continued to give precedence to the spiritual over the institutional . . . the higher they raised their ideal of spiritual priesthood, the more circumspect they became with regard to the hierarchy that was increasing in numbers and importance."[26] In the end, their efforts failed to stem the tide of increasing formalism. Their efforts to preserve the early elements of the church "did not stand in the way either of the development of a clergy or of the appearance of a Christian laity."[27]

This move can also be traced in the writings of Tertullian. In his writings can be found the recognition of a distinction between the clergy and laity. Campbell writes, "The distinctions between different ranks of minister are clearly more pronounced. He can call the bishop *summus sacerdos*; he can speak of presbyters and deacons as being in the next place and only able to baptize with the bishop's authority; and he can speak of laymen who baptize as (legitimately) exercising powers that belong to their superiors."[28] At this early stage, Tertullian saw the differences between clergy and laity as more of a difference in function rather than equality or value. Even though the groups were distinct

---

[25] Faivre, 44.

[26] Ibid., 44-45.

[27] Ibid., 45.

[28] Campbell, 233.

Tertullian saw them as being on the same level. Faivre writes, "The constitution of a special 'order' preparing for entry into the clergy was for him quite unthinkable, because such an order would form a barrier between the clergy and the laity. Lay people claimed a priestly dignity equal to that of priests. Because they had the same dignity as priests, they also had identical duties. The hierarchy appeared only as an expression of the dignity and duties of the whole Christian people."[29] Faivre quotes Tertullian, "'lay people are priests according to the will of God . . . [and] . . . fully constitute the church. . . . Where there is no bench of the ecclesiastical order . . . you, layman, offer and baptize and you are your own priest. In other words, where there are three persons, though they are laymen, there is the church.'"[30]

As the church grew larger and more complex, this gap between laity and clergy began to take on more significance. Faivre quotes the writings of Origen, "The frontier between clergy and laity began to close and the inequality also began to enter the way of life of the Christian people and even to penetrate their attitudes."[31] Origin was conscious of the high dignity of the clergy and refused to put the laity on an equal fitting with the clergy. Faivre writes, "In his view, there was a procession in the demand to be perfect from layman to deacon, presbyter and bishop. This hierarchical scale had to be expressed by progressive stages in the penitential discipline."[32] In Origen, the laity may still form

---

[29] Faivre, 46.

[30] Ibid., 47.

[31] Ibid., 71.

[32] Ibid., 60.

part of the people of God but they were starting to be seen as decidedly inferior to the clergy.

The result was that at the beginning of the third century the division into clergy and laity was well underway. Faivre writes:

> The term 'lay' was used to describe men . . . who belonged to the church, but were not bishops, presbyters, or deacons, or who were not, in a more general way, members of the clergy. . . . From this period onward, the layman's function was to release the priest and Levite from all his material concerns, thus enabling him to devote himself exclusively to the service of the altar, a task that was necessary for everyone's salvation. It is here that we can find the true and concrete foundation for the distinction that came to be made between the laity and the clergy.[33]

Donald Bloesch describes the process:

> While New Testament Christianity was characterized by a dominance of spirit (charisma), in early Catholicism charisma was transferred to the office of the hierarchy. Then later we see the extension and transfer of charisma from office to thing (sacrament). Whereas in the New Testament church the Spirit was a moving reality in the life and experience of believers, it finally became objectified in the sacraments.[34]

This institutionalism, however, was not left unchallenged. Throughout the history of the church renewal and reform efforts would call this restriction of ministry into question, beginning with the Montanist conterversey.

**Montanist Controversy**

As the church moved away from its initial freedom to take on more institutional forms the Montanists reacted in an attempt to regain some of the freedom to exercise the

---

[33] Ibid., 69.

[34] Bloesch, 123.

gifts of the Spirit.[35] The Montanists, much like their later renewal cousins, sought to remodel the church back to the purpose and structure of the first century church. Snyder writes, "The new movement soon organized itself as a church with alternate forms of leadership. It formed close-knit communities of believers modeled, they thought, on the first Christian community in Jerusalem."[36] While larger than just structural issues, "Montanism, in fact, became the battleground and rallying point for the church's struggle between institution and charisma, between hierarchical authority and prophetic inspiration, and between strict discipleship and open inclusiveness."[37] Ironically, because of the extreme form this movement took it actually "pushed the church further toward institutionalism, the bureaucratization of the charismatic power, and a clergy-dominated church."[38] Despite numerous renewal and monastic movements, this situation of a clergy-dominated, hierarchical church remained unchanged for centuries until Martin Luther began the Reformation.[39] His initial efforts laid the foundation for later renewal movements to also challenge the hierarchical nature of the church. The chapter will start by examining the role of the Reformers, and then briefly review later renewal movements that arose in Europe before reviewing the renewal movements of North America.

---

[35] Bloesch, 109.

[36] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 20. Most renewal movements also make this "back to Jerusalem" claim.

[37] Ibid., 28. Snyder also says, "The New Prophecy was a reaction to this hardening of leadership categories and to the development of the concept of 'office' in the church."Ibid., 18.

[38] Ibid., 23.

[39] It has been argued that many of the monastic orders fulfilled the same function within the Catholic Church that the later Renewal movements did in the Protestant church. However, for the purposes of this project, attention is focused on the impact renewal movements had on the Protestant church.

## The Reformation

The advent of the Reformation, with its direct challenge of the Roman Catholic institutional church and its subsequent breaking away from that body, held real potential for bringing new life to the idea of the priesthood of all believers and a fresh start to ministry structures. Martin Luther saw a hint of the future when in his preface to *The German Mass* he suggested that the church could be transformed through the idea of *ecclesiolae in ecclesia.* This idea suggested that little micro-churches consisting of groups of seeking lay people could be formed within the larger institutional church. These groups would meet for prayer and instruction in homes and could lead to renewal working its way through the larger church.[40] Unfortunately, Luther never followed through on this idea and it was left to later renewal movements such as Pietism, the Moravians, and the Methodists to implement.

It seems that Martin Luther and the Reformation in general struggled to join the idea of an organic, community church with their understanding of an institutional church. This struggle led to the Reformation talking about the priesthood of all believers but unable to enact it in any practical terms. The Reformation set the theological stage for a renewal in lay ministry by rehabilitating "the New Testament usage of the term 'priest' as referring not to the individual ordained persons . . . but to the whole people of God."[41] Karkkainen adds that the Reformers abolished "the differences between ordained and

---

[40] Lovelace, 165.

[41] Karkkainen, 146.

non-ordained in the sense of these two groups differing from each other ontologically" and they "sought to legitimize the use of ordained ministry in a way that should not—at least in principle—lessen the importance of the rest of the people of God."[42] But this theological foundation failed to impact the hierarchical nature of the church because the Reformers maintained their institutional definition of the church. Ogden writes, "The Reformation was never fully able to realize the fullness of the priesthood of all believers because it attempted to wed this organismic doctrine to an institutional definition of the church."[43] He describes what happened this way:

> Because the essential nature of the church in actuality was empowered by its top down leadership, a priesthood within a priesthood was the outcome. Even Luther seemed to affirm the priesthood of all believers at one moment and then take it away the next. . . . As long as leadership is conceived in mediatorial and representative terms . . . then the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is undermined. It was affirmed in theory and denied in practice.[44]

Luther opened the door to more universal ministry through his belief in the priesthood of all believers. Ogden writes, "According to the universal doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, as articulated by Luther, every Christian should be a minister of the Word of God. Luther's conviction that every believer in the gospel is by nature a priest, a mediator, and intercessor between God and man had revolutionary potential for the conception of ministry."[45] Unfortunately this potential was not realized due to

---

[42] Ibid., 147.

[43] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 52.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 50.

Luther's institutional definition of the church. Karkkainen writes, "Due to historical reasons, Luther's view of the church still manifested hierarchical notions even if his theology did not necessarily lead to a hierarchical view."[46]

Calvin also tried to merge an organic understanding of church with an institutional one. In the end, like Luther, Calvin did little to change the clergy-driven, top-down institutional structure of the church. In his *Ecclesiastical Ordinance* Calvin writes, "There are four orders of offices that our Lord instituted for the government of his church: first, the pastors, then the teachers, after them the elders, and fourthly the deacons. Therefore if one would have the church well ordered and maintained in its entirety, we must observe that form of rule."[47] In the Reformed churches "it is the minister or pastor who has been given the responsibility to preserve the church's doctrine and proper ordering of its sacramental life. . . . So the church is defined by a select group of its leaders who have the role of carrying out the essence of the church."[48] Ogden again summarizes the eventual result:

> By conceiving these offices as sacred law instituted by Christ, Calvin made this order of the church rigid and transferable. This is to say that even though the liberating doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was rediscovered and its radical implications at times clearly seen, yet the institutional definition of the church and subsequent obsession with proper church order blurred the vision and its expression.[49]

---

[46] Karkkainen, 147.

[47] Quoted in Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 52.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

This meant that although the Reformers brought great change to many aspects of Christian life, it did little to empower the laity or to challenge the institutional framework of the church.[50] It would be left to other renewal movements to try and bring the doctrine of the priesthood of believers to life. The first such movement, Pietism arose in seventeenth century Germany.

**Pietism**

The theological foundation laid by the Reformers found new life in the renewal movement of Pietism. Bloesch writes, "Whereas this doctrine received theoretical recognition from Luther and his colleagues, the Pietists gave it tangible expression. Indeed, one of their salient emphases was the priesthood of all believers over the exclusive priesthood of the clergy."[51] In the seventeenth century, Philipp Jakob Spener began to see that the domination of the church by the two centers of power of clergy and civil authority had led to a largely dormant and powerless laity.[52] He believed that if the church was going to be renewed the change would need to come from the laity. In his 1687 sermon on Matthew 22 entitled "Of the Christian Church," Spener talked of the real community of faith being the people rather than institution. He used strongly organic images, such as community, body, and wife. In his sermon he stated that the inner church consists of:

---

[50] A major exception to this would be among the Radical Reformation of the Anabaptist movement and its later descendants such as the Mennonites.

[51] Bloesch, 114.

[52] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 81.

> The righteous believers who have the true, divine, living faith and therefore find themselves not only in the outer assembly, and confess themselves to Christ, but who through such faith in him, cleave to the true head, and out of him, as the branches out of the vine (John 15:4, 5) receive living sap and spirit, and bring forth fruit of the same. Thus we can imagine "the entire outer Christian church as a tree which has dry and green branches."[53]

With this kind of thinking, Spener "takes orthodox understanding of the church and infuses it with new life by de-emphasizing the church's institutional side and stressing her essential character as a people, community and body."[54]

Spener, with his stress on a spiritual priesthood, was "recasting ecclesiology in more vital, less institutional terms" and represents a "paradigm shift" towards a "more charismatic" structure stressing "koinonia, mutual edification and discipline."[55]

Unlike the Reformers, Spener was able to put his ideas of lay ministry into practical reality. Because of his view that every Christian should be given the privilege of teaching, exhorting, and converting others, Spener formed special assemblies of laypeople who would come together for the purpose of mutual consolation and edification.[56] In 1666, Spener began the *Collegia Pietatis*, or "exercises of piety," grounded in a firm belief in the "universal spiritual priesthood."[57] These meetings touched a hunger in the spiritual life of people and soon multiplied across the city.[58]

---

[53] "Of the Christian Church" quoted in ibid., 91.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 98.

[56] Bloesch, 114-115.

[57] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 99.

[58] McDow and Reid, 176.

Spener spoke about these groups in his *Pia Desideria* and hoped they would reintroduce the ancient and apostolic kind of church.[59] The collegia allowed for the development of both the theoretical and practical meaning of the priesthood of all believers and gave a way for ordinary believers to find a place for leadership in the church. Thus the "matrix of the *ecclessiola* became the source for the actual, practical expansion of Christian ministry beyond the clergy" and the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers given "concrete expression beyond mere theory."[60]

Spener was concerned with matters that, if translated into today's terminology, have a remarkably familiar ring. His thoughts on discipleship, lay ministry, the use of elders, cell groups, and equipping believers could be lifted from any number of contemporary works. In Spener's day, however, these views were considered radical and potentially subversive.[61] Like many renewal leaders Spener did not seek conflict with the institutional church. Rather he adopted the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* idea found in some of Luther's writings. This is clear from his writing in *Spiritual Priesthood*:

> It cannot be wrong if several good friends sometimes meet by appointment to go over a sermon together and recall what they heard, to read in the Scriptures, and to confer in the fear of the Lord how they may put into practice what they read. Only the gatherings should not be large, so as not to have the appearance of a separation from a public assembly. Nor should they, by reason of them, neglect the public worship or condemn it, or disdain the ordained ministers.[62]

---

[59] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 99.

[60] Ibid., 109.

[61] Ibid., 76.

[62] From Spener's *Spiritual Priesthood* quoted in ibid., 99.

When faced with criticism that he was encouraging separatism Spener moved these groups into church buildings. But "it is clear that the change in size and place produced a change in the internal dynamics of the collegia with the loss of intimacy and spontaneity which are part of the peculiar dynamic of a cell group or house fellowship."[63]

Another Pietist leader, Franke, attempted to build on this by developing the *Collegium Philobilicum,* a small group similar in form to the *Collegia Pietatis.* It's rapid success and spread of these groups aroused opposition from University administration. Franke then left Leipzeg and went to Erfurt and tried to develop small groups there. Once again, as the groups grew, they encountered opposition and Franke was given forty-eight hours to get out of Erfurt.[64]

In the struggle between institutional and organic view of the life of the church, first seen in the Montanist controversy, once again the strength of the institutional authorities forced the laity into the background. Because of this, German Pietism was not able to significantly reshape the organizational structure of the church. However, the ideas developed by Spener would be picked up by those whom came after, first by Count Zinzendorf in Moravia and from there would pass on to John Wesley.

## Moravianism

In the religious community that began forming on his estate in Moravia, Count Zinzendorf, being free from direct clerical oversight, was able to develop the idea of lay

---

[63] Ibid., 107.

[64] McDow and Reid, 177.

groups further than those in the Pietist movement. Lovelace writes, "The most deliberate and successful use of the small group principle in history, however, was the band system of Count Zinzendorf. The microcommunity of Herrnhut . . . was further subdivided into group meetings for sharing, mutual correction and confession and prayer."[65] In Zinzendorf's organization of Herrnhut, two emphases were important: the need for structure in order to build and sustain community and the need for flexibility in order to prevent structures from leading to "institutionalism and dead orthodoxy."[66] Zinzendorf drew his imagery of the church from 1 Corinthians 12. He believed that laying ministry all on one person was a bad idea, and that it "no more needs proof, than we need to demonstrate that the foot is not to eat, the hand to run, or the eyes to hear. God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him"[67]

Zinzendorf didn't put a lot of stress on the priesthood of all believers but his conception of the Brethren as a missionary community led him to strive for "the productive and meaningful involvement of every able person."[68] The Count was concerned that every person be placed in the specific place in the church for which he appeared to be gifted by God. This created many leadership and service functions within the Moravia community and provided great openness to all kinds of lay leadership and

---

[65] Lovelace, 117.

[66] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 152.

[67] Quoted by Howard Snyder in ibid., 162.

[68] Ibid., 132.

ministry.[69] Lovelace writes, "The band meetings made much freer use of lay leadership than previous Pietist collegia. . . . In many respects Herrnhut must be considered the most thoroughgoing and fruitful application of the principle of community in church history."[70]

The implementation of *eccelesiola* structures was key in releasing and sustaining the life of the movement. The Moravians developed the idea of a priesthood of all believers much farther than German pietism. The conception of the church as a missionary community gave each member a sense of ministry and significantly reduced the clergy/laity distinction. They appointed many people to a wider range of ministry functions with great freedom, based on discernment of their gifts. Zinzendorf's dominant imagery of the church as an open community and the idea that all believers were "soldiers of the lamb" tended to reinforce the sense of every believer being a minister.[71] Interestingly, the idea of a missionary community would lead the Moravians to impact the next player in the plan of God for the renewal of the church.

**John Wesley and Methodism**

Even before his dramatic conversion Wesley had discovered the power of *ecclesiola* structures. While at Oxford, John and Charles began meeting with William Morgan and Robert Kirkham to practice strict discipline in their spiritual life. This

---

[69] Ibid., 154.

[70] Lovelace, 177.

[71] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 170.

accountability group focused on self examination, studied the Word, practiced acts of service, and took communion.[72]

As the renewal movement grew in England during the Great Awakening, Wesley combined the ideas of Luther and Spener with the band system of Zinzendorf to produce the class meeting that was to nurture converts and help keep the renewal moving.[73] These class meetings were built upon his initial experience with the Holy Club at Oxford and influenced by his visits to the Moravians and were designed to organize people into small groups for study and spiritual growth called the Societies.[74] As the movement continued to grow, Wesley divided the classes into even smaller groups. Eventually the Society was developed into four levels. The United Societies were for all spiritually awakened people, the Bands for those having remission of sins, the Select Societies for those at a greater level of maturity, and the Penitents for those who had fallen away from their faith.[75] These groups combined both strict commitment by participants but were also highly flexible and relational in nature. Snyder and Runyon suggest, "This was their genius for one hundred years. The system was simple, but it nurtured relationships that were healthily complex."[76]

---

[72] McDow and Reid, 186.

[73] Lovelace, 177.

[74] The societies were defined as "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of Godliness, united to prayer together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other work out their salvation." McDow and Reid, 196.

[75] Ibid., 197.

[76] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 40.

While Wesley didn't stress the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in his preaching, the societies created many opportunities for it to be practiced. Snyder writes, "Wesley seems to have put less stress on the priesthood of all believers but more on the gifts of the Spirit than did Spener. . . . One may say that the priesthood of all believers simply was not a theme of Wesley's theology, though his ecclesiology is inherently compatible with the emphasis."[77] Snyder adds that the class system was "based in part on Wesley's convictions that spiritual oversight had to be intimate and personal and that plural leadership was the norm in a congregation."[78] Wesley did not seek to get rid of clergy but he was "adamant that the laity too must participate in the evangelistic mandate of the church through personal witness, intercession, bible study, and deeds of mercy."[79] In addition the rapid growth of these societies also meant an increasing need for leadership. To handle this Wesley built a strong system of leadership development into his organization greatly increasing the ability of the laity to be involved.[80] McDow and Reid write, "Early in the Awakening, Wesley began forming a staff of lay preachers. He nurtured them like a father, while insisting on strict discipline. He maintained a standard of personal discipline that gave him credibility with the leaders."[81] Thus Wesley created a Methodism which provided more opportunity for the exercise of spiritual gifts, and for

---

[77] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 221.

[78] Ibid., 225.

[79] Bloesch, 115.

[80] McDow and Reid, 196.

[81] Ibid., 195.

involvement than did the church of England, where ministry was severely hedged by ›ricalism.[82]

As could be imagined the Church of England was less than enthusiastic about this y involvement. Wesley began to face opposition from Anglican clergymen who charged ıat Wesley was creating a new church. Wesley denied this charge vigorously and it is lear that Wesley did not set out to create a new denomination. Rather he encouraged :onverts to remain loyal members of the Church of England.[83] This did little however to olunt the criticism from institutional authorities. Ironically this resistance actually encouraged innovation in organizational structures within the burgeoning revival. Forced to the margins of ecclesiastical life, the class societies were driven to re-invent organization and structure. Because the pulpits and parishes were denied them Methodist preachers discovered the masses of people hungry for God on the margins of English life. Since so few clergy were willing to assist the movement, it was forced to use unlettered lay preachers and ministers. John Walsh writes:

> It was largely because the Methodist clergy were denied Anglican pulpits in 1739 that they took to the open air and discovered a huge new mission field in the yawning gaps in the Anglican parish system. In isolated hamlets, proto-industrial settlements on moorland and wastes, colonies gathered round coal mines and iron forges. It was largely because they themselves were ecclesiastically marginalized that the early Methodists were driven to address those on the social margins. It was because so few clergy helped them that they were forced to use unlettered lay preachers and exhorters, and to make a direct and fruitful contact with the world of popular culture. This led Wesley to advance the historical theory that all great religious revivals began on the edges of society among the poor and

---

[82] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 232.

[83] McDow and Reid, 195-196.

insignificant, rather than at the center, where power and prestige were located.[84]

Once again Methodism displayed the familiar pattern of a renewal movement seeking to break free from a rigid institution through a practical expression of the priesthood of all believers and new organizational forms, only to face opposition and resistance from the hierarchical, clergy dominated church. But the movement begun in England through the Wesley brothers and George Whitfield would not be held to the British isles and it quickly spread to North America. Before exploring the renewal movements of North America, one further European renewal movement needs to be reviewed.

**Nineteenth Century Welsh Revival**

The Welsh revival in the latter half of the nineteenth century also stressed the involvement of the laity. The key leader in this renewal movement was layman Evan Roberts. In his meetings Roberts tried to keep a low profile in order to allow as much freedom as possible for the Holy Spirit to work amongst the people. Riss suggests that this policy was "one of the secrets of the phenomenal success of his meeting. People were free to express themselves in psalms, hymns, and exclamations of joy."[85] As the movement spread it attracted the attention of the regular clergy. One such clergy, G. Campbell Morgan, an eyewitness of the revival, said, "Never in the history of revivals

---

[84] John Walsh, "Methodism and the Origins of English-Speaking Evangelicalism," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 32.

[85] Riss, 39.

has there been any revival more spontaneous than this. It has burst out here, there, and everywhere, without leaders or organizations or direction. If Mr. Evan Roberts is spoken of as the center, it is only because it happens to be [he is] one of the few conspicuous figures in a movement he neither organized nor controls."[86]

It seems that unlike many regular clerics G. Campbell Morgan had an understanding of how institutionalism can dampen the fires of renewal. Morgan said in a sermon entitled "Pentecost Continued", "we had better keep our hands off this work . . . with the Welsh revival there is no preaching, no order, no hymnbook, no choirs, no organs, no collections, and finally, no advertising. . . . There were organs, but silent; ministers but among the rest of the people, rejoicing and prophesying with the rest, only there was no preaching . . . the whole thing advertises itself."[87]

The Welsh revival illustrates again, the tendency for rigid institutionalism to break down during renewal movements, and for the priesthood of all believers to find practical expression. This is also true with the renewal movements in North America.

**Great Awakening: North America**

North America became home to many and varied renewal movements and renewal leaders. People such as Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday were all key in different renewal movements. These renewal movements in North America would exhibit similar characteristics to those in England and Europe. In 1726, Dutch Reformed theologian Theodore Jackobus Frelinghuysen led a revival in North

---

[86] Quoted in Ibid., 40-41.

[87] From Ibid., 41.

nerica that featured two significant innovations. First, he developed the practice of nall group devotional meetings, very similar to the *collegia pietatis* in German Pietism. econd, he transformed the *voorlessers* (helpers) into lay preachers.[88] McDow and Reid rite, "When off to minister to others, Felinghuysen appointed one or two men to preside ver the devotional meetings. The success of this approach is seen when in1736 the Jnited Consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church elected one or more helpers for each church."[89] Jonathon Edwards also made use of the small group idea, encouraging youth to form small groups for prayer and discussion, which many adults joined as well.[90]

In the American south, revival began through a layperson. Samuel Morris and several friends had questions about the teachings of their local pastor in the Episcopal church. Out of concern for their spiritual growth they started a group who read together Whitefield's sermons and material from Martin Luther. Soon, this practice became so popular that 'reading houses' were built, and Morris began to be asked to read to other congregations. His readings and itinerant ministry were a source of renewal to many communities.[91] The revivals of the nineteenth and twentieth-century continued to see this pattern develop.

---

[88] McDow and Reid, 207.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., 212.

[91] Ibid., 220-221.

**Pentecostalism**

In 1906, the Holy Spirit fell on the cottage prayer meetings led by William J. Seymour in the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry. An eyewitness account of what happened sounds similar to G. Campbell Morgan's account of the Welsh Revival:

> The how and why of it is to be found in the very opposite of those conditions usually thought necessary for a big revival. No instruments of music are used. None are needed. No choir . . . no collections are taken. No bills have been posted to advertise the meetings. No church organization is back of it.[92]

Another witness, J. M. Pike, wrote in *Way of Faith,* "A similar gracious work of the Spirit to that in Wales is in progress here. But while that is mostly in the churches, this is outside. The churches will not have it, or up to present have stood aloof in a critical and condemnatory spirit."[93] Not only did Pentecostalism begin outside formal church structures but when church structures were in the way of the movement lay people went outside those churches and did the work of the Spirit on their own. An example of this is the Full Gospel's Businessmen's Fellowship. A wealthy California Dairyman, Demos Shakarian, started the group in 1951. From the beginning the FGBF was a fully lay movement. Shakarian appointed the evangelists and paid their expenses, so "they might help evangelize the world and spread the message . . . Shakarian's denomination, the Assemblies of God did not allow those who were not full time pastors into their

---

[92] Quoted in ibid., 48.

[93] Quoted in ibid., 61.

leadership. Therefore, many laymen capable of such leadership became involved as leaders" in the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship.[94]

It is also interesting that for some that were involved early on in the revival, organizing was exactly the wrong thing to do. Frank Bartlemen wrote:

> The truth must be told. "Azusa" began to fail the Lord also, early in her history. God showed me one day that they were going to organize, though not a word had been said in my hearing about it. . . . The New Testament church had already arrested their further progress in this way. Sure enough the very next day after I dropped this warning in the meeting I found a sign outside. "Azusa" reading "Apostolic Faith Mission" . . . and from that time the trouble and division began. It was no longer a free Spirit for all as it had been. The work had become one more rival party and body, along with the other churches and sects of the city.[95]

Eventually, of course, the Azusa Street revival became organized and has continued to move toward more rigid organizational forms, such as creating new denominations like the Full Gospel and Foursquare churches. Once again, the pattern of renewal bringing freedom from structure and freedom to lay ministry has solidified over time into a more standard clerical/lay division.

At approximately the same time as the Pentecostal revival was occurring another movement was beginning to take solid form. Although Fundamentalism, and its later descendant Evangelicalism, were not strictly renewal movements, they are of interest in this chapter as they represent the tradition from which Grace Evangelical Bible Church springs.[96]

---

[94] Ibid., 156.

[95] Quoted in ibid., 59.

[96] Although Grace Evangelical Bible Church comes from a Mennonite background, and still contains a large Mennonite population, a brief examination of its historical theology reveals that,

**Evangelicalism**

While Grace Church's cultural roots lie with the Mennonites much of its theology and practice has its roots in Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism, strictly speaking, is not a renewal or revival movement but is a descendant of the Fundamentalism movment of the late 19th century.

Though the roots of Fundamentalism, and therefore Evangelicalism, reach back to Puritanism and even Pietism, Fundamentalism arose out of several controversies within the North American Church that began during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[97] These controversies were the result of several changes occurring in North American society as the nineteenth century came to a close and the twentieth century began. First, the church felt threatened by a change in the intellectual climate brought on by the twin threats of the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin and the higher biblical criticism imported from Europe. Second, the mostly rural churches found themselves in an increasingly urbanized society, and the churches were struggling to adapt. Third, not only was society becoming urbanized but was becoming culturally and religiously diverse. Rising immigration levels led to large increases in Catholic and Jewish people in North America. North American churches were not prepared for this increasingly pluralistic environment. Lastly, North American life had begun to head down the path of secularization. This secularization was not so much seen in church attendance as in the

---

theologically and doctrinally, it has far more in common with the Fundamentalist heritage than a Mennonite heritage.

[97] Bloesch, 1.

ıss of influence in key areas of society such as politics and academic life.[98] undamentalism arose to protect what it saw as the doctrinal purity of the church.

As time progressed, a further division arose within the movement over the issue ɔf how Christians should relate to the culture around them. Fundamentalist held to a strict doctrine of separation based on such passages as 2 Cor. 6:14-17a that called for God's people to "come out from them and be separate". Fundamentalists felt that it was wrong for Christians to cooperate with those outside of the faith and that it was important to not be associated with non-Christian organizations and even other Christian denominations. Others, soon to be called Evangelicals, felt that this was taking the concept of separation too far and that there could be cooperation between Christians and others in culture on matters that did not involve compromising Scriptural beliefs. In time these two groups developed into two distinct movements. Evangelicals maintained the Fundamentalist emphasis on maintaining historic Christian doctrine in the face of pressure from modernist churches, however, they were more open to being involved in and working with others of differing beliefs.

Perhaps because Fundamentalists and Evanglicals saw themselves as defending the faith from doctrinal errors rather than structural or organizational errors, this movement had little impact on either church organization or on the ability of laity to be involved in ministry. In fact, Marsden says, "One of the striking features of much of evangelicalism is its general disregard for the institutional church. Except at the

---

[98] George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 14-16.

ngregational level, the organized church plays a relatively minor role in the ovement."[99] Even in the local church, the rise of individualistic thinking has also mited discussion concerning ecclesiology or the priesthood of all believers. Marsden rites, "Even the local congregation while extremely important for fellowship purposes, s often regarded as a convenience to the individual. Ultimately, individuals are sovereign and can join or leave the church as they please. Often they seem as likely to choose a church because it is 'friendly' as to do so because of its particular teaching."[100] In fact, in Evangelical churches the situation seems remarkably similar to that of Martin Luther. The priesthood of all believers is a doctrine talked about and affirmed as theology but, in practical terms, is not applied or applied only in terms of lay ministry definitely being inferior to professional, ordained clergy. Howard Snyder relates an interesting quotation from an essay by Rosemary Ruether titled "The Free Church Movement in Contemporary Catholicism." She writes The Free church is:

> [F]ounded on a view which denies the hierarchical institutionalization belongs to the essence of the church. The church is seen essentially as the gathered community of explicit believers in which sacramental distinctions between clergy and laity are abolished, priestly roles become purely contextual and functional; the whole community arising by our joint covenant entered into by the existential analogue of believer's baptism; that is to say, by voluntary adult decision. This concept of the believer's church is, I believe, the authentic church, and it is the understanding of church which ever reappears in the avant garde at the moments of real church renewal." [101]

---

[99] Ibid., 81.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Quoted in Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 25.

Fundamentalism/Evangelicalism has been able to maintain loyalty to certain theological doctrines such as biblical inerrancy, substitutionary atonement, and the reality of the physical resurrection; however, when it comes to freeing organizational structures and improving access to service on the part of the laity, it has had little impact.

This brief survey of Protestant renewal movements has shown that many of these movements have several themes in common. These are summarized below.

**Summary Theme: Institutionalism**

The first common theme is to discover that over time, faith communities tend to slip into institutionalism and rigidity. Whether it is Pietism falling back into standard Lutheran forms, Methodists turning their voluntary lay groups into a new denomination, or the early Pentecostals drive for organization, the pattern remains the same. Almost inevitably, clergy/lay distinctions creep back in and a hierarchical structure reappears.[102] Greg Ogden writes:

> Historically, the church has been trapped in institutionalism. The institutional church resembles a corporation with the pastor as its head. Locked into a hierarchical structure, the clergy are ensconced at the pinnacle of the pyramid. . . . As a separated, elevated class, the clergy have acted as if only they are able to enter the realm of things spiritual. The clergy as a distinctive caste have supposedly received a special unction and calling that enables them to have a closeness to God unattainable by ordinary church members.[103]

---

[102] It is recognized that some movements have managed to resist this tendency to restrict ministry to a professional clergy. Both the Plymouth Brethren and Quakerism remain open to the ideas of universal ministry. See Bloesch, 116. He writes, "Among the Plymouth Brethren the idea of a separated clergy is wholly rejected, and any layman illumined by the Spirit can give a special address at meetings or officiate at the Lord's Supper. . . . In original Quakerism, too, there was no ordained clergy, and every follower was believed free to speak or prophesy by the Spirit."

[103] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 19.

Part of the result of renewal then is to challenge these rigid, hierarchical forms. This leads to the question of where churches are when it comes to their own organizational structures?

**Summary Theme: The Use of Small Groups**

All of the movements examined created alternative forms of ministry, often involving some form of small group meeting. Snyder writes, "Surveying the history of Pietism, Moravianism, and Methodism reveals that all three movements made use of small cell groups."[104] History suggests that renewal often brings tension between institution and Spirit driven ministry. Snyder writes, "Whenever the Holy Spirit is perceived to be doing a new work in the present, tension with existing patterns is almost inevitable. Suddenly the status quo is questioned. Is the 'new thing' of the Spirit or not? And if it is, what kind of judgment is this on the existing pattern?"[105] Pietism had *collegia,* the Moravians had bands, and Methodists had classes. Other renewal movements such as in the American South and Pentecostalism were brought out of small groups meeting for prayer, study, and sharing. This forces the church in the emerging culture to ask how ready it is to accept new organizational forms if the Holy Spirit were to do a new work today?[106] Structures are not the only challenge to the existing church when renewal comes, there is also the issue of freeing ministry for the laity.

---

[104] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 252-253.

[105] Ibid., 24.

[106] Not very ready, was Richard Lovelace's answer. "A second major area of structural renewal needed within the local congregation is the formation and strengthening of nuclear subcommunities within the larger church community. . . . Vitality in the church of Christ gather around centered groups of

**Summary Theme: Renewal Brings New Ministry to the Laity**

In the renewal movements the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was given practical expression, and many lay people found opportunities for service and leadership that were prohibited to them in the institutional church.[107] One of the keys in a Renewal movement is an "effective realization of Luther's concept of the priesthood of all believers."[108] Lovelace writes, "One of the clearest themes in the history of awakenings is the increasing importance of lay leadership in the church's life."[109] In the freer and less institutionally regulated environment, renewal movements are often led by people with no recognized leadership status in the church and often emerge through the work of the Holy Spirit.[110] But it is this freer, less controlled, lay-organized aspect that often brings renewal movements into conflict with the institutional church.

**Summary Theme: Reform Will Be Resisted by the Institutional Church**

A very common theme, from Montanists to Pentecostals, is that the institutional church rarely welcomes renewal movements. In fact, during the Wesleyan revival, support did not come from the dissenting chapels that prayed for revival but from the religious societies operating outside of the organized church. Walsh notes that the revival

---

Christians who are interacting with one another and with other groups like cells or organs in a body." Lovelace, 227.

[107] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 252-253.

[108] Lovelace, 224.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 25.

arose not from the dissenting or reformist churches that "were clamoring for revival" but from High Church Anglican youth, who participated in the religious societies.[111] Lay leadership was often the issue that led to the controversy and opposition from the institutional church.[112] Often this meant the churches played a negative role in blocking the momentum of the revival and renewal they had been seeking. John Stackhouse Jr. writes:

> Many conservative churches and leaders approve of revival – as long as it is the formulaic, automatic sort that boosts attendance, giving and enthusiasm for a week or so each year. But Christians who seek more abundant showers of blessing often meet with frustrating resistance from entrenched authorities. It is in the very nature of revival and renewal (R/R), though, to threaten the status quo and the most privileged in and supportive of that situation. R/R obviously pronounces judgment on things as they are and declares that things need to change. R/R, furthermore, is unpredictable and risky: We know what we have now and we're used to it, but who knows what we will encounter tomorrow, next week, or next year if this impulse for change is given full reign?[113]

**Summary Theme: Renewal Cannot Be Sustained without Reforming Structure**

Renewal often takes the initial form of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But this outpouring must be incorporated into the ecclesiology and structures of the church if it is to be long lasting. Snyder writes:

> Too often renewal fails precisely here. More than once I have seen the Spirit move upon a congregation until nearly every person was changed—but then the renewal aborted because believers did not understand what was happening and lacked the appropriate structures to nurture the new

---

[111] Walsh, 32.

[112] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 253.

[113] John G. Stackhouse Jr., "Revival and Renewal - We All Want It Don't We?" in *Church: An Insider's Look at How We Do It* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 126.

> life. Spiritual babies suffered malnutrition, and in short order the new life was stifled by the institutional business as usual.[114]

Bloesch puts it bluntly, "The church ideally should be the vessel of the ecclesia, but too often it presents an obstacle to the growth of the ecclesia through sacramentalism and sacerdotalism."[115] Structural renewal by itself cannot bring about revival but "putting forms above life" can stifle revival.[116] Snyder adds, "Renewal often dies prematurely for lack of effective structures. The new wine flows through the cracks of our own forms and is soon lost. Renewal becomes a fond memory, not a new way of life. Structural renewal is simply finding the best forms, in our day, for living out the new life in Christ. History is full of examples of structural renewal becoming a key to extending renewal beyond the passing moment."[117]

The question needs to be asked: if the Holy Spirit were to move in a new way today, would churches in the emerging culture be vessels that help or block His work?

## Conclusion

Rarely does the Holy Spirit bring renewal from within static ecclesiological structures, but from the margins. Churches can be on their knees and pray for revival, but if churches are unwilling to let the Spirit move then revival may be insufficient to shake them into action. If churches are overly concerned with issues of ecclesiastical control

---

[114] Ibid., 292.

[115] Bloesch, 123.

[116] Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*, 291.

[117] Ibid., 290.

and authority, and therefore reluctant to allow lay people into ministry; if they fear separation by groups that meet outside of normal church gatherings, and insist that all meetings be under clergy control, when revival comes they will either miss it or worse, strive to kill the very work of God for which they have been praying. Greg Ogden asks:

> If, as the Reformers agreed, priesthood is no longer limited to the hierarchical few but is intended as God's gift and God's intention for all believers, what is the situation in regard to Christian ministry of service? Is it possible that it too belongs to all believers and that our present structures and patterns actually inhibit God's intention for the way the work of the church is to be done?[118]

The church has been given this warning before. Elton Trueblood wrote in the 1960s that:

> If in the average church we should suddenly take serious the notion that every lay member, man or woman, is really a minister of Christ, we could have something like a revolution in a very short time . . . most Protestants pay lip service to the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of every believer, but they do not thereby mean to say that every Christian is a minister . . . our opportunity for a big step lies in the opening of the ministry to the ordinary Christian in much the same manner that our ancestors opened the Bible reading to the ordinary Christian.[119]

Greg Ogden describes the current situation in negative terms. He writes, "Appropriating another image, we can describe the pastor as performing a solo act on the theatre stage while the church members are the audience, never fellow actors. Laypeople passively warm a pew and place money in the offering plate to create the context for pastors to perform their ministry."[120] Greg Ogden goes on to say, "If in fact . . . the

---

[118] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 7.

[119] Elton Trueblood in *Your Other Vocation,* Quoted in Robinson, 15-16.

[120] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 19.

clergy-laity bifurcation is the greatest single bottleneck to the renewal and outreach of the church, then we must begin to take drastic steps".[121] If the church wishes its renewal efforts to have lasting impact in the emerging culture, its organizational structures must be reformed to provide a healthy environment in which further change can be enacted.

[121] Ibid., 72. He also quotes John Stott as saying, "I do not hesitate to say that to interpret the church in terms of a privileged caste or hierarchical structure is to destroy the New Testament doctrine of the church." Ibid.

# CHAPTER 5

## THE SHIFT FROM MODERN TO POSTMODERN: IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

There ain't no rules around here! We're trying to accomplish something!
Thomas A. Edison (1847 - 1931)

Like many other aspects of the emerging culture organizations are also experiencing rapid change. Structures that have provided stability and efficiency for generations are becoming too rigid and inflexible to cope with the changes in the emerging culture. As a result organizations are undergoing a paradigm shift away from the hierarchical assumptions of the modern era to a new understanding of how to understand and structure organizations. This chapter will describe how the modern world view led to the construction of hierarchical organizational structure. Then the chapter will outline how the current changes in culture are making that hierarchical understanding of organizations obsolete and insufficient to cope with the demands of the twenty-first century. Finally the chapter will present a new model of understanding and designing organizational structures that will be suitable to the characteristics of the emerging culture.

**Hierarchy: A Product of Newtonian Thought**

Throughout the modern era, organizations have been viewed largely in a hierarchical manner. "When we think of organizing, the idea of hierarchy leaps to mind, or a picture of an 'organization chart' in the shape of a pyramid."[1] This should not be a surprise as these ideas have their roots in the scientific worldview that produced modern society. Organizations and institutions are built to be compatible with the forms and structures of the natural world as they are understood. Marshall writes, "The way that scientists view the dynamics, patterns, and relationships of the universe and natural world has profound implications for the way we construct our world. As a consequence, we shape, organize, and direct our institutions according to the science of our times."[2]

During the modern era, that scientific worldview was dominated by the hierarchical and machine-like thinking of Newtonian science. Marshall continues, "For three centuries, the dominant scientific worldview was the image of a static, repetitive,

---

[1] Elizabeth Pinchot and Gifford Pinchot, *The End of Bureaucracy & the Rise of the Intelligent Organization* (San Francisco, CA.: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1993), 50.

[2] Stephanie Pace Marshall, "Creating Sustainable Learning Communities for the Twenty-First Century," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 179.

predictable, linear, and clockwork universe. This Newtonian worldview seemed to create an obsession with linear thinking and encouraged the escalation of an almost exclusively rational trajectory that has controlled and defined almost every dimension of our cultural and organizational life."[3] Margaret Wheatley agrees and writes that:

> Each of us lives and works in organizations designed from the Newtonian images of the universe. We manage by separating things into parts, we believe that influence occurs as a direct result of force exerted from one person to another, we engage in complex planning for a world that we keep expecting to be predictable, and we search continually for better methods of objectively perceiving the world. These assumptions . . . come to us from seventeenth-century physics, from Newtonian mechanics.[4]

The chief metaphor of this Newtonian perspective was the machine with its ideas of predictability and control. Wheatley writes, "The universe that Sir Isaac Newton described was a seductive place. As the great clock ticked, we grew smart and designed the age of machines . . . As the earth circled the sun (like clockwork), we grew assured of the role of determinism and prediction."[5] Dee Hock agrees:

> It was primarily Newtonian science and Cartesian philosophy that fathered the modern version of those concepts, [Greek ideas], giving rise to the machine metaphor. That metaphor has dominated the whole of our thinking, the nature of our organizations, and the structure of the Western Industrial society to a degree few fully realize. And it has rapidly infected the rest of the world. It declared that the universe and everything in it, whether physical, biological, or social, could only be understood as a clock-like mechanism composed of separable parts acting on one another with precise, measurable, linear laws of cause and effect. If we could dissect and understand all the parts and the laws governing them, we could

---

[3] Ibid.

[4] Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organization from an Orderly Universe* (San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 6.

[5] Ibid., 27.

> reconstruct the world and all therein as measurable, predictable, orderly machines.[6]

This led to a hierarchical world "of squares and boxes and pyramids" organized by the "language of command and control, of order and predict, of climb the ladder, of top and bottom, up and down [where in] every large organization . . . rank equaled authority."[7]

This Newtonian and mechanistic worldview was supremely suited for the coming Industrial Age. Hock writes:

> Just as the machine metaphor that arose from Newtonian science and Cartesian philosophy was the father of today's organizational concepts, the Industrial Age was the mother. Together, they dominated the evolution of all institutions. The unique processes of the age of handcrafting were abandoned in favor of mechanistic, dominator organizations, which, in order to produce huge quantities of uniform goods, services, knowledge, and people, amassed resources, centralized authority, routinized practices, and enforced conformity. This created a class of managers and specialists expert at reducing variability and diversity to uniform, repetitive, assembly-line processes endlessly repeated with ever increasing efficiency.[8]

The resulting bureaucratic, hierarchical organizations helped organize the new complexity of the Industrial Age. The Pinchots write that, "Bureaucracy gained pre-eminence because it worked for many of the needs of the industrial age. It increased the effectiveness of hierarchy by reducing some of the worst abuses of power and by providing a rational way to manage tasks too complex for any one person to

---

[6] Dee Hock, *Birth of the Chaordic Age* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1999), 55.

[7] Frances Hesselbein, "The Circular Organization," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 81.

[8] Hock, 56.

comprehend."[9] As the level of complexity rose during industrialization organizations sought structures and forms that would help provide management and control in this new environment. Organizations based on hierarchy and bureaucracy developed and succeeded because they provided a structure that was able to deal effectively with the demands and variables of the Industrial Age. Hierarchical structures proved very effective at providing this level of control. Ashmos and his colleagues write, "The machine model relies on a complex system of highly prescribed rule sets, formalized control, and hierarchical authority structures that are intended, despite their intricacies, to simplify the organization's ongoing operations and lead to simple, well-defined responses, even in the face of shifting environmental conditions."[10]

The Pinchots continue:

> Given that bureaucracy is in such ill-repute today, it is hard to remember that it was once considered a great organizational innovation. By organizing the division of labor, by making management and decision making a profession, and by providing an order and a set of rules that allowed many different kinds of specialists to work in coordination toward a common end, bureaucracy greatly extended the breadth and depth of intelligence that organizations could achieve.[11]

Hierarchical structures continue to be the norm for organizations today as "the mechanistic mode of thought has shaped our most basic conceptions of what organization is all about."[12] Ashmos et al. go on to suggest that, "Traditional approaches to orderly

---

[9] Pinchot and Pinchot, 22.

[10] Donde P. Ashmos and others, "What a Mess! Participation as a Simple Managerial Rule to Complexify Organizations," *Journal of Management Studies* 39, no. 2 (2002), 190.

[11] Pinchot and Pinchot, 21.

[12] Ashmos and others, 190.

management have been based on the idea that the world is knowable, because it is a kind of mechanical system in which identifiable forces and fundamental laws of motion are in operation . . . this knowledge enables managers to achieve predictability, order and control in their organizations."[13] Keene agrees, "The dominant organizational paradigm remains wedded to scientific management theories which reflect a philosophy that remains committed to a need for control and prediction. . . . The structures of our organizations continue to reflect the model of a machine."[14] Margaret Wheatley sums up the current situation well:

> It is interesting to note just how Newtonian most organizations are. The machine imagery of the spheres was captured by organizations in an emphasis on structure and parts. Responsibilities have been organized into functions. People have been organized into roles. Page after page of organizational charts depict the workings of the machine: the number of pieces, what fits where, who the big pieces are.[15]

Alan Roxburgh suggests that the hierarchical corporation continues to dominate organizational life because it is the "primary institutional form of social structure for much of the 20th Century."[16] And despite much talk of reform "the control based

---

[13] Donde P. Ashmos, Dennis Duchon, and Reuben R. McDaniel Jr., "Organizational Response to Complexity: The Effect on Organizational Performance," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 13, no. 6 (2000), 580.

[14] Angelique Keene, "Complexity Theory: The Changing Role of Leadership," *Industrial And Commercial Training* 32, no. 1 (2000), 15.

[15] Wheatley, 27.

[16] Alan Roxburgh, *"Traditional Vs. The Emergent Church: Struggling with Structure and Looking for New Forms*(accessed October 19 2004); available from http://www.allelon.org/articles/print.cfm?id=148.

hierarchy—with multiple levels, functional divisions, differentiated roles and rewards, and fragmented information—is still the prevalent organizational model."[17]

But this organizational paradigm is not limited to the corporate sector of society. The ideas and forms, so successful in the rest of society, have been adopted into the church as well. Alan Roxburgh writes that:

> The modern corporation was built on hierarchies of organizational life, professionalization of all elements of work and social services, impersonal bureaucratization and a strategic planning process that could predict outcomes and results. It was a brilliant creation for the new, modern, industrial society. For most of the 20th Century the churches of North America designed and built there [*sic*] organizations and structures around this highly successful and productive model of organizational life.[18]

## Impact on Church Organizational Structures

This new science of organizational life developed just in time to be adopted by the numerous denominations that began to proliferate during the latter half of the nineteenth-century. Guder and Barrett write:

> After the turn of the century, as the science of organizational management began to develop, denominations adopted these insights by shaping themselves as corporate organizations. What had grown up as an ad hoc arrangement of diverse boards and agencies within most denominations was now consolidated into a modern management system organized around key functions and managed by administrative committees . . . complementing these developments within denominations, congregations increasingly adopted an organizational identity as well.[19]

---

[17] Ron Ashkenas, "The Organization's New Clothes," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 100.

[18] Roxburgh, (accessed).

[19] Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Craig Van Gelder, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 65,66. Alan Roxburgh agrees: "Churches flourished within the

These structures also shared the mechanistic view of the organizations. Bill Easum writes, "[Church structures] may be of endless variety, designed by various denominational polities and theological technicians, but they are all machines no less."[20] In this model churches operate "like giant machines, with church leaders serving as mechanics."[21]

These structures have become so much a part of the identity of the church that "most people in North America take denominations and denominationalism, along with unique congregational structures they have formed, for granted. These organizational arrangements are so familiar to us that most of us assume they are prescribed somewhere in Scripture."[22] Hirsch and Frost note:

> While some denominations are ideologically committed to a very top-down hierarchical model that includes archbishops, bishops, priests and parish councils, others (who call themselves low church) are equally indebted to top-down approaches via regional superintendents, senior pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors and deacons. From Pentecostals to the Orthodox Church, from Baptists to Episcopalians and Presbyterians, the hierarchical model seems to be universal.[23]

---

professionalized corporate model of organizational life. Denominations grew rapidly with large professional staffs, departmentalized around specialties and vertically integrated structures of synods or conferences in regions serving congregations through an overarching national strategy. Like all other corporate systems these forms of institutionalization thrived well into the last quarter of the 20th Century." Roxburgh, (accessed).

[20] Bill Easum and Thomas G. Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 114.

[21] Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 6.

[22] Guder, ed., 67.

[23] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 21. Christian Schwarz states that much of the discussion around church "comes closer in its thinking to the robot model than to the organism model." Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Carol Stream, Il.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 62.

Bill Easum agrees, "Throughout the industrial age, the structure of most organizations, including Protestant denominations, has been a hierarchy of boxes and lines stacked and drawn on descending levels of responsibility, accountability, control and authority . . . the end result of this model is called bureaucracy."[24]

Like their secular counterparts, this form of organization worked very well during the modern age. It was an organizational form that was well suited to its relatively stable environment.[25] The difficulty is that the environment has changed, and this new environment demands new organizational forms.

## New Organizational Forms Needed

Increasingly the changes sweeping through Western culture are creating more and more stress for hierarchical organizational structures. Harmon writes, "Stress builds as people keep trying to meet twenty-first century needs within the nineteenth-century creations that are the dominant forms of organization today. The basic elements of the organization have changed. So have both the social climate in which the organization operates and the human components within the organization."[26] Dee Hock puts it bluntly:

---

[24] Bill Easum, *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers: Ministry Anytime, Anywhere, by Anybody* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 98.

[25] "As long as society remained stable and sympathetic to Christianity, this method of organization kept churches and denominations fairly well organized. However, when society became unstable and its attitude toward Christianity began to change, this method of organization became a major liability." Ibid.

[26] Frederick G. Harmon, "Future Present," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 240.

> The Industrial Age, hierarchical, command-and-control institutions that, over the past four hundred years, have grown to dominate our commercial, political, and social lives are increasingly irrelevant in the face of the exploding diversity and complexity of society worldwide. They are failing, not only in the sense of collapse, but in the more common and pernicious form—organizations increasingly unable to achieve the purpose for which they were created, yet continuing to expand as they devour resources, decimate the earth, and demean humanity.[27]

Hierarchy worked well when structure was needed to provide accountability, clear lines of authority, standardized routines, and specialized division of labor; however, "in a world of unpredictable change, globalization, dynamic technologies and educated employees and consumers, these capabilities will not work."[28] The pace of change has accelerated beyond the capability of most organizations to respond and many institutions are struggling to keep up.[29] The result is that "where managers once operated with a Tayloresque, mechanistic model of their world, which was predicated on linear thinking, control, and predictability, they now find themselves struggling with something more nonlinear, where limited control and a restricted ability to predict outcomes are the order of the day."[30]

---

[27] Hock, 5,6. Thomas Peters make the same point. "Today's structures were designed for controlling turn-of-the century mass-production operations under stable conditions, with primitive technologies. They have become perverse, action-destroying devices, completely at odds with current competitive needs." Thomas J. Peters, *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 426.

[28] Dave Ulrich, "Organizing around Capabilities," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 190.

[29] Ashkenas, 99.

[30] Roger Lewin and Birute Regine, "Leading at the Edge: How Leaders Influence Complex Systems," *Emergence* 2, no. 2 (2000), 6.

This points to a dim outlook on the future of hierarchical structures. The Pinchots provide evidence of this crisis:

> Bureaucracy as we know it . . . cannot survive these changes. It is leaving center stage and becoming just a bit player in the wings. Many huge companies that were successful over generations with tight bureaucratic patterns of organization and control have been driven into desperate fixes. For example, in 1992 General Motors, IBM and Sears lost a total of $32.4 billion . . . they had far to fall: Just two decades ago, these three giants were among the top six companies worldwide by stock valuation. They were masters of hierarchical coordination and expert in extracting obedience from massive groups of employees. Now they struggle to replace bureaucracy with structures and processes that reduce the role of hierarchy and encourage more intelligent, collaborative self-management.[31]

Or to put it more succinctly, "Bureaucracy is no more appropriate to sophisticated work today than serfdom was to the factory of the early Industrial Revolution."[32]

## Environment Too Complex to Control

Hierarchical structures were built on the Newtonian foundation that the environment could be understood, predicted, and controlled. The explosion of diversity and information has created a world where knowledge, prediction, and control are impossible. The image of a simple cause and effect machine is being replaced with the whirlpool image of dynamic systems. Wheatley writes:

---

[31] Pinchot and Pinchot, 4. Bill Easum also writes that, "Most forms of bureaucracy will not survive the first half of the twenty-first century. As the machine like Industrial Age fades away, a new economy driven by microprocessors instead of combustible engines requires organizations to be able to process information . . . and constantly learn. The paradoxical world of quantum physics and the multi-layered world of the microprocessor produces problems too complex and demanding for bureaucracy." Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 98.

[32] Pinchot and Pinchot, 4.

> The world is far more sensitive than we had ever thought. We may harbor the hope that we will regain predictability as soon as we can learn how to account for all the variables, but in fact no level of detail can ever satisfy this desire. Iteration creates powerful and unpredictable effects in our non-linear systems. In complex ways that no model will ever capture, the system feeds back on itself, enfolding all that has happened, magnifying slight variances, encoding it in the system's memory- prohibiting prediction forever.[33]

The Newtonian perspective viewed the world as a machine where a leader could know with certainty what outcomes various actions would cause. It was a matter of defining the problem, devising the right solution, and implementing it. The reality is, "taking action in an organization is like shooting a wobbly cue ball into a large and complex array of self-directed billiard balls. So many balls bounce off one another in so many directions that it is hard to know how things will look when everything settles down."[34] Instead of operating with machine-like precision, Kauffman suggests reality is more like adding grains of sand to a sand pile, never knowing which grain of sand will trigger the avalanche. He writes, "We live on a sand pile; we ourselves create the sand; we ourselves step across the sand pile, shedding avalanches at every pace. Gone is the presumption that we can predict more than a bit."[35] Bolman and Deal describe the challenge, "Organizations are complex. Organizations are populated by people and our ability to understand and predict human behavior is still limited. Interactions among many different individuals, groups, and organizations get complicated in a hurry . . .

---

[33] Wheatley, 127.

[34] Lee G. Bolman and Terrance E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997; reprint, Second Edition), 23.

[35] Stuart Kauffman, *At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 131, 132.

ıost anything can affect anything else in collective activity. Permutations produce mplex, casual knots that are very hard to disentangle."[36] As Dee Hock writes, Ianagement expertise has become the creation and control of constants, uniformity, and ficiency, while the need has become the understanding and coordination of variability, omplexity, and effectiveness."[37] Hierarchical structures are losing their effectiveness ecause the world they were built for no longer exists.

## Organizations Need Speed and Adaptability

Because of the assumption of predictability and control hierarchical structures were also designed to bring about stability and standardization. This allowed organizations to minimize disruptions and allowed them to pursue their objectives with efficiency; however, the pace of change has accelerated to the point where trying to bring about stability by control is no longer possible. Ashkenas describes it this way:

> Organizations fostered stability through an intricate and interrelated series of controls, usually administered by senior management and a variety of staff groups (personnel, finance, legal, quality and others). Whenever performance or behavior began to oscillate outside of the normal range, these controls were used to dampen the waves and return the organization to its steady state. In a relatively stable world, this organizational system was effective, and, in fact, it led to decades of unprecedented prosperity and social progress. In today's world, however, the oscillations no longer are controllable, nor do we want them to be. Rather, the organization needs to be let loose to ride the riptides of change and move in new directions. It needs to be fast and flexible, able to change directions quickly and nimbly and to innovate continuously.[38]

---

[36] Bolman and Deal, 22.

[37] Hock, 6.

[38] Ashkenas, 104.

Hierarchical structures functioned by predicting and planning for the future. Long range planning was intended to exert control over the forces of change and establish stability by preparing for and resisting outside forces that might threaten that stability. In today's complex world, this degree of control is not possible. Lissack writes that, "Long-term forecasting is almost impossible for chaotic systems, and dramatic change can occur unexpectedly; as a result, flexibility and adaptiveness are essential for organizations to survive."[39] Today organizations need the exact opposite response to external change. Instead of trying to control change they need to be able to react and adapt to the change. Coleman writes, "The concept is to design the organization for the purpose of evolution with the changing environment, to design for emergence by avoiding the rigidities of bureaucratic hierarchy. This means creating organizational arrangements that do not inhibit evolutionary change and that accept discontinuous change in the environment as entrepreneurial opportunity."[40] Thomas Bandy adds:

> Leadership in the twenty-first century is not about *controlling* the river of change. It is about *chaos surfing*. Such leadership requires a different kind of organization. These are not organizations that try to control the flow of spiritual change. These are organizations that equip leaders to surf the turgid water to an unknown destination. In a sense, they are always building a better surfboard—not a better dike. They are unafraid of chaos. They seize chaos like a surfer grabbing the largest wave, and they ride that chaos as far as they can go.[41]

---

[39] Michael R. Lissack, "Complexity: The Science, Its Vocabulary and Its Relation to Organizations," *Emergence* 1, no. 1 (1999), 112.

[40] Henry J. Coleman Jr., "What Enables Self-Organizing Behavior in Businesses.," *Emergence* 1, no. 1 (1999), 38.

[41] Thomas G. Bandy, *Christian Chaos: Revolutionizing the Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 12. Emphasis his.

The result is that "to handle this complexity and the rapidity with which many of these factors are changing, we need to create organizations capable of meeting demands for speed, multidimensionality, flexibility, creativity, and complex solutions."[42] The challenge is where to look for a new model or perspective that is capable of handling the current levels of change and complexity in our world?

## A New Science for a New Era

During the past few decades science too has been undergoing something of a paradigm shift in how it views the universe. Scientists are questioning whether the images and metaphors of the Industrial age are still the best way to understand the world.[43] Margaret Wheatley writes, "Scientists in many different disciplines are questioning whether we can adequately explain how the world works by using the machine imagery created in the seventeenth century."[44] Lewin and Regine agree and note:

> Science, too, is in the midst of an important Kuhnian shift that parallels what is happening in business; or, more accurately, is the vanguard of that change. Where once the natural world was viewed as linear and mechanistic, where simple cause-and-effect solutions were expected to explain the complex phenomena of nature, scientists now realize that most

---

[42] Pinchot and Pinchot, 7. They go on to write that, "The organizations that are smart enough to deal with the complexity and fluidity of today's world have what computer people call a 'mutable architecture', meaning the structure shifts to face the problems at hand." Pinchot and Pinchot, 19.

[43] Stanely M. Davis writes that "The mindset that began in the universe, and wound its way through science and technology to business and organization, has reached a dead end and collapsed. It is time for a new world view." Stanley M. Davis, *Future Perfect* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1987), 197.

[44] Wheatley, 8,9.

> of the world is non-linear and organic, characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability.[45]

In contrast to the perspective of modernity, which focused on understanding things by separating them into their smallest parts, this new science seeks to understand things by focusing on the whole and by focusing on the relationships and interactions between the parts. Keene writes that, "It is evident that the mechanical and linear Newtonian approach is not the only view of the world and that of organizations."[46] This new perspective is spreading to encompass and link together many diverse fields of scientific study. New thoughts and ideas are arising from such diverse fields as quantum physics, chaos mathematics, evolutionary biology, neuroscience, cognitive science, and systems theory.[47] These new perspectives in science need to be examined because they, like the Newtonian science that preceded them, will provide the mental models, images, metaphors and pictures for the emerging culture. As Margaret Wheatley says, those seeking to build organizations for this age "need to link up once again with the vital science of our times . . . because by now scientific concepts and methods are embedded deep within our collective unconscious. We cannot escape their influence nor deny the images they have imprinted on our minds as the dominant thought structure of our society."[48] But what exactly is this new perspective?

---

[45] Lewin and Regine, 6.

[46] Keene, 16.

[47] Marshall, 177.

[48] Wheatley, 142.

## The Quantum World

As scientists continue to explore the natural world, and especially the world of the atom, it is becoming clear that there are definite limits to the application of Newtonian science. The results of research into the sub-atomic or quantum world are causing scientists to question the universal application of Newtonian science. Margaret Wheatley describes what is happening:

> In science, the beginning of the twentieth century heralded the end of Newton's domination. Discoveries of a strange world at the subatomic level could not be explained by Newtonian laws, and the path was opened for new ways of comprehending the universe. Newtonian mechanics still apply to our world and still contribute greatly to scientific advances, but a new and different science is required now to explain many phenomena. Quantum mechanics, the most successful theory ever developed in physics, does not describe a clock-like universe.[49]

H. Thomas Johnson, economic historian and former president of the Academy of Accounting Historians, describes how this new science is beginning to alter the mental models used to understand reality. He states:

> The Cartesian/Newtonian worldview has influenced thought far beyond the physical sciences, and accounting is no exception. Double entry bookkeeping and the systems of income and wealth measurement that evolved from it since the sixteenth century are eminently Cartesian and Newtonian. They are predicated on ideas such as the whole being equal to the sum of the parts and effects being the result of infinitely divisible, linear causes. . . . Quantum physicists and evolutionary biologists, among others, now believe that it is best to describe reality as a web of interconnected relationships that give rise to an ever-changing and evolving universe of objects that we perceive only partially and with our limited senses. In that 'systemic' view of the world nothing is merely the sum of the parts; parts have meaning only in reference to a greater whole in which everything is related to everything else.[50]

---

[49] Ibid., 30.

[50] Quoted in Hock, 172.

In this quantum world beliefs about objective measurement, and hence prediction and control, are challenged because "we observe a world where change happens in jumps, beyond our powers of precise prediction."[51] In this world "things have disappeared" and only relationships begin to define reality.[52] It challenges the linear and mechanistic worldview with "the conception of an ecological universe—a holistic, dynamic, and inextricably connected system in which everything seems to affect everything else."[53] Instead of seeing space as largely empty, with only isolated pieces floating around, space begins to appear as a universe of connections and why "metaphors turn to webs and weaving."[54]

Jones explains the significance of all this to those in leadership. He says, "Why should accountants [or church leaders] continue to believe that human organizations behave like machines if the scientists from whom they borrowed that mechanistic worldview now see the universe from a very different perspective?"[55] Or as Wheatley writes, "If we are to continue to draw from the sciences to create and manage organizations . . . then we need to at least ground our work in the science of the times.

---

[51] Wheatley, 20.

[52] Ibid., 32.

[53] Marshall, 181.

[54] Wheatley, 41,42.

[55] Quoted in Hock, 173.

We need to stop seeking after the universe of the seventeenth century and begin to explore what has become known to us in the twentieth century."[56]

## Complexity Theory

One branch within this new quantum science holds particular promise for developing a new paradigm from which to look at organizations. The study of complex systems, or complexity theory, has revolutionized the understanding of order and chaos.[57] Complexity theory arose as those studying systems thought to be beyond comprehension of any order, hence "chaotic systems," began to find deep patterns of unplanned order.[58] Those studying complexity theory began to find order within chaos. Snyder and Runyon write:

> Complexity theory is described as the emerging science at the edge of order and chaos. It studies the way order sometimes arises from seemingly chaotic systems. It looks at the highly complex interaction of the many factors involved in weather, economics, living cells and other systems. A complex system is one in which a great many independent agents are interacting with each other in a great many ways.[59]

These complex systems are random and unpredictable, and resist all attempts at control. They are systems that arise from the interactions of many interconnected agents.

---

[56] Wheatley, 6.

[57] Keene writes that, "The space of complexity is that state which the system occupies and which lies between order and chaos. It is a state which embraces paradox; a state where both order and chaos exist simultaneously. It is also the state in which maximum creativity and possibility exist for the system to realize and explore." Keene, 16.

[58] Work on complexity theory began to take off during the mid-1980's at New Mexico's Santa Fe Institute. See Richard T. Pascale, "Surfing the Edge of Chaos," *Sloan Management Review* 40, no. 3 (1999), 85.

[59] Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 36.

These systems produce seemingly random behavior "that cannot be predicted or even envisioned from a knowledge of what each component of a system does in isolation."[60] Understanding the parts does not lead to an understanding of the whole.

Order amidst Disorder

Complex systems (and Complexity Theory) offer two understandings of particular interest to those leading organizations. First, in complex systems, order and stability can be found within chaos. In Newtonian thinking, order and chaos were seen as mutually exclusive concepts; therefore, top-down control was essential to prevent the organization from descending into unmanageable chaos. Complexity theory, however, suggests that lack of control does not necessarily result in chaos. Instead, at times, chaos can be both ordered and stable. Leonard Sweet describes the study of complex systems as the "study of systems that are so sensitive to miniscule influences that they appear random and capricious but aren't. In fact, there is harmony amid the chaos, and stability can both inhere in and issue disorderliness."[61] Margaret Wheatley suggests that work in complexity theory "has led to a new appreciation of the relationship between order and chaos. These two forces are now understood as mirror images, one containing the other, a continual process where a system can leap into chaos and unpredictability, yet within that state be held within parameters that are well-ordered and predictable."[62]

---

[60] Lissack, 111.

[61] Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 81.

[62] Wheatley, 11.

These complex systems exhibit characteristics of both chaos and order. They balance order and predictability over the whole system while any one component within that system remains random and unpredictable. Wheatley writes, "A system is defined as chaotic when it becomes impossible to know where it will be next. There is no predictability; the system is never in the same place twice. But as chaos theory will show, if we look at such a system long enough and with the perspective of time, it always demonstrates its inherent orderliness. The most chaotic of systems never goes beyond certain boundaries."[63] Patricia Shaw calls this "order for free" where order emerges "without any central or governing control or intention."[64] Complexity theory suggests that there may be other ways to build stability and order into an organization without the need for rigid, centralized control that purchases stability at the cost of being unable to adapt to changing environmental conditions. As Lissack writes, "For 50 years organization science has focused on 'controlling uncertainty'. For the past 10 years complexity science has focused on how to understand it better so as to better 'go with the flow' and perhaps channel that flow."[65]

## Self-Organization

The second important characteristic of complex systems, closely related to the first, is the ability of these random systems to generate self-organizing behavior. Wilson

---

[63] Ibid., 20,21.

[64] Patricia Shaw, "Intervening in the Shadow Systems of Organizations: Consulting from a Complexity Perspective," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 10, no. 3 (1997), 235.

[65] Lissack, 121.

writes, "Complexity theory rests on the observation that things organize themselves through continual, very simple relationships and processes of adaptation into discernable entities. The entities themselves self-organize into greater systems. There are hierarchies of such entities from simple cells to organs to people to communities, from cells to plants and animals to forests and ecosystems."[66]

In complex systems organization is not top-down from some central leader but arises naturally within the system from the interactions of the system elements. And far from being rare, these self-organizing systems are found "everywhere, from microbes to galaxies . . . organization is a naturally occurring phenomenon."[67] Strogatz, a mathematician, agrees:

> At the heart of the universe is a steady, insistent beat: the sound of cycles in sync. It pervades nature at every scale from the nucleus to the cosmos. Every night along the tidal rivers of Malaysia, thousands of fireflies congregate in the mangroves and flash in unison, without any leader or cue from the environment. Trillions of electrons march in lockstep in a superconductor, enabling electricity to flow through it with zero resistance. . . . Even our own bodies are symphonies of rhythm, kept alive by the relentless, coordinated firing of thousands of pacemaker cells in our hearts. In every case, these feats of synchrony occur spontaneously, almost as if nature has an eerie yearning for order.[68]

One example of this self-organization is found in the colonies of fireflies in Malaysia. In the 1960s, John and Elisabeth Buck took dozens of Malaysian fireflies and

---

[66] Jonathan Wilson, "Winning through Chaos - Part 1," *Credit Control* 20, no. 4 (1999): 27,28.

[67] Margaret J. Wheatley, "Goodbye, Command and Control," in *Leader to Leader: Enduring Insights on Leadership from the Drucker Foundation's Award-Winning Journal*, ed. Frances Hesselbein and Paul M. Cohen (San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 2. Stuart Kauffman writes, "The living world is graced with a bounty of order." Kauffman, 71.

[68] Steven Strogatz, *Sync: The Emerging Science of Spontaneous Order*, First ed. (New York: Hyperion Books, 2003), 1.

released them into their darkened hotel room. At first, the fireflies flashed randomly, but as time progressed more and more fireflies began to flash in unison.[69] Strogatz comments that "out of all the hubbub, sync somehow emerges spontaneously. . . . Thus, we are led to entertain an explanation that seemed unthinkable just a few decades ago—the fireflies organize themselves. No maestro is required, and it doesn't matter what the weather is like. Sync occurs through mutual cuing, in the same way that an orchestra can keep perfect time without a conductor."[70]

This mysterious process of self-organization provides a potentially new way of looking at organizations. It offers a model and metaphor that will be able to come to grips with the complexity of the emerging culture. It offers a way to overcome the limits of modern organizational understandings. Strogatz writes that, "We're accustomed to thinking in terms of centralized control, clear chains of command, the straightforward logic of cause and effect. But in huge, interconnected systems, where every player ultimately affects every other, our standard ways of thinking fall apart. Simple pictures and verbal arguments are too feeble, too myopic."[71] Understanding organizational reality as self-organizing system presents a model that is well suited to the complexities of modern organizational life.

---

[69] This experiment is reported in Ibid., 13.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 34.

## A New Model: Self-Organizing Systems

Advances in complexity theory have given rise to understanding large, complex systems as self-organizing systems.[72] Burnham defines a self-organizing system:

> In the new science of chaos and complexity, a self-organizing system is a collection of random material entities that come together suddenly and begin to act as a single organism. These "complex systems" develop a remarkable adaptive capacity that allows them to shift on a dime in response to critical changes in their immediate environment. They also exhibit a paradoxical combination of order and freedom. Often there is a recognizable pattern to their behavior, but they are also capable of totally unpredictable control.[73]

Lewin and Regine also describe the self-organizing system:

> Simply defined, complex adaptive systems are composed of a diversity of agents that interact with each other, mutually affect each other, and in so doing generate novel behavior for the system as a whole. However, the pattern of behavior we see in these systems is not constant, because when a system's environment changes, so does the behavior of its agents, and, as a result, the behavior of the system as a whole. In other words, the system is constantly adapting to the conditions around it. Over time, it evolves through ceaseless adaptation.[74]

Self-organizing systems have two important characteristics. First, order is generated from the interactions of the whole system, rather than from a central position. The Pinchots write, "A self-organizing system is a system made up of autonomous units that by virtue of their relationships with one another create a system wide order. It happens without the need for an ordering authority outside the system or a point from

---

[72] These systems are also called "complex adaptive systems," "dissipative structures," and even "chaordic systems." Throughout this project they will be called self-organizing systems except when quoting other authors.

[73] Frederic B. Burnham, *Cops and Burgers* [Web Site Article] (2002, accessed February 2 2006); available from http://www.spiritualityhealth.com/NMagazine/articles.php?id=492.

[74] Lewin and Regine, 6.

which order emanates within the system."[75] Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel point to a flock of birds as an example of this kind self-organizing system. In the flock, "there is no single, organizing bird leader. Rather a pattern of organization develops from local interactions among agents, apparently following simple rules."[76] Margaret Wheatley calls this "order for free" and writes:

> As a living system self-organizes, it develops shared understanding of what's important, what's acceptable behavior, what actions are required, and how these actions will get done. It develops channels of communication, networks of workers and complex physical structures. And as the system develops, new capacities emerge from living and working together. Looking at this list of what a self-organizing system creates leads to the realization that the system can do for itself most of what leaders have felt was necessary to do to the systems they control.[77]

The second important characteristic is that self-organizing systems have the ability to adapt quickly to changes in their environment. As Shaw states, these systems "learn in both simple and complex ways."[78] Axelrod expands on this:

> The primary characteristics of complex adaptive systems are learning and adaptability, spontaneously self-organization, and phenomena that emerge from interactions among the agents, but are not features of the independent agents working alone. Together these characteristics allow the system to evolve and improve its performance in changing environments. These features are particularly attractive for large or complex organizations that need to rapidly adapt to changing situations.[79]

---

[75] Pinchot and Pinchot, 50.

[76] Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel Jr., "Organizational Response to Complexity," 579.

[77] Wheatley, "Goodbye, Command and Control," 22.

[78] Shaw, 237,238.

[79] Norman N. Axelrod, "Embracing Technology: The Application of Complexity Theory to Business," *Strategy & Leadership* 27, no. 6 (1999), 56.

Beam correctly notes that these two characteristics overlap and support each other. He writes that self-organizing systems tend "to move toward and maintain an optimal type of order. This place of optimal order—the 'sweet spot'—is a mixture of stability and chaos that provides both consistent form on the basis of which new order can evolve and sufficient flexibility to adapt to changes in the surrounding environment."[80] To see how these systems can help in understanding organizations some key characteristics of self-organizing systems need to be examined in more detail.

## Characteristics of Self-Organizing Systems

Self-organizing systems have some unique characteristics that are of great significance to those seeking new forms of organizational structures in the emerging culture. A brief summary of these follows.

### Stability Found in Strong Identity

Self-organizing systems are able to find stability amidst chaos not because order is mandated by a controlling agency or hierarchical structure, but because the system is anchored by strong sense of its own identity. Marshall writes, "Identity is the principle that is most fundamental to all self-organizing systems. It encompasses the organization's meaning, purpose, and intentionality and provides the coherence around which the system stability emerges."[81] These systems find stability through a principle called self-

---

[80] Henry H. Beam, "The Biology of Business: Decoding the Natural Laws of Enterprise," *Academy of Management Executive* 14, no. 1 (2000), 159.

[81] Marshall, 185.

reference.[82] When faced with changes in the environment the system adapts along with it, but it only changes in ways that are consistent with its own identity. Wheatley writes, "As it changes, it does so by referring to itself; whatever future form it takes will be consistent with its already established identity. Changes do not occur randomly, in any direction. They are always consistent with what has gone on before, with the history and the identity of the system."[83] In other words, while the system has the freedom to move in many different directions, making short-term prediction impossible, it will not exceed definite boundaries. Wheatley writes, "The system has infinite possibilities, wandering wherever it pleases, sampling new configurations of itself. But its wandering and experimentation respect a boundary."[84] This produces a paradoxical effect. Self-organizing systems exhibit great stability over the long term and in the big picture, yet remain highly reactive and adaptable in the short term. In fact, self-organizing systems find stability by being uncontrolled. System stability is maintained by allowing change and adaptability along the edges of the system. Wheatley writes, "Small, local disturbances are not suppressed; there is no central command control that prohibits small, constant changes. The system allows for many levels of autonomy within itself, and for

---

[82] So states Margaret Wheatley. "The motion of these systems is kept in harmony by a force we are just beginning to appreciate: the capacity for self-reference. Instead of whirling off in different directions, each part of the system must remain consistent with itself and with all other parts of the system as it changes." Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 146.

[83] Ibid., 94.

[84] Ibid., 123.

small fluctuations and changes. By tolerating these, it is able to preserve global stability and integrity in the environment."[85]

This bounded randomness is seen in two unique phenomena of self-organizing systems, the strange attractor and the fractal. As the movements of a self-organizing system are plotted over time, randomness begins to give way to a shape. And "an order to this disorder emerges. The chaotic movements of the system have a shape. The shape is a 'strange attractor' and what has appeared . . . is the order inherent in chaos."[86] The system may be at any place within that shape but will never land outside of it. Stuart Kauffman suggests these strange attractors are "tiny attractors" but produce "vast, vast order."[87] He writes, "The trajectory [output of the system] converges onto a state-cycle attractor around which the system will cycle persistently thereafter. A variety of different trajectories may all converge on the same state cycle, like water draining into a lake."[88]

A second ordering phenomenon is that of the fractal. A fractal is found when a simple structure is repeated on different levels throughout a system. As Cole says, fractals are "simple repeating designs found in much of creation. Each unit has similar patterns and similar purposes. This design can be seen in the most obvious external appearance, all the way down to the microscopic features of the organism. Rock crystals,

---

[85] Ibid., 95. Wheatley goes on to quote Jantsch who relates this principle this way: "The more freedom in self-organization, the more order. Quoted in Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 95.

[86] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 122.

[87] Kauffman, 102.

[88] Ibid., 100.

snowflakes and leaves all demonstrate such a pattern."[89] Fractals and strange attractors are both evidence of the order found amidst the randomness of self-organizing systems.

The Pinchots point out the significance of this for organizations. They write, "The fact that none of the most complex systems is organized by chain of command is damaging to the basic assumption of bureaucracy—namely, that hierarchy and rigid control are necessary to create order. Just the reverse turns out to be true."[90] The reality is more freedom given to the organization, coupled with a strong central identity produces the strongest stability. Wheatley calls this the "strange and promising paradox" of self-organizing systems.[91] She writes, "Clarity about who we are as a group creates freedom for individual contributions. People exercise that freedom in the service of the organization, and their capacity to respond and change becomes a capability of the whole organization."[92] The independence of human nature and the corrupting power of sin may make this a more complicated process in human organisms than in simple biological organisms. However, if people are given a clear identity and purpose they can begin to act in self-organizing ways. Leaders can assist people in this by giving them a few simple principles instead of detailed procedures.

---

[89] Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 128.

[90] Pinchot and Pinchot, 51.

[91] Wheatley, "Goodbye, Command and Control," 4.

[92] Ibid.

## Guided by Simple Rules

Hierarchical structures excel at maintaining control through standardized policies and procedures. Control is established by providing detailed rules to be followed in all situations. These structures assume that these detailed procedures are the only way to ensure organizational order and control. Self-organizing systems suggest that complex procedures are not the only way to ensure control. As Keene writes, "The study of complexity further reveals that complexity is in fact the result of simplicity. A complex system is governed by only a few rules."[93] The abstinence of detailed controls is what gives self-organizing systems their ability to adapt and respond quickly to changes in the environment. At the same time, the few, guiding rules, based on the systems central identity, create the stability on which the system is centered. Wheatley writes, "A self-organizing system has the freedom to grow and evolve, guided only by one rule: It must remain consistent with itself and its past. The presence of this guiding rule allows for both creativity and boundaries, for evolution and coherence, for determinism and free will."[94]

## Thrive On Change

One of the most common characteristics of modern organizations is a built-in fear of change. This fear is heavily influenced by the science inherent in the Second Law of Thermodynamics. This understanding of the universe as a closed system, inevitably

---

[93] Keene: 16. Margaret Wheatley writes, "In many systems, the scientists now understand that order and conformity and share are created not by complex controls, but by the presence of a few guiding formulae or principles." Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 11.

[94] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 135.

wearing down to death led to the thinking that stability and equilibrium were the most desired state. Wheatley writes, "In a universe that is on a relentless road to death, we live in great fear. Perhaps we become so fearful of change because it uses up valuable energy and leaves us only with entropy. Staying put or keeping in balance are our means of defense against the eroding forces of nature."[95]

Self-organizing systems, however, maintain a different relationship with their environment. Instead of systems doomed to decay self-organizing systems are open to their environment and can use this interaction to produce new energy and life across the system. This process, called *autopoiesis*, from the Greek word for self-production, is the ability of "living systems to continuously renew themselves and to regulate this process in such a way that the integrity of the structure is maintained."[96] Instead of change bringing disorder and death self-organizing systems see change as critical to their long-term health by bringing energy into the system. Scientists sometimes call these systems dissipative structures because they dissipate energy in order to re-create and renew themselves into new forms of organization. As changes hit the system the system re-configures to deal with and produce energy from the change. For self-organizing systems change is not something to be avoided but something to be embraced. Self-organizing systems "demonstrate that *disorder* can be a source of *order,* and that growth is found in disequilibrium, not in balance. The things most feared in organizations—fluctuations, disturbances, imbalances—need not be signs of impending disorder that will destroy us.

---

[95] Ibid., 77.

[96] Ibid., 78.

Instead, fluctuations are the primary source of creativity."[97] Kauffman notes that creativity is found most when systems exist between order and chaos.[98] The result is that by seeking to control and minimize all change and disorder organizations have been unable to draw upon the creative energies inherent within them. Margaret Wheatley says, "It is both sad and ironic that we have treated organizations like machines, acting as though they were dead when all this time they've been living, open systems capable of self-renewal."[99] Self-organizing systems are able to respond to change in this way if there is enough information and feedback flow throughout the system.

## Feed On Information and Feedback

Self-organizing systems are extremely reliant on the amount of information flowing through the system. The ability of any system to be self-organizing is dependent on the "rate of flow of information and energy in the system, the richness of connectivity and the diversity of agents in the network."[100] Information often takes the form of feedback loops as information in one part of the system spreads and affects other parts of the system. As the system experiences change, the resulting ripples spread throughout the organization producing yet more change. Leonard Sweet calls this "double loop learning" and writes that, "Simple interactions can alter the emergent order, which in turn

---

[97] Ibid., 20.

[98] He writes "We will find an ordered regime where poor compromises for the entire organization are found, a chaotic regime where no solution is ever agreed on, and phase transition between order and chaos where excellent solutions are found rapidly." Kauffman, 247.

[99] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 77.

[100] Shaw, 244.

influences the whole through successive feedback loops that spiral upward."[101] Kauffman describes this as "all the agents in a system that is trying to coordinate behavior let other agents knows what is happening to them. The receivers of this information use it to decide what they are going to do. The receivers base decisions on some overall specification of 'team' goal. This, it is hoped, achieves coordination."[102]

For these feedback loops to function there must be continual and free flow of information throughout the system. Wheatley writes:

> In a constantly evolving, dynamic universe, information is the fundamental ingredient, the key source of structuration...For a system to remain alive, for the universe to move onward, information must be continually generated. If there is nothing new, or if the information that exists merely confirms what is, then the result will be death...the fuel of life is new information—novelty—ordered into new structures...we need to have information coursing through our systems, disturbing the peace, imbuing everything it touches with new life.[103]

Self-organizing systems rely on information to provide the energy and creativity that allows the system to adapt quickly to its environment.

## Very Responsive to the Environment

Self-organizing systems have the capability to respond very quickly to changes in the environment. Rather than fighting against the environment, seeking to impose control over it, self-organizing systems adapt and change to make the most of their environment. In traditional thinking it was believed that "to maintain our identity and individuality, we

---

[101] Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Manana: Is Your Church Ready to Seize Tomorrow?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 94.

[102] Kauffman, 267, 268.

[103] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 104, 105.

must protect ourselves from the demands of external forces . . . but in the world of self-organizing structures, we learn that useful boundaries develop through openness to the environment."[104] Wheatley writes that self-organizing systems have an "internal capacity to create structures that fit the moment . . . the system possesses the capacity for spontaneously emerging structures depending on what is required. It is not locked into any one form but instead is capable of organizing information in the structure that best suits the present need."[105] Because self-organizing systems are much more responsive to their environment they are better able to manage change than traditional organizations. Coleman writes:

> Models of organizations that are based on living systems are naturally organic and adaptive. This is in contrast to the mechanistic models of bureaucracy, where discontinuous change requires a complete overhaul of the organization if it is to survive . . . adaptive change by organic systems rarely needs to be radical, even when there is discontinuous change in the environment because the interface between the organization and its environment is on the edge of chaos. Cellular organizations tend to mirror the complexity of the environment with requisite variety, as individual cells sense new entrepreneurial opportunities and self-organize in response to change.[106]

At the same time the system is not overrun by change as it retains its basic identity within itself. Hence, self-organizing systems have both the stability and flexibility needed to continually adapt to the environment without losing its foundation.

---

[104] Ibid., 91.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Coleman Jr., 43,44.

Self-organizing systems have the "paradoxical feature of continuity and novelty, identity and difference, at the same time."[107]

Self-organizing systems, based on the emerging science of complexity theory, present a new, more culturally-suited model for looking at organizations. More, the idea of self-organizing systems matches well with the current shift in understanding of organizations as more living organisms then static machines.

**The Organization as a Self-Organizing System**

It is interesting to see how these concepts from self-organizing systems parallel how organizations are increasingly seen in the emerging culture. Margaret Wheatley states, "Our concept of organizations is moving away from the mechanistic creations that flourished in the age of bureaucracy. We have begun to speak in earnest of more fluid, organic structures, even boundaryless organizations."[108] Shaw writes, "Social systems can be thought of also as complex adaptive systems, in which agents may be individuals and groups interacting in co-evolving sense-making and active contexts. Peculiarly human characteristics only add to the potential complexity without changing the fundamental dynamics."[109]

---

[107] Ralph Stacey, "The Emergence of Knowledge in Organizations," *Emergence* 2, no. 4 (2000), 35,36.

[108] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 13.

[109] Shaw, 238. Lewin and Birute state the same thing, "The point is that business organizations are also complex adaptive systems. This means that what complexity scientists are learning about natural systems has the potential to illuminate the fundamental dynamics of business organizations." Lewin and Regine, 7.

Increasingly culture is moving away from the machine perspective of the Newtonian age and towards a more organic, living systems perspective. Leonard Sweet writes, "The Newtonian coloration of the modern world as Clockwork Orange is being replaced with a Web Green view of the universe marked by interweaving, intricacy, collaboration, and self-organization."[110] Dee Hock writes, "Whether biological or social, whether organism or organization, all things are living processes, not constructed mechanisms, and none can be made to behave as though they were machines, in spite of all our illusions to the contrary."[111]

Examining organizations from the standpoint of self-organizing systems makes sense due to the chaotic pace of change in the emerging culture. As Dolan, Garcia, and Auerbach write, "Turbulent environments are a rule in this world, not an exception. Thus, the best way to deal with it is not by going against chaotic behavior trying to control it, but by developing an understanding of its characteristics that allows the possibility of following its natural flow."[112] Self-organizing systems provide a model to handle this rapid change. Bolman and Deal write, "The self-organizing network's bias toward decentralization, teaming, cross-functional, and cross-geographical work makes it well attuned to the conditions of complexity and change."[113]

---

[110] Sweet, *Carpe Manana*, 159. Marshall talks of the "paradigm shift from a machine-based 'clockwork' conception of the universe to a complex adaptive system perspective." Marshall, 178.

[111] Hock, 177.

[112] S. L. Dolan, Garcia S., and Auerbach A., "Understanding and Managing Chaos in Organisations," *International Journal of Management* 20, no. 1 (2003), 26.

[113] Bolman and Deal, 47.

Increasingly organizations are being viewed not as machines but as self-organizing systems. Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel suggest that "all organizations are complex adaptive systems, that continuously self-organize and co-evolve."[114] Bolman and Deal state that organizations "function like complex, constantly changing, organic pinball machines."[115] As self-organizing systems, organizations "gather information about their surroundings, themselves and their own behavior and then use this information for adapting and co-evolving with their environment."[116] Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel go on to say that organizations self-organize, "which means that by relying on the web of connections they have the capacity to reconfigure connections and activities. The benefit of self-organizing is an organizational structure that is fluid, yet sensitive to the needs of connected elements."[117]

Seeing organizations as self-organizing systems requires a whole new approach to structure, leadership and management. It requires that leaders approach organizations with a different worldview, and with a different set of goals and objectives, to be met with a new set of tools. But it offers a new perspective that arises from the most current scientific thought, and is a model that is ideally suited to the complexity and rapid change

---

[114] Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel Jr., "Organizational Response to Complexity," 578. Ashmos and others say the same thing in Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 191. "Complexity theory suggests that all organizations are complex adaptive systems that continuously self-organize and co-evolve."

[115] Bolman and Deal, 217.

[116] Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel Jr., "Organizational Response to Complexity," 578. Coleman agrees, "Complexity theory views organizations as 'complex adaptive systems' that coevolve [sic] with the environment through the self-organizing behavior of agents navigating fitness landscapes of market opportunities and competitive dynamics." Coleman Jr., 33.

[117] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 192.

of the emerging culture. As Ashmos and colleagues write, "We propose that complexity theory can be applied successfully to organizations, and it will suggest management practices very different from those prescribed by machine models."[118] Leading an organization from the perspective of a self-organizing system requires seeing the organization from a new perspective, and a new set of skills, goals and objectives.

### Leading the Organization As a Self-Organizing System

Leaders of organizations understood their task to be one of management of the resources and people of an organization toward a specific goal. Their task was to set the direction of the organization, assign objectives to subordinates, and to create the procedures and policies that would control and direct the organization. Their role was one of aligning the organization through command and control hierarchies and standardized procedures. Understanding the organization as a self-organizing system will require a completely new set of skills and a new understanding of the role of the leader.[119] It requires the leader to understand the characteristics of a self-organizing system and to undertake roles and tasks that will enhance and encourage those characteristics. Knowles

---

[118] Ibid., 190.

[119] For example, Lichtenstein suggests four characteristics of self-organizing systems that need to be understood as managers. First, change is a constant and the organization is always in motion, therefore managers must shift from maintaining control to supporting the environment. Second, organizations are not reducible to their parts and the parts cannot explain the whole therefore managers must have a holistic, organic view. Third, the elements in a self-organizing system are mutually dependent, therefore relationships between parts are all important. Fourth, self-organizing systems behave in non-proportional ways therefore small interventions can have large outcomes. Mangers then need not implement large change to be effective, but small but well designed interventions and create large outcomes. Each of these will be discussed further in the section below. Benyamin M. Bergmann Lichtenstein, "Emergence as a Process of Self Organizing: New Assumptions and Insights from the Study of Non-Linear Dynamic Systems," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 13, no. 6 (2000), 527, 528.

writes, "Reliability, stability, predictability, and control are great for machines, but people and organizations are not machines."[120]

## Focus More on Relationships than Parts

The machine view of organizations focused on separating the organization into distinct parts and then ensuring each part was functioning at high efficiency. This efficiency required the parts to be kept separate from each other with rigid boundaries and treated as isolated units. Communication between parts was directed by the hierarchical structure and chain of command. Dave Fleming writes, "Hierarchy has been the dominant way we've viewed relationships of leadership and followership (top down). In this system people related to each other based on their positions in the hierarchy."[121] Ashmos and colleagues describe well the traditional organization:

> The intricate rule systems of the machine model minimize connections among agents. Machine model rule systems separate agents from another, minimize agent participation in decision-making, and rely on elaborate control mechanisms to ensure that the agents separated from each other are following the rules. In these systems highly standardized procedures serve as coordinating mechanisms and decision rules for agents operating in a system where each element is tightly controlled.[122]

Understanding the organization as an organic self-organizing system requires that leaders have a more holistic view that focuses on the relationships between all the parts of the system. Lewin and Regine write that:

---

[120] Richard N. Knowles, "Self-Organizing Leadership: A Way of Seeing What Is Happening in Organizations and a Pathway to Coherence," *Emergence* 3, no. 4 (2001), 116.

[121] Dave Fleming, *Stream Thinking: A New Way to Think About an Old Problem* [Email] (2004, accessed June 23 2004).

[122] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 195.

> We found in our work that this new science leads to a new theory of business that places relationships—how people interact with each other, the kinds of relationships they form—in dramatic relief. In a linear world, things may exist independently of each other, and when they interact, they do so in simple, predictable ways. In a nonlinear, dynamic world, everything exists only in relationship to everything else, and the interactions among agents in the system lead to complex, unpredictable outcomes.[123]

Davis states much the same thing when he writes, "Industrial organization structures, like buildings, are a hierarchy of boxes and lines. 2001 organization structures, like atoms, are a network of relationships."[124] Marshall calls these relationships the "neural network" of the organization for "they establish the organization's capacity for participation, engagement, and interconnectedness."[125]

In a self-organizing system, healthy relationships enhance the systems ability to adapt and react to change and leads to increased levels of creativity that allows the system to function effectively. Snyder and Runyon write, "Relationships should be basic to all our structuring. In practice we often put structure ahead of relationships, or we over-structure and thereby over-complicate our relationships."[126] When relationships are strengthened; however, the whole system is strengthened. Lewin and Regine write, "Interactions and connections among agents of a system are the source of novelty, creativity and adaptability. In this way mutual relationships are the organizing principle

---

[123] Lewin and Regine, 12,13.

[124] Davis, 77.

[125] Marshall, 187.

[126] Snyder and Runyon, 39.

in businesses as [self-organizing] systems."[127] The Pinchots suggest that leaders focus "on the relationship among parts rather than on detailed analysis of each part. Changing key relationships can alter the whole behavior of a system, which is why scientists look to relationships to find the key leverage points for changing system performance. Thus building a better system begins with improving the quality and productivity of the relationships in it."[128] Lewin and Regine agree and note that in their research leaders had found "relationships had become the new bottom line, not only for humanistic reasons, but as a way to promote adaptability and business success . . . relationships in these organizations became a source that released enormous energy that ultimately enabled the organization to evolve."[129]

## Surrender the Need for Control

Leaders seeking to switch their view of the organization from that of a machine to a living, self-organizing system will have to deal with the issue of control. The machine organization was built on the foundation of predictability, stability, order, and control. The leader was assumed to be "in control" and leaders developed large bodies of rules, policies and procedures all designed to maintain control. As Senge writes, "In hierarchical organizations leaders give orders and others follow."[130]

---

[127] Lewin and Regine, 12,13.

[128] Pinchot and Pinchot, 282.

[129] Lewin and Regine, 14.

[130] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline the Arts and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York City: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 290.

Control in a self-organizing system looks very different. Self-organizing systems function best when on the boundary between control and chaos. Leaders must become comfortable with an element of disorder and with the knowledge that they will lack total control of the organization. Robert Swiggett, retired CEO of Kollmorgen Corporation, states, "In moving from the traditional authoritarian, hierarchical organization to a locally controlled organization the single greatest issue is control."[131] Lewin and Regine, in their study of leaders, noticed that this was a big issue but that overcoming it had a big payoff. They write, "Giving up control is the toughest thing to do for a leader, which all the leaders in these organization admitted. But in their efforts to let go, they learned something else: flexibility and patience, are apt qualities for our complex times."[132]

Instead of seeking over-arching control, leaders of self-organizing systems understand that disorder is necessary to create the energy and creativity that allows the organization to adapt to its environment. They understand the paradoxical truth that giving up control can actually lead to a more stable organization. They understand that self-organizing systems operate on the boundary of chaos and order.[133] Dee Hock created the term "chaordic" to describe this kind of organization. He decided on this term because "such systems are believed to emerge in the narrow phase between chaos and order."[134] He defines a chaordic system as "any self-organizing, self-governing, adaptive,

---

[131] Quoted in Ibid.

[132] Lewin and Regine, 18.

[133] Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 81.

[134] Hock, 27.

nonlinear, complex organism, organization, community or system, whether physical, biological or social, the behavior of which harmoniously combines characteristics of both chaos and order."[135]

Leaders of self-organizing systems understand that order can emerge without control, and can emerge from within the organization. Ashmos and colleagues describe what happens this way: "Self-organizing occurs when connections and interactions among group members produce coherent behavior, even in the absence of hierarchy which in the machine model is used to ensure order. These patterns of coherent behavior can be spontaneous, that is, not decreed by any individual."[136] Herb Kelleher is an example of this kind of leader. He says, "A financial analyst once asked me if I was afraid of losing control of our organization. I told him, 'I've never had control and I never wanted it. If you create an environment where people truly participate, you don't control."[137]

If leaders are going to give up control they will also need to learn to disperse authority throughout the system.

## Disperse Authority

In hierarchical organizations authority was something to be prized, protected and used by those at the top of the organization in order to control and direct those below them in the hierarchy. Ray Stata, CEO of Analog Devices, describes the traditional

---

[135] Ibid., 30.

[136] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 197.

[137] Quoted in Ibid., 203.

organization well. He says, "In the traditional hierarchical organization, the top thinks and the local acts."[138] Rules, procedures, and chains of command all ensured that no part of the system exceeded its authority.[139] In self-organizing systems, authority must be dispersed from the center to the edges if the system is going to have the freedom to adapt and evolve as necessary. Freedom without the authority to act is only an illusion. Leaders in self-organizing organizations will need to ensure that authority is decentralized and dispersed throughout the system. A major step needed to move an organization towards self-organization is "the decentralization of power: Moving to the periphery decisions that were once part of the center's monopoly of power."[140]

This decentralization of power must go farther than simply shifting authority from one part of the bureaucracy to another. It must instead push authority as close to the edge of the system as possible. The Pinchots state:

> [T]he next step beyond classic decentralization takes organizations not to a better decentralized bureaucracy but instead to ending reliance on the chain of command as the fundamental instrument of integration and control. The new systems of control are decentralized in a different sense: They rely on establishing the conditions under which the self-determined choices of smaller units create an order and a pattern of integration more effective than any that could be designed or administered from above.[141]

---

[138] Quoted in Senge, 288.

[139] During the author's days as a loans officer with the Royal Bank of Canada this was driven home many times. During training and orientation it was driven home that the worst thing loans officers could do, second only perhaps to stealing, was to grant credit in excess of the authorized lending limit without approval. Authority excesses were considered to be a cause for immediate dismissal.

[140] Pinchot and Pinchot, 103.

[141] Ibid., 104.

Peter Senge agrees, "Many writers on organizational theory have used the metaphor of 'organization as organism' to suggest an entirely different image for organizational control from that of traditional authoritarian hierarchy. It is the image of local control—countless local decision-making processes that continually respond to changes, so as to maintain healthy conditions for stability and growth."[142]

Self-organizing is most effective when the edges of the system have the authority and freedom to act in creative and innovative ways. Ashmos and colleagues write, "Complex and timely adaptive behaviors can best be achieved from organizational processes that are free of elaborate, restrictive rules and control features, because elaborate rules and control systems restrict both creative thinking and action. Instead the organization needs simple, flexible rule systems which both generate large behavioral repertoires and can be applied quickly."[143]

One method organizations have used to retain authority was to divide the organization into various departments and to restrict connections and information from flowing between these segmented parts. This was done largely to reap the benefits of specialization however the cost was often disrupted information flows and a rigidity of thought and action. Organizations structured as self-organizing systems will look for ways to lower these boundaries to enable rich cross connections between all parts of the organization. Coleman writes, "Behavior is self-organizing when people (agents) are free to network with others and pursue their objectives, even if this involves crossing

---

[142] Senge, 293.

[143] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 196.

organizational boundaries created by formal structures."[144] Ashkenas calls this the "boundaryless organization" and says that, "No longer will organizations use boundaries to separate people, tasks, processes, and places; instead the focus will be on how to permeate those boundaries—to quickly move ideas, information, decisions, talent, rewards, and actions to where they are most needed."[145]

Dispersing authority is not the same as creating anarchy nor does it mean that the organization is without control and rudderless. Peter Senge points out that in many self-organizing systems such as the human body, decentralized authority actually results in more control. He writes, "Just because no one is 'in control' does not mean that there is no 'control'. In fact, all healthy organisms have processes of control. However, they are distributed processes, not concentrated in any one authoritarian decision maker."[146] Senge uses the example of the human immune system as just such one system of distributed authority. When an infection strikes the body the immune system in whatever part of the body that is attacked leaps into action without waiting for guidance or direction from any central mind or authority.[147] This leads to a natural question. Organizations are not exactly like a human body. If leaders don't control their organizations how is the organization kept from spiraling into chaos? What keeps the organization coherent and on track?

---

[144] Coleman Jr., 33,34.

[145] Ashkenas, 103,104.

[146] Senge, 292.

[147] Ibid.

Stability Centered on Identity (Mission/Purpose/Values)

In self-organizing systems leaders are willing to surrender the need for complete control of everything that happens in the organization. This does not mean that leaders have no role to play in ensuring order and stability within the system. In the self-organizing system the leader contributes to the stability of the organization by ensuring that the central identity of the organization; its mission, purpose and values are foundation of the entire system. In fact, "precisely because there will be so much ambiguity, so much flexibility, so many variations, far more clarity will be needed in respect to mission, values, and strategy."[148]

This is because the mission, purpose and values become the central identity around which the system will evolve. Earlier it was noted that self-organizing systems maintain their stability by self-referencing, and an organization's mission, purpose and values produce the same effect. Wheatley writes, "In human organizations, a clear sense of identity—of the values, traditions, aspirations, competencies, and culture that guide the operation—is the real source of independence from the environment. When the environment demands a new response, there is a reference point for change."[149] Bill O'Brien, CEO of Hanover Corporation, states, "In the traditional authoritarian

---

[148] Hesselbein, 4.

[149] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 94.

organization, the dogma was managing, organizing and controlling. In the learning organization, the new dogma will be vision, values, and mental models."[150]

Instead of relying on detailed procedures and policies to direct the organization leaders rely on the mission, vision and values of the organization to lead people to make decisions in the best interest of the organization as a whole. Keene describes what needs to happen:

> We may begin to realize the importance of vision, values and guiding principles of the organization as the steering mechanism for the organization and not relegate these to the bottom of the drawer, but ensure these are known and shared by all and create the passion we need to create realities beyond the mundane. All decisions and actions will be influenced by these few rules—rules which will include the values and beliefs and vision of the organization which will permeate every fiber of the organization.[151]

Margaret Wheatley agrees, "If people are clear about the purpose and true values of their organization—if they understand what their organization stands for and who it shows itself to be through its actions—their individual tinkering will result in systemwide coherence."[152] Dolan, Garcia, and Auerbach refer to this as "management by values." They write, "Values are the framework of this structure; they are the glue that holds an organization together when confronted with chaos and the need for change."[153]

In the self-organizing system a clearly understood sense of identity anchored in the organization's mission, vision and values replaces the controls of the bureaucratic

---

[150] Quoted in Senge, 181.

[151] Keene, 16.

[152] Wheatley, "Goodbye, Command and Control," 24.

[153] Dolan, S., and A.: 34.

institution. Thom Peters writes that an inspiring vision and clear values "replaces traditional controls by means of written policy directives filtering down from a remote headquarters."[154] In other words, "the vision must supplant the rule book and the policy manual."[155]

The key is that this central identity is not maintained by external controls or by downward pressure from a hierarchical structure. Instead the identity is established in every part of the system, "within every employee."[156] This central identity "guides members towards a common goal without compulsion, and it has shared values that define the boundaries of acceptable behavior."[157]

This central identity is what enables the organization to tolerate the disorder and experimentation that allows it to respond quickly to changes. It frees the organization to react to the environment and yet provides the anchor that keeps the organization stable at the core. And this ability to react quickly is exactly what organizations in the emerging culture require. Peters states that, "In times of turbulence, we must be able to take instant action on the front line. But to support such action-taking at the front, everyone must have a clear understanding about what the organization is trying to achieve."[158]

---

[154] Peters, 49.

[155] Ibid., 482. Peters quotes an unnamed executive at Tandem Corporation who says, "The controls are not a lot of reviews or meetings or reports, but rather the control is understanding the basic concept and philosophy of the company." Peters, 489.

[156] Beam, 160. Davis reveals the depth of the challenge facing leaders when he asks, "Currently, how many employees carry out their jobs every day with a clear idea of the organization's fundamental purpose? How much stronger would an organization be if they had this perception?" Davis, 32.

[157] Pinchot and Pinchot, 68.

[158] Peters, 482.

In a very real sense this central identity of mission, vision and values act as the strange attractor of the organization and can even produce fractal like results. Margaret Wheatley writes:

> The very best organizations have a fractal quality to them. An observer of such an organization can tell what the organization's values and ways of doing business are by watching anyone, whether it be a production floor employee or senior manager. There is a consistency and predictability to the quality of behavior. No matter where we look in these organizations, self-similarity is found in its people, in spite of the complex range of roles and levels.[159]

Knowles agrees and notes he found similar patterns in two stores of a single company on two different continents. He writes, "When I told the story of the first store in Australia, the people in the group immediately recognized the behavior and correctly identified the company. I was just talking about the store in Niagara Falls, NY and yet here were similar patterns showing up halfway around the world. The patterns are quite fractal."[160] Dolan, Garcia, and Auerbach call this the "strange attractor of values." They write, "Basic beliefs and values that form its organizational culture are the parameters that will lead the company to its success (or not) in the long term. Values will guide people's behavior and work conduct into achieving the desired results, just as do the attractors. There's a strong analogy between the organization values and strange attractors; both lead a system to its aimed status."[161]

---

[159] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 132.

[160] Knowles, 115.

[161] Dolan, S., and A., 30.

Organizations led as self-organizing systems will rely on their mission, vision, and values to provide direction and outline the boundaries within which the system can operate freely. Wheatley writes:

> Fractal organizations, thought they may never heard of the word, *fractal*, have learned to trust in natural organizing phenomena. They trust in the power of guiding principles or values, knowing that they are strong enough influencers of behavior to shape every employee into a desired representative of the organization. These organizations expect to see similar behaviors show up at every level in the organization because those behaviors were patterned into the organizing principles at the very start.[162]

This guiding activity of the mission, vision and values means that leaders can give their organizations the freedom to adapt and make changes, without rigid supervision, knowing and trusting that those changes will not go outside the parameters set by the central identity. Again, Margaret Wheatley:

> When a meaning attractor is in place in an organization, employees can be trusted to move freely, drawn in many directions by their energy and creativity. There is no need to insist, through regimentation or supervision, that any two individuals act in precisely the same way. We know they will be affected and shaped by the attractor, their behavior never going out of bounds.[163]

Dick Knowles of Du Pont uses a metaphor of a bowl to explain how this works. He says, "The bowl is a safe container that gives people freedom to experiment, to create improvements, but it also provides order at the same time."[164] He created this "bowl" by involving many people in a conversation about the values, mission, and principles of the

---

[162] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 132.

[163] Ibid., 136.

[164] Quoted in Lewin and Regine, 20.

organization from which a "collective vision" emerged.[165] This central identity formed the bottom of the bowl, and the values and principles the sides, keeping everyone centered on the identity of the organization. This process reflects again the paradox found in self-organizing systems that order is found in freedom. Wheatley explains:

> Here is another critical paradox: The two forces that we have always placed in opposition to one another—freedom and order—turn out to be partners in generating viable, well-ordered, autonomous systems. If we allow autonomy at the local level, letting individuals or units be directed in their decisions by guideposts for organizational self-reference, we can achieve coherence and continuity. Self-organization succeeds when the system supports the independent activity of its members by giving them, quite literally, a strong frame of reference. When it does this, the global system achieves even greater levels of autonomy and integrity.[166]

Using the metaphor of the DNA of biological cells, Coleman describes how this freedom with boundaries works. He writes:

> The "organic" model of format structure enables employees to pursue a shared direction through self-control. Such direction is innate in the identity of the firm, guided by the corporate equivalent of DNA, as each cell embraces an entrepreneurial vision. By weaving the sense of purpose into the structure of the organization, organic models like the cellular firm do not need visionary leaders to control them; rather, they need senior managers to act as the central nervous system by coordinating the activities of the parts and monitoring the overall health of the system so that each cell is free to be entrepreneurial.[167]

Ashmos and colleagues summarize it well: "Individual freedom leads to global stability."[168]

---

[165] Ibid.

[166] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 95.

[167] Coleman Jr., 39.

[168] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 198.

Leaders in self-organizing systems play an important role in ensuring that each member of the organization has absorbed the mission, vision, and values. They make sure that each person is also absorbed into the identity of the organization. In addition leaders must make sure that the various parts of the organization have all the information they need to make the most effective local decisions, thereby leading to self-organizing behavior.

## Spread Information across the System

In the previous examination of self-organizing systems communication and information were determined to be critical. In the example of the Malaysian fireflies the fireflies could only coordinate their flashing if they could see each other, that is, if there was information flow across the system. Margaret Wheatley writes that an organization can only self-organize:

> If it has access to new information, both about external factors and internal resources. It must constantly process this data with high levels of self-awareness, plentiful sensing devices, and a strong capacity for reflection. Combing through this constantly changing information, the organization can determine what choices are available, and what resources to rally in the response. This is very different from the more traditional organizational response to information, where priority is given to maintaining existing operational forms and information is made available to fit the structure so that little change is required.[169]

The parts of the system, the individuals within the organization, can only make effective decisions if they have sufficient information to work with. As the Pinchots state, "To work, freedom requires well-informed people. We cannot expect individuals to use

---

[169] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 91.

freedom effectively if they are kept in the dark. Intellect functions most effectively when it has good information to work with."[170] They go on to suggest that information is the equivalent of oxygen and nourishment within the body. They write, "We think of individuals and teams as analogous to nerve cells. To form a brain, the nerve cells must be whole and healthy, and they must be freely interconnected—so that they can constantly send and receive information from other nerve cells and receive nourishment and oxygen from the system they serve and help coordinate."[171] Knowles also uses this image when he writes that the "web of connections is like a nervous system, with each perspective informing all the others."[172]

Ashmos and colleagues put it in more technical language. They write, "When organizations are encouraged to recognize connections, when people are encouraged to enhance existing connections and create new connections as seems appropriate to the task, the organization as a whole system is more capable of co-evolving effectively with its environment. The probability of the system's successful environmental co-evolution is thereby improved as the quality of the internal connections increases."[173]

The number of interconnections determines the amount of information that can flow across a system in the system. Interconnections are created whenever one part of a system (individual, team, and department) connects with or interacts with another part of

---

[170] Pinchot and Pinchot, 64.

[171] Ibid., 71.

[172] Knowles, 115.

[173] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 193.

the system. To enhance information flow leaders must increase the number and richness of those connections. Lewin and Regine describe the importance of these connections. They write, "When relationships and connections are weak in an organization, there is poor flow of information and limiting feedback loops and thus adaptability . . . in order to have more positive outcomes, positive and constructive relationships need to feed into those loops, and great deal of interconnection among people is needed to enrich the loops."[174] Ashmos and colleagues agree:

> Connections, especially dense, rich connections, transmit information and enable meaning creation among subunits, thus providing systems with improved capacity to learn. This interconnectedness stands in sharp contrast to the barriers of information flow (i.e. silos) characteristic of the machine model. Connections also provide the system with the capacity to effectively self-organize. Connections enable information flow and meaning creation related to issues that emerge from the connected elements themselves.[175]

The difficulty is this view of information and connections runs counter to the practices among traditional hierarchical organizations. Ashmos and colleagues elaborate:

> Enhancing connections, however, is potentially problematic for managers who have become accustomed to the search for stability, predictability, and orderliness the machine-model of organizations promises . . . encouraging connections can subject open systems to confusion, messiness, and inter-agent conflict because connections increase the amount and complexity of information with which the agent must cope. Encouraging connections creates intra-agent conflict because it will require agents to cast aside the assumptions of the machine model that lie at the heart of many organizations; letting go of practices, which, even if not entirely satisfactory, are at least familiar and habitual.[176]

---

[174] Lewin and Regine, 13.

[175] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 191,192.

[176] Ibid., 104.

Margaret Wheatley describes the traditional thoughts and feelings toward information found in many traditional organizations:

> We have no desire to let information roam about, to let it procreate promiscuously where it will, to create chaos. Our management task is to enforce control, to keep information contained, to pass it down in such a way that no procreation occurs. Information chastity belts are a central management function. The last thing we need is information running loose in our organizations. And there are good reasons for our stern, puritanical attitudes towards information: Misplaced information seems to have created enough horror stories to justify our frequent witch hunts.[177]

The problem is the lack of information creates a vacuum that will be filled one way or another. Jeanie Duck writes that in the absence of real information "people will connect the dots in the most pathological way possible. In the absence of communication from leaders, the organization will seek information from other sources, whether those sources know what they're talking about or not."[178] Therefore, "we must abandon our dark cloaks of control and trust in the principles of self-organization, even in our own organizations. Information is the source of order, an order we do not impose, but an order nonetheless."[179]

All this suggests that leaders of self-organizing organizations must be committed to enhancing and improving information flows and deepens connections within the system. As Keene says, "The role of leadership will be that of torch bearer, constantly scanning the environment for the information needed by the elements within the system

---

[177] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 105, 106.

[178] Jeannie Daniel Duck, *The Change Monster: The Human Forces That Fuel or Foil Corporate Transformation & Change* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001), 186.

[179] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 106.

to create the emergent reality within the guidance of the vision."[180] In their research into leaders managing their organizations in a self-organizing manner, Lewin and Regine found that "leaders generally felt that it was their responsibility to enrich connections in the system—that is, to forge new connections where none existed or improve existing connections; and to identify the disconnections—that is, the blindness, the denials and limitations that restricted the organization's ability to change and adapt, and then systematically and simultaneously to address them.[181]

The bottom line is that the role of leaders is not erased in a self-organizing structure but their role changes from controlling to supplying. Wheatley concludes:

> People do need a lot from their leaders. They need information, access to one another, resources, trust, and follow-through. Leaders are necessary to foster experimentation, to help create connections across the organization, to feed the system with rich information from multiple sources—all while helping everyone stay clear on what we agreed we want to accomplish and who we wanted to be.[182]

This new approach to authority and information leads to a new approach for leaders in self-organizing systems. In traditional hierarchical organizations leaders focused on making decisions, controlling and managing those beneath them in the structure. In self-organizing organizations leaders will need to take a different approach. First, they will need to shift from controlling those who report to them to empowering them. Second, they will need to shift from making things happen to creating the right environment for things to happen.

---

[180] Keene, 17.

[181] Lewin and Regine, 10.

[182] Wheatley, "Goodbye, Command and Control," 25.

## Empowering Leadership

In the traditional hierarchical structure subordinates existed to help fulfill the manager's mission. Subordinates were resources the leader relied on to fulfill his or her objectives. In a self-organizing structure leaders still want to fulfill their objectives but they do it not by using subordinates as resources but rather by focusing on equipping and empowering their subordinates to fulfill the employees' objectives. Then, as these empowered subordinates reach their goals and objectives, they help the leaders fulfill theirs. In this form of organization the leader's role is to help their subordinates maximize their potential. Lewin and Regine in their research found that "leaders saw their responsibility as nothing less than providing work for people, creating opportunities for them to reach their potential, and supporting them in the work they cared about most. They engaged their people more fully—that is, as full human beings in the workplace—by accommodating people more in terms of their interests and skills and who they were in the world, rather than fitting them into job descriptions."[183] Keene describes this form of leadership simply as "the ability to release the potential of those within the organization." He writes, "The start of this process is to value people and to express confidence in their ability to be all that they are capable of being."[184]

This subordinate-focused style of leadership can unlock much of the hidden potential within many organizations. Thomas Peters writes, "The chief reason for our

---

[183] Lewin and Regine, 15.

[184] Keene, 17.

failure in world-class competition is our failure to tap our work force's potential."[185] Further, he says, "It's absurd! We don't want for evidence that the average worker is capable of moving mountains—if only we'll ask him or her to do so, and construct a supportive environment."[186] The key is for leaders to focus on supporting and being there for their subordinates. Somerville writes, "For people to take on leadership responsibility, they need support and encouragement, not controls and certainly not punishment" and focus of leaders should "shift to coaching, mentoring and being a role model of responsibility and accountability." [187]

The changing nature of workers, outlined in chapter 2, almost requires this kind of leadership shift. Highly educated and skilled workers of the twenty-first century will not respond well to leadership styles designed to influence the low skilled and uneducated workers of the nineteenth century. Harmon writes, "Empowerment is not a fad that failed. It is a core idea of the future that forces antiquated organizational forms to adjust both to a societal change and the expansion of workers' attitudes. Better educated workers will reject nineteenth-century authoritarianism on the job as they have rejected it in so many other aspects of their lives."[188] Conger adds, "Managing this generation as their 'boss' will only backfire. Instead, they will be seeking superiors who are mentors and coaches,

---

[185] Peters, 345.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Iain Somerville and John Edwin Mroz, "New Competencies for a New World," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 70.

[188] Harmon, 241.

who lead more by effective persuasion than by command. . . . [They] will be drawn toward managers and organizations that create a sense of community."[189]

Steve Miller of Shell describes the essence of empowering leadership and it's effect on the organization. He says, "The leader becomes the context setter, the designer of a learning experience—not an authority figure with solutions. Once the folks at the grassroots realize they own the problem, they also discover that they can help create and own the answers, and they get after it very quickly, very aggressively, and very creatively, with a lot more ideas than the old-style strategic direction could ever have prescribed from headquarters."[190]

The second shift in leadership parallels this one. As leaders seek to empower their subordinates, they realize that one of the best ways to do this is to ensure that their subordinates are working in an environment that is conducive to their maximizing their potential.

## Create Environment not Outcomes

In traditional hierarchical organizations leaders sought to achieve their objectives through a direct, top-down approach. Leaders outlined the objectives, designed a plan, and then sought to execute it with the resources of their subordinates. Leaders in self-organizing systems, however, accomplish their objectives in a different, indirect approach. Rather than seeking to create outcomes directly these leaders focus on ensuring

---

[189] Jay A. Conger, "How Generational Shifts Will Transform Organizational Life," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 25.

[190] Quoted in Pascale, 93.

the environment in which their subordinates work is ideally positioned to allow them to succeed. And as they succeed so does the leader. Lewin and Regine describe this approach as they found it being applied by the leaders they studied:

> These elements of an organic approach to leading change are a different way of doing things in that these leaders didn't make changes, they cultivated conditions for change to occur. Instead of implementing strategies or plans, they generated ambiguity and uncertainty, encouraged risks, attended to relationships that allowed the organization to rearrange itself. They engaged the whole person and forged connections between people, which in turn made their organization more whole and connected.[191]

Beam describes this shift in approach this way:

> Management has a new role: influencing the factors of self-organization from below rather than attempting to control them from the top. CAS [Complex adaptive systems or self-organizing systems] assumes that managers by themselves, no matter how capable, lack the 'requisite variety', of collective organizational knowledge, to effectively manage using a top-down approach because of the sheer complexity of the global business environment. Instead, the requisite variety needed to match the complexity of the environment must come from the bottom of the organization.[192]

Leaders in self-organizing systems have a completely different understanding of change. In traditional hierarchical organizations change was something to be feared and resisted, as it often threatened the stability of the organization, built as it was on rigid boundaries and standardized rules and procedures. In self-organizing systems leaders become the promoters of change, creating an environment where change is encouraged, not resisted. Rathburn writes, "One of the key roles of leadership is to develop within its

---

[191] Lewin and Regine, 17.

[192] Beam, 159, 160.

people the capacity to deal with constant change, and at the same time ensure the organization's identity and values remain constant. The leader's job is to be an environmental change agent."[193] Keene agrees, "Leadership in an environment of complexity will be that person who facilitates and creates an environment which makes it possible for the elements within the system to interact and create new forms of reality, guided by the overarching vision and rules."[194]

Focusing on the environment can unlock hidden energies and potentials within people. Dick Knowles of Du Pont describes what happens: "When the leader . . . creates the conditions that make it okay for people to grow, an enormous energy gets released. People discover that they can make a difference, meaning begins to flow, you get discretionary energy flow."[195] Dee Hock states, "The truth is, that given the right chaordic circumstances, from no more than dreams, determination, and the liberty to try, quite ordinary people consistently do extraordinary things."[196]

The secret of this approach to leadership is the understanding that in complex, non-linear systems small changes can create large outcomes. This is because of the non-proportional nature of complex systems that is popularly called the "butterfly effect." Lichtenstein states, "Since dynamic systems are disproportionate, small inputs can have large effects, known as the 'butterfly effect' in chaos metaphors. Conversely, large inputs

---

[193] David G. Rathburn, "Innovation & Mission," *The Gospel Message* 2003, 9.

[194] Keene, 17.

[195] Lewin and Regine, 15.

[196] Hock, 192.

can sometimes have no outcome at all."[197] Returning to Stuart Kauffman's metaphor of the sand pile, any slight disruption of the sand can trigger an avalanche that is disproportionate to the size of the disruption. He writes, "The size of the avalanche is unrelated to the grain of sand that triggers it. The same tiny grain of sand may unleash a tiny avalanche or the largest avalanche of the century. Big and little events can be triggered by the same kind of tiny cause. Poised systems need no massive power to move massively."[198]

This characteristic means leaders do not have to cause large interventions or changes to create large outcomes. In the language of Kauffman, leaders do not seek to trigger the avalanche, rather they seek to create tiny changes in the sand pile, creating the conditions that make the avalanche possible, and then wait for the work of others to trigger the avalanche.

The view of organizations as self-organizing systems requires a very different kind of leader than a traditional authoritarian organization. Dee Hock summarizes the role of leaders in a self-organizing system well:

> To be precise, one cannot speak of leaders who *cause* organizations to achieve superlative performance, for no one can *cause* it to happen. Leaders can only recognize and modify conditions that prevent it; perceive and articulate a sense of community, a vision for the future, a body of principle to which people can become passionately committed, then encourage and enable them to discover and bring forth the extraordinary capabilities that lie trapped in everyone waiting to get out.[199]

---

[197] Lichtenstein, 536.

[198] Kauffman, 237.

[199] Hock, 72.

As difficult as this shift in leadership may be, it is well worth the effort, for it can lead to a very different kind of organization, one that is well designed to handle the high level of complexity and rapid changes currently racing through the emerging culture.

**The Result: A Responsive Organization**

In chapters one and two a key problem facing churches in the emerging culture was the inability of their organizational structure to adapt and respond to the changes occurring in the emerging culture. Built on the assumptions of Newtonian science, and designed to work well with the characteristics of the Industrial age, the organizational structure of many churches is simply unable to react and respond to the changing assumptions, priorities and interests of people in the information based emerging culture. Rigid bureaucracies, standardized programs and structures, and a focus on control through proper procedure and chain of command means that churches are simply unable to react in time to meet the needs and interests of the people they mean to serve. Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel describe the problem, "Organizations that are highly centralized and formalized have less freedom to spontaneously reconfigure themselves because of their rules."[200] Dolan, Garcia, and Auerbach state it more directly when they write, "The inefficiency of rigid bureaucratic structures, with many hierarchical levels and watertight compartments, can no longer be tolerated in companies that must compete in turbulent times."[201]

---

[200] Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel Jr., "Organizational Response to Complexity," 583.

[201] Dolan, S., and A., 28.

The challenge for churches is to develop "larger repertoires of potentially adaptive behavior because the problems they face in complex environments are likely to be novel, multi-faceted, complex problems. Larger, more complex behavioral repertoires increase the chance of developing an adaptation that is part of a successful co-evolution."[202] Miller suggests organizations will need to like the chameleon where "the chameleon constantly adapts itself to its environment. The organization of the future likewise will be an ultimately adaptable organism. Its shape and appearance will change as its environment and the demands placed on the organization change."[203]

In the science of complex systems, and particular, the idea of an organization as a self-organizing system, exists the potential to provide churches with a new model upon which to build structure. Self-organizing systems present a culturally sensitive alternative that offers the church the ability to be able to react and adapt to rapid changes in the environment without losing grip of its central identity and mission. It is this ability to rapidly respond to the environment that makes the model of self-organizing systems such an appealing option. Ashmos and colleagues write, "These complex organizational systems are orderly enough to ensure stability, yet full of flexibility and surprise . . . further, these systems are adaptive because they can adjust to changes in the environment."[204] The Pinchots remind us that this adaptability arises not out of the

---

[202] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 196.

[203] Doug Miller, "The Future Organization: A Chamelon in All Its Glory," in *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 119.

[204] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 192.

superior abilities of the leaders at the center of the organization but by the responsive capabilities of the people at the edges of the organization. They write that what makes organizations adaptable "is not the brilliance of organizational designers sitting at the top but the decisions of people in the middle and bottom of the organization who freely choose the connections needed to make their area work in coordination with what is going on elsewhere in the organization."[205]

Many churches, like many other organizations built on the assumptions of the modern age, have great difficulty responding to change. Self-organizing systems offer them a model that embraces change. Self-organization creates an organization "more likely to recognize or create a successful adaptation in response to environmental complexity. In such an organization change is not seen as disruptive, but rather as part of co-evolution. Co-evolution becomes normal and expected in contrast to the predictability expected in the machine system."[206] The structure of the organization becomes more fluid and able to respond to changes in the environment. Coleman again uses an organic metaphor to describe the advantage of self-organizing system. He writes, "When environmental demands change, new cells can be formed and old ones disbanded as necessary; like an amoeba changing with its surroundings, the operating logic of the form is based on flexibility with accepted protocols of knowledge sharing substituting for hierarchical controls."[207]

---

[205] Pinchot and Pinchot, 62.

[206] Ashmos and others, "What a Mess," 196.

[207] Coleman Jr., 37.

The principles of self-organizing systems provide the church with new ideas and models on how it can build an organizational structure that is based on the science of the emerging culture and is uniquely suited to the complexity and rapid changes of the emerging culture. Yet, cultural fit, is not the only factor to be considered as churches design their organizational structure. As chapter 1 explored, the church's organizational structure needs to be culturally suitable but also be based on biblical principles. The challenge is to design a structure that combines the unique characteristics of self-organizing systems with the foundational principles laid out in Scripture for the development of God's people, the church.

# CHAPTER 6

# THE WEBBED CHURCH

Heaven is purpose, principle, and people. Purgatory is paper and procedure. Hell is rules and regulations.

Hock, *Birth of the Chaordic Age*

Chapters 1 and 2 described how Grace Church is having difficulty adapting to the changes in the emerging culture. Some of this difficulty is due to the hierarchical organizational structure of the ministries within Grace Church. This hierarchical structure is based on the mechanistic ideas common to many organizations that originated during the modern age.[1] While this has been an effective structure for many years in Grace Church it is proving to be too inflexible and rigid for the new environment of the emerging culture. A new organizational structure needs to be designed so that the structure of the church can equip and aid the people of Grace Church in the accomplishment of their mission. This means designing a structure that is more organic and less hierarchical. The Pinchots quote Warren Bennis who says the hierarchical organization is "becoming less and less effective . . . [and] is hopelessly out of joint with contemporary realities."[2] Reducing hierarchy in organizational structure is also

[1] See David Ulrich, "For the last century, the pyramid has been the organizational symbol for structure, control, status and bureaucracy." Ulrich, 190.

[2] Pinchot and Pinchot, 1.

compatible with the principles outlined for the church in the New Testament. As Snyder and Runyon write, "Hierarchy is in our cultural DNA . . . but is *not* part of the DNA of the gospel. We need to cleanse the old leaven of hierarchy from our understanding of church and mission or it will continue to infect and subvert missional faithfulness."[3]

Today Grace Church needs an organizational structure that is adaptable and flexible to the changes in the emerging culture, one that moves people to fulfilling the mission that God has called them to, and links them together to fulfill the purpose for which God created Grace Church. As Sweet states, "only those churches will survive and prosper that empower all their members with the intelligence and decisions support that can exercise, organize and mobilize brainpower into missional muscle."[4] To do this, Grace church needs a structure that looks like an "ever-changing magnetic field that surrounds and binds together a complex organization...it is not a 'timeless' structure that endures despite changes in society around it, but a 'timely' organism that changes shape in constant response to the changes around it."[5]

## The Church as a Self-Organizing System

Chapter 5 explored the concept of the complex or self-organizing system as a culturally-suited model for looking at organizational structure in the emerging culture. The self-organizing model is also compatible with the biblical understanding of the church and holds promise of finding application in the design of organizational church

---

[3] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 112. Italics theirs.

[4] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 229.

[5] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 135.

structure. Snyder and Runyon suggest, "The church as the Body of Christ is a living, social, spiritual, charismatic organism. It is alive."[6] They go on to write, "The church as the Body of Christ is the most complex social organization. Its complexity includes both spiritual and physical dimensions and potentially incorporates everyone from the least to the greatest, from the poor to the rich. The church includes all people of every race and in every time and place who believe in Jesus Christ."[7] Sweet, borrowing language from Hock states, "The church is by its very definition a chaordic organism—an organic, free-form community driven by mission and responsive to its indigenous environments. The early church was almost a textbook definition of 'chaordic': Fluid, flat, fast off its feet and strong on its feet with control at the edges only."[8] Schwarz notes that the church acts in ways characteristic of self-organizing systems. He writes, "The church of Jesus Christ is a complex organism with many parts that are interrelated according to God's plan. It is virtually impossible to really understand any one of these parts . . . until one has understood its relationship to the whole. If one acts upon any single element, it simultaneously affects all the others parts."[9]

At one level the idea of a church as a self-organizing system may seem an alien idea but the concepts of self-organizing systems can be found within the Scriptures themselves. McManus writes, "This level of complexity strikes us as new and innovative,

---

[6] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 90.

[7] Ibid., 80.

[8] Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 81. Bandy calls this "Spiritually Contained Anarchy." See Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 29.

[9] Schwarz, 66.

and yet the Scriptures have advocated this kind of interconnections for thousands of years. The idea that the sin of one man and one woman could send a disruption throughout the entire cosmos is an extraordinary description of the organic connection between all of nature."[10] Snyder and Runyon agree, "Rather than taking its cue from business, the church should note that business itself, at the cutting edge, is thinking ecologically. As the church starts to think ecologically—provided it keeps Scripture primary—it will discover a host of insights about the wineskins which it may effectively serve as agents of God's mission in the world."[11] Further they write, "If anything, the discoveries of complexity theory reaffirm the nature of the church as the body of Christ and the community of God's people."[12]

Grace Church needs to move away from seeing the church as a controllable and programmable machine that can be directed from the top-down through a rigid hierarchy to create large, standardized ministries for large groups. Instead, using the model of the church as a self-organizing system, Grace Church needs to understand the church as a chaordic, self-organizing, flexible, and adaptable network of micro-ministries, each

---

[10] McManus, 15.

[11] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 84. Runyon and Snyder use the term "ecology" to refer to an "organic" way of thinking that has its base in the concept of complex adaptive systems or self-organizing systems.

[12] Ibid., 36-37. Snyder and Runyon go on to outline six insights complexity theory can give into the nature of the church. First, the church is a totality of complex factors, not a linear cause-and-effect system. This suggests the programmatic solutions to church health, assuming the church as a machine, will not be effective. Second, complexity theory illuminates the long-range significance of small actions. Third, complexity theory reveals the vital role of interrelationships and structure. It reveals that perhaps certain structures are natural to organic systems and that these arise out of the interrelationships in the system. Fourth, complexity theory reveals that size is not the main question. Healthy life can exist at many different size levels. Fifth, complexity theory affirms the individuality of each church, it's culture or DNA. Sixth, complexity suggests that as a church becomes healthy it may produce its own structures and ministries internally. See Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 37-42.

seeking to fulfill their purposes and by so doing, helping the church fulfill its larger mission. This new model requires a new symbol. In the mechanistic age the pyramid was the symbol of the hierarchical church structure, found in countless churches' organizational charts. This emerging structure also finds its identity in a symbol but it replaces the pyramid with the network. Grace Church needs to see ministry being accomplished through multiple, small-scale ministries loosely networked together in the form of an ever adjusting web.

### The Network or Web-Linked Church

The architecture of self-organizing structures is found in the network.[13] Rather than a tightly controlled hierarchy people and ministries exist in a network tied together more by central purpose and relationships (connections) than by formal titles and reporting structures. Sweet writes that the church in the emerging culture needs "new leadership structures based on networks, not ladders."[14] Easum describes this network structure as a "holistic, organic, self-generating, interactive, horizontal, and chaotic network of peers, designed to deliver a unique and customized mission, in a timely and consistent manner to a target audience, any place, any time, by anyone in the organization."[15] He goes on to write:

---

[13] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 97.

[14] Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 303.

[15] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 56. Easum also writes "The top down oppressive approach of bureaucracy is on its way out. In its place are emerging permission-giving networks. These networks are freeing and empowering people to explore their spiritual gifts and individually and in teams on behalf of the Body of Christ." Ibid., 29.

> [Self-organizing churches] are an ever-changing web of networks that connect together people and information so that communication and decision making can occur quickly and directly no matter how far removed people are geographically or organizationally. Networking creates an organizational structure that relates all of the parts to the whole world and allows for communication between every part, at every level, at every point of need, whenever the need may arise, in the shortest time possible.[16]

**Networks Suited to the Emerging Culture**

Networks are ideally suited to the environment of the emerging culture. Increasingly people's worlds are made up of a collection of networks, from the World Wide Web to social networking sites such as MySpace.com. In addition, networks and network language are more suitable to the way reality is being viewed in the emerging culture. As Snyder and Runyon say, "Globalization accents the role of images and brings a new focus on linkages, connections, and patterns of relationship. Significantly, the global model is more organic than mechanical, more flowing and flexible than fixed or final. This suggests for the future a new sensitivity to networks and patterns that hold things together."[17]

The network fits well with the increasingly organic understanding of our universe. Cladis says, "The postmodern understanding of our universe as more mysterious organism than quantified, measurable machine lends itself to a view of organizations as more networks of relationships than cumbersome multi-layered structures."[18] Kelly

---

[16] Ibid., 101-102.

[17] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 149.

[18] Cladis, 25.

underscores this when he notes, "Essentially, a network is a decentralized organism that has no hard boundaries, that has no center."[19]

Networks are adept at handling complexity. As society becomes ever more complex, therefore, networks become increasingly attractive as an organizational paradigm. The Pinchots write, "The more complex a task, the more certain we can be that it will be performed by a network rather than a system integrated by a hierarchy of command."[20] Kelly writes, "The natural organizing metaphor for complexity is something like a network. So the new metaphor is to assemble organizations in a biological manner, meaning to use networks."[21] Marilyn Ferguson sums up the advantages of networks for organizations in the emerging age. She says:

> The network is the institution of our time: An open system, a dissipative structure so richly coherent that it is in constant flux, poised for reordering, capable of endless transformation. This organic mode of social organization is more biologically adaptable, more efficient, and more "conscious" than the hierarchical structures of modern civilization. The network is plastic, flexible. In effect, each member is the center of the network. Networks are cooperative, not competitive. They are true grass roots: Self-generating, self-organizing, sometimes even self-destructing.[22]

The church is not just another organization however. It is the spiritual community of God's gathered people. As such, efficiency is only one criterion that must be examined in designing organizational structure. Any organizational structure used in the church must also reflect the biblical understanding of nature of the church.

---

[19] Kevin Kelly, "The Biology of Business," *Executive Excellence* 17, no. 2 (2000), 14.

[20] Pinchot and Pinchot, 268.

[21] Kelly, 14.

[22] Quoted in Davis, 78.

## Networks Compatible with Biblical Views of Church

Network metaphors, language, and imagery match up well with the biblical understanding of the church. Chapter three revealed the organic nature of the church and networks do a good job of conveying these organic concepts. Snyder and Runyon write, "Church structure . . . must be consistent with the organic nature of the church" and that "local congregational structures should be organic in nature—in harmony with the nature of the church itself. This means, for example, using the model of the organic network rather than the vertical (hierarchical) institution."[23] Far from hindering a biblical understanding of the church network thinking is well suited to the task of capturing the organic, flexibility and diversity of the church. Easum writes, "The body of Christ is the best biblical metaphor to connect with the Quantum Age and lay the foundation for permission-giving networks . . . the Body of Christ is composed of networks and relationships that are in daily flux. New relationships are formed at will and networks emerge to fit the situation at hand. The Body of Christ, like the Quantum Age, is in constant change."[24]

## The Advantages of a Network Structure

Network structures offer many advantages to organizations seeking to design organizational structures that will help them function in the emerging culture. The growing complexity of the emerging culture means that the most important

---

[23] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 54.

[24] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 39.

characteristics for structure are to be highly flexible and adaptable, able to react and move with the rapid changes in the environment. Organizational structures based on networks provide foundations for this kind of adaptability. The Pinchots suggest that the network organizational structure is better suited to this task:

> It is not possible to make all the linkages across the organization that might be useful—there are too many possibilities. One solution would be to have a brilliant organizational architect figure out who should link to and partner with whom and require them to do so, forbidding all other internal linkages. No one is smart enough to do this, so network organizations are grown rather than designed. In egalitarian network organizations, each person or team individually connects to the network and embraces or discourages the connections others want to make.[25]

They go on to quote Wayne E. Baker:

> The network form is designed to handle tasks and environments that demand flexibility and adaptability . . . unlike a bureaucracy, which is a fixed set of relationships for processing all problems, the network organization molds itself to each problem. Moreover, it adapts itself not by top-management fiat but by the interactions of problems, people, and resources; within the broad confines of corporate strategy, organizational members autonomously work out relationships . . . the intrinsic ability of the network organization to repeatedly redesign itself to accommodate new tasks, unique problems, and changing environments enables such organizations to escape the plight of forms such as bureaucracy, which ossify and become incapable of change.[26]

Part of the reason networks have this ability to adapt is because networks, through their myriad of connections, enhance organizations' ability to learn. The Pinchots write, "To have a flexible and responsive organization, intelligence must be distributed throughout, with all individual minds interacting to create a continuous and current

---

[25] Pinchot and Pinchot, 259-260.

[26] Wayne E. Baker quoted in ibid., 255. Kevin Kelly writes "The advantage goes to those who can adapt quickly, and the structure for adaptation is invariably a network because it is the least form-specific." Kelly, 15.

knowledge that can be rapidly disseminated and applied. The organizational form that accomplishes all this interconnection is a continually changing network of connections."[27] In summary they say, "Perhaps the greatest single advantage of network organizations over chain-of-command organizations is their ability to learn. Networks have more brains actively engaged in learning and more ways to implement learning in rapidly evolving organizational patterns."[28]

The question is what would a network organizational structure look like for Grace Church and how would it operate?

## A Network Structure at Grace Church

Grace Church needs to move away from its hierarchical, committee-driven structure to a more fluid and flexible network structure in order to equip people successfully for ministry in the emerging culture. Instead of envisioning a pyramidical structure Grace Church needs to see its structure as a web of unique and interdependent ministries.[29] Each front-line ministry needs to be freed from its linkages to hierarchy and given the freedom to explore and fulfill its mission in the manner that best suits it. Rather than seeing ministries as sub-departments, they need to be seen as autonomous and interdependent ministry teams. The ministry teams in the web structure look to the church

---

[27] Pinchot and Pinchot, 70. They also write that "perhaps the greatest single advantage of network organizations over chain-of-command organizations is their ability to learn. Networks have more brains actively engaged in learning and more way to implement learning in rapidly evolving organizational patterns" and "networks have the rich connections to generate better new ideas and the flexible structures to make good use of more of them." Ibid., 274, 280.

[28] Ibid., 274.

[29] See Appendix 4 for a diagram of this potential structure.

structure for direction, resources, and support but are self-organizing in their make up, purpose, method, and program. Each ministry team in the web acts as a unique cell of the greater body, living out its calling from God for the greater health of the body. The Pinchots describe this change as a "move from relationships of dominance and submission up and down the chain of command to horizontal relationships of peers across a network of voluntary cooperation."[30]

In this network or web structure all the elements of the church, from elders to front line ministry teams, work together in a multiplicity of ways to forward the health of the church. This network structure can be envisioned as an interconnecting and expanding web. Bolman and Deal write that the structure is more circular than hierarchical. They write that:

> The web builds from the center out. The web's architect works much like a spider, spinning new threads of connection and reinforcing existing strands. The web's center and periphery are interconnected. Action in one place ripples across the entire configuration, forming an interconnected cosmic web in which the threads of all forces and events form an inseparable net of endlessly, mutually conditioned relations.[31]

This structural web is made up of several pieces: the elders (or leadership team), a logistics or resource team, ministry mentors or coaches, and the individual ministry teams.[32] The elders are the heart of the structure and set the direction of the web through helping the church define its mission and purpose. Further the elders define the

---

[30] Ibid., xiv.

[31] Bolman and Deal, 69-70.

[32] Bandy calls these the "three leadership teams" necessary to the church. He calls them the "pastoral leadership team, the human resources team and the administration team." See Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 156.

boundaries of the web through the communication of the church's core values. These are the parameters within which ministry teams are free to work and must remain. The elders set the direction and the frame of the network but also offer freedom to ministry teams to work in whatever way they need to within those boundaries. In this way the structure replaces the strict command-and-control of the hierarchical model, with the mission, vision, and values that hold the ministry teams together. Easum describes this kind of structure when he writes, "Instead of levels, boxes, or lines, networks more closely resemble the structure of human cells or atom like structures . . . they do not worry much about span of control because in some ways all of the parts are connected to each other."[33]

The logistics or resource team is responsible for finding and managing the resources needed for the various parts of the web to function. At Grace Church this is done through the trustee committee that is responsible for the financial and building resources of the church. In this network structure they are tasked helping others find the assets they need to complete their missions rather than "protecting" these assets from use by others.

Chapter 5 revealed that a key component of any self-organizing system is the amount of information flow across the network. The better the information the better job of self-organizing the network can do. In many traditional church structures front-line ministry people can feel isolated from other things happening within the church and can end up feeling alone and unsupported. The potential to feel alone and unsupported exists

[33] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 103.

in a network structure also because the freedom to operate can lead to isolation. To prevent isolation the network structure needs agents that integrate all the pieces of the network and ensure information flow across the system. At Grace Church Ministry Coaches will facilitate this. These coaches are not responsible for the functioning of the team to which they are linked. They are not managers or leaders in the traditional sense. Rather, they are to view themselves as the equippers, coaches, and cheerleaders for the ministries to which they are linked. They are not responsible for doing ministry but rather for encouraging and mentoring the leaders of various ministries. They serve as resource people, encouragement, and support. In turn these coaches connect with each other and the anchoring leadership team to ensure information about needs, challenges, and opportunities spreads across the network.

The final element in this structure is the front-line ministry teams. Front-line ministry teams might evolve from traditional ministries such as worship, children's ministries or Deacons' ministries. They could also form around new or temporary challenges such as fundraising for youth heading out on mission trips. Teams are given the permission to form, and dissolve as needs are identified and goals are accomplished. Kelly says the organization becomes "a web, a network, a network of nodes, of people who come and go, who assemble for a project and then go on. . . . It will be a society of little work centers that act as distributed cores."[34] As long as a team is within the framework of the web formed by the mission, vision, and values and is linked to the web

[34] Kelly, 14.

by a ministry coach, it has the freedom to accomplish its purpose in any manner it determines most effective.

## General Characteristics of a Network Structure

The network pieces will be further developed below; however several general characteristics of this organization need to be examined. First, the network structure involves a transition away from depending on large-scale, standardized ministry programs to smaller, more need-specific ministries.

### Micro versus Macro Ministry

In traditional church structure ministries were designed to attract large groups of people with similar needs. It was assumed that the standardized ministries would best meet the needs of people and that everyone (or most) people would attend all (or most) relevant programs. Success was seen in having a large turn out and great care was taken to ensure that ministries did not overlap on the schedule. As outlined in chapter two, however, the emerging culture is too fragmented and time-pressed for this structure to work. People have a wider variety of needs with more diverse schedules and participate only in those programs they perceive as personally valuable. Davis notes how this same effect affected the department store:

> The same thing happened to clothing, furniture, and hardware. They each had existed as individual shops, until they were combined into the same space in department stores. Through the decades these grew larger and larger, and as they did they lost their quality of differentiation—one store from the other, and one department from the other within the store. Store decorators tried to institute themes to remedy the sameness but could do so only to a limited degree. The solution came in the form of increased

> internal differentiation without loss of size. Boutiques opened up within department stores. Specialty corners set up next to standard departments. Today's department store is a honeycomb of very distinctive niches, all massed together yet different at the same time.[35]

He goes onto to relate how a similar process occurred in the entire retail industry:

> The stores organized their shopping space along the same lines. Small, specialized stores centered themselves around a village square. As suburbs grew, the large supermarkets and department stores moved into shopping centers. The next step was a logical one—to combine the small and the large simultaneously in the mall concept. Malls are at once both large and small. Customers move through common open space, not building and doors, to go from one store to the next. The mall embraces a complex totality within a single expanse. It is a single, internally differentiated mass, with each part catering to the needs of suburban villager. [36]

Twenty years after Davis wrote those words the trends are increasing. The Internet provides shopping options capable of reaching the smallest market. In retail success follows the biggest or the smallest. Social networking sites like Yahoo groups provide places for those with unique interests to gather.[37]

In order to adapt to this fragmentation Grace Church needs to adopt a new mindset towards ministry, a mindset that focuses on small, target-specific ministries. Instead of a few large, standardized ministries Grace Church needs a structure that allows the creation of multiple small ministries, each targeting a different need in a different way, but all working together for the health of the entire church. It is less important that a lot of people participate; it is more important that those who participate grow in their

---

[35] Davis, 186.

[36] Ibid., 187.

[37] Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More* (New York: Hyperion, 2006).

faith. The church calendar need not accommodate only one event at a time because the church recognizes that not everyone would attend one event anyway. Instead a network of small ministries spreads out in a web of activity to accomplish the mission of the church. Easum calls this a "cascade of simultaneous ministries."[38] This may seem chaotic or confusing but as Easum quotes Margaret Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers, "Fuzzy, messy, continuously exploring systems bent on discovering what works are far more practical and successful than our attempts at efficiency."[39] Easum goes on to note, "The cumulative impact of multiple and even redundant ministries is more powerful than any single action."[40] Peters affirms this idea when he writes, "Big firms must act like a collection of smaller ones when it comes to innovation."[41] Coleman agrees, "The cellular structure is based on the concept of 'small within big' and capitalizes on the informality of personal relationships made possible by small units."[42] Hirsch and Frost summarize the matter:

> We're increasingly convinced that bigger is not necessarily better. This is actually a modernist assumption. We have come to think smaller is better in the postmodern context as long as it is done with cultural vigor . . . the missional-incarnational church thinks more in terms of multiplication rather than addition. Getting more and more people into the same room at the same time is not part of the incarnational agenda. This might have worked in postwar U.S., where the 1950s American subculture was much more monochrome, where the world of the baby boom meant that a one-

---

[38] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 129.

[39] Margaret J. Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers, *A Simpler Way* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1999); quoted in Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 130.

[40] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 130.

[41] Peters, 245.

[42] Coleman, 42.

> size-fits-all church was likely to work. Now we are seeing such a dramatic fracturing of Western society into a range of sub-cultures, even in the suburbs, that one-size-fits-all is increasingly outmoded.[43]

An important factor when considering this network of small, niche ministries is to realize that the leadership will be unable to imagine, design, and implement this variety of ministries. It is important, therefore, that the structure encourages and allows ministries to be imagined, developed, and implemented from the bottom up instead of the traditional top-down manner.

## Relationships

The Newtonian perspective viewed an organization as constructed from distinct parts and pieces and, therefore, reform focused on breaking the organization into its various parts and building up these parts. The organic view sees value in the parts of the organization and in the relationships among the parts. McNeal writes, "The quantum universe is not a universe of things but a universe of relationships. The modern mind viewed the universe as a giant machine that could be explained if you could strip it down to its component parts. The quantum vision of the universe is more interested in the whole, how things interrelate."[44] The network structure, therefore, puts a strong emphasis on relationships. Grace Church "can only be smart, well-informed, and wise if its people are wise and interconnected."[45] The freedom for various pieces of the church to form

---

[43] Frost and Hirsch, 65.

[44] McNeal, 57.

[45] Pinchot and Pinchot, 274.

connections and linkages provides the learning ability of the church. These connections take the form of relationships within the church. The Pinchots suggest:

> People who are empowered to work within the informal networks that cross all the boundaries of the organization make up the main nervous system of the modern organization. Like the human brain, the organization gets its intelligence from its rich interconnections—each individual and each team connected to many others. The informal network follows no organizational chart; it is the sum of all the connections people make to get the job done.[46]

Because of this the leaders at Grace Church focus on the health of relationships within the church in a number of ways. First, the leaders create open and multiple pathways for communication. Second, they ensure that information is spread abundantly through the whole church. Third, they continuously generate and share new knowledge. Fourth, they promote honest dialogue, feedback, and interaction. Fifth, they keep the rules simple so people can detect, process, and integrate information. Sixth, the leaders encourage frequent and rapid experimentation.[47]

## Experimentation and Failure as Sources of Learning

In the traditional church failure was something to be avoided at all costs; therefore, experimentation was actively discouraged and replaced by a strong emphasis on control.[48] Grace Church, however, exists in an environment that is continually changing, challenging the church to come up with new methods to accomplish its mission. In order to discover new methods Grace Church fosters a safe environment in

---

[46] Ibid., 259.

[47] Marshall, 186.

[48] Easum, *Sacred Cows*.

which experimentation and failure occur. Peters writes, "The essence of successful innovation is, and always has been, constant experimentation."[49] Gordon Forward, president of Chaparral Steel, says, "You've got to have an atmosphere where people can make mistakes. If we're not making mistakes, we're not going anywhere."[50] The network structure provides the freedom for varying ministries to experiment with new forms of ministry. Guided by the leadership team, and anchored by the church's mission, vision, and values, ministries are empowered to experiment with how they accomplish their missions. The task for the leaders is to model imagination and creativity while at the same time giving other groups permission to experiment and fail as they seek to find optimum methods to achieve their missions. Hirsch and Frost write, "In the church's case it is a function of leadership to passionately value imagination and creativity and rate them as essential resources for mission, ministry and leadership. The leadership of a given community will need to give organizational permission for rethinking and allow for lots of experimentation, recognizing that this process is dangerous, tricky and inevitably chaotic."[51]

In addition Grace Church will learn to be comfortable with a higher level of disorder and unpredictability. Traditionally Grace Church has valued control and order but these values hinder the growth of a network structure and make experimentation impossible. Grace Church will learn that disorder is not always bad and that a certain

---

[49] Peters, 240.

[50] Quoted in ibid., 315.

[51] Frost and Hirsch, 196.

level of disorder may be vital to the ongoing health of the church. Easum writes, "Things in the environment that disturb a system's equilibrium help create new forms of order. Chaos or disorder becomes the source of new order instead of something to be avoided. Chaos is desirable because it is the start of something new."[52] Sweet states, "Uncertainty must be embraced, not excluded. Until we hear 'out of control' as positive, not negative, we will not be able to navigate these chaotic seas."[53] To handle this unpredictability Grace Church needs to have what Sweet calls "prepared un-preparedness".[54] Sweet describes this attitude:

> Our ancestors had a strong sense of "Providence" in which they believed that God was doing something great with them at that moment. . . . They didn't know what would happen tomorrow or where they would go next. But they knew their job was to "act" when called upon by God. Hence, their motto of "prepared unpreparedness.'" Preparedness does mean putting God in the captain's seat and giving up one's control over the journey.[55]

This may prove difficult for many people but Grace Church can remember the advice of Paulo Coelho, "The ship is safest in port. But that's not what ships were made for."[56] One of the ways a network structure can help Grace Church do this is by decentralizing authority and building permission-giving into its nature.

---

[52] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 176.

[53] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 134.

[54] Ibid., 99.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Paulo Coelho, *The Pilgrimage* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 22.

## Decentralized Authority

If Grace Church is going to operate as a network the various pieces of the network must be given authority to make decisions and take actions in a timely manner. The traditional structure of Grace Church emphasized control and protocol and tended to centralize authority at the top of its organizational structure. Southern and Norton's description of the problem applies to Grace Church. They write:

> The still-popular hierarchical model supposes that major decisions should be handed down by leadership, as if from on high. This old model is resistant to organic systemic change, hampers the emergence of new leaders, stifles creativity, and makes it difficult for people to become engaged in meaningful ministry. The underlying issue is less about ministry and more about who decides who can or who can't be involved—it's us against them. There are so many disempowering layers in the decision-making process that participation becomes a zero-sum game. Unhealthy control issues can dominate the life of the congregation and have a deadening effect on ministry initiatives. Volunteers serving under this mind-set often view it as a burdensome duty motivated by institutional needs and driven by guilt. The result: no ministry of significance happens.[57]

To change this situation Grace Church decentralizes authority and gives permission for ministry groups to take action within the boundaries of mission, vision, and values laid out by the leadership team. Rather than worrying over control, Grace Church will "respect the church as a complex adaptive system [self-organizing system] that can respond to challenges without having to wait for or depend on chain-of-command orders wafting down."[58] Instead of making all the decisions for each group the leadership team sets the boundaries within which the ministry teams must operate and

---

[57] Southern and Norton, 113.

[58] Sweet, *Aqua Church*, 169.

gives the teams the authority to make all their own decisions within those boundaries. Bandy suggests that leadership "does not list everything that should be done but only identifies that which *should not* be done. The board discerns long-term vision for the direction of the church, but diffuses authority to accomplish mission among many people."[59] Neil Cole describes it this way:

> Leadership . . . never prescribes the work but instead describes it, allowing great diversity and multitude of expression, all containing and contained by the original DNA. There is order but not control. There is leadership but not micromanagement. There is accountability of relationship but not subjugation. There is not delegation of authority but distribution of it. Dependence and independence are replaced with a healthy interdependence.[60]

Decentralizing authority demands an environment in which people are freed to develop their gifts and tap their creativity. Southern and Norton write:

> Permission-giving makes it possible and desirable for one to discover one's gifts, talents, and passions, and explore how they can be used for ministry. It recognizes that life is about change. It celebrates willingness to embrace change. It is an understanding that life is self-organizing and self-replicating. Rather than struggle against these realities, permission-giving is a decision by the congregation to 'let go and let God' express through them. This includes understanding that things may not always be done right, but that the right things will be done in an atmosphere of relaxed openness.[61]

The aim of decentralizing structure is to create an organizational structure that "encourages and facilitates ministry instead of coordinating or managing it."[62]

---

[59] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 98. Emphasis his.

[60] Cole, 134.

[61] Southern and Norton, 119.

[62] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 55.

This decentralizing of authority will create a number of advantages for Grace Church. First, it can lead to an increase of involvement by people who have a sense of ownership over their own ministries and an increased ministry satisfaction. It allows the church to examine each ministry situation individually and allows room for people to take risks. People have a sense of personal ownership and begin to see ministry success as being their responsibility, thereby increasing their willingness to invest time, effort, and resources into ministry. Lastly, it can create multiple avenues for people to connect with the Grace Church congregation.[63] It gives people input over how their gifts and resources are used within the church thereby increasing the overall effectiveness of the church. Easum notes, "People can't act responsibly and make a contribution unless they are free to control things that are important to them. People are free to be responsible only when they do not have to go through a labyrinth of committees to get approval."[64] In the end, "the Body of Christ is most effective when individuals are given permission to live out their God-given spiritual gifts . . . on behalf of the Body rather than someone restraining what they can or cannot do."[65] This focus also means that ministry needs to be designed in a new way.

## Gift-Based Ministry

Like so many other churches operating with a traditional hierarchical structure ministry development and personal service at Grace Church are designed primarily in

---

[63] Southern and Norton, 125.

[64] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 10.

[65] Ibid.

institutional and positional terms. The task of the Nominating Committee is to find and recruit people to serve in the official positions of the church's standing committees in order to fulfill the tasks of the church. Cladis describes this kind of situation well. He writes, "The modern era emphasized tasks more than gifts. The important thing was whether a particular task was done and not so much whether a person was especially well-equipped to do the task."[66] Dawn notes how sometimes this pressure to fill positions can often time discourage people from serving in ministry. She writes, "The pressure to fill all the 'necessary' positions sometimes tears down the Body and prohibits any true sense of community . . . in serving out of one's true self."[67]

One of the advantages of moving to a network structure that focuses on small, micro-ministries is that it encourages and depends on people to be using their gifts to serve where God has called them to. Cladis writes, "When people view the universe as a highly sensitive network of relationships rather than as a machine, they develop relationships to collaborate on various projects" and in which "each member of the body has a unique role to play and is gifted by God to do it. We are interconnected in a network of relationships with Christ as head."[68] The network structure encourages people to serve where they feel called and gifted to serve rather than simply filling in positions in the institution. Reggie McNeal describes this process of moving from institutional to gift

---

[66] Cladis, 26.

[67] Dawn, 79.

[68] Cladis, 27.

based service the "new reformation."[69] He writes, "The first reformation was about freeing the church. The new reformation is about freeing God's people from the church (the institution). The original Reformation decentralized the church. The new reformation decentralizes ministry."[70] Sue Mallory believes that freeing people to serve in this way can unleash the church's potential. She believes "that if believers are equipped with direction to use their God given spiritual gifts the local church will not be able to contain the energy that will be released."[71] Marva Dawn also sees the potential in unleashing people to serve in accordance with their gifts. She writes, "Imagine what would happen if our congregations truly functioned by means of each person offering his or her gifts to the working together of the whole, if we all understood ourselves not so much as individual Christians but as members within the framework of the unity of the Body."[72]

A network structure helps in shifting the focus to gift-based ministry rather than institutional-based ministry because it encourages the church's ministries to be developed by individuals rather than the institution. Rather than all ministry ideas originating with leadership and being implemented from the top-down, in the network structure ministry ideas originate "in the hearts and passions of any believer who can find a few others who share the same passion. The church supports or makes room for those ministries that are

---

[69] McNeal, 43.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Mallory, 93-94.

[72] Dawn, 79.

grown and sustained in the hearts of its members."[73] In the network structure a "church's ministry takes the shape of gifted people instead of forcing people into pre-existing niches that act like a confining straitjacket."[74]

This image of ministry fits well with the New Testament picture of the church as a "gifted" or "charismatic" community. Greg Ogden writes:

> The church is fundamentally a charismatic community, for the *charismata* (grace-gifts) have been distributed and assigned to all in Christ (1 Cor. 12:11,18). This makes each person an initiating center for ministry. All are directly connected to Jesus, the head of the body. The signals for ministry are sent directly from the head to the parts. Initiative for ministry can be taken by any responsible person, whether or not they hold an office.[75]

Greg Ogden goes on to call this a bottom-up and "bubble-up" form of ministry. He writes, "The bottom-up church is a bubble-up ministry. The body is not passively waiting for or resisting the pastor's next move. Nor is the congregation reduced to an audience who applauds the solo performance of a multi-gifted pastor."[76] By giving permission to people initiate ministries within the overarching direction of the church, the network structure encourages individuals to serve in accordance with their gifts and calling rather than in institutional terms. As individuals, and teams, develop their ministries the network structure gives them the freedom they need to be creative along with the accountability needed to ensure coherence and stability.

---

[73] Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 100.

[74] Ibid., 33-34.

[75] Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 75.

[76] Ibid., 75,76.

It Is Based on Accountability Not Control

Any organization, including a church, needs some system to ensure that the organization does not descend into anarchy. There must be controls in place in order to make sure that the efforts of the various ministries contribute to, not detract from, the overall mission of the church. The traditional church believed this was best done through hierarchical structures and detailed processes; however, this control was achieved at the cost of stifling creativity and hindering the church's ability to adapt to changes in its environment. The network structure tries to find a better balance between the need for freedom and the need for order by giving up control in return for accountability. Bandy writes:

> Accountability is important to both traditional organizations and thriving church [network] organizations, but accountability in the former quickly becomes mere control, while accountability in the latter is a matter of establishing credible *trust.* Traditional organizations ask the question, "Have you done everything we asked you to do?" Thriving organizations ask the question, "Have you done anything we forbade you to do?" This latter form of accountability involves far more trust, because so much is left to the imagination of the leaders. So long as they do not go beyond specified boundaries, they are free to do things that may even jar the aesthetic sensibilities or traditional practices that are unconsciously assumed by members of the board or long time adherents of the congregation.[77]

Trust is a major difference between accountability and control because control means having to get permission before implementing an idea. The accountability of the network structure works by evaluating an idea after it takes place. Easum states, "Accountability occurs after action takes place. The individual or team takes action and

---

[77] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 74. Italics his.

then gives an account of what was done and why it was done. Control occurs before a person or team takes action. The individual or team has to ask for permission before taking action."[78] Easum believes that this form of accountability is scriptural and well-suited to the emerging culture. He writes, "The quantum world, like the Scriptures, focuses on accountability as opposed to control" and therefore "in the quantum world, church leaders must develop an environment in which accountability more than control guides the direction of ministry."[79]

Accountability works as the leaders lay out the mission, vision, and values of the church, providing the direction and the boundaries of ministry, and trusting people and teams to freely operate within those parameters. Jim Collins, in his study of good to great companies, discovered that many organizations used this kind of accountability to find the balance between freedom and order. He says these organizations "built a consistent system with clear constraints but they also gave people freedom and responsibility within the framework of that system."[80] Further this method of accountability can be integrated into the culture of an organization creating what Collins calls a "culture of discipline."[81] A culture of discipline replaces control because "when you have disciplined people, you don't need hierarchy. When you have disciplined thought, you don't need bureaucracy. When you have disciplined action, you don't need excessive controls. When you combine

---

[78] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 29.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Business, 2001), 125.

[81] Ibid., 13.

a culture of discipline with an ethic of entrepreneurship, you get the magical alchemy of great performance."[82]

By giving ministries freedom to take action without excessive controls leaders are demonstrating their trust in the abilities and skills of the people. Hierarchical structures were designed with the assumption that workers (people) were uneducated and poorly skilled and therefore were not able to be trusted. Chapter 2 demonstrated that one of the shifts of the emerging culture is a rise of the education, skills, and abilities of people. Today people view hierarchical structures and excessive controls as indication that leadership does not trust or believe in them or consider them valuable to the mission. The network structure, by giving people permission to design ministry, demonstrates the leaders trust in people, along with the encouragement that they will be held accountable to the mission, vision, and values of the church. Bandy states, "Accountability tends to be team-based, peer supervision that unfolds in an atmosphere of mutual trust. It is truly a vehicle for empowerment."[83] With these characteristics in mind, it is time to look at each element of the network structure in more detail.

---

[82] Ibid.

[83] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 37.

## The Elements of the Grace Church Network Structure

### Anchored by the Leadership Team

The core of the networked structure at Grace Church is the leadership team. Made up of the elders, this leadership team provides the foundation on which the network of ministries is based. This leadership team sets the direction of the church, establishes the boundaries and encourages each ministry within the network. From a biblical perspective, this leadership team is the elders that are appointed to "direct the affairs of the church" (1 Tim. 5:17) and who are to "be shepherds of God's flock" (1 Pet. 5:2 NIV). At Grace Church, in keeping with the principles found in the New Testament, this authority is given not to the pastor, but to the team of elders, to which the pastor belongs.[84]

This leadership team is a steering team that acts as a central nervous system of the body and whose purpose is to help discover the strategies, policies, values, beliefs and principles of the organization. [85] In addition it helps ensure coordination between staff, lay leaders, the resource team and the various ministry teams. In this picture the leadership team is not an administrative body that decides what can or cannot be done, but instead "rather defines the boundaries within which opportunities can be explored."[86] As Easum states, its goal "is to free and equip people to develop their spiritual gifts."[87]

---

[84] See Glenn Johnson who writes, "A mark of growing churches, that is, churches that are growing God's way, is that they are always led by a plurality of godly leaders . . . you will search in vain the pages of the New Testament to find church leadership vested in one man." Johnson, 61.

[85] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 131.

[86] Ibid., 135.

[87] Ibid., 134.

The leadership team achieves these purposes by acting in accordance with the principles of Scripture that call on them to be servants, not rulers (Matt. 20:24-28). The members of the leadership team are not managers, nor directors, nor CEOs but are servants dedicated to giving to others. As Johnson writes, they are "undershepherds, not overlords" who "empower others to minister and serve our Lord Jesus Christ."[88]

As servant leaders, this team focuses on empowering and equipping people in the church to successfully fulfill the ministry God has laid on their hearts. In this model leadership is not about getting people to assist in leaders' ministries but to have the leaders assist people in theirs. Schwartz writes in his ground-breaking study of healthy churches that "leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering other Christians for ministry. They do not use lay workers as helpers in attaining their own goals and fulfilling their own visions. Rather, they invert the pyramid of authority so that the leader assists Christians to attain the spiritual potential God has for them."[89] Secular business leaders are discovering the power of servant leadership. Bill O'Brien, president of Hanover Insurance, states that leaders "must give up the old dogma of planning, organizing and controlling, and realize the almost sacredness of their responsibility for the lives of so many people. A manager's fundamental task, according to O'Brien is providing the enabling conditions for people to lead the most enriching lives they can."[90] This is especially true for the leadership team of a local church. Their sacred mission is

---

[88] Johnson, 45.

[89] Schwarz, 44.

[90] Quoted in Senge, 140.

"to authorize, enable and give opportunity for others to participate in Christ's global cause. Empowering others is a primary role of leaders."[91]

A key role for leadership team members is their responsibility to live out and practice the mission and purpose of the church in their own lives. As important as communicating the direction of the church is, the leadership team must go farther than this by living it out in the lives of the members. Cladis writes that:

> The culture of the principal leadership team has an enormous effect on the congregational culture and even the community at large. The best way for this leadership team to influence the church and the town environments is to exhibit and live the vision and mission of the church. The lived culture becomes contagious and is replicated in various ways throughout the church and community, both intentionally and unconsciously. Over time the culture is exported by individual church leaders out into their various arenas of ministry.[92]

Or, as Cladis says more succinctly, "The key ingredient is a leadership team that lives the vision, breathes it, models it, tells its story any chance it gets, sleeps and eats it, and otherwise calls people together around it."[93]

Of all the tasks of the leadership team the most important is its ability to cast a unifying vision and mission for the church. It is up to the leadership team to ensure that everyone in the church is on the same page and heading in the same direction. The leadership team determines the direction of the network of the church. Duck, reporting on a major study of change by the Boston Consulting Group, writes, "The clearest finding was that the most common cause of failure—across every type of initiative and in every

---

[91] Johnson, 46.

[92] Cladis, 76.

[93] Ibid., 56.

geography was . . . the lack of alignment of the leaders . . . when the leaders are not aligned, it has a disastrous effect on the rest of the organization."[94] This finding led Duck to report, "The most important aspect of the leadership team is alignment around the vision and strategy."[95]

There is no shortage of others who support this principle. Bolman and Deal write, "Organizations need leaders who can provide a persuasive and durable sense of purpose and direction, rooted deeply in human values and the human spirit . . . leaders need to be deeply reflective, actively thoughtful, and dramatically explicit about their core values and beliefs."[96] Cladis adds, "There is a consensus among innovative organizational and business thinkers today that *leaders cast a vision that unites people around a cause.* Without that vision, people have no direction, no inspiration, and no meaning given to their work . . . it is absolutely critical, they argue, for a leader or leadership teams to articulate the vision of the work group, give it sharp focus, and rally resources toward meeting that goal."[97]

Kelly notes how this changes the role of the leadership team. He writes, "The new role for leaders is to suggest or point to a particular destination and envision or anticipate the future. Rather than trying to steer the organization leaders are trying to look ahead and describe the view and then articulate that view so people can understand it and steer

---

[94] Duck, 24.

[95] Ibid., 95.

[96] Bolman and Deal, 379.

[97] Cladis, 55. Italics his.

toward it."[98] Bandy also describes this change in function. He writes that the leaders' concern for "clarity of congregational identity indicates their conviction that the central organizational board should distance itself as far as possible from the management of the church."[99] Instead, "they will more likely concentrate on resolving ambiguities regarding the core values, beliefs, vision, and mission of the church."[100] As this issue of establishing the central identity of the church through mission, vision and values is so important, this task of the leadership team will be discussed in more detail.

## Guided by Mission, Vision, and Values

The central core of the network structure is made up of the mission, vision, and values of the church. These provide the foundation on which the entire structure is built. Further, the number one priority of the leaders of the church is the discovery, definition, communication, and maintenance of the mission, vision, and values. Easum states that these three things form the "body culture" of the church.[101] He writes that these three things "give a clear, distinct, and focused picture of what God is calling the church to be and do."[102] In another work, Easum and Bandy state that the mission, vision, and values

---

[98] Kelly, 14.

[99] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 35.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 136.

[102] Ibid.

"function like the genetic code that marks each cell of the [church]."[103] These governing ideas answer the three critical questions for of what, why, and how of the church.[104]

There is a tremendous amount of literature defining and describing what mission, vision and values are. For the purposes of this project each is defined as follows. Mission is the purpose of the church. It is the reason the church exists. The mission describes what it is out to accomplish. Vision is related to mission but focuses on describing what the successful accomplishment of the mission looks like. Vision gives a picture of what the future will look like if the church accomplishes its mission. Core values outline the how of mission accomplishment. They describe what is important to the church in terms of how it goes about fulfilling its mission. Core values act as boundary markers defining what the church will and will not do to achieve its purpose. Each of these will be described in more detail below.

The mission is the "basic bottom-line mission of the church. It is why the church exists."[105] The mission outlines what the church hopes to achieve during its existence, or as Southern and Norton say, "Mission is your congregation's fundamental reason for being" and "all ministry activities must be in alignment with it."[106]

Vision is closely related to mission, and describes what the church hopes to accomplish. This narrows the broad mission of the church, making it much more

---

[103] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 129.

[104] Senge, 223.

[105] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 136.

[106] Southern and Norton, 25-26.

specific.[107] Vision describes what the accomplishment of the mission looks like. It paints the picture of the future that the church is trying to create.[108] Vision helps establish identity for the congregation in the short term. It tells "what we are, what we are not, and what we expect to become in three to five years."[109] This vision of the future speaks to the "heart, not mind" and can be described as the "song in the heart" that motivates and inspires people.[110] Senge writes that vision "is not an idea . . . it is a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power . . . few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision."[111]

In contrast to secular organizations where vision, however it is developed, arises solely out of people's hearts, vision in the church comes from God. The church seeks to discover its mission by listening to the heart of God. Herrington, et al. write that, "We also want to firmly and emphatically state that vision . . . originates from God . . . the Bible offers many stories of God implanting his vision in human leaders in order to accomplish his purposes."[112] For the church developing a vision statement is "producing

---

[107] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 136.

[108] Senge writes, "Vision paints the picture of what we want to create." Senge, 231.

[109] Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 49.

[110] Thomas G. Bandy, *Moving Off the Map a Field Guide to Changing Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998), 178.

[111] Senge, 206.

[112] Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 52.

a written description of God's preferred future that is broad and exciting in its direction but clear and explicit in its details."[113]

While mission and vision lay out the direction for the church describing where it wants to go, core values act as boundary markers indicating where the church does not want to go. These core values "provide the subtle boundaries that informally sanction or prohibit behavior."[114] Core values answer the question of "how" the church will carry out its mission and vision. They answer the question of "how do we want to act, consistent with our mission, along the path toward achieving our vision."[115] Southern and Norton describe core values this way, "Core values are the qualities that your congregation feels are intrinsically worthwhile and desirable. Values say what you are willing to do, and where you draw the line. Firmly held core values are so strong that they endure when the environment changes. They show where your boundaries are; they translate into standards of behavior and expectations."[116]

Core values allow people to know when their actions are in-bounds or out-of-bounds. Bandy writes, "Core values are a matter of consistent choices that shape the daily, monthly, and yearly behavior of the people in the congregation—both individually and collectively."[117] As boundary markers all behavior in the church is weighed against these deeply held values. Hock writes that core values present "a clear, unambiguous

---

[113] Ibid., 61.

[114] Easum, *Sacred Cows*, 136.

[115] Senge, 224.

[116] Southern and Norton, 7.

[117] Bandy, *Moving Off the Map a Field Guide to Changing Congregations*, 145.

statement of fundamental belief about how the whole and all the parts intend to conduct themselves in pursuit of the purpose. A [core value] is a precept against which all structures, decisions, actions and results will be judged."[118]

Examples of mission, vision, and values can be seen in a number of places within the Scriptures. Numbers 13 and 14 record the report of Joshua concerning the Promised Land. His report is an example of an effective vision for the future as he describes the benefits of the land, acknowledges the difficulties (giants), affirms the possibility of success, communicates his passion, and builds up the people's faith in the face of their fears.[119] Another example is Paul's response to the problems in the Corinthian church. Bandy writes, "The Corinthian church was perhaps the most chaotic Christian community in the whole, chaotic Gentile mission—and it is instructive to see how Paul brings order into the chaos. What he does *not* do is impose a hierarchy of authority, a bureaucracy of management or prescriptive mandates and job descriptions that precisely define what everyone should do."[120] Instead he articulates core values, beliefs, and basic boundaries (idolatry, sexual immorality); he articulates a core message and vision (1 Cor. 1:18-31). He appeals for the church to have unity of purpose, beliefs, vision, and mission (1 Cor. 1:10), and he empowers individuals to use and employ their gifts in accordance with that mission (1 Cor. 12).[121]

---

[118] Hock, 8.

[119] Appel and Nelson, 136-137.

[120] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 16.

[121] Ibid., 16-18.

Together mission, vision, and core values help create a common identity that spreads throughout the church.[122] Establishing this central identity is essential if a congregation is to traverse diverse and similar directions at the same time. This identity is the shared foundation for all the various and unique ministries within the church's web. Bandy writes that the church "must determine the basic, fundamental, or essential vision, beliefs, and values of church life" and that these "define the essential identity of the church as it exists for the participants today."[123] Keene relates this back to the strange attractor of complex systems. He writes:

> The inherent simplicity found in the system can be likened to the values and guiding principles within an organization, the vision and purpose which influences all decisions made within the organization. The role of leadership will, therefore, be one of creating and determining the purpose of the organization—what it does it want to be known for, what is the overriding vision and purpose? These principles will provide the simple rules and navigations system for the organization. Whilst giving the organization direction, it will allow the elements in the system to co-create the route that will be taken in getting there.[124]

A central, shared identity is also able to harness the immense potential of the various parts of the church's body. Ulrich writes, "When individuals share a common mindset about the company's identity, their personal strengths merge to form a stronger whole. This shared mindset is created when employees know what the company is trying to accomplish, why the company is headed in one direction over another, and what each

---

[122] Peter Senge writes that "the combination of mission, vision, and values creates the common identity that can connect thousands of people within a large organization." Senge, 293.

[123] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 141.

[124] Keene, 17.

individual contributes to the overall goal."[125] Hock agrees, "Since the strength and reality of every organization lies in the sense of community of the people who have been attracted to it, its success has enormously more to do with clarity of a shared purpose, common principles, and strength of belief in them than with money, material assets or management practices, important as they may be."[126]

This central identity is important because it replaces the rules and regulations of the traditional organization in providing guidance and stability for the church, and does so in a way that promotes rather than restricts freedom and flexibility. This can be a struggle for some within the church to understand. The dependence on Newtonian mechanistic thinking has led many people to see detailed rules and regulations as the only way to ensure the organization does not fly out of control. As Wheatley writes, "Those who try to convince us to manage from values or vision, rather than from traditional authority usually scare us. Their organizations seem devoid of the management controls that ensure order. Values, vision, ethics—these are too soft, many feel, too translucent to serve as management tools. How can they create the kind of order we crave in the face of chaos?"[127] The answer is first, to help people see that these controls never really provided the certainty and control they promised, and second, to help people understand the manner in which the shared common identity acts in the background to provide the right amount of stability in a manner that rules and regulations could never do.

---

[125] Ulrich, 192.

[126] Hock, 120.

[127] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 57.

The challenge is to help people see the universe in a more complex and subtle way. Wheatley writes that Newton's world justified people's fears of loss of control "because it was a world of pieces spinning off in all directions" but people need to "look past Newton," change their "field of vision" and "see a world of greater, more subtle forms of order."[128] Rules and regulations will continue to have a place within any organization including the church but no longer will leaders rely on them to deliver mechanistic certainty and control.[129] Instead leaders will focus on enabling each person in the church share the mission, vision, and values so the common identity can act like "an electromagnetic field within which the ferment of church life occurs."[130]

A shared common vision works by providing certainty around the core ideas of the church while allowing the flexibility the church needs to be able to adapt to its ever-changing environment. Martoia calls this having "clarity at the core and flexibility at the fringe."[131] He writes, "Postmodern churches don't need and may not want clear boundaries on a host of things if they want to respond well to the host of turbulent conditions of our postmodern environment" but "the mission of why we exist, the vision

---

[128] Ibid.

[129] Hock writes, "This is not to say that contracts, laws, and regulations do not serve a purpose. Rather, it is to point out that they can never achieve the mechanistic certainty and control we crave. Rules and regulations, laws and contracts, can never replace clarity of shared purpose and clear, deeply held principles about conduct in pursuit of it." Hock, 89.

[130] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 156. See also Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 13. where she writes "I have come to understand organizational vision as a field—a force of unseen connections that influences employees' behavior—rather than some evocative message about some desired future state."

[131] Martoia, 121.

of how to accomplish it, and our core values are clear and constant."[132] Bolman and Deal found this same dynamic to be a key component in companies who were managing to adapt well to the fast-paced change in the emerging culture. These companies, they found, have "relatively loose structures that reward innovation and entrepreneurship but are tightly controlled by culture and values."[133]

Similarly, Thomas Petzinder, the Washington economics editor for the Wall Street Journal, also notes the importance of this paradox of freedom and control. He describes a large chemical company where "leadership articulated a short, simple set of rules based on corporate values. Members of the corporation then had the freedom to do what was required as long as they stayed within 'the cowl' or the parameters of the rules."[134] He notes, "This method preserves trial and error and provides freedom within a circumference of control." Petzinger described this intersection between freedom and control as "the edge of chaos."[135]

Bandy describes the differences between the traditional methods of control and control by mission, vision, and values in terms of prescriptive and proscriptive thinking. Traditional controls work by prescribing exactly what any person, team, or committee can do. This leaves the person, team, or committee lacking freedom to deviate from what is prescribed. In contrast, the mission, vision, and values do not attempt to prescribe

---

[132] Ibid.

[133] Bolman and Deal, 275.

[134] Quoted in Axelrod, 57.

[135] See ibid.

exactly what a person, team, or committee does but instead they proscribe that which they cannot do. It emphasizes the boundary lines that the person, team, or committee cannot cross. Bandy writes, "Prescriptive thinking lists everything that a committee, program, or church office *can or should do.* It prescribes activity in the same way that a doctor prescribes medicine for a patient. Proscriptive thinking defines boundaries beyond which a ministry team, program, or church leader *cannot go, but within which they are free to take initiative.*"[136] The result with proscriptive thinking is "individual participants do not need to ask permission to do things. They are empowered to ask for themselves: Does this creative idea go beyond the boundaries of core values, bedrock beliefs, motivating vision, or key mission? If the answer is no, they are free to do whatever they wish, no matter how crazy the idea might be, immediately."[137]

The leaders promote and communicate the mission, vision, and values throughout the church so they become a part of each member's shared identity. The leaders' job is to make the words and sentences leave the written page and enter the hearts and actions of those in the church. Bandy writes, "Only when these boundaries are clear can the congregation know where they want to go, why they need to go there, and how they can accomplish their journey."[138] Wheatley suggests it is helpful to think of mission, vision, and values of a field that needed to "permeate organizational space."[139] The task is to

---

[136] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 34. Italics his.

[137] Bandy, *Moving Off the Map a Field Guide to Changing Congregations*, 36.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 54.

permeate this field "through the entire organization so that we could take advantage of its formative properties. All employees, in any part of the company, who bumped against that field would be influenced by it."[140] Marshall puts the task in more simple words. He suggests, "Leaders need to involve the expertise and experience of everyone in the system in creating the organization's fundamental beliefs, values, and shared purpose (mission) and encourage people to organize around them."[141] The leaders' task is to communicate the mission, vision, and values, to keep them ever-present and clear, and "then allow individuals in the system their random, sometimes chaotic-looking meanderings."[142] Frost and Hirsch describe the mission ahead for the leadership team at Grace Church:

> All that a great visionary leader does is awaken and harness the dreams and visions of the members of a given community and give them deeper coherence by means of a grand vision that ties together the 'little visions' of the members of the group. The fact remains that no one will be prepared to die for my sense of purpose in life. She or he will die only for her or his own sense of purpose. My task as a leader is to so articulate the vision that others are willing to embed their sense of purpose within the common vision of the community. Only if they think that the common vision legitimizes their vision will they be motivated by a leader's vision. In this sense, willingness to partake in corporate vision is the greatest compliment that a person can pay to leadership...It is this capacity to articulate a preferred future based on a common moral vision that allows people to dream again. This is true of all apostolic leadership. And in a profound sense the leader is the key person in the release of spiritual creativity and innovation in any setting—the catalyst for reconceptualizing the mission of the church.[143]

---

[140] Ibid.

[141] Marshall, 186.

[142] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 133.

[143] Frost and Hirsch, 188.

Prepare not Plan

By developing the mission, vision, and values the leadership team helps prepare for and respond to the future the church faces. The word "prepare" is a deliberate and significant choice. In this network model of the church the leadership team does not have the capacity, knowledge, competency, time, or energy to devise detailed plans for each piece of the church. In addition detailed plans for each piece of the church are unnecessary for the church to reach its goals. McNeal writes, "Typical approaches to the future involve prediction and planning. This works OK in a world that experiences significant continuity. It doesn't work in the current environment . . . the better (and biblical) approach to the future involves prayer and preparation, not prediction and planning."[144] Snyder and Runyon agree because "complexity theory stresses . . . that it is simply impossible to predict very far into the future. The multiplied number of variables increases exponentially as time passes."[145] Therefore, they go on to say: complexity theory is:

> [Complexity is] suspicious of long-range planning. We think the church should be too. Vital systems and vital churches are marked more by flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances than by long-range plans. They are marked more by vision than by detailed strategies. How many churches have brilliant long-range plans gathering dust on shelves

[144] McNeal, 93. Wilson describes the problem this way, "Got a planning problem? Take some measurements and extrapolate. Got a real planning problem? Take lots and lots and lots of measurements and extrapolate in great detail, using all the computing power you can find. No don't. It won't work, it will paralyse the business, by the time you get the results it will be too late and the results will be wrong anyway. The plannable days are long gone." Wilson, 29-30.

[145] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 42.

> because of unforeseen circumstances. From a complexity and organic perspective, such an outcome is no surprise.[146]

Instead of developing detailed strategic plans the leadership team calls the church to its purpose and identity in order to prepare each ministry team to be able to adapt and respond to their environment. The focus again is on communicating a clear purpose with clear values. Hock writes:

> One need not know and be able to prove in advance what could be accomplished. One need not have a precise plan about how to get there. In a complex, rapidly changing world, a clear sense of direction, a compelling purpose, and powerful beliefs about conduct in pursuit of it [values], seemed to me more infinitely sensible and robust than mechanical plans, detailed objectives, and predetermined outcomes.[147]

Southern and Norton call this preparation for the future "strategic-mapping" instead of "strategic-planning."[148] Strategic mapping suggests that the leaders are able to give ministry teams a general picture of the future, the desired direction, the worst hazards, best opportunities, and key routes, but the map is not so specific as to prescribe an exact path. This strategic map is based on the mission, vision, and values but also gives room for each ministry team to find the optimum path to the goal. Southern and Norton go on to outline the advantages of mapping over planning. They write:

> Things move with amazing speed in our often chaotic and rapidly changing postmodern world. A congregation, too, must learn to move just as quickly. Strategic planning and strategic mapping are two good ways to get your congregation from where it is to where it wants to be. However, strategic planning is too often tied to property, program and hierarchical

---

[146] Ibid.

[147] Hock, 202.

[148] Southern and Norton, 13.

> control. It frequently defines goals, choices and programs on the basis of linear decisions. Planning is less sensitive to immediate feedback from the environment. Strategic mapping, which we prefer over strategic planning, is tied to values, mission, vision and permission-giving. Thus mapping gives a congregation room to make course adjustments as needed because it draws boundaries while leaving open space between boundaries. In this open space, there is ample room for flexibility and exploration. Mapping is an open and living method for helping you find your way to your vision. It anticipates changing needs by developing a way to meet those needs spontaneously, wherever and whenever they may occur.[149]

A worker at Abbott Laboratories summed it up well when he said to Jim Collins "We recognize that planning is priceless but plans are useless."[150]

Supported by Staff

Staff members at Grace Church play a similar role in coordination with the leadership team. Staff members are not viewed as controllers, managers, or doers of ministry but as equippers and coachers of ministry. The job of staff members is to further communicate and instill the mission, vision, and values within their areas of responsibility. In keeping with the biblical principles discussed in chapter 3 the staff members at Grace Church are encouraged to see themselves as leaders who equip and empower others to develop their gifts and serve God in the various areas of the church. Stevens writes, "Christian leadership is the God-given ability to influence others so that believers will trust and respond to the Head of the church for themselves, in order to accomplish the Lord's purpose for God's people in the world."[151]

---

[149] Ibid. This is why Grace Church has a Mission Map instead of a Strategic Plan. See Appendix 5.

[150] Collins, 123.

[151] Stevens and Collins, 109.

Staff members at Grace Church see themselves as coaches, mentors, and encouragers of ministry. Their roles include shepherding, coaching, synthesizing, and motivating.[152] As Paul records in 1 Thessalonians 2:5-9, this means more than performing a duty or a job but also a sharing of life.[153] Staff members become "executive champions" who become "nurturer[s], protector[s], facilitator[s], and interference runner[s] for as many energetic champions as you can induce to sally forth."[154] Their ultimate goal is to equip the whole community for mission. Snyder and Runyon write, "The central focus for leadership rejects the clergy/laity dichotomy as heretical", understand that "to be a member of the body is to have a function, a ministry, in the body" and become "experts in multiplying ministry."[155]

Resourced by the Logistics Team

The network structure proposed for Grace Church suggests that ministry teams be given direction and boundaries, anchored by the leadership team, and freed to develop ministry as they see fit. Yet successful ministries need one more ingredient. They need resources. In terms of ministry resources could include volunteers, workers, space,

---

[152] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 23.

[153] Paul writes, "On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you." (1 Thess. 2:409 NIV)

[154] Peters, 302.

[155] Snyder and Runyon, *Decoding the Church*, 92.

promotion, technical resources such as audio/visual, and financial. The task of the logistics team is to gather, evaluate, and distribute these resources to the ministries as needed. This role, filled by the Trustee Committee at Grace Church, is similar to the traditional role of trustees. The committee is responsible for guiding the setting of the budget, ensuring proper financial accountability, maintaining land and buildings, and ensuring that all administrative requirements (legal, administrative, tax, financial) are met.

A key difference from the traditional mode is the attitude with which this ministry is carried out. Too often in the traditional hierarchical structure those in charge of these areas come to see themselves as the protectors of assets rather than stewards. Subtly, the mission becomes about how to protect resources (buildings, budget, finances) from being damaged or used up in ministry. In the network strategy the goal is the opposite. In the network or web structure resources lack inherent status and links to hierarchical processes or authority. Resources are to be managed and coordinated for all the different ministries of the church. In a sense the Trustee Committee administers resources so that ministry teams are freed to focus on their mission goals, without having to worry about administration. Over the last several years the church has seen some of this attitude being adopted by the logistics team, and while not all protective memories have been erased, significant progress has been made. The logistics team is working towards becoming a servant to the ministry teams.

Built around Teams

In the current structure of Grace Church relatively few elected committees carry out the work of the church. In the new network structure much of this work is broken into smaller pieces and accomplished through diverse ministry teams. These teams differ from the committees in that they are generally not elected, are oriented towards narrow and specific ministry needs, and are generally self-organized. At times these ministry teams evolve from older committees and at other times these are new teams that emerge to meet a new need. For Grace Church teams will become the basic building block of ministry. Peters writes, "The modest-sized, task-oriented, semi-autonomous, mainly self-managing team should be the basic organization building block."[156] Cladis agrees with Peters:

> Ministry teams that are open, available, flexible, responsive, and representative of the people they lead will do better in the postmodern world than will leaders at the top of an old-style hierarchical pyramid. [The emerging culture] requires organizations to turn the pyramid upside down so that leaders who were above are now below. And instead of giving orders from above, they give support to the wider constituency from below.[157]

Team-based ministries satisfy the two founding principles discussed earlier: they are both biblically based and well-suited to the emerging culture. Cladis writes, "The most effective churches today are the ones that are developing team-based leadership.

---

[156] Peters, 356. See also Sommerville who writes that "Organizations of the twenty-first century must find a way to make the spontaneous forming and re-forming of high-performing multidisciplinary teams a natural way of working." Somerville and Mroz, 71. And also Miller, "Among the skills that the chameleon organization will impart to its people are those required for operating in teams. Such skills are critical because teams will play a greater role in performing the work of the organization." Miller, "The Future Organization," 123.

[157] Cladis, 21. Sue Mallory perhaps overstates the matter when she writes that "the complex organism called the church does not function in a healthy manner without multiple interdependent teams." Mallory, 78.

This pattern will likely continue into the twenty-first century, both because Scripture emphasizes Spirit-led, Spirit-gifted, collaborative team fellowship and because today's culture is receptive to such leadership."[158] J. Paul Nyquist agrees that teams are a biblically compatible option. He writes:

> God is all about team. For example, Christ did not entrust the Great Commission to an individual. He gave it to a group—the church. And the Bible's description of the church likens it not to a parade of unrelated individuals, but to an interconnected body. . . . Paul's key point [in 1 Cor. 12] is we need each other. No one believer has all the gifts. No single Christian can go it alone. Instead, we are a body and members of each other. In other words, we are a team.[159]

Bandy adds, "The authentic call of Christ from the experience of the earliest church is that teams should be sent into the chaos of the pagan world, and be trusted to take whatever measures seem necessary to proclaim the gospel."[160]

One difficulty stems from lack of clarity about what exactly a team is. How is a team different from a committee, a department, or a board? Cladis defines a team as "small groups that have a sharp mission, collaborate by combining their skills, gifts, and resources to move towards a meaningful . . . goal."[161] Teams differ from other forms of organization in that they are drawn together not by duty but by a commitment to a common interest. They are more task-focused than maintenance-focused. A team comes together to accomplish something. Another key difference between teams and

---

[158] Cladis, 1.

[159] J. Paul Nyquist, "Reclaiming Teamwork for Kingdom Work," *The Gospel Message* 2003, 3.

[160] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 31.

[161] Cladis, 95.

committees is that "committees take minutes, vote, make decisions and recommendations" and others are expected to carry them out.[162] In contrast a team may do all those things but it is also responsible for the execution of the plan and the accomplishment of the goal. Easum describes the difference between teams and committees:

> Teams are different from committees. Committees usually come into existence because a nominating committee randomly selects people to serve together without any verification that those people want to serve, have the necessary abilities for the task, or have anything in common. Once established, committees have very little authority to make decisions. Most decisions are referred to a central committee.[163]

Teams on the other hand, have affinity because each person on the team has an interest in the ministry of that particular team. They do not have to meet to decide what to do. Team leaders decide this before they seek the rest of the team. The team is responsible for making decisions and acting on its own without having to return to the source for its selection for approval.[164]

In addition teams have flexibility that committees lack. Teams are self-forming, self-organizing, and self-destructing.[165] They can adapt quickly to changing circumstances and situations. Miller writes, "The self-directed, self-managed team provides the muscle inside the flexible organization. . . . Teams will form around a problem. Once the problem has been solved or redefined, some teams will disappear and

---

[162] Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 301.

[163] Easum, *Sacred Cows,* 117.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., 113.

new ones will form."[166] As Cladis writes, "A team that learns how to discern the spiritual gifts of the individual team members and how to have members work together, pray hard, and share information and energy in order to move toward a sharply defined mission, vision, or cause, is an extremely powerful unity of ministry."[167]

Recently Grace Church had the opportunity to test this new form of ministry. For a couple of years the church had partnered with another much larger church in the community to run an evangelism program called Alpha. For a number of reasons the cooperative effort ran its course and it was decided that each church should run its own evangelism program. For a church as small as Grace Church, Alpha seemed beyond its capacity to run. Alpha required tremendous resources in leadership and volunteers. The course required full dinners to be cooked for program participants for thirteen weeks in a row. In addition people were needed to lead discussion groups, organize the materials, set up and run the audio-visual equipment, lead music, and plan a retreat. It seemed overwhelming; however, the elders committed to attempting the program with a ministry team rather than appointing a standing committee. Discussions were held with those who had assisted in the cooperative effort, the vision and need were spelled out at the congregational level, and the leadership watched to see what would happen.

Within a few weeks several people came forward willing to lead in different areas. One lady offered to run the kitchen, prepare the meals, and organize teams to set up and take down the dining room. Another four people agreed to be discussion leaders

---

[166] Miller, "The Future Organization," 123.

[167] Cladis, 88.

and another four people expressed interest in helping out. One man was invited to be the 'point-person (or ministry coach—see next section). This incredibly complex, thirteen-week program involving over forty volunteers was launched after only two meetings. The first formed the leadership team and routed people to the areas where they felt called and gifted. The second was held after the first dinner to iron out problems and evaluate what could be done better. The rest of the planning was done by phone, email. and one-on-one conversations.

With Grace Church's traditional system a program like this would have taken months and many meetings to set up. The team focus made it quicker, more exciting for people, and fun as the team learned to serve together. The program recently entered its second run and most of the team eagerly signed up to continue. It is hoped this pilot project will serve an example to follow in the years ahead.

## Linked By Coaches

Chapter 5 on complex adaptive system stressed the importance of connections and information flow across a system. A system can be self-organizing only if the various parts are connected to each other and each part has the information it needs to make wise decisions. This is certainly true within the structure of Grace Church. If the leadership team is to guide the church effectively the mission, vision, and values must be communicated throughout the church and become part of the identity of every ministry team. Further connection and communication are essential for the various ministry teams to be self-correcting and self-adjusting. Brown and Armour write that is "purposeful

planning for feedback" are essential in churches. They write ,"To know where change is needed and to manage it effectively, leaders must have he pulse of all the systems in their congregation."[168]

Communication between ministries has not been strong for Grace Church. In the traditional hierarchical system each ministry focused almost solely on completing its own mission. Conflicts between ministries were handled upwards through the hierarchy and especially to the board of elders. In addition ministry leaders often felt isolated and abandoned as they were given tasks and sent out to do them. For the most part no one was designated to encourage, support, and equip ministry leaders other than the pastoral staff, which in most cases was too small to connect everyone.

Connection is important in the network structure; however, ministry leaders might feel more disconnected and isolated as the formal, hierarchical connections are severed. People with the gift of encouragement can act as ministry coaches to avoid problems in the transition. Ministry coaches are not the leaders of teams but persons who connect ministry team leaders to the larger network. The coaches encourage team leaders, inform them of what is happening elsewhere in the church, and pass needs from the teams back to the leadership team or logistics team and throughout the rest of the network. Mallory designates ministry coaches as the "ligaments" mentioned in Ephesians 4:16 because they are the people who create the connections between the various parts of the body.[169]

---

[168] Armour and Browning, 131.

[169] Mallory, 139.

These leaders are called coaches because their roles are not to do ministry but to come alongside others and coach them to succeed in their ministries. Cladis says these leaders "function as coaches, giving advice to, equipping, training, and encouraging those in the front lines of ministry."[170] Bandy's description of a pastor-coach in his life depicts the role and method of the coach. Of a youth pastor in his own life, Bandy writes:

> His coaching did not fit well with the programmatic expertise and professionalism demanded by the congregation and denomination. He did not organize youth rallies and impressive liturgical celebrations; instead, he helped others give birth to their abilities to organize youth rallies and worship celebrations. He helped people discover and release their potential for leadership. More than this, he helped people customize their gifts to suit changing times, supported them when their handcrafted leadership contradicted traditional institutional expectations, and challenged them to move beyond their plateaus of achievement.[171]

Ministry coaches make it their ministry to come alongside others and help them to maximize their spiritual gifts. They succeed when others succeed. Mallory says that a coach's job is not to run the church but to empower the people of God to be the ministers they are called to be. Coaches get their rewards through seeing other people live out their gifts.[172]

Where ministry coaches fit in the overall structure of the church may depend on the size of the church. In a small church, with relatively few ministry teams coaching may be part of the leadership team's role. In larger churches other gifted individuals will

---

[170] Cladis, 124. One potential of this designation is that women may not relate to it as well as men, oriented as it is towards athletics and sports. However, I have been unable to come up with another word that carries the idea equally as well as 'coach'.

[171] Thomas G. Bandy, *Coaching Change: Breaking Down Resistance, Building up Hope* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 22-23.

[172] Mallory, 139.

need to be recruited to help the leadership team connect to multiple ministry teams operating under the umbrella of the church. At Grace Church this role is shared between the elders (leadership team) and a couple of coaches. Two men have been asked recently to serve as coaches, one connects with the worship team and men's ministry and the other connects with Alpha and some of the small group leaders. These men were selected because they were already demonstrating mentoring and coaching gifts in their ministries. In the future it is hoped that as the number of new ministry teams grow new coaches will emerge to keep the body connected.

Over the last few years Grace Church has progressed in the transition from a traditional, hierarchical structure to a new, network structure. The elders (leadership team) have shifted much of the management details of the church to the trustees (logistics team) in order to focus on delineating and communicating the mission, vision, and values as demonstrated in the Mission Map (see Appendix 5). The trustees (logistics team) have begun to understand their role as a resource gatherer rather than maintainers and defenders of resources. Some committees have begun operating more in the team-mode with one informal team (Worship) virtually replacing the formal committee (Music) that gave birth to it. When new ideas have arisen people have been challenged to form new teams (such as the Alpha Team) to take on the task. Other committees and functions are beginning the transition and others have found the move away from formal controls unsettling, but overall there has been a welcome response to the strategy of moving from controlled ministry to permission-giving ministry.

## Conclusion

Grace Church has found itself struggling to keep up with its changing environment. Different people, with different priorities, abilities, and lifestyles, require that Grace Church be able to react quickly to different needs and opportunities. The traditional hierarchical structure Grace Church has used for the past fifty years is not up to this task. The traditional hierarchical structure did an excellent job of providing Grace Church with a solid foundation and a stable base for ministry from its inception. Now, however, with the rapid changes racing through the emerging culture, Grace Church needs a new way of structuring to provide ministry. Grace Church is in the process of transition from a few, standardized, large-group ministries to multiple networked, small-group ministries. These various Grace Church ministries intend to be like "radiation, sending off a million-and-one glowing, uniquely different particles that affect the world in large and small ways."[173]

The hope is the new organizational structure will be both biblically based and well suited to the characteristics of the emerging culture. First, the organizational structure will be streamlined. It will be smaller than traditional structure and in the background. Second, leadership will be "redeployed" so that it is "no longer doing ministry, but facilitating ministry done by others." And third, the organizational structure will be "reoriented" to "freeing people within boundaries, not telling people what to do."[174]

---

[173] Bandy, *Kicking Habits*, 149.

[174] Bandy, *Christian Chaos*, 181.

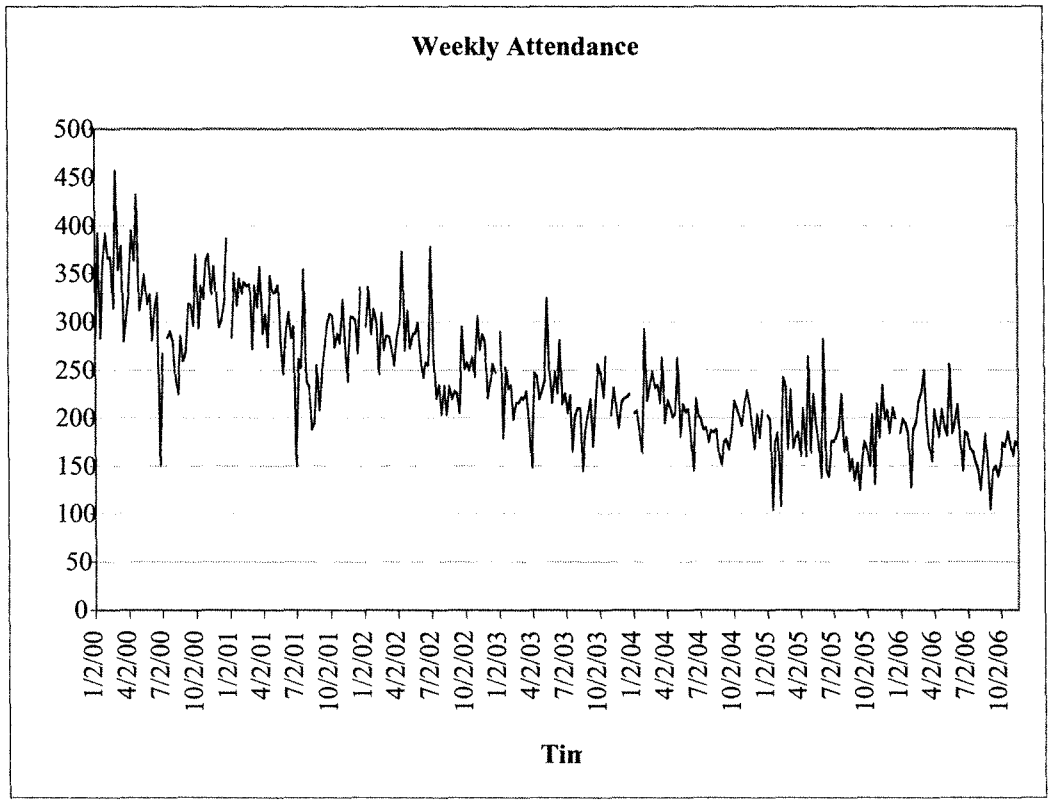
In the future, the organizational structure of Grace Church will:

Recognize [people] with a clear awareness of Spiritual gifts who [are] personally called by Jesus and who [are] motivated by a strong sense of destiny, anchor them in a core vision, values, beliefs, and missions of the organism, send them out into a cascade of simultaneous ministries, equip them for excellence, and get out of their way.[175]

[175] Easum and Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, 127.

APPENDIX 1

GRACE CHURCH WEEKLY ATTENDANCE 2001-2006



## APPENDIX 2

## GRACE EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE 1968-1969[1]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pastor | Rev. S. H. Epp | |
| Ministers: Rev. H.P. Fast, Rev. John R. Dick (Prince Rupert) | | |
| Deacons | C. H. Hiebert, Peter Loewen, P. A. Unrau | |
| Moderator | Menno Zacharias | |
| Assitant | Jack Friesen | |
| Secretary | Corny Epp | |
| Assistant | Don Williams | |
| Church Council | Pastor, deacon (rep.), moderator, secretary, and Commission Representatives: Abe Krahn (Christian Ed.), Wm. Neufeld (Music), Henry Funk (Promotions), Don Williams (Departments), Arnold Barkman (Chrisitan S.) | |
| Treasurer | Arden Reimer | |
| Assistant | Henry Braun | |
| 2nd Assistant | Wm. Thiessen | |
| Christian Service Committee | Ben F. Hiebert | 1969 |
| | Jack Hiebert | 1970 |
| | Don Williams | 1970 |
| | Arnold Barkman (Chair) | 1971 |
| | Henry Braun | 1971 |
| Promotions Committee | Pete Mierau | 1969 |
| | Abe Loewen | 1969 |
| | A. J. Martens | 1970 |
| | H. B. Funk (Chair) | 1971 |
| | Arden Reimer (by virtue of Trea. Office) | |

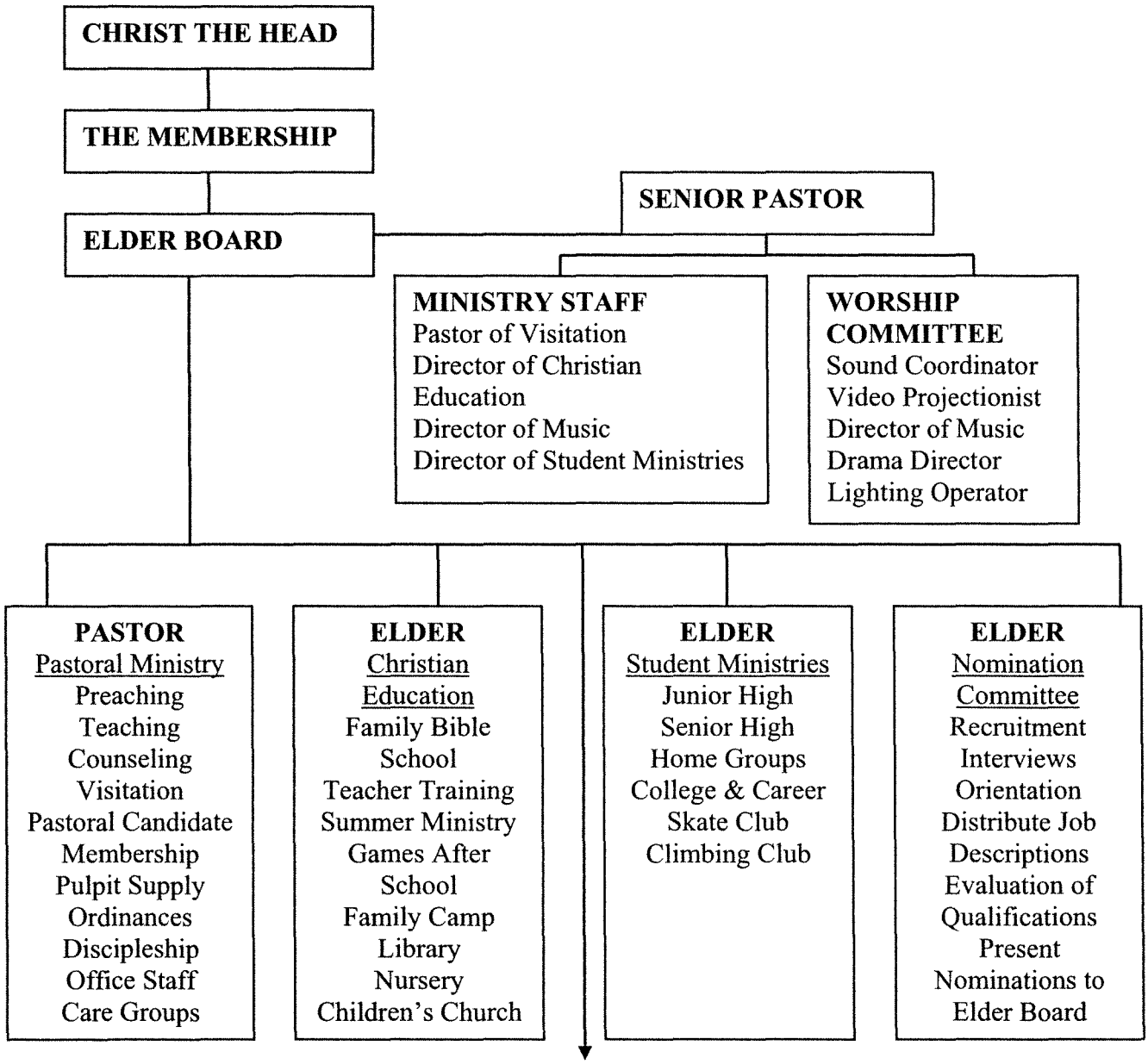
[1] Excerpt from Grace Evangelical Bible Church Annual Report 1968 "Grace Evangelical Bible Church Historical Records", Grace Evangelical Bible Church Historical Records Abbotsford, Abbotsford.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Christian Education Committee | Abe Krahn, General Supt.<br>Bernie Koop, Assistant Gen. Supt.<br>Bill Penner, Secretary-Treasurer<br>Peter Loewen, Mid-Week Director<br>Nick Peters, Youth Advisor | |
| Music Committee | Mrs. Ben Hiebert | 1969 |
| | Mrs. Victor Funk | 1969 |
| | John T. Martens | 1970 |
| | Wm. Neufeld (Chair) | 1971 |
| | Frank Martens | 1971 |
| Departments Representative | Don Williams | |
| Youth Advisors | Jack Hiebert, Nick Peters | |
| Ushers | Allan Lusty (Chairman), Tom Toews, Ed Dyck, Vic. Funk, Wm. Neufeld, Robert Neufeld, Cal. Hiebert, Larry Mierau, H. B Funk, Abe Fehr, Ken Neufeld | |
| Recording Secretary | A. A. Dickman | |
| "Gospel Tidings" Correspondent | Mrs. Vic. Funk | |
| Mennonite Disaster Service | Frank Thiessen, Peter Wiebe | |
| Billeting Committee | Mr. & Mrs. John Dueck<br>Mr. & Mrs. Dave Schartner<br>Mr. & Mrs. Jac. Dueck | |
| M.C.C. Representative | Arden Reimer | |
| Church Custondian | John H. Dueck | |
| Auditors | C.H. Penner, Jack Friesen | |
| Hazelwood Cemetary Rep. | Paul Dyck | |
| Food Committee (Dining Room) | Mr. & Mrs. John Coers<br>Mr. & Mrs. Bill Penner<br>Mr. & Mrs. Dave Schartner<br>Mr. & Mrs. P. G. Rempel | |
| Men's Fellowship | (to be organized in January) | |
| Ladies Auxiliaries | | |
| Senior Ladies M. Society | Mrs. A. H. Warkentin, President<br>Mrs. C. H. Hiebert, Vice-President<br>Mrs. Peter Bese, secretary<br>Mrs. H. H. Loewen, Mrs. John Dueck, Mrs. Pete Rempel – Cheer Committee<br>Mrs. J. Pankratz, Mrs. John Dueck – Food Committee<br>Mrs. P. Unrau, Mrs. C. Litke-Parcels for Missionaries<br>Mrs. Dirks, Mrs. Richard – Quilting | |

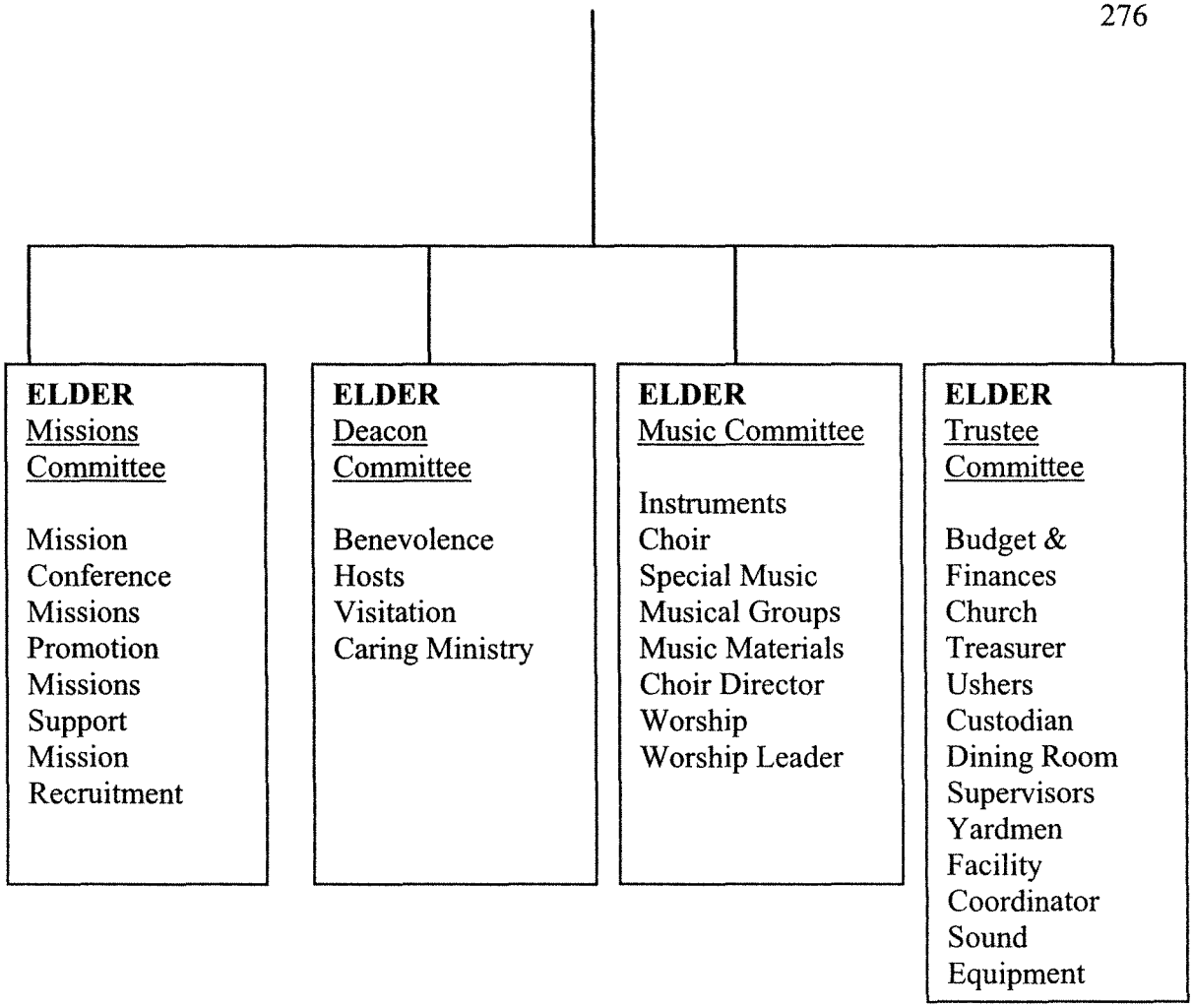
| | |
|---|---|
| Ember Ladies M. Society | President: Mrs. John Fast<br>Vice-President: Mrs. Paul Dyck<br>Secretary: Mrs. Ed Dyck<br>Devotional: Mrs. Don Williams, Mrs. Arnold Barkman<br>Cheer Committee: Mrs. J. Dueck, Mrs. Ben Loewen<br>Flower Committee: The Grace Ambassadors<br>Distribution Committee: Mrs. Bill Penner, Mrs. Henry Braun<br>Social Committee: Mrs. Henry Funk, Mrs. Johnny Peters<br>Cutting Committee: Mrs. Aaron Janzen, Miss Susie Berg<br>Quilting Committee: Mrs. J. Berg, Mrs. J. Unruh, Mrs. Schartner, Mrs. C. Epp<br>Lunch Committee: Mrs. Zacharias, Mrs. F. Martens, Mrs. Ben Hiebert. |
| Grace Ambassadors | President: Mrs. Ruth Peters<br>Vice-President: Mrs. Marilyn Funk<br>Sec. Treasurer: Mrs. Margaret Lusty<br>Music: Mrs. Deloris Williams<br>Social Committee: Mrs. Margaret Friesen, Mrs. Marlene Wall<br>Devotional: Mrs. Olive Dirks<br>Work Committee: Mrs. Tina Coers, Mrs. Ruth Martens, Mrs. Sue Dyck, Mrs. Kae Voth<br>Correspondence: Mrs. Mae Krahn |
| Youth Fellowship | Larry Mierau, President<br>Calvin Hiebert, Vice-President<br>Lois Schartner, Secretary<br>Hank Funk, Treasurer<br>Judy Fast, Social<br>Karen Dyck, Devotional<br>Nick Peters and Jack Hiebert, advisors. |

APPENDIX 3

GRACE CHURCH EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART[1]

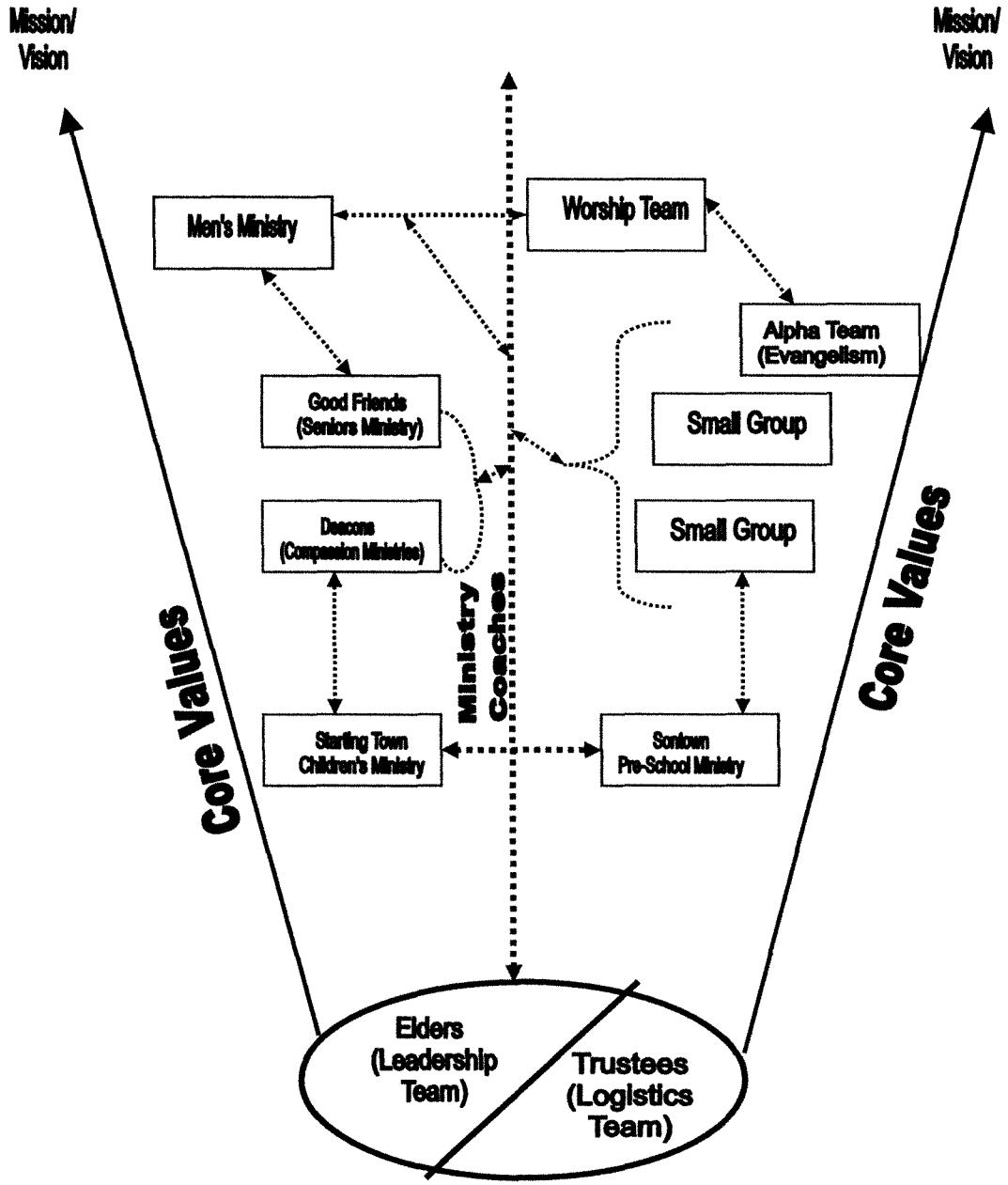



[1] Excerpt from Grace Evangelical Bible Church Constitution "Grace Evangelical Bible Church Historical Records", Grace Evangelical Bible Church Historical Records Abbotsford, Abbotsford.


ELDER
Missions Committee
Mission Conference
Missions Promotion
Missions Support
Mission Recruitment
ELDER
Deacon Committee
Benevolence
Hosts
Visitation
Caring Ministry
ELDER
Music Committee
Instruments
Choir
Special Music
Musical Groups
Music Materials
Choir Director
Worship
Worship Leader
ELDER
Trustee Committee
Budget & Finances
Church Treasurer
Ushers
Custodian
Dining Room Supervisors
Yardmen
Facility Coordinator
Sound Equipment

APPENDIX 4

A SUGGESTED NETWORK STRUCTURE FOR GRACE CHURCH



APPENDIX 5

GRACE EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH MISSION MAP

**Our Mission: (Why We Exist)**

"Loving People to Passionately Follow Jesus"

**Our Purpose Statement: (How We Will Achieve our Mission)**

**Up-Reach**

**Worship:** All of us are called, individually and as a community, to *express* our love for God in worship. We praise, thank, commune, and devote our lives to Him.

**Spiritual Transformation:** We are journeying together towards knowing God. By internalizing God's word, our hearts and entire lives are *transformed* to mirror Jesus.

**In-Reach**

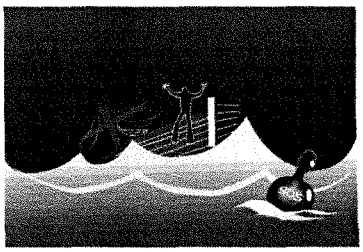
**Fellowship:** Our lives are woven together in Christ. We live in intimate *relationships* of mutual love, humility, authenticity, accountability, safety and encouragement.

**Service:** We move toward maturity as we each develop and use our God given-gifts to *serve* each other physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.

**Out-Reach**

God calls us to *share* His good news, seeking to lead them into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ God calls us to love our neighbors and to serve them with compassion.

**Image Statement: (How We See Ourselves)**



We believe the church is a *Search* And *Rescue* Team. We view the church as a people who move out into the world to offer hope, healing and salvation to all people.

**Our Culture: (What We Want To Be)**

**A Dispersed Community:** Getting Church into people's *lives* everyday rather than people's lives in the church on Sunday.

**God's Truth:** Constantly Wrestling to *Refine* Our Understanding of God's Truth

**Spiritual Growth:** Not *Optional*

**Community:** *Commitment* to the Grace Church Family/Team Is Vital

**Acceptance:** Openness and honesty are valued. ALL are *welcomed* by our family/team.

**Equipping:** Our team believes in mentoring and *leading* by example. We believe in On-the-job training.

**Purpose:** Being Christ's Hands and Feet in our *Community*.

**Innovation**: We want to be *creative* when it comes to ministry forms and practices. We believe our mission requires a "Whatever it takes" attitude when it comes to forms, practices and traditions. 1 Cor. 9:19-23

## What Is Our Purpose for You?

We are not here to *meet* your *needs!* We are not here to make you *feel* good!

We are not here to keep you *safe*! We are not here to make you feel *guilty*!

**We ARE here to equip and encourage you to fulfill the *life mission* that God has for you!**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Chris. "The Long Tail." *Wired*, October 2004, 171-177.

_____. *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*. New York: Hyperion, 2006.

Appel, Gene, and Alan Nelson. *How to Change Your Church (without Killing It)*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2000.

Armour, Michael C., and Don Browning. *Systems Sensitive Leadership Empowering Diversity without Polarizing the Church*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1995.

Ashkenas, Ron. "The Organization's New Clothes." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 99-107. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Ashmos, Donde P., Dennis Duchon, Reuben R. McDaniel Jr., and John W. Huonker. "What a Mess! Participation as a Simple Managerial Rule to Complexify Organizations." *Journal of Management Studies* 39, no. 2 (2002): 189-207.

Ashmos, Donde P., Dennis Duchon, and Reuben R. McDaniel Jr. "Organizational Response to Complexity: The Effect on Organizational Performance." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 13, no. 6 (2000): 577-594.

Axelrod, Norman N. "Embracing Technology: The Application of Complexity Theory to Business." *Strategy and Leadership* 27, no. 6 (1999): 56-58.

Bandy, Thomas G. *Kicking Habits: Welcome Relief for Addicted Churches*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.

_____. *Moving Off the Map a Field Guide to Changing Congregations*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998.

_____. *Christian Chaos: Revolutionizing the Congregation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999.

_____. *Coaching Change: Breaking Down Resistance, Building up Hope*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000.

_____. *Road Runner: The Body in Motion.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002.

Beam, Henry H. "The Biology of Business: Decoding the Natural Laws of Enterprise." *Academy of Management Executive* 14, no. 1 (2000): 159-160.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology: Life, Ministry and Hope.* Vol. II. San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979.

Bolman, Lee G., and Terrance E. Deal. *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership,* 2d ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Brown, Raymond E. "Episkope and Episkopos: The New Testament Evidence." *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 322-338.

Burnham, Frederic B. "Cops and Burgers." http://www.spiritualityhealth.com/NMagazine/articles.php?id=492 (accessed 2 February 2006).

Cairns, Earle E. *An Endless Line of Splendor: Revivals and Their Leaders from the Great Awakening to the Present.* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1986.

Campbell, R. Alastair. *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity.* Studies of the New Testament and Its World, ed. John Riches. Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1994.

Carroll, Jackson W. *As One with Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry.* Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991.

Cladis, George. *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999.

Coelho, Paulo. *The Pilgrimage.* New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

Cole, Neil. *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2005.

Coleman Jr., Henry J. "What Enables Self-Organizing Behavior in Businesses." *Emergence* 1, no. 1 (1999): 33-49.

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't.* New York: Harper Business, 2001.

Conger, Jay A. "How Generational Shifts Will Transform Organizational Life." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 17-24. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Cordeiro, Wayne. *Doing Church as a Team*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001.

Davis, Stanley M. *Future Perfect*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1987.

Dawn, Marva J. *Truly the Community: Romans 12 and How to Be the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.

Dolan, S. L. , Garcia S., and Auerbach A. "Understanding and Managing Chaos in Organisations." *International Journal of Management* 20, no. 1 (2003): 23-35.

Duck, Jeannie Daniel. *The Change Monster: The Human Forces That Fuel or Foil Corporate Transformation and Change*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001.

Easum, Bill. *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers: Ministry Anytime, Anywhere, by Anybody*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Easum, Bill, and Thomas G. Bandy. *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Easum, Bill, and Dave Travis. *Beyond the Box: Innovative Churches That Work*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003.

Elliott, John H. "Elders as Honored Household Heads and Not Holders of "Office" in Earliest Christianity." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 33, no. 2 (2003): 77-82.

Faivre, Alexandre. *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church*. Translated by David Smith. New York: Paulist Press, 1990.

Fleming, Dave. "Stream Thinking in Organizations." Comment posted April 27, 2005. http://thedepend.typepad.com/deep/2005/04/stream_thinking.html (accessed June 23 2005).

Fraser, Richard. "Office of Deacon." *Presbyterion* 11, no. 1 (1985): 12-19.

Frederick, Judith A., and Janet E. Fast. *Enjoying Work: An Effective Strategy in the Struggle to Juggle?* Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2001.

Frost, Michael, and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.

Gillespie, Thomas. "The Laity in Biblical Perspective." In *The New Laity*, ed. Ralph D. Bucy, 13-33. Waco: Word Books, 1978.

Grace Evangelical Bible Church Historical Records. Abbotsford, BC.

Grenz, Stanley J., and John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Guder, Darrell L., and Lois Barrett, eds. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. The Gospel and Our Culture Series, ed Craig Van Gelder. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

Guelzo, Allen C. "Are You a Priest?" *Christianity Today*, September 16 1991, 35-38.

Guthrie, Shirley C. *Christian Doctrine*. Louisville, KY: John Knox/Westminster Press, 1994.

Hamilton III, William B. "An Investigation into the Primary Evidence Pertaining to the Function of Elders in the New Testament Church." Masters Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983.

Harmon, Frederick G. "Future Present." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 239-247. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

*Health Indicators*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2001http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-221-XIE/00601/high/stress.htm (Accessed 22 August 2005).

Herrington, Jim, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr. *Leading Congregational Change a Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000.

Hesselbein, Frances. "The Circular Organization." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 81-85. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Hjalmarson, Len. "Toward a Missional Spirituality—Spirituality for the Road." http://www.allelon.org/articles/print.cfm?id=125 (accessed 19 October 2004).

Hock, Dee. *Birth of the Chaordic Age*. San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1999.

Hopkins, David. "Superman Is Dead: No More 'Hero-for-Hire' Clergy." April 1999. Next Wave, April 1999. http://www.next-wave.org/apr99/superman.htm (accessed 23 June 2004).

Hyatt, Bob. "The Problem with Programs (or Bigger Is No Longer Better)." http://www.the-next-wave.org/stories/storyReader$507 (accessed 18 January 2005).

Jackson, Dale. "Hey, Take Some Time Off." http://gold.globeinvestor.com/servlet/ ArticleNews/commentarystory/GIGOLD/20050818/jackson18/home/home?back_ url=yes (accessed 22 August 2005).

Johnson, Glenn. *Marks of Great Churches: Defining the Church God Blesses*. Manila: Action Philippines, 1999.

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. "Restoring People to the Heart of the Organization of the Future." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 139-150. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Karkkainen, Veli-Matti. "The Calling of the Whole People of God into Ministry: The Spirit, Church and Laity." *Studia Theologica* 53 (1999): 144-162.

Kauffman, Stuart. *At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Keene, Angelique. "Complexity Theory: The Changing Role of Leadership." *Industrial And Commercial Training* 32, no. 1 (2000): 15-18.

Kelly, Kevin. "The Biology of Business." *Executive Excellence* 17, no. 2 (2000): 14-15.

Knowles, Richard N. "Self-Organizing Leadership: A Way of Seeing What Is Happening in Organizations and a Pathway to Coherence." *Emergence* 3, no. 4 (2001): 112-127.

Kuyper, Abraham. *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. Translated by Henri De Vries. Chatanooga, TN.: AMG Publishers, 2001.

Lewin, Roger, and Birute Regine. "Leading at the Edge: How Leaders Influence Complex Systems." *Emergence* 2, no. 2 (2000): 5-23.

Lichtenstein, Benyamin M. Bergmann. "Emergence as a Process of Self Organizing: New Assumptions and Insights from the Study of Non-Linear Dynamic Systems." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 13, no. 6 (2000): 526-544.

Lissack, Michael R. "Complexity: The Science, Its Vocabulary and Its Relation to Organizations." *Emergence* 1, no. 1 (1999): 110-117.

Lovejoy, Arther. *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea.* New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960.

Lovelace, Richard F. *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal.* Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1979.

Maddox, Randy L. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology.* Nashville, TN.: Kingswood Books, 1994.

Mallory, Sue. *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.

Mappes, David. "The "Elder" in the Old and New Testaments." *Bibliothecra Sacra* 154 (1997): 80-92.

_____. "The New Testament Elder, Overseer, and Pastor." *Bibliothecra Sacra* 154 (1997): 152-174.

Marsden, George M. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991.

Marshall, Stephanie Pace. "Creating Sustainable Learning Communities for the Twenty-First Century." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 177-188. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Martin, Richard. "Would You Buy the Future of Radio from This Man?" *Wired*, October 2004, 132-136.

Martoia, Ron. *Morph! The Texture of Leadership for Tomorrow's Church.* Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003.

McDow, Malcolm, and Alvin L. Reid. *Firefall: How God Has Shaped History through Revivals.* Nashville, TN.: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997.

McLaren, Brian D. *Reinventing Your Church.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.

McManus, Erwin Raphael. *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind.* Loveland, CO: Group, 2001.

McNeal, Reggie. *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2003.

Mead, Loren B. *The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1991.

Miller, David W. "The Uniqueness of New Testament Church Eldership." *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (1985): 315-327.

Miller, Doug. "The Future Organization: A Chamelon in All Its Glory." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 119-125. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Nyquist, J. Paul. "Reclaiming Teamwork for Kingdom Work." *The Gospel Message* (2003): 3.

Ogden, Greg. *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990.

_____. *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003.

Pascale, Richard T. "Surfing the Edge of Chaos." *Sloan Management Review* 40, no. 3 (1999): 83-95.

Peters, Thomas J. *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution*. New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

Pinchot, Elizabeth, and Gifford Pinchot. *The End of Bureaucracy and the Rise of the Intelligent Organization*. San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1993.

Pink, Daniel H. "The Shape of Things to Come." http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.05/start.html?pg=2 (accessed 6 July 2005).

Rathburn, David G. "Innovation and Mission." *The Gospel Message* (2003): 8-9.

Riss, Richard M. *A Survey of 20th Century Revival Movements in North America*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988.

Robinson, William. *Completing the Reformation: The Doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers*. Lexington, KY: The College of the Bible, 1955.

Roxburgh, Alan. "Traditional Vs. The Emergent Church: Struggling with Structure and Looking for New Forms." http://www.allelon.org/articles/print.cfm?id=148 (accessed 19 Cotober 2004).

Schaller, Lyle E. *The Interventionist: A Conceptual Framework and Questions for Parish Consultants, Intentional Interim Ministers, Church Champions, Pastors*

*Considering a New Call, Denominational Executives, the Recently Arrived Pastor, Counselors, and Other Intentional Interventionists in Congregational Life*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*. Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996.

Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline the Arts and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Currency, 1990.

Shaw, Patricia. "Intervening in the Shadow Systems of Organizations: Consulting from a Complexity Perspective." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 10, no. 3 (1997): 235-250.

Shields, Margot. *Stress May Be a Precursor to Poor Health*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2004. Health Bulletin.

Slaughter, Michael, and Warren Bird. *Unlearning Church: Just When You Thought You Had Leadership All Figured Out!* Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2002.

Snyder, Howard A. *The Community of the King*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977.

_____. *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Academic Books, 1989.

Snyder, Howard A., and Daniel V. Runyon. *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002.

Somerville, Iain, and John Edwin Mroz. "New Competencies for a New World." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 65-78. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Southern, Richard, and Robert Norton. *Cracking Your Congregation's Code Mapping Your Spiritual DNA to Create Your Future*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001.

Stacey, Ralph. "The Emergence of Knowledge in Organizations." *Emergence* 2, no. 4 (2000): 23-39.

Stackhouse Jr., John G. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

_____. "Revival and Renewal - We All Want It Don't We?" In *Church: An Insider's Look at How We Do It*, 191. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003.

Stevens, R. Paul, and Phil Collins. *The Equipping Pastor a Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership*. New York: The Alban Institute, 1993.

Strogatz, Steven. *Sync: The Emerging Science of Spontaneous Order*. New York: Hyperion Books, 2003.

Sweet, Leonard. *Aqua Church: Essential Leadership Arts for Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture*. Loveland, CO.: Group Publishing, 1999.

_____. *Soul Tsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.

_____. *Carpe Manana: Is Your Church Ready to Seize Tomorrow?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.

Trueblood, Elton. *Your Other Vocation*. New York: Harper and Row, 1951.

_____. *The Company of the Committed*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1961.

Ulrich, Dave. "Organizing around Capabilities." In *The Organization of the Future*, ed. France Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, 189-196. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Vine, W.E. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Thomas Nelson Inc., 1996. Compact Disc.

Walsh, John. "Methodism and the Origins of English-Speaking Evangelicalism." In *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington and George A. Rawlyk, 19-37. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Webber, Robert. *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002.

Wheatley, Margaret J. *Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organization from an Orderly Universe*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.

_____. "Goodbye, Command and Control." In *Leader to Leader: Enduring Insights on Leadership from the Drucker Foundation's Award-Winning Journal*, ed. Frances Hesselbein and Paul M. Cohen, 151-162. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999.

Wheatley, Margaret J., and Myron Kellner-Rogers. *A Simpler Way*. San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1999.

Wilson, Jonathan. "Winning through Chaos - Part 1." *Credit Control* 20, no. 4 (1999): 27-33.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Fullness of Christ: Paul's Revolutionary Vision of Universal Ministry*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1987.