

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE VISION EXPLOSION COMPANY: ITS CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

Rev. Robert S. Hallett

New Castle, Indiana

May, 2010

Copyright 2010 by Robert S. Hallett
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

THE VISION EXPLOSION COMPANY: ITS CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Rev. Robert S. Hallett

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010

Mentor: Dr. Frank Schmitt

The Vision Explosion Company will provide a consulting ministry in a business context to mentor churches throughout each of the developmental stages for defining their Vision Journey, implementing those results into the programming life of the church, and deploying the gospel troops to staff those programs. It is a company that is newly created by this author and his wife, and will be staffed by ministers/consultants who serve as Vision Mentors.

It is easy for churches to fall into complacency and routineness, having understood their general vision theologically, but do not have it specifically defined for their church, and have lost the passion to fulfill it. The Vision Journey is designed to remedy that situation with a mentoring approach that takes each church from their current situation to where they really want to be.

This is an action venture that goes far beyond a research project. While relevant literature and the plans of similar companies will be reviewed, as appropriate, this project will focus primarily on the ministry, mechanics, methods and materials, mentors, and marketing factors for creating, developing, and implementing the measures necessary to make Vision Explosion both effective and successful. It will be designed so as to become the country's premier vision development company.

Abstract length: 206 words.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I never cease to be amazed at the love, forgiveness, patience, grace, and desire of God to reach down and reclaim this wayward, wandering, and very angry teenager for His own. There was nothing in me to deserve His attention, or His mercy. He rescued me while in the lumber camps of New Brunswick, Canada in 1962, and placed me in a loving and supportive church that became my new family. He called me to the ministry that same year, guided me through the ministerial studies of colleges and seminaries, and provided me with countless opportunities for ministry ever since. I would never have dreamed of the extent and impact of the ministry He has opened to me. My purpose is to thank and glorify my Lord every way possible by my service to Him and His Kingdom.

My special thanks to Carol, my wife of over 40 years, who is my loving, supportive, and spiritual partner in life, and who has served continually at my side. She has accepted my calling to ministry as her calling as well. I could not have asked for or designed anyone better – God knew what He was doing when He put us together.

My thanks to Dr. Frank Schmitt for his friendship over the past 15 years, for his support of my ministry, for his strong encouragement to restart my D.Min. studies, and for his making it possible to do so. It is doubtful this would have happened without him.

I appreciate all the staff of TLC Ministries as they function as a team that is supportive and respectful of each other, and who also serve our Lord with the passion of wanting to make a difference in building more dynamic disciples for God's Kingdom.

I also appreciate the many churches that have allowed me to minister in their midst leading their capital campaigns. Their confidence in me and the Ministry Approach of TLC Ministries is humbling indeed. To God be the glory for all that has been done!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Justification for the Project.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	9
Statement of Limitations.....	11
Theoretical Basis for the Project.....	11
Statement of Methodology.....	19
Review of the Literature.....	21
CHAPTER II: MINISTRY IN A BUSINESS CONTEXT.....	28
Distinction Between Ministry and Business.....	28
Legal Distinctions.....	29
Company Ownership Style.....	31
Motivational Differences.....	33
Business with a Ministry Emphasis.....	38
Foundational Values of Vision Explosion.....	44
Description.....	44
Tracks.....	45
Motto.....	45

Mission Statement.....	47
Vision Statement.....	48
Purpose.....	49
Core Values.....	49
Separation Issues Between Business and Ministry.....	52
CHAPTER III: MECHANICS OF STARTING VISION EXPLOSION COMPANY....	56
Legal Creation of the Vision Explosion Company.....	57
Name Change.....	59
Sister Companies.....	61
Funding of the Vision Explosion Companies.....	66
Business Plan.....	67
Obstacles to a Strong Start.....	74
Factors to Consider for the Vision Journey.....	75
CHAPTER IV: METHODS AND MATERIALS OF THE VISION JOURNEY.....	78
Phases of the Vision Journey.....	80
Phase I – Decisions.....	81
Phase II – Discovery.....	82
Phase III – Defining.....	83
Phase IV – Development.....	84
Phase V – Deployment.....	85
Phase VI – Documentation.....	86
Phase VII – Duplication.....	87

Church Life Cycle Stages.....	87
Church Life Cycle Chart.....	92
CHAPTER V: MENTORS FOR THE VISION JOURNEY.....	93
Vision Mentors as Church Consultants.....	94
Example Leadership.....	94
Servant Leadership.....	100
Role of the Vision Mentor.....	103
Developing Ownership.....	103
Combining Congregational Input and Leadership Authority.....	107
Participatory Leadership.....	113
Motivation vs. Administration.....	117
Value of the Vision Mentor Being Onsite.....	119
Qualifications of the Vision Mentor.....	121
Ministerial Mandate.....	122
CHAPTER VI: MARKETING OF THE VISION EXPLOSION COMPANY.....	126
Category, Target Market, and Branding.....	127
Marketing.....	133
Credibility Marketing.....	135
Enticement Marketing.....	139
Internet Marketing.....	143
Church Growth Conferences.....	160
Ministerial Seminars.....	163

Sales Process.....	163
Perceived Value.....	168
Mind of the Vision Mentor.....	173
CONCLUSION.....	175
APPENDIX A (CHURCH LIFE CYCLE CHARACTERISTICS).....	176
APPENDIX B (LARGE BROCHURE TEXT).....	181
APPENDIX C (SMALL BROCHURE TEXT).....	187
APPENDIX D (WEBSITE TEXT).....	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	207
VITA.....	220

CHAPTER 1

MAKING OF THE VISION EXPLOSION COMPANY – AN INTRODUCTION

The development of the Vision Explosion Company is the answer to some major problems in churches this author has witnessed firsthand throughout his entire ministry, and especially apparent while consulting with churches relative to funding their plans for building and expansion projects. The primary problems are three-fold: 1) the lack of a mission and vision that is owned by the congregation and actually guides the ministry efforts of the church; 2) the minimal and largely ineffective efforts in purposeful disciple making that is widespread throughout Christendom; and 3) the absence of any effective and cohesive connection between these two concepts.

The Vision Explosion Company will connect and address these problem areas by creating and developing a new process called a Vision Journey. This Vision Journey will mentor churches as they define their Mission Mandate, involve their people in the development of their Focused Vision, and establish a purposeful plan of action to identify, enlist, train, and deploy the Gospel Troops in the fulfillment of their Focused Vision. All this is done within the context of developing and maturing disciples through meaningful ministry experiences. Briefly stated, the creation of the Vision Explosion

Company is designed to enable the development of a mission and vision that is owned by the congregation, and connecting them with making disciples in the fulfillment of their mission and vision. It is expected that this will enable the church to reinvent itself.

This author's call by God in June of 1962 is ministry, and has been his God-directed assignment in life from that point forward. He has been preparing for or serving in various ministry capacities ever since, including preaching his first sermon later that same year at the age of 16. Since then, this ministry calling has been fulfilled by serving in various ministry capacities such as Evangelist (1964-69, 1984-85), Pastor (1969-84), Development Officer (Wheaton College – 1989-90), Church and Stewardship Consultant (since 1985), ministry owner (since 1990), author, and now Vision Mentor. Regardless of the format, the passion for ministry and disciple making has always been predominate in his heart and the focus of his ministry efforts. He has become increasingly aware of the lack of mission, vision and purposeful disciple making efforts among churches, especially since 1985.

This concern for more purposeful ministry (both embracing the church's mission and vision and purposeful disciple making) is why he pioneered the Ministry Approach to church capital campaigns while working for a capital campaign company in the 1980's, and then fully implemented it when he started TLC Ministries in 1990. He recognized that the potential of the capital campaign was more than raising funds – its real potential was the positive impact it could have on the lives, values, commitments, and spiritual walk of church people as they resolve the issues of personal giving in a sacrificial context.

He literally wrote the book on the Ministry Approach to church capital campaigns, the concept of which has not been duplicated since by any other company. While other companies have copied the language, it is suspected the reason the approach has not been copied is that it costs the company too much – the mindset needed is far beyond the normal fund raising concepts, the extra effort involved means more travel and time, the extra expense required to cover that travel and time, and the passion for ministry and disciple making necessary that changes the dynamics from leading an administrative campaign to leading people through the process for changed attitudes.

When designing the Ministry Approach, everything in the typical church capital funds campaign was evaluated – many things were cut, much was added, and most were changed so that everything was placed on a solid Scriptural foundation, and every aspect of the campaign reflected the Ministry Approach. This Ministry Approach was encased in several different general program formats to accommodate the variations in church size, situations, needs, and project types (at this writing, there are 20 different major program formats from which to select), additional primary materials were created (and are frequently updated), Stewardship studies were written (for adults and teens, age-appropriate for children, and for small groups), many support materials were developed, position papers and insights were originated, Consultants were recruited and trained, and the campaign was redesigned so as to enhance unity within the congregation by requiring involvement, cooperation, and interdependence. He even recorded the entire campaign on video (14 tape set) as a low-cost alternative for smaller churches. The result was, and still is, the Scriptural Funding Campaign, which has as its motto, “developing more responsive stewardship disciples.” In addition, he wrote all the text for all the printed

marketing materials (brochures, etc.) for TLC Ministries, wrote the text for the company's website (www.tlcministries.com), coordinated the display booth designs for conventions, and developed and was featured in the company's TV commercial.

While all this was a major undertaking over several years, the Ministry Approach is validated by TLC Ministries earning the track record of having the highest ratio of funds raised in church capital campaigns of any consulting company in the country. Also, reports from the client churches show that many new believers have been brought into the Kingdom of God, and a multitude of current church members have become more solid and active in their faith, primarily because of the Ministry Approach of the Scriptural Funding Campaign. A recent comment by a church member in Avon Park, Florida sums up that potential, "I am pleased that our board chose your company to work with us doing this 'spiritual' campaign. It has made many of us more prayerful and more dedicated to HIS Kingdom." For those with a heart for ministry, the results are worth the efforts expended to attain them!

The success of the Scriptural Funding Campaigns to help churches with their mission and vision focus that is connected to their discipleship development efforts prompted this author to develop a more definitive approach that could be used in most churches whether they needed a capital campaign or not. In leading capital campaigns, it was very apparent that most churches do not have a compelling Mission Mandate which gives specific direction to its ministries and programs, nor do they have a clear vision of what it will take to fulfill that Mission Mandate. He also observed that many churches may have a theologically correct mission or vision statement that hangs on the wall, and perhaps is referenced in the church media, like the bulletin, newsletter, website, and

promotional literature, but is unknown by the great majority of its people, and does little or nothing to give specific direction to the ministry efforts of their churches. The pastors of these churches may have seen the need to produce such a mission and/or vision statement. But once they have the final plans in their hands, they seem to be saying, “Now what do we do? How can we get our people involved in meaningful ministry? How will this change our church? How can we design an approach that will help us to develop the kind of church that we have been praying for?”

Once the awareness of these problems became acute, this author and the staff of TLC Ministries developed processes to address them as a way to improve the effectiveness of the capital campaign itself. While disciple making has always been a hallmark of the Scriptural Funding Campaign, the entire process was reviewed and improved to incorporate the factors that enhance disciple making, and to identify more closely how to cooperate with how God works with the human heart.

Another specific step in this direction was to develop the Vision Defining Seminar to help churches clarify and define their vision, to identify their primary purpose for ministry in their unique setting, and to create unity around that vision by direct involvement and input by the congregation. It was offered to churches preliminary to the capital campaign (and sometimes independent of it), and accomplished in one weekend a solid foundation on which to build their future ministry programs, as well as to enhance the strength of commitment for the support of their building projects (if any). It was first designed and used in this author’s last pastoral assignment in 1981, and brought a significant renewal to that church.

As good as these improvements were, two major weaknesses soon became evident – there was no organized strategic planning that followed the Vision Defining Seminar (each church was left to work out their planning on their own), and there was no process in place to connect their mission and vision with disciple making. Without these items being connected, the ministry and disciple making efforts of the church was found to flounder and was largely ineffective and incomplete. This was unacceptable, so this author started looking for other companies that had a proven track record of developing both components and connecting them in an effective way – the intent was to find such a company or ministry to which churches could be referred.

That search was met with disappointment and frustration – no such company or ministry was found. Neither were any written materials discovered. Some disciple making programs were uncovered, but there was little direct tie-in with the church's vision and mission. Some companies were identified that do an excellent job of helping guide churches through the mission, vision, and strategic planning process, but their weakness was where they stopped – at the strategic planning phase. No connection was made to purposeful disciple making. The churches that have excelled at disciple making seem to have done it on their own without much outside help.

While Andy Stanley has excellent insights into developing the vision personally for the leader, his book on Visioneering reflects this top down approach where the Senior Pastor is the one to have the vision, to cast it among the people, and to expect everyone to jump on board. Since people will support their own ideas better than someone else's ideas, it has already been proven in the capital campaigns that this approach does not work well because it bypasses the very foundational issues of ownership – personal

involvement and input. This difference between verbal approval and passionate support are shown most clearly in people's response to the challenge of sacrificial giving for their church's building project. Money not only talks, it reflects vision, passion, commitment, and personal ownership.

This search into finding an acceptable vision and discipleship development company revealed that the available resources were not effective in addressing these problems in a format that this author understood to be the best way to resolve them. Knowing that he already had a proven track record of accomplishing these objectives individually, he determined to develop a new process that would answer these problems in a way that would connect them to each other to make them more complete and effective. The look at the other companies was a surface look, and did not delve into the details of their approaches. Once the approaches and end results of these companies were identified, he decided not to cloud his thinking with formats which did not accomplish his purposes and ultimate objectives.

Instead of depending upon the incomplete work of others, he turned to what he had already created, and what he already knew worked because of using it successfully in leading over 250 capital campaigns personally, as well as six Vision Defining Seminars. The research has already been done in these churches, and the verdict is in – the processes for both vision and discipleship development has been proven to be successful and effective.

In light of this background and his fruitless search for another company to lead the way, he developed the entire format for the Vision Journey within the staff of TLC Ministries, using his writings, procedures, and insights as foundational for that process,

and then building on them for this new process called a Vision Journey. Thus the normal book research for this thesis was purposefully not done prior to developing the Vision Journey process, so no written materials or offerings by any other company were consulted in developing this new approach. The only works he reviewed in detail prior to developing this new process was Developing a Dynamic Mission for Your Ministry by Aubrey Malphurs (he wanted to verify and clarify his understanding of mission and vision by a known expert in this area), and Andy Stanley's two books, Visioneering and Making Vision Stick, but they had little relevance to the Vision Journey since they reflect the top down approach. He also reviewed closely the two books by Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life and The Purpose Driven Church, as well as Rediscovering Church by Bill Hybels.

In essence, this author became his own resource based on his 47 years of various types of ministry, combined with leading this vision process in his own church (as the Senior Pastor) in 1981, and 25 years of consulting experience with churches in visioning and disciple making activities. Church leaders are passionate about his leadership of their capital campaigns because of what happens spiritually, disciple making, vision enhancement, and lay ownership and involvement within their churches. One Senior Pastor summed it up by saying, "This is nothing short of turbo-charged discipleship!" In addition to leading capital campaigns himself, he also enlists and trains other consultants with the Ministry Approach which he pioneered in the 1980's, and he oversees the capital campaigns which are led by those other consultants.

The Vision Explosion Company was developed as a separate consulting company to house this new Vision Journey approach. It was determined early in the process not to

make a direct marketing connection between the two companies for fear it would leave the impression that this was another capital campaign company, or even a capital campaign in disguise. It needed to be a separate entity because potential client churches would not necessarily be drawn from the same pool. Its objective is to help churches fulfill the purposes that Christ envisioned when He left His church in their care, and that takes both vision and disciple making.

I. Statement of the Problem

This project will address two primary issues: 1) the development of this ministry in a business context known as the Vision Explosion Company, and the structure needed to set it on a firm financial basis, and 2) an overview of the processes used in fulfilling the ministry assigned to it in mission, vision, and disciple making.

The Vision Explosion Company will provide a consulting ministry in a business context to mentor churches and their leaders throughout each of the developmental stages of their Vision Journey process. It is expected that this process will produce four primary results, all connected in one package, and related to the four interwoven tracks of the Vision Journey:

Defining and developing the church's distinct Mission Mandate and Focused Vision with involvement by both the church leaders and the entire congregation;

Aligning and impacting the ministries and programs of the church with a singular focus;

Maturing disciples through purposeful and significant ministry experiences; and

Mobilizing dynamic, passionate, and committed disciples to do effective ministry while fulfilling the church's mission and vision.

The final results of the newly developed Mission Mandate and Focused Vision (strategic planning) are designed to be implemented into the programming life of the church. The process, however, does not stop with developing the plans. Once the plans are developed, the local gospel troops are identified for their best place of service to staff those ministries and programs. Then they are enlisted, trained, disciplined, activated, and deployed to fulfill the church's Mission Mandate and Focused Vision. A cyclical process is then put into place to reproduce and evaluate these events.

Vision Explosion Company's purpose is to become the premier church vision development company in the country, employing a highly qualified group of ministers who serve our Lord by mentoring churches in the fulfillment of their mission and vision while developing dynamic disciples in the process. This combination and connection of both concepts, and the processes used to fulfill them, are unique to the Vision Explosion Company. The results of this combination and connection are expected to be much more significant than either concept when used independently of each other, or even when they are used sequentially.

To help define the terminology being used in this thesis, the Vision Journey is a seven step process used to accomplish the objectives of the Vision Explosion Company, and will be described in overview fashion later in this project. The Mission Mandate is a brief statement of the church's assigned mission as it relates to its setting. The Focused Vision, on the other hand, is an expansive statement developed through strategic planning that describes how the many ministries and programs of the church will be utilized to fulfill its Mission Mandate. The mentoring process refers to church consultants (called Vision Mentors) who guide each step of the Vision Journey by personal example, by

personal consulting to direct each church in applying the Vision Journey to their individual settings, by specific approaches to help the church leaders know how to implement and reproduce this in their churches, and by direct training for the congregation as the teams engage their various assignments.

II. Statement of Limitations

This project will be limited to the development of the Vision Explosion Company as a ministry in a business context (without revealing private information), and will incorporate broad strokes to describe the overall format used to accomplish its ministry objectives, including both the processes and materials. While some references will be made to the mentoring materials used by the Vision Explosion Company in this endeavor, these detailed materials are proprietary to the Vision Explosion Company, and will not be disclosed in detail herein. All Scripture references contained herein are from the New International Version of the Holy Bible, unless noted otherwise.

III. The Theoretical Basis

The theoretical basis for this project is considered from three perspectives: 1) the Scriptural foundation for both a mission and a vision in the life of Jesus, His command to the churches, and the Scriptural mandate for church leaders; 2) a practical ministry perspective where the need for this ministry is evident among churches of today; and 3) the format for the development of the Vision Explosion Company as a worthy business to bring glory to our Lord.

Our Lord's personal Mission Mandate is seen in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."¹ His personal Focused Vision is recorded in Hebrews 12:2-3,

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Our Lord's mission was to provide salvation for the lost, wayward, and wandering of the world. His vision was the method He used to provide that salvation – His substitutionary death on the cross for the sins of the world. His mission controlled the direction of His life, while His vision embraced the passion to fulfill this sacrifice through such a painful death.

Our Lord also established a Mission Mandate for the church, as given to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20,

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

He also gave the disciples their Focused Vision before He left this earth, as revealed in Acts 1:7-8, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

¹ All Scriptural references are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, unless noted otherwise.

Paul expands upon this mission and vision to the churches of today by calling the church to be ambassadors for God in His redemptive work in the world through Christ.

Hear how he made this mandate personal when he says in II Corinthians 5:18-20,

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

The church was not assigned our Lord's personal mission – only His death would be an acceptable substitute for sins. The church's mission, however, was to take the message of His redemption throughout the world to make disciples wherever they could. His personal vision was the passion to die on the cross, which again was His alone. The church's vision, however, describes both the method (being filled with the Holy Spirit) and the locations where they should go to take His message and develop disciples. Thus the church's mission and vision are built on the mission and vision of Christ, but are not the same as those of Christ – the mission and vision of the church are to take the action of Christ to the rest of the world, to create a system whereby all people could become dynamic disciples of Christ, and to continue the message and disciple making process until the whole world hears it, and He returns again for His own. The church is to speak to the world with the passion of a vision, and implores the world on Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God.

The second side of the theoretical foundation for the Vision Explosion Company is the practical ministry perspective where the need for this ministry is evident in the weaknesses found in a very significant number of churches today, as described earlier in

this paper. That weakness is seen in a lack of ownership by the congregation, and people not personally embracing their church's Mission Mandate and Focused Vision, even when they have something similar. It is also seen in the church leaders by their lack of ministries and programs that have the dual agenda of purposeful disciple making while helping the church fulfill its mission and vision. There is especially a void of understanding of the connection between disciple making and vision, as is proposed by the Vision Explosion Company. It seems that most church leaders consider disciple making as a separate ministry of the church, and not as one that is integral in accomplishing all its other ministries and programs.

There is a strong need for this ministry in churches today as much so, if not more, than it ever has been. Unless disciple making and vision are purposefully connected, disciples are not adequately developed, and churches do not fulfill their assignment and potential in their communities and around the world. This becomes an issue for evangelism because without disciple making, there is no system in place to continue taking the gospel message to the world until Christ returns. And it is an issue for the spiritual development for the congregants because without vision, there is no passion to continue making disciples.

It is clear that the redemptive message of Christ being taken to the world depends upon the church owning and embracing both the mission of disciple making and the passion of a vision to continue making them. Without the church embracing and connecting both disciple making and vision, the world will continue on its way to hell with no one to stop them, and thus the salvation of Christ will not be available to those who need it.

The Vision Explosion Company embraces the concepts of mission and vision for both individual Christians and the church at large as being firmly established in the Scriptures. It also recognizes that the church of today needs to own and embrace this message in order to fulfill its mandate. In addition to embracing the mission, vision, and message of the Gospel in developing the Vision Journey format, the intent of the Vision Explosion Company is that it be founded upon solid business principles that it may both be successful and be a credit to God's Kingdom.

The Scriptures are replete with references to having a solid work ethic, and that we should consider our employment for an employer as reflective of the way we serve our Lord. Note Colossians 3:23-24, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." This is good admonition both for employees, as well as for the business owner.

There are many guidelines for proper work behavior found in the Scriptures that are noticeable for employees, and specifically directed towards them. The references to the practices of business people, however, often have a concern, correction, or condemnation associated with them, as in James 4:13-16,

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

Then James takes this concern in a different direction and at a much deeper level when he continues in 4:17 to 5:6,

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. 5:1 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

If the above passages in James were considered as the only Scriptural word on business, then it would appear that God hated business people, and could not find much good to say about them. But as in all things in the Scriptures, the larger perspective must be considered, and the Scriptures must be taken as a whole picture. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, for example, are both filled with good admonition for business people, and are usually put in a more positive perspective. They assume that business will occur, and while cautions are still issued, they affirm that businesses can be led by good people. In I Corinthians 12:28, Paul identifies administration as one of the gifts of the Spirit. This project will take extra pains to insure that all things are done with the best business practices as they are identified in the Scriptures, put in a modern cultural context, and follow any applicable law. Thus the potential good for this company will not be undermined or compromised by sub-standard practices.

Amidst all the Scriptural references about business practices, there are two in Ecclesiastes that have been the primary source of encouragement and direction for this author. One is found in 9:11, and clarifies the challenge to every business owner,

I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.

While there are a lot of rabbit trails in this passage that could delve into extensive details, the message that it shouts flies in the face of much of modern business practices. It is not enough that a business person is the swiftest, the strongest, the wisest, the most brilliant, or the most learned. These are all good things and need to be pursued, but they do not guarantee success by themselves. The “time and chance” factor seem to speak to being prepared when the opportunities do come. Success will not come to a person who may have great abilities, but who is not prepared for the opportunities that present themselves throughout life. This author has used the phrase “investment goals” to define that state of preparedness – investing every energy possible into being fully prepared so success will come when the opportunities come.

The other passage that challenged this author is found in Ecclesiastes 11:1-6.

Brief comments are included (**highlighted in bold**), which reveal this author’s reflective insights relative to being prepared for when “time and chance” will bring the opportunities to the forefront. It reads,

Cast your bread upon the waters (**extensive marketing**), for after many days you will find it again (**business activity / return on investment**). 2 Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land (**diversify product lines as a way to hedge against weak markets in some areas**). 3 If clouds are full of water (**business potential / people who are ready, willing, and able to buy**), they pour rain upon the earth (**business is inevitable when people need and want what is being offered for sale**). Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie (**business deals with circumstances that are real, and does not wait for the ideal to come**). 4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap (**there are very few days without wind or clouds / bad attitudes, laziness, and excuses will influence people to look at the obstacles**

more than the opportunities, and will cause them to cease or limit their business activities, and thus fail). 5 As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb (**regardless of the feasibility studies, some things in business cannot be quantified, anticipated, or understood, but that should not limit business activity / windmills can be built and work well even if the science of wind is not fully understood**), so you cannot understand the work of God (**some things are beyond human understanding, but God works in His own ways and for His purposes**), the Maker of all things (**human effort cannot substitute for the workings of God, but is designed to cooperate with God's workings**). 6 Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle (**with business, laziness is neither acceptable nor profitable / there is no time or place where things will produce on their own without human involvement and investment / work must be done day and night to produce the desired results**), for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well (**market testing is helpful, but the success of a particular product line cannot be fully anticipated ahead of time, so all endeavors deserve our best efforts**).

These Scriptures and related insights have provided this author with both challenge and direction in establishing the business foundation of the Vision Explosion Company, which has been started in addition to the owner's more established company, TLC Ministries. The potential for both companies is great in their respective areas, but no one knows yet which will be the greater producer, and which will have the greatest impact upon God's Kingdom.

The mission and vision given to the church by our Lord many years ago is still the mandate for churches of today. A great many churches, however, do not see the connection between their disciple making mission and their vision of taking their witnessing ministries around the world to create disciples for our Lord. It is this lack of personal support for the church's mission and vision, the waning of passion to create disciples through valid ministry experiences, and the connection between these concepts, that is the thrust of the Vision Explosion Company. This thrust is combined with the

commitment to encase this process in such a worthy business context that would bring honor and glory to our Lord, and not be the cause of any diversion of attention away from its message.

IV. The Statement of Methodology

This project will take the form of several steps, some of which may overlap in practical application and time lines. There will be six chapters in this project which will approach the making of the Vision Explosion Company from several perspectives:

Chapter 1 – Making of the Vision Explosion Company – An Introduction

This introductory overview will serve as the first chapter of the completed project, and then the following five steps will form the foundation for the other five chapters of this thesis. The following issues will be addressed and developed individually and in much more detail throughout these subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 – Ministry in a Business Context

There is a presumed distinction between a ministry, which is usually classified as a nonprofit way to benefit certain groups and causes while providing goods and services to them, and a business, which is usually seen as the selling of goods and services so the owners can make a profit from their efforts. In this chapter, the basis for both ministry and business is explored, and how both can be in the opposite category depending upon the personal motivation for conducting that ministry or business.

In addition to discussing the general concepts of a ministry in a business context, the Foundational Values of the Vision Explosion Company will be shared and discussed, with specific correlation to establish this as a ministry in a business context. These Foundational Values will include a Description of the Vision Explosion Company, the Motto/Brand, the Mission Statement, the Vision Statement, the Purpose, and the Core Values.

Chapter 3 – Mechanics of Starting the Vision Explosion Company

This chapter will identify the steps and documents necessary to start the Vision Explosion Company, incorporating it as a “Sub-S” Corporation, organizing the business so the processes are in place for it to run smoothly, and to estimate and

arrange for its funding. In addition, a business plan will be developed to help establish it as a viable business of its own. It will also address the issue of whether the cost can be kept within a reasonable range so client churches can afford the services offered.

This chapter will also discuss the special relationship that exists between the Vision Explosion Company and TLC Ministries. It will specifically address the eventual separation of the Vision Explosion Company from the support structure of TLC Ministries, and the impact that the sale of either business would have upon the other business.

Chapter 4 – Methods and Materials of the Vision Journey

This chapter will define and describe in general terms the methods that will be used to lead churches through their Vision Journey process, along with approximate time frames for each of the seven phases. It will also identify the materials used to support the seven phases. These materials have been developed specifically for the Vision Journey, and are proprietary. Their purpose is to equip the Vision Mentors with the tools they will need to lead the Vision Journey in the churches, as well as to provide resources for the Journey Coaches as they tackle their various tasks. The seven phases of the Vision Journey process include:

- Decisions, (determining direction, schedules, and leaders);
- Discovery (understanding demographics);
- Defining (establish the Mission Mandate);
- Development (develop the Focused Vision);
- Deployment (people enlistment and development)
- Documentation (victories of fulfilling the vision, affirmation, and encouragement, as well as support for failing ministries); and
- Duplication (continuing training programs and continuing the Vision Journey process).

Chapter 5 – Mentors for the Vision Journey

The role of the Vision Mentors will be defined, again in general terms, as they lead each phase of the Vision Journey process, and will discuss how they will relate to the church and Vision Journey leaders, as well as to the members of the congregation. It will describe the qualifications and commitments necessary to become a Vision Mentor. It will also highlight the anticipated time investment of the Vision Mentor needed for each phase of the Vision Journey.

This chapter will also explore the Scriptural principle of Example Leadership, and how it relates to the Vision Mentor and the church and Vision Journey leadership. Example Leaders are not bosses as in an employer-employee relationship, but lead the building of the Kingdom of God through their personal examples.

Chapter 6 – Marketing of the Vision Explosion Company

Since marketing is a major key to the financial success of any business, the various options and opportunities available (both paid and free) will be identified and discussed as to their potential effectiveness and cost. This will involve identifying the target audience for this ministry, when and how would be the best way to present this service to them at a time and in a way that they would respond positively to it, and the type of approach that would be most productive in the sales process. Special attention will be given to starting this ministry in an economic downturn, as well as developing the market for this ministry since this process is so unique.

This marketing is also assigned the task of creating the awareness of the need for this service in such a powerful way that church leaders will seek out the services of the Vision Explosion Company to help them accomplish their ministry objectives through vision and discipleship development. It is also intended to brand the Vision Explosion Company as the country's premier vision and discipleship development company.

V. Review of the Literature

The literature for this project is divided into three primary categories: business development, mission and vision development, and discipleship development. The business development literature is further subdivided into official and legal literature, secular literature, and Christian literature.

It needs to be noted at this point that the Vision Explosion Company was started because of what other companies did not do, rather than what they did. Likewise, it was started in the void of applicable materials, rather than the abundance of them. So the literature reviews that follow, especially the mission, vision, and discipleship development literature, did not have any impact upon the processes or procedures of the Vision Explosion Company and its Vision Journey. These processes were all developed by this author prior to consulting any outside sources or referring to any outside literature, except as noted earlier.

The legal literature was consulted, but since the very same structure had already been put in place for TLC Ministries, the purpose of the legal literature was primarily to use the proper forms and applications by means of the appropriate government internet websites. In contrast, the business relationship between the two sister companies was developed independently by this author because there are no known models to which to refer. While the business aspects were already established by TLC Ministries, marketing is the main area for which this author sought outside literature. All the rest came after the fact, and some were helpful in tweaking some of the materials that were already developed.

Official and legal literature was found primarily on government websites. The website of the Indiana Business Services Division is www.in.gov/sos/business. It is the primary website for information related to starting and running businesses that are domiciled in Indiana, along with the various legal aspects of such businesses. In addition to the official information from Indiana, www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=98263,00.html is the website for the federal government that deals with the regulations for registering the company as an S Corporation. In addition, the Business Owner's Toolkit DVD, which was produced in 2008 by business.gov, gives the overview for small businesses to know how to relate to the federal government, as well as helpful insights for starting and running a small business. Their updated website, which is an official website of the United States government, www.business.gov, provides up-to-date information to help small businesses understand their legal requirements, and locate government services supporting the nation's small business community. This is all in addition to an overwhelming amount of

IRS booklets and schedules which regulate business activity, taxes, and various types of reporting requirements.

Secular business literature has resources like First Things First by Stephen R. Covey (author of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People), A. Roger Merrill, and Rebecca R. Merrill. This book turns the corner from the keys to success away from the normal concepts of being faster, smarter, working harder, and focusing on time and things. Instead they focus on effectiveness, relationships, and results, which have some overlap with Ecclesiastics 9:11. A book with a distinctive twist, Selling the Invisible: A Field Guide to Modern Marketing by Harry Beckwith, along with his companion book, The Invisible Touch, addresses those who must sell something invisible, like their knowledge or service. This changes the focus of the sale from some tangible objects to the intangible ideas, concepts, and personal services that are being offered. These books are based on the concept that improving the quality of what is offered is better than any marketing plan. These books have a strong application to marketing and selling the vision and services of the Vision Explosion Company.

Christian business literature has resources as well, like Business by the Book by the late Larry Burkett. In this book, the many aspects of owning and operating a business are addressed from a Scriptural perspective. It is a standard in Christian circles, and contends that qualified people can be successful in business while following God's ways of doing business, and that business people do not need to compromise their principles and values in order to make a profit. A recent addition (2008) to the arena of Christian business literature is Rainforest Strategy: The Planet's Most Successful Business Model by Michael Q. Pink. In it, he builds business models on various principles he found in the

Amazon rainforest, where trees flourish and grow under very poor conditions. He applies these insights both to specific and general principles of operating a business, and how to make that business prosper. It is heavy on the Christian application of these principles and insights. Nothing But a Jar of Oil by Patrice Tsague and Melvin Mooring is an excellent book in which they build a business plan based upon the seven principles of business that they identify in the Scriptural account of II Kings 4. To them, Biblical entrepreneurship is found both in the quality of the product or service, as well as how well it is sold. They also argue that the sales process is not a competition, but a way for everyone to accomplish what is best for them.

For mission and vision development, Andy Stanley's book Visioneering is a classic, and is followed by Making Vision Stick. He addresses the Visioneering process from a leadership perspective, and has excellent insights and application principles. There is a difference, however, with the process used in the Vision Journey, where the vision for a church is not limited to being caught and cast by the leader (as in Visioneering), but seeks input by the congregation, which greatly enhances ownership and participation in the disciple making process later in the Vision Journey. Aubrey Malphurs' book Developing a Dynamic Mission for Your Ministry was consulted to help this author verify and clarify his understanding of mission and vision by a known expert in this area. Kevin G. Ford has written Transforming Church, which addresses the various factors involved with making changes in the church. This includes personal and leadership evaluations, leadership styles, and what it takes to lead the church through "adaptive change" scenarios. Taken from the concept that change is inevitable, he focuses on change that is thoughtful and purposeful instead of catching people off guard and it

becoming repulsive to them. This is helpful because helping the church develop its Mission Mandate and Focused Vision will most certainly mean some changes will occur in the church and people's concept of church. Will Mancini's Church Unique is a book with rare insights into what it takes to help churches develop their mission and vision. To him, this is not a top down approach, but a process to draw the congregation into the visioning arena. His approach would be the closest of any other company to the Vision Explosion Company, but only as far as it goes. Once it develops the mission and vision, and addresses the missional aspects of the church, it stops short of the disciple making process used by the Vision Explosion Company. Perhaps the most thorough and methodical treatment of both the church's mission and disciple making is Rick Warren's classic The Purpose Driven Church. In it, he equates establishing the church's mission to laying the foundation for a building, and how the consistent emphasis on the church's mission will impact everything else related to the church and its people. He describes disciple making as turning a crowd into a church through assimilation, membership, spiritual and relational development, and actively expressing their faith through ministry and service opportunities.

As for discipleship development literature, Bill Hull has a three book set which includes The Disciple Making Pastor, Jesus Christ Disciple Maker, and The Disciple Making Church. Together these books give a detailed view of what it means to make disciples from a pastoral perspective, from the example of our Lord, and from the Scriptures as revealed in the early churches. Of particular note is his division of our Lord's life, ministry, and teaching into four distinct time periods, and the level and depth of disciple making that is appropriate within each of those periods. In The Habits of

Highly Effective Churches, George Barna transitions churches from the concept of doing certain things well to being effective in overall ministry endeavors. The nine habits he identifies would seem to be a picture of the perfect church, but there is no such thing as a perfect church. These are goals or objectives, that when done well, will make the church more effective in its mission. If the church suffers from a weakness in its people or in any of these areas, then a degree of their overall effectiveness is lost. While disciple making is not specifically identified as being among the nine habits, the concepts of disciple making are definitely there.

It is indeed an awesome task to try to gather the information necessary to have a proper understanding of the principles of Scripture, church life, and human nature so as to develop a methodology to design and create a new ministry model, such as the Vision Journey. It is equally as daunting a challenge to place this new ministry model in a business context where it must be marketed, presented, and “sold” to churches so that it sustains itself financially. Added to these is this author’s efforts to navigate another company through these turbulent economic times in the church market that is already suffering from the current economic struggles. Many churches have substantially reduced their plans to build, which diminishes their perception of their need of this type of consulting service. To combine these three major endeavors into one Vision Explosion Company can be overwhelming for the faint of heart. The mission of this author, however, is to provide effective ministries that would enhance the efforts of churches to build the Kingdom of God. This author’s vision incorporates the passion to do so through such avenues as the Vision Journey and the Scriptural Funding Campaign, and other ministries as time, energy, and opportunity permit.

With today's prevailing conditions of weak discipleship efforts that are tied into the vision of those churches, the Vision Explosion Company is a ministry whose time has come. It is intended that the company be prepared to take advantage of the "time and chance" opportunities as they are presented. It is also intended that this Vision Journey be a catalyst for church growth and effectiveness across Christendom. Bringing others to a saving and believing relationship with Christ, and preparing them in the best way possible for heaven (disciple making), is the ultimate purpose (vision) of the Vision Explosion Company, and the primary reason why it was started. May God both direct and bless these efforts.

CHAPTER 2

MINISTRY IN A BUSINESS CONTEXT

There is a presumed distinction between a ministry and a business. A ministry is usually classified as a nonprofit way to benefit certain groups and causes while providing goods and services to them, while a business is usually seen as the selling of goods and services so the owners can make a profit from their efforts. In this chapter, the basis for both ministry and business is explored, and how both can be in the opposite category depending upon the personal motivation for conducting that ministry or business. Justification will also be submitted to establish the Vision Explosion Company as a ministry in a business context.

In addition to discussing the general concepts of a ministry in a business context, the Foundational Values of the Vision Explosion Company will be shared and discussed, with specific correlation to establish this as a ministry in a business context. These Foundational Values will include a Description of the Vision Explosion Company, the Motto, the Mission Statement, the Vision Statement, the Purpose, and the Core Values. The Core Values will include the Vision Explosion Company's Commitment to the

Gospel Ministry, its Commitment to Biblical Teachings and Standards, its Commitment to the Cause of Christ, its Commitment to the Role of the Local Church, and its Commitment to Excellence as seen in its methods and materials, business practices, and highly qualified mentors.

A ministry in a business context is not easily understood by those who see them as separate, if not competing, concepts. The legal distinction between the two concepts is best seen by answering two questions related to the finances of the organization: “What is the source of the funding?” and “Who benefits from that funding?” As to the source of the funding, a business is normally seen as a profit-making venture where the company’s income is derived from fees charged for services provided, and/or from the sale of goods and products offered. A ministry, on the other hand, is normally seen as a nonprofit venture whose support comes from donations and/or membership fees, and possibly the sale of minor incentive items designed to solicit larger donations from those with some measure of “donor intent.” In addition to receiving donations of goods and services, a nonprofit corporation may also charge reasonable fees to cover the costs of its operations and/or the services provided. So the first issue in determining whether the legal standing of an organization is a business or a ministry is to consider the source of the funding. Was that funding received from donations and from fees to cover expenses, or was it received from charges with a built-in profit margin?

Who benefits from those funds is the second issue to consider in determining whether a corporation’s legal identity is either profit or nonprofit. Were those funds channeled to benefit others (nonprofit) through programs and people, or were they earned to benefit those who worked to receive them (profit), and to provide a profit for the

organization's owners? While the purpose of a business is to make as large a profit as possible, and to protect itself in the process, the purpose of a ministry, on the other hand, is to extend and invest itself in others, bringing improvement and value in their lives and situations.

Ministry often requires those who provide such beneficial services to go beyond the normal limits of time and personal involvement as with a regular job, making it a sacrificial venture for the service providers. The ministry provides some type of free or reduced cost service that is valuable either to the public or to a specific group, and hopefully receives enough income from donations, membership fees, and other charges to cover the costs of providing that service.

In brief, a ministry is usually considered a nonprofit organization because it is designed to benefit others with the services it provides. The Indiana government's website identifies a nonprofit corporation as,

Nonprofit Corporation: A corporation whose purpose is to engage in activities which do not provide financial profit to the benefit of its members. Such corporations must obtain nonprofit or tax exempt status from the IRS and Indiana Department of Revenue to be free from certain tax burdens.¹

The issue of who benefits from the funding, however, was not the primary issue in determining the legal designation of the Vision Explosion Company as a nonprofit or a for profit corporation. The Vision Explosion Company qualifies as a nonprofit organization as far as its mission is concerned, and exists only to serve churches with their vision and discipling efforts, but it does not qualify for the nonprofit designation as it refers to the company's ownership. A nonprofit corporation needs a divergent Board of

¹ Indiana Government Website, "An Entrepreneur's Guide to Starting A Business in Indiana," Online Reference. <http://www.in.gov/sos/business/2428.htm> (accessed February 24, 2010).

Directors to own and oversee the corporation's operations. When asked about a nonprofit organization's ownership, the Cincinnati office of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) responded by indicating it means having most Board Members who are not related to each other, and who would not receive any financial benefit from the corporation.² The Vision Explosion Company is family owned, and thus would not qualify as a nonprofit corporation.

The IRS identifies the board requirements of nonprofit corporations among the listing of operational regulations. That list includes qualifications that would exclude the Vision Explosion Company from legally being a nonprofit organization,

- must ensure that its earnings do not inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual;
- must not operate for the benefit of private interests such as those of its founder, the founder's family, its shareholders or persons controlled by such interests,³

The question then becomes why the ownership and Board of Directors of the Vision Explosion Company was limited to a single family unit instead of entrusting it to a much broader base. The answer is inherent credibility, efficiency of operations, personal commitment to and aggressive support of the purposes of this organization, and a vision, passion, and drive to see it come to fruition.

Since this concept has never been done before, and it is a new company, it stands to reason that neither the concept nor the company has any track record of success, and thus no inherent credibility. Potential board members and investors would want some type of assurance that this company and this concept have a strong potential to succeed,

² Verbal conversation with the IRS office in Cincinnati, Ohio, about 1990.

³ IRS Website, in the "operations" list of requirements for a nonprofit organization, page 3, Online Reference. <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4220.pdf> (accessed December 31, 2009).

which would include a strong track record of success that validates in some way either the concept or the company. It takes this type of successful track record to attract the attention of the heretofore uninvolved to become involved to the extent that they would invest of their time and finances to start and operate this company until it was self sustaining. To find such potential board members and investors would be a major, if not impossible, assignment.

In addition, far too many good ideas die a premature death while in the hands of an inactive committee. The questions the owners considered were – would a committee or board that did not originate the idea have the passion to keep the company moving forward even when the financial returns were being delayed? What would happen if they dropped the project as a failing cause? Once authority is given to others, it is difficult to retrieve it again. The owners, therefore, could not gamble this God-given concept by leaving its future in uncertain hands. Thus it is designated as a business to ensure its success, even though it is really a ministry.

The issue of who receives any profits from the fees collected was not the primary motivation for starting this company in the first place, although it is anticipated that the start-up fees will be recovered during the operations of this company. The issue of profits did not enter the consideration for defining the organization's ownership style. The deciding issues centered on what it would take to have the support and sustained leadership to launch this concept and this organization, and what would be best for helping to build God's Kingdom in the long term. It was felt that a small family unit could best accomplish those objectives. Any additional personnel needed for additional resources and insights would be added as either employees or consultants.

In the wider church context, it is also assumed that there is a different motivation for these two organizational models – serving others, which prompts the desire to give, or serving oneself by striving to earn and receive more. Both of these motivations are present in the heart of every person, but they come from different places in the heart. Usually one of these motivations is dominant over the other, and is the prime motivator for that person’s life. Not only are both motivations present, usually they are both active in the same heart, but are triggered by different stimuli depending upon the circumstances. For example, a business person may be negotiating the sale of an item to a customer when a fifth grader walks up to the business person and asks for a donation to a school sponsored charity. It would not be uncommon for that businessperson to interrupt the negotiations to make that donation, and then return to the negotiation mode with the customer, trying to get the best deal possible.

It is this difference in motivation between giving and getting that will ultimately determine whether it is a business, or a ministry, or a business in a ministry context, or a ministry in a business context. While the Vision Explosion Company is not in a typical ministry organizational format, it is a ministry in a business context because its primary purpose is to benefit the Kingdom of God through providing consulting services to client churches, and those who serve in this context do so with the passion of personal ministry.

Matt Gillogly has understood the different motivations that enter into making any activity a ministry or a business, regardless of the setting. In his article entitled “The Difference Between Worldly & Kingdom Entrepreneurship” as found in his weekly newsletter, he identifies the issue of control as the primary deciding factor as to whether the entrepreneur is following his own agenda, or God’s agenda,

I get asked a lot of questions about life as an entrepreneur. Those asking fall into two categories. They either want to do it for themselves or they want to do it for God.

In the world's version of entrepreneurship, it's all about control. Be who you want to be. Making it happen and manifesting your destiny. It's all about you controlling the situation.

In Kingdom Entrepreneurship, it's very different. And it's way more of a wild ride. Why? Because you aren't in control, God is and in order to survive without killing yourself, you have to learn to ride the wind currents of the Holy Spirit.⁴

A ministry in a business context seems to cross some type of assumed and legal barrier between the two concepts. It is not an impossible leap, however, when the real descriptions of business and ministry are understood. While the beneficiaries of the funding will determine its legal standing, business and ministry are not dependent upon the type of services provided or who benefits from the funds received, but upon the motivations of the hearts of those who provide those services. Even when the activities, the funding source, and the funding recipients may be the same, the classification could be different depending upon the motivations of those involved, and the amount of energies expended to accomplish them. Thus it is the motivation more than the money that determines whether it is a business or a ministry.

This motivation of the heart and the behavior of those involved determine whether it truly is a business or a ministry, regardless of the type of legal designation for the entity. A church is legally and commonly perceived to be a ministry. The pastor, however, may be in either business or ministry, depending upon the motivation of his

⁴ Matt Gillogly, "The Difference Between Worldly & Kingdom Entrepreneurship," Online Resource. March 25, 2010. <http://www.christianbusinessdaily.com/> (accessed March 29, 2010).

heart and his behavior. If the pastor operates from a self-protective mode when there is no physical or other compelling reason to do so, and the people receive the benefits of only a limited portion of the pastor's time and energies, and the pastor is looking either for what he can get out of the ministry, or how little would be necessary to put into it, then the pastor is in business and is only doing a job, regardless of the type of organization he represents. For example, the motives of many (but certainly not all) television preachers, the "televangelists," have long been questioned by others when they see how huge is the profit some of the televangelists receive personally from their ministries. The air-conditioned doghouse owned by Jim Bakker has become somewhat of a symbol of the excesses enjoyed by those who have misused the goodwill and donor intent of their followers to pad their own pockets financially. While all television preachers are certainly not in this category, the type of television preacher who receives excessive personal rewards is usually perceived to be a business in a ministry setting.

When the pastor, however, exhibits a compassionate heart and is willing to invest his time, energies, and emotional strength into helping people even when it goes beyond the call of duty to the point of personal sacrifice, then the pastor is considered to be in ministry. While a few pastors receive extravagant salaries, they are very few in comparison to the many who live on minimal financial support from their congregations for their extensive efforts. Being in business or ministry really depends upon the motivation of the heart, which is best revealed by the behavior of the pastor (or other minister). People can usually tell whether their pastor is in business for himself, or in ministry to benefit and assist others.

It is not an uncommon thing for this author to conduct subsequent capital campaigns in the same church. On three separate occasions, this author has worked with the same church leading two capital campaigns, but the second campaign was led by a pastor who was not the pastor for the first campaign. In each instance, the church board insisted to the new pastor that they engage this author's consulting services again – they wanted someone whom they could trust to lead their second campaign. In two of those churches, the second campaign produced very positive responses, just as was experienced in their first campaigns. In the third church, however, the people's response to their pastors vividly illustrates the difference between ministry and business being founded upon the motivation of the heart. For the pastor during the first campaign, the leaders openly summarized their perceptions of him by commenting, "Pastor David was not perfect, and he had his faults, and we butted heads on several occasions, but he loved us and he truly loved this community." They were saddened when he left because they felt like they had lost a true friend in the ministry. For the pastor during the second campaign, however, they felt betrayed because the pastor brought in a personal friend as the church secretary, and although the pastor knew the truth, the pastor refused to tell the church leaders that the secretary had been fired from the former church because of stealing funds from that church. The people at the campaign church felt that the new pastor had invited the wolf into the flock instead of protecting the flock from the wolves, and they were angry when they found out the truth. In addition, other events soon developed that verified to them that the pastor was just doing a professional job, and had little or no love for these people. They could not wait to get the pastor's poisonous attitude out of their midst, and fired the pastor during the capital campaign. The people had a very negative

reaction towards the pastor whom they felt had no love for them, and for whom they felt they could not trust. It was a sad day for everyone.

It was the same church and the same people, but the difference was in the people's perceptions of the motivations of their pastors. With one pastor, they felt loved. With the other pastor, they felt betrayed, rejected, and that they could not trust their pastor either to tell the truth, or to protect them. Their response, of course, was to reject the offending pastor. They may deal with these same issues in a business context, and have learned to be on guard to protect themselves from unethical business behavior, but they did not expect it, and would not accept it, from their pastor. The people needed to know that their pastor was giving them his highest priority, and would protect and defend them against all threats, both internally and externally.

In contrast, this author has also heard several pastors reassuring their people, who were very nervous about engaging the services of an outside consultant to lead their capital campaigns, that the pastor would be there to protect them. In the early stages of a capital campaign, these pastors would make statements something like, "I want you to know that I will diligently protect this flock, that I will not let anything happen in this campaign that I do not personally approve of. I am standing on guard for you." While capital campaigns typically start with the people being suspicious, those same people will relax and participate in the capital campaign much better when they know that their pastor stands on guard on their behalf.

There usually comes a time early in a pastor's tenure at any particular church when the people see by the pastor's behavior and attitudes whether the pastor is operating out of a self-protective (business) mode, or serving others out of a ministry mode. In

essence, the people will subtly look for clues as to whether the pastor has the people in his heart, or whether the pastor is just doing a professional job, or even whether that pastor's heart is so full of personal ego, personal agendas, personal rewards, and personal motivation so as not to have much room left over for the people. People in the pew will respond in a positive way to the ministry-oriented pastor, but they will be hesitant to follow a business-oriented pastor who does not have much room left over from personal ambitions and agendas to give the people the prominent place in his heart that they crave, expect, and deserve.

The ministry of a pastor is more than preaching, teaching, encouraging, challenging, and administrative leadership. The core quality of the pastor's ministry is Example Leadership as displayed in the pastor's commitment, compassion, and consistent behavior. The Scriptural principle of Example Leadership will be discussed in Chapter 5 – Mentors for the Vision Journey. The motivation of the pastor is shown more by the expressions of his heart than by his ministry activity, and perceptive congregants will soon know whether they can trust him or not.

There are businesses which are really ministries operating in a business context, and it all depends upon the motivation of the heart of the leaders. For example, many contractors and architects who specialize in designing and building church facilities will consider what they do to be a ministry. To them, it is not just designing a building that will win them some type of award or bring them great profit. It is providing an appropriate place for God's people to worship and minister. They will minimize their profit margins, will go to great lengths to design a facility that is both cost effective and efficient, and will provide a finished product that will not overly encumber the church

with unnecessary debt. This author knows several such kingdom-minded architects and church builders.

Tim Funk, a staff writer for the News Observer in Charlotte, North Carolina wrote an article entitled “Doing God’s Business” in which he uses several companies as examples of ministries in a business context. Here are a few of his observations:

Christian business owners say spreading the message is no marketing gimmick. They say they feel a calling to weave their religion into their business. That can mean everything from banning smoking or cursing on the job to paying a chaplain to be available to employees. It almost always means proclaiming Christianity on company websites, business cards, trucks – even clothing.

He quotes Scott Hoffman, operations manager of Dallas 1 Construction, as saying, “We do construction work, yes. But we’re really, first and foremost, a ministry of Jesus Christ...He’s the boss. We’re working for Him.”

He also quotes Scott Callahan Junior, who runs Callahan’s Painting, as, “We want Jesus to be exposed. If He is going to be in our everyday walk, He’s got to be in our business too. We take Him to work.” Also, God “requires me to get people to know about Him, and what better way? We run into hundreds of people. But being Christian also helps you treat customers better. You want to do the absolute best job and be accountable.”

Companies and business professionals who identify themselves as Christian have multiplied to such a degree that groups have sprouted to support them. The Charlotte Christian Chamber – “Doing the Kings Business in the Queen City” – offers chances to network, and it sponsors monthly luncheon speakers.⁵

How can someone know when business people are in ministry? It is certainly more than words – it must be verified by behavior and motivation. When they have the best interests of the Kingdom of God in mind, when they operate their businesses with a sense of calling about their service to their Lord, when they put forth their best efforts to bring honor and not shame to the name of their Lord, and when they go to great efforts to

⁵ Tim Funk, “Doing God’s Business,” Charlotte, NC: Charlotte News Observer, 2/18/2010. Online Reference. www.newsobserver.com/2010/02/18/343955/doing-gods-business.html (accessed February 26, 2010).

protect God's interests, then these people are in ministry even though they have a business structure from which they operate. To them, ministry is not only church related activities or the legal description of the organization – it is a passion to share the Gospel message in every aspect of their lives.

There are various organizations that provide a sense of direction and fellowship for those who want to operate kingdom businesses, whether those businesses have any direct business relationships with churches or not. These organizations recognize that Christian leaders of all kinds of companies want to use their companies to further the cause of Christ, and are willing to place the influence of their lives and positions on the line to do so. They purposefully study the business principles found in the Scriptures, and together determine what is the best and most appropriate way to incorporate those Scriptural truths into their businesses to bring glory to God, enhance His kingdom, and provide resources, an example, and encouragement so their employees can advance in their individual spiritual lives. In the mid 1990's, this author was associated with the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International (FCCI) organization, and attended their chapter meetings in Cincinnati. They provided that type of support for Christian business owners. Their website gives this overall summary of the organization,

As of March 31, 2002, Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, Inc (FCCI) is under the management of Crown Financial Ministries (CFM). As a result, financial information after 2001 for FCCI is consolidated with CFM.

Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, Inc. ("FCCI") is a fellowship of companies whose CEOs and/or owners are Christians. FCCI is a member-to-member ministry – it is a vehicle, a resource, and a tool to empower Christian businessmen to develop their own ministry. FCCI serves to bring together in faith a fellowship of companies whose leaders desire to glorify Jesus Christ in every aspect of their businesses. FCCI teaches businessmen to implement Biblical principles into their daily decision-making process and to equip these businessmen to teach these principles to others. FCCI must be members in good

standing of a local church supporting the work of Christ through the church with their time, talents and finances. The FCCI CEO strives to share the Gospel of Christ with the company's employees, customers, competitors, suppliers and other business contacts. They take an active part in the development of the spiritual life and Christian testimony of the employees, and operate in accordance with the principles and commands of Scripture by providing encouragement, accountability and Biblical instruction. This organization is a nonprofit, contributions to it are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. It is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).⁶

Another organization that purposefully develops Christians around the world in the pursuit of starting their own businesses is Nehemiah Project International Ministries, Inc. (NPIM). It “is a non-profit, tax exempt, business training, and business support organization that provides high quality, comprehensive, transformational, biblically-based entrepreneurship curricula and resources.”⁷ To accomplish this, it has designed several Biblical Entrepreneurship (BE) courses (for a fee), leading to a certificate of completion. They describe themselves as “a consulting and book publishing practice targeting Christians who want to incorporate biblical principles into their businesses.”⁸ Its vision is,

to transform the marketplace with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, one entrepreneur at a time, with the ultimate goal to create a community of Kingdom business stewards who provide God-honoring services and products in a God-honoring way, and are contributing to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.⁹

⁶ Fellowship of Companies for Christ International. Online Resource. <http://www.investorwatch.org/profile/fellowship-of-companies-for-christ.aspx>. (accessed April 6, 2010).

⁷ Patrice Tsague and Melvin Mooring. *Nothing but a Jar of Oil: Seven Steps to Achieving Financial Victory Through Biblical Entrepreneurship* (Damascus, MD: Nehemiah Publishing, 2009), 126.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Many Christian leaders of companies have a passion to serve Christ in the marketplace, such as Art Ally, founder of The Timothy Plan, which was started to fill the void of providing retirement plans for pastors of independent churches by using funds that are screened and verified to be morally upright, and in which this author is an investor. He left a lucrative financial planning practice to do so, and suffered great financial loss and risk to do so. He gives an overview of his personal story in the Introduction to Nothing But A Jar of Oil.¹⁰ Throughout the leading of hundreds of capital campaigns, this author has found many Christian leaders of companies who have the same passion to use their companies as a way to grow God's Kingdom, but very few have a local association of other Christian business leaders with whom to associate, and where they can find support for one another in their Kingdom efforts.

Knowing that money plays such a dominant role in business transactions, Tsague and Mooring take pains to clarify the financial objectives for individual Christians, which would have a direct impact upon the Christian leaders of ministries in a business context, as revealed in their definition of financial victory and success,

Too many Christians have defined financial victory as the capacity for unlimited material consumption: you have "made it" when you can buy any car, house, or toy you want. This is not what the Bible teaches about monetary success. In this book, we do not characterize financial victory by the size of the bank account but by the size of the heart. A man who can provide for his household with contentment, give to those in need and fund the Great Commission has achieved financial victory. A man who spends millions a year on his own selfish desires is merely a slave to his lusts.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., 7ff.

¹¹ Ibid., 11.

Ministry-minded Christian leaders who are serving God through their businesses have the passion to have both a spiritual and a financial impact in their spheres of influence as they strive to develop people and advance God's Kingdom through their companies. Various support groups and resources have been raised up to provide Christian leaders with the biblical foundations, tools, direction, encouragement, and fellowship with other Christian leaders that they desire in their quest for significant investment in things eternal. Such is the case with the Charlotte Christian Chamber as their members provide support for each other in their Kingdom agendas, and with the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International as they focus on the spiritual impact that Christian leaders may have in the marketplace and with their employees, as well as with the Nehemiah Project International Ministries, Inc. as they purposefully help develop and empower Christians to use their businesses to bring eternal benefit to others. May all their tribes increase, and many more like them become available to other Christian leaders!

The Vision Explosion Company is designed to be a ministry in a business context, as is its sister company, TLC Ministries. Everything that is done in both companies is with the purpose of building up the Kingdom of God and developing God's people. The profit margins are very small, every resource possible is reinvested into improving these ministries, and the efforts expended on the part of the owners and employees are far beyond those of normal expectations for a similar job or business. The entire purpose of both companies is to express themselves by providing a ministry that will help churches fulfill God's Great Commission.

The leaders of the Vision Explosion Company have identified several Foundational Values and descriptive statements that serve both to reveal the true nature of this ministry, as well as to give the company perpetual direction, consistency, stability, type of ministry, and corporate focus. They will serve as parameters within which the company will operate. These values will serve both to exclude what the company is not, as much as they are to include what it is. This company has a very focused purpose, and its mandate to provide leadership to help churches with their visioning and discipleship efforts is clear. It will not be enticed into providing services that go beyond its mandate, and it will not stop short of achieving its purposes and objectives. The following statements and Foundational Values are quoted from the company's internal records, and have not previously been shared in a public setting.

The following statement is issued in an effort to describe the Vision Explosion Company in a concise way, with enough information for churches to understand the nature of the company, the reason it exists, and the passion of its objectives:

The Vision Explosion Company is an organization of Christian ministers committed to the building of God's Kingdom, both in our local churches and throughout Christendom. Our passion is to mentor pastors and church leaders through the process of understanding who they are, identifying their mission, clarifying and embracing their Focused Vision, and helping them to develop dynamic disciples while fulfilling their mission and vision.

We come from various denominational backgrounds and theological persuasions. We are evangelical in orientation, but we do not promote nor limit our ministry to any one group or tradition. Our mentoring staff are ordained ministers who have been carefully selected for their personal and professional qualities, and who have been successful and respected in their own ministry settings. We are headquartered in New Castle, Indiana, but extend our ministry through our mentors living in the regions they serve.

What does the Vision Explosion Company do? In brief, it uses the Vision Journey process to help each local church reinvent itself. There are four major interwoven tracks that will dominate the seven phases of this process:

Defining and developing the church's distinct Mission Mandate and Focused Vision with involvement by both the church leaders and the entire congregation;

Aligning and impacting the ministries and programs of the church with a singular focus;

Maturing disciples through purposeful and significant ministry experiences; and

Mobilizing dynamic, passionate, and committed disciples to do effective ministry while fulfilling the church's mission and vision.

Every organization needs a motto to help others identify it in a quick and easy way. Sometimes that motto becomes the organization's slogan, and at other times the slogan is a separate issue. Hopefully the motto and/or the slogan will be memorable ones. The motto typically is an accurate description of the organization itself, is usually more academic, and is designed to last the lifetime of the organization. The slogan, on the other hand, is usually part of a marketing campaign, usually is not academic nor precisely descriptive, and has the purpose of acquiring business or soliciting donations. "It floats" and "Just do it" are both memorable slogans that have been used to great effect to bring in business to their respective companies, but do not qualify as mottos. To be viable for business or donations, each organization needs to brand itself in order to attract the attention of the donor or buyer. Both the motto and the slogan have their part in the branding of an organization.

"Explosive Vision Journey – Deploying Dynamic Disciples" is the Motto of the Vision Explosion Company. It is a lifetime motto, and is intended to be descriptive of the

company's purposes, but is not catchy enough to be a good marketing slogan. The intent with this motto is to help people understand both the vision and discipleship elements of the Vision Explosion Company, and the connection between them.

This motto identifies the Vision Journey, and puts it in an explosive context. The explosive context ties it in with the company's name, and implies that the Vision Journey will explode and impact the rest of the ministries of the church. The Vision Journey is introduced, but not described, at this point.

On the discipleship side, the term "deploying" hints at a military assignment, possibly in times of war. It especially carries with it the concept of engaging and activating the congregation to fulfill works of service and ministry. This is significant since the national average is that 20% of the people of most congregations actually do 80% of the ministry and serving by that congregation, much to the lament of their leaders. It is important that church leaders understand that the Vision Journey is designed to bring considerably more than the normal amount of people into more significant service in their ministry operations. The term "dynamic" indicates action, activity, and excitedness that people will have about serving in their various ministry assignments. This is in stark contrast to the obligation type of serving that is seen in many churches. And the term "disciples" collects the intent of all the previous implications into the concept of purposeful disciple making. But it is not disciple making as a terminal objective – it is discipleship with the purpose of engaging people in meaningful ministry experiences as they mature in their individual walks with God.

The "Explosive Vision Journey" is not complete without "Deploying Dynamic Disciples," and "Deploying Dynamic Disciples" is not nearly as effective without an

“Explosive Vision Journey” to build upon. This motto is an accurate description of the Vision Explosion Company because it both describes what the company does, and captures the connection intended between them.

Any slogan for the Vision Explosion Company will change from time to time with a difference in advertising campaigns. Several possibilities are being considered at this time, but one has not been finalized yet for this first promotional blitz.

The Vision Explosion Company’s Mission Statement is, “The mission of the Vision Explosion Company is to build Kingdom disciples by mentoring church leaders through their Vision Journey process.” This brief Mission Statement includes several elements, like building Kingdom disciples. The company is not trying to build disciples for any individual denomination or tradition, even though the context will be within the structure of a particular local church. The company’s efforts are designed to build disciples for God’s Kingdom, which supersedes and is not limited to the intentions of one local church. The concept of building is intentional in that disciples are never at a stopping point in their journey to be like our Lord, as is seen in Romans 8:29, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” While there may be resting points on that journey, God will not be content with His disciples until we are conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ in every way. Admittedly, that will never happen completely in this life, but God does not allow for any place to stop that remaking process along the way. It will continue until we experience death, or He comes again in all His glory!

Since God does not allow for stopping points, neither will the Vision Journey purposefully exclude anyone from the process, especially the pastor. Once the pastor

“gets it,” then the people will get it. The pastor and church leaders are the primary targets of the Vision Explosion Company’s mentoring efforts. Sadly, most pastors are too full of pride to admit they need this kind of help. But if the pastors were already where they needed to be and doing what they needed to be doing, then they would have already accomplished the objectives of this journey themselves! But that is seldom the case. Mentoring church leaders will be discussed in Chapter 5 – Mentors for the Vision Journey, and the Vision Journey process will be explored in Chapter 4 – Methods and Materials of the Vision Journey.

The Vision Statement, on the other hand, is more expansive, and will guide the processes and procedures of the Vision Explosion Company as it develops each aspect of the company’s efforts. The Vision Statement contains enough detail to give direction to the company, but allows the freedom to be creative in how these objectives will be accomplished. In essence, it describes how the company will seek to fulfill that Mission Statement. It is stated as:

The vision of the Vision Explosion Company is to see churches discover, define and develop their Mission Mandate and distinct Focused Vision with input by both the church leaders and the congregation. We will develop mature disciples through ownership, enlistment, training, and serving in appropriate ministry experiences of the church, and to deploy dynamic and maturing disciples in the fulfillment of the church’s distinct Focused Vision. We will do this by mentoring churches through a Vision Journey process to provide pastors and other church leaders the tools to reinvent the church in a way that will mobilize its people to do effective ministry, and thus fulfill its Mission Mandate. The primary method we will use to accomplish this is to mentor church leaders through a Vision Journey process, in which they:

- Determine their Vision Journey leadership (called coaches);
- Discover their true identity and local situation;
- Define their Mission Mandate that is based on the Great Commission;

- Develop a distinct Focused Vision (strategic plans) to fulfill that Mission Mandate;
- Deploy (enlist, assign, and train) the people to staff the ministries identified in the Focused Vision;
- Document the success stories as the vision is being fulfilled to encourage people's continued service; and
- Provide resources and effective ongoing training as a way to duplicate the Vision Journey.

The Vision Explosion Company's Purpose is "to become the premier church vision development company in the country, employing a highly qualified group of ministers who serve our Lord by mentoring churches in the fulfillment of their Mission Mandate." This is not a striving for vainglory, but an effort to provide churches with the guidance they need to become the churches God intended them to be. The Vision Journey process embodies those principles, and should be available to all churches.

The following pages list some additional Foundational Values that have been defined for the Vision Explosion Company. They are self explanatory, and do not need much elaboration. They are listed here to help the reader understand how the Vision Explosion Company really is a ministry in a business context. They represent the Core Values of the Vision Explosion Company, and are summarized as:

COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY:

We are Christian Ministers first, and then Vision Mentors as our ministry assignment. Thus our first commitment is to God to serve as His ambassadors to this world, and our second commitment is to the churches we serve. Therefore, we will speak the truth in love to each church, no matter how hard it is to hear, and we will give guidance based on what is best for God's Kingdom more than what is comfortable for the church.

COMMITMENT TO BIBLICAL TEACHINGS AND STANDARDS:

We believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God, inerrant in the originals, and complete in the 66 Books of the Old and New Testaments. Further, we have adopted The Apostle's Creed as our Statement of Faith. We will follow the Scriptural teachings as our guide for all matters of faith, practice, business, and mentoring. We will depend upon them as the foundational principles for all we do in conducting our personal lives, in the operation of the Vision Explosion Company, and in mentoring churches through their Vision Journeys. We will employ current business and mentoring practices only to the extent as the Scriptures allow and teach.

COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST:

The church is the body, building, and bride of Christ. As such, it is the visible manifestation of Christ's Kingdom here on earth. Those who have come to personal redemptive faith in Christ are members of His universal church, and are intended to be members of local communities of believers called local churches. Together, these believers hold a very special place in the heart of God, upon whom He lavishes His love, His gifts, His resources, and His blessings. Therefore, each local community of believers is to live in response to God's graciousness, and to be the lighthouse God intended them to be to this world of how His grace is sufficient for the needs of all humankind.

COMMITMENT TO THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH:

The role of the local church can best be seen as three parallel tracks that intermingle with each other. One track is the fulfillment of the Great Commission by aggressively making Kingdom disciples. Another track is to develop believers into mature disciples through individual and corporate growth experiences as their relationships with God mature into the oneness of nature with God that He desires. The third track is to become the outreach arm of God to take the message that God has already recorded in the Scriptures to a wayward world in an effort to bring it back to God, and to establish God's values throughout the world. Thus each local church is to engage in such activities and mission-oriented ministries as would accomplish all three objectives. Each church is assigned the Great Commission. Believers need these mission-oriented activities in order to mature and develop in their own discipleship journeys. The world also needs the witness of the church so they can be aware of God's values, judgments, and mercy. And the world is in desperate need to hear from the messengers of God the need to restrict their activities to those that can be approved and sanctioned by God.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE:

The Vision Explosion Company is committed to excellence as an expression of our belief that God calls us to excellence, and requires excellence of us in all we do. After all, whatever we do is to be done for the glory of God, and God is not glorified by substandard attitudes or practices. Therefore, we will express our commitment to excellence in the things we do through our:

Methods and Materials

We have developed a proven process by which most churches can accomplish the objectives of the three tracks of disciple making, personal growth, and being a witness to the world. We have also developed the most comprehensive materials possible to help churches along their Vision Journeys. In addition, we will constantly monitor both the methods and materials to make sure they reflect the highest standards possible, and are appropriate for each individual church.

Business Practices

Our first priority in conducting our business is to do things God's way, as revealed in the Scriptures. After that, we commit ourselves to maintaining a proper balance between what is required by applicable laws, the best business practices available for our profession, and valuing individuals and churches more than profit margins. We insist upon integrity and honesty in all dealings, both personal, personnel, vendors and suppliers, and with the churches we serve.

Highly Qualified Mentors

Vision Explosion's Vision Mentor will partner with churches to give diligent and professional leadership to each church's Vision Journey in a way that is consistent with and supportive of each church's identity, mission, and objectives. Each Vision Mentor will have proven credentials in prior ministerial settings, and is carefully chosen and trained to be:

- Experienced in ministry and local church leadership;
- Experienced and knowledgeable in leading the Vision Journey in local churches;
- Possessive of leadership abilities and style that create confidence and comfort;
- Competent to adapt the Vision Journey to the unique nature of each church;

- Above question in integrity, character, and commitment;
- Able to relate well with people, establishing warm and friendly lines of communication; and
- Both a listener and a leader, with experience, wisdom, common sense, and foresight.

The lines between a ministry and a business are usually blurred by money and funding issues, both the source of the funds and the beneficiaries of those funds. But the funding is not the only issue – the motivation of those who lead the organization and the foundation on which it is built are the real determining factors as to whether it is a ministry, a business, a ministry in a business context, or a business in a ministry context, as addressed earlier.

Why should there be this distinction between ministry and business? Should not all that we do and embrace in life be dedicated to the service of our Lord and the advancement of His Kingdom? Do the Scriptures not show that the early Christians went everywhere preaching the Gospel of our Lord without any sort of distinction between the two concepts? And do the Scriptures not admonish us to be ambassadors of Christ without any reference to the organizational structure from which we operate? Did not Paul actually serve both as a missionary and a tent-maker at the same time? It appears that this distinction is a manmade one which started with the good intentions of reverencing the work of God among people, but which eventually became a source of power over the common people by an elite and educated few of the religious institutions. It also became a significant source of financial benefit to those religious institutions, both through donations received, as well as tax relief benefits from the land holdings and business activities of those institutions. These tax relief benefits have often been misused.

An additional consequence to the separation and special treatment of religious institutions has been the separation of the concept of ministry so ministry endeavors are commonly seen as originating from and centered in religious institutions, especially the church. As a result, ministry and business have been considered as separate, and even competing, concepts. But does a ministry have to be labeled a ministry in order to be a ministry? Of course not – ministry comes from the motivation of the heart and behavior of those who minister, not from the legal description of the organization!

Do the Scriptures teach about the distinction between ministry and business? It seems that some, who assume that money comes from the greed of business and is not to have any part in ministry, point to I Timothy 6:5 to justify an imagined distinction, “men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.” But the context is that of those who try to destroy the church from within by their false teachings and corruption of every kind, and has no reference at all to a business setting. Greed is greed regardless of the context, and occurs both inside and outside the church, as well as inside and outside of businesses.

Paul continues in verses 9 and 10 to define that having money and making money is not the problem, but the motivations of the heart of people cause the problem,

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

So the problems associated with money are to be addressed in the hearts of people, not in their money, and are not to be blamed on business endeavors as if business itself is corrupt.

Can a minister have significant wealth and still keep his priorities straight and his values intact? There are those who think not. They would point to Matthew 6:24 where Jesus declared, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” That teaching is certainly true, but it is not limited to ministers. Anyone can have problems with money, regardless of occupation or calling. Some would refer to the story of the rich young ruler, where Jesus told him to sell all he had and give the money to the poor. Jesus never made that a universal demand, however, and isolated His comments to that particular man when it is recorded in Mark 10:21, “Jesus looked at him and loved him.” The next few verses talk about how hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of heaven. The principle of not allowing anything to have a higher value in our hearts is solidly conveyed here, but there is no condemnation of wealth itself.

The concept of the love of money rather than the money itself being the root of all evil is hard for many to accept. In 1981, a bi-vocational pastor in a Midwestern state was laid off from his secular job. His family’s finances became extremely tight, and he sold everything he could to survive. He personally went to many businesses looking for secondary employment, but none was to be found. Finally, he interviewed for a position that promised great financial rewards, and he qualified for it. But he also knew it did not fit him well – the requirements of the position would have taken him where he knew he should not go. The employer offered him the position, but added these stinging remarks – “The job is yours if you want it, but personally, I cannot see a pastor making that kind of money, especially when pastors preach about the evils of wealth, and the blessings of being poor.” The pastor did not accept the position, not because of the money issue, but

because he would not violate his principles for the sake of money. Many pastors, however, have never understood that money makes a great servant, but a very poor master.

To consider ministry and business as separate and opposing concepts is to overlook the Scriptural teaching on the stewardship of the Christian's life. Paul describes the essence of stewardship as he deals with the concept of maintaining sexual purity in the Christian's life when he says in I Corinthians 6:19b-20, "You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body." Christians are to hold all that we are, have, and do in trust to be used for the glory of God, whether it is our bodies, or our money, or our efforts to build God's Kingdom. The organizational structure from which we operate is not a Scriptural issue.

While the Vision Explosion Company is legally in a business context, it has all the hallmarks of a ministry except for its ownership structure. It was founded with the motivations of ministry concern and commitment, and it is built on ministry-oriented principles and values. It truly is a ministry in a business context. After all, it does not need the label of ministry to be a ministry, and to do ministry. Building God's Kingdom on earth is what really matters.

CHAPTER 3

MECHANICS OF STARTING THE VISION EXPLOSION COMPANY

This chapter will identify the steps and documents that were used to start the Vision Explosion Company: 1) its incorporation first as a corporation in the state of Indiana; 2) designating it as an S-Corporation with the Internal Revenue Service; 3) organizing the business so the processes are in place for it to run smoothly; and 4) estimating and arranging for its funding. It will also discuss the special “sister” type of relationship that exists between the Vision Explosion Company and TLC Ministries, why it was started under the umbrella of the more established company, and the working relationship between them. It will specifically address the eventual separation of the Vision Explosion Company from the support structure of TLC Ministries, and the impact that the sale of either business would have upon the other business.

In addition, a business plan summary will be developed to help establish it as a viable business of its own. It will also address the issue of whether the cost can be kept within a reasonable range so client churches can afford the services offered. Since this is a privately held company, specific figures will not be revealed so as to protect the

confidentiality of the owners. Instead, this chapter will deal with the applicable legal issues, and the concepts, processes, and principles used in the company's structure.

The Vision Explosion Company is a company that was newly created by this author and his wife on December 1, 2008, first as a Corporation in the State of Indiana, and then as an S-Corporation with the IRS, which is the necessary sequence. The State of Indiana website identifies the Corporation structure as,

Corporation: A legal entity which is created by filing Articles of Incorporation. The Corporation itself assumes all liabilities and debts of the Corporation. A corporation is owned by shareholders. A shareholder enjoys protection from the corporation's debts and liabilities.¹

One significant problem with this corporate business structure for a small, privately held Corporation is its double taxation for income tax purposes – both the Corporation and the individual owners (shareholders) are taxed separately on any profits generated by the Corporation,

TAX: Income is taxed twice: 1) at the corporate level; and 2) at the employee level when a wage is paid or at the shareholder level when distributed as a dividend.²

Those profits can be spread around in a large Corporation with many shareholders, and would not affect the employees for their individual tax situations. If any employees were also shareholders, it would be seen as any other investment which was chosen voluntarily. In a small business, however, the owners of the Corporation

¹ Indiana Government Website. "An Entrepreneur's Guide to Starting A Business in Indiana." Online Reference. <http://www.in.gov/sos/business/2428.htm> (accessed February 24, 2010).

² Ibid.

usually are also the primary (and sometimes only) employees of the Corporation. This presents a major problem because the same people are taxed twice for the same profits. This double taxation would greatly reduce any incentive for small businesses to start, as well as limit the ability of the small businesses to remain competitive with the larger Corporations.

The Internal Revenue Service of the United States federal government has made an allowance for smaller Corporations so that this double taxation can be avoided. This is identified as an S-Corporation, which is commonly called a “Sub-S Corporation” or “Sub-S Corp.” In the S-Corporation, any profits from the Corporation transfer directly to the personal income tax obligations of the owners (shareholders) without having incurred any income tax obligations by the Corporation,

S-Corporation: After filing Articles of Incorporation, a Corporation may seek to obtain S-Corporation status for federal income tax purposes. The income of an S-Corporation is taxed only once: at the employee or shareholder level. To qualify, the corporation may not have more than 75 shareholders and must meet other certain Internal Revenue Service criteria. The corporation must submit IRS Form #2553 to the IRS. An S-Corporation is considered a corporation in all other respects and is subject to no additional or special filing requirements with the Secretary of State.³

The S-Corporation type of structure was chosen for the Vision Explosion Company for four primary reasons: 1) because it would give the company credibility as a valid business entity; 2) because it would most closely reflect its type of ownership; 3) because of the tax savings; and 4) because of the legal protection the owners enjoy from the debts and liabilities of serving churches without risking personal assets for any potential corporate liabilities.

³ Ibid.

The application for the Vision Explosion Company to be formed as a Corporation in the State of Indiana was submitted online on the appropriate forms on December 1, 2008, and approval was granted that same day. Application was then made immediately with the Internal Revenue Service for a Federal Identification Number, which was assigned on December 6, 2008.

The Internal Revenue Service Form #2553 was then filed online with the Internal Revenue Service on December 6, 2008 to obtain S-Corporation status, with the applicable date of December 1, 2008. Approval was granted for S-Corporation status on February 2, 2009. No Tax Identification number was sought for the state of Indiana because the Vision Explosion Company was not registered for any tax types – there would not be any separate payroll yet (handled by TLC Ministries), nor would there be any sale of goods, so no sales taxes would be collected. Tax wise, it is irrelevant that the company provides consulting services to churches.

It is important to note that the Vision Explosion Company was originally formed as the Mission Mandate Ministries Company, and all the previous filings reflect the name of the Missions Mandate Ministries Company. While the original name is an accurate and academic description of the purposes of the Vision Explosion Company (both mission and ministries), the unexpected negative response to the title necessitated the change in name. When asked, the initial reaction of pastors who were hearing it for the first time indicated a serious misunderstanding – they assumed it was a heavy handed missions organization. That is not the impression that was intended, and certainly not accurate.

The owners felt that the name was not a battle that needed to be fought, and that the marketing of the company would suffer grave harm if such perceptions were allowed

to persist. So the owners selected the new name of Vision Explosion Company for three primary reasons: 1) its unique description of the visioning process that ties it to action as well as an academic pursuit; 2) its positive implications of explosive growth, which is a common but unstated measure of success in ministry; and 3) its potential for creating energy and refreshing dynamics within the church. The motto of “Explosive Vision Journey – Deploying Dynamic Disciples” was chosen to reflect those three primary reasons. Papers requesting the name change were filed with the State of Indiana on January 19, 2009, and approval was granted on January 22, 2009. Paperwork for the name change was filed with the Internal Revenue Service along with the first year’s Corporate Tax return (2008), which did not show any income or expenses.

Where possible, the business filings, both with the State of Indiana and the Internal Revenue Service, were completed on their respective business websites. They were also completed without any outside legal counsel since the owners were familiar with the process – they had previously incorporated three companies in the state of Indiana, one of which also included a change of name as well as a DBA (Doing Business As / assumed business name). Rev. Robert S. Hallett was listed as the Incorporator. The owners and Board of Directors were listed as Robert S. Hallett (President and Treasurer), and Carol R. Hallett (Corporate Secretary). The owners are husband and wife. The initial investment by the owners was the normal \$1,000.00 to establish the company. Each owner owns fifty (50) % of the company. One hundred (100) shares of stock were issued immediately, with the potential of one thousand (1,000) shares of stock being issued. Each owner owns fifty (50) shares of stock, resulting in each owner (shareholder) owning 50% of the company. Appropriate stock certificates were issued to each shareholder. The

company's fiscal year runs concurrent with the calendar year, concluding on December 31 of each year.

The Vision Explosion Company will share office space at 1702 Indiana Avenue, New Castle, Indiana 47362 (at least for the immediate future) with TLC Ministries. The two companies will also share support staff and company officers. The consulting staff, however, is assigned primarily to one company or the other, but some will be cross trained so they may serve in either company. This author will give overall administrative and consulting leadership to both companies, and this author's wife will be the office manager for both companies, at least for the immediate future.

The Vision Explosion Company is purposefully structured as an independent "sister" company to TLC Ministries since they both have the same ownership. It is being developed with the business support of TLC Ministries, and the start-up of the Vision Explosion Company is being funded by TLC Ministries as much as possible, with additional funding coming from additional investment from the owners as necessary.

This new ministry of the Vision Explosion Company will complement the current ministry offerings of TLC Ministries, which this author and his wife already founded, own, and operate. TLC Ministries was created in the state of Indiana in September, 1988 as an S-Corporation under the name of TLC Tours Incorporated, but the name was changed to TLC Ministries Incorporated in 1990 with the change of business purposes. The original purpose of TLC Tours Incorporated was to lead tours for church senior adult groups. The purpose of TLC Ministries Incorporated, however, is to lead church capital campaigns. The owners felt that this change of purpose also necessitated a change in the corporation's name.

The relationship between the two companies is best described as supportive but distinct. It was determined that developing a new company was preferred over expanding the purposes of TLC Ministries to include the Vision Journey for two primary reasons: 1) so the purposes of each company could be kept distinct without confusion in the minds of potential client churches; and 2) so a separation between the two companies could be made at some future time without complicating that separation or the sale of either company. The following is a copy of the working relationship that was established between the two companies on November 28, 2008, and approved and recorded in the official Minutes of both companies, before the Mission Mandate Ministries Company (previous name of Vision Explosion Company) was officially created. This action was approved by the Board of Directors of both companies, and reads,

Resolved that Mission Mandate Ministries Company (M-3 Company) establish a working relationship with TLC Ministries, Inc. (TLC) for personnel and administrative support. It is acknowledged that a unique relationship exists between the two corporations since the two corporations share the same ownership. They could be described as “sister” corporations. This working relationship between the two corporations includes several factors:

- a) Although each are established as separate Sub-S Corporations, it is acknowledged that initially the M-3 Company will share the same staff as TLC on a lease (or sub-contract) basis, and will reimburse TLC for their services. That reimbursement shall be a percentage of any consulting fees collected.
- b) All staff will continue to be employed by TLC, and may be separated at some future date for the two corporations. All payrolls will initially be handled by TLC out of funds generated by TLC. The receipts for the M-3 Company will be handled by the M-3 Company, which will pay the invoices presented to it by TLC for staff and services.
- c) Initially the M-3 Company will share the same administrative services as TLC, and will reimburse TLC for those services. That reimbursement shall be a percentage of any consulting fees collected by the M-3 Company. These services include office space, unlimited use of the office equipment and supplies, and the use of any TLC owned vehicles.

- d) The rates for the staff and administrative services will be negotiated later, and will be invoiced by TLC on or about the fifth and twentieth days of the month. In addition, the M-3 Company will reimburse any travel expenses received by the M-3 Company for any (separately billed) travel expenses paid by TLC on the M-3 Company's behalf.
- e) The M-3 Company will initially share the same facilities at 1702 Indiana Avenue in New Castle, Indiana 47362 as are currently rented and occupied by TLC, and owned by the Hallett Land Company. No separate rental agreement will be issued to the M-3 Company by the Hallett Land Company or by TLC.
- f) M-3 Company will use its own resources for whatever marketing and other corporate purposes as are deemed appropriate to advance the causes of the M-3 Company.
- g) In the initial stages, the TLC staff will have full freedom to use whatever time, facilities, and resources are at its disposal in the development of the programs and materials for the M-3 Company. It is also acknowledged that Rev. Robert S. Hallett may use the M-3 Company as the Thesis project for his Doctor of Ministries degree pursuits at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, which are funded by TLC.

While they share some of the same staff and the Vision Explosion Company is being started under the financial umbrella of TLC Ministries, the Vision Explosion Company is not a capital campaign without the reference to raising funds. The Vision Explosion Company has a different and distinct process of its own, and will serve churches whether they need to raise major funds or not. It features mentoring churches through their Vision Journey process to become the church their leaders envision.

The resources for one company, however, are available to the other company in its programming offerings. For example, if churches need both the Vision Journey and the Scriptural Funding Campaign in the same time frame, TLC Ministries has drawn from the Vision Journey to provide a seamless combined process entitled the "Vision Campaign" to incorporate defining the church's mission and vision, developing dynamic

disciples, and raising major funds for facility needs to help them fulfill their God-given Mission Mandate and Focused Vision. If churches need some, but not extensive, help in identifying their Mission Mandate and Focused Vision, then that element can easily be incorporated into the more standard approach of the Scriptural Funding Campaign. The disciple making experience of TLC Ministries, on the other hand, is being utilized in the discipleship development segment of the Vision Journey of the Vision Explosion Company. This cross-company support has increased the viability of both companies, and provides a truly customized campaign for each company, depending on the needs of the local church being served.

The minutes of November 28, 2008 also record the agreement between the two companies should they ever separate, or one or both of them be sold. Each action was approved separately by their respective Boards of Directors on behalf of both companies:

Resolved that the arrangements aforementioned between the M-3 Company and TLC are conditioned upon the joint ownership of both corporations. Should the ownership of TLC ever change, then the working relationship herein described between the M-3 Company and TLC will automatically be dissolved, and the M-3 Company will be given free and clear to Rev. Robert S. Hallett and Carol R. Hallett, without any recompense or reimbursement by the M-3 Company or the Halletts beyond what is invoiced for staff and services already rendered by TLC on behalf of M-3.

Resolved that the arrangements aforementioned between the M-3 Company and TLC are conditioned upon the joint ownership of both corporations. Should the ownership of the M-3 Company ever change, then the working relationship herein described between the M-3 Company and TLC will automatically be dissolved. However, the M-3 Company may be sold to the new owners, with the funds going to the then current owners of the M-3 Company. The selling price for the sale of the M-3 Company must be mutually agreed upon by all parties concerned. Appropriate invoices by TLC will be paid by the M-3 Company.

Resolved that the M-3 Company may be separated from this working relationship with TLC upon majority action of the M-3 Company Board of Directors and/or the TLC Board of Directors. It is understood by prior action that any such

voluntary separation would be accomplished without any recompense or reimbursement by the M-3 Company to TLC beyond what is invoiced for staff and services already rendered by TLC on behalf of M-3.

In that same meeting of the Boards of Directors on November 28, 2008, the corporate officers were appointed:

Resolved that the officers of the corporation be Rev. Robert S. Hallett serving as President and Treasurer (for legal purposes), and Carol R. Hallett serving as the Corporate Secretary.

At a subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors, the following people were also appointed to positions within the Mission Mandate Ministries Company. According to the Minutes of November 28, 2008, all those filling these positions are employees of TLC Ministries, and are leased to the Mission Mandate Ministries Company to serve in these capacities. Those appointments were approved separately, and are listed in the minutes of December 11, 2008 as:

Resolved that R. Mark Hallett be appointed as the new Corporate Treasurer, with his appointment and responsibilities to take effect immediately. He will be authorized to sign checks and transact business on behalf of the Mission Mandate Ministries Company. He will be a "leased employee" from TLC Ministries, Inc., as described in the Incorporation Minutes, and his compensation will be in the form of a percentage of the funds received by Mission Mandate Ministries Company, as agreed upon by both Mission Mandate Ministries Company and TLC Ministries, Inc.

Resolved that Dr. David T. Allen be appointed as the Vice-President, with his appointment and responsibilities to take effect as of February 1, 2009. He will be a "leased employee" from TLC Ministries, Inc., as described in the Incorporation Minutes, and his compensation will be in the form of a percentage of the funds received by Mission Mandate Ministries Company, as agreed upon by both Mission Mandate Ministries Company and TLC Ministries, Inc.

To give the company further stability, the following additional actions were taken at the December 11, 2008 meeting of the Board of Directors:

Resolved that the Missions Mandate Ministries Company establish an account with the ***Bank (name purposefully withheld) located in New Castle, Indiana, for the purpose of transacting banking related business. The Board of Directors hereby authorizes Rev. Robert S. Hallett, Carol R. Hallett, R. Mark Hallett, and any others subsequently named by the Board of Directors, to transact any such business on behalf of the Mission Mandate Ministries Company with the ***Bank.

Resolved that the M-3 Company adopt the standard corporate bylaws, and that any bylaws of the M-3 Company that are in addition to the standard corporate bylaws will be determined later by the M-3 Company Board of Directors.

With the business structure firmly in place, the issue of funding the ongoing operations of the Vision Explosion Company must be addressed. It is necessary that the business eventually be fully supported by the funds it receives from its client churches. One of the major problems that churches will have with embracing the Vision Journey is its cost, which is based to a large degree upon the personal consulting offered to each church. The two biggest cost factors for those churches are the time invested in the church by the Vision Mentor, and the travel expenses involved for getting the Vision Mentor on location and back again. The company leadership feels that the best context for the success of the Vision Journey is for the Vision Mentor to be onsite for several key meetings and training sessions with the appropriate groups within the church.

The Vision Mentor being onsite for those key meetings will be considered a significant expense for the church. Sadly, it is expected that only the larger churches, perhaps those with over 400 in its regular Worship attendance, will see its value and engage the Vision Explosion Company for its full Vision Journey. But what about the

smaller churches who may need and want the Vision Journey, but do not see its value at that level of expense, or they do not have the funds to pay for it?

The Vision Explosion Company has made allowances for those smaller churches by developing a Vision Journey with a combination of teleconference calls and personal visits by the Vision Mentor. There are three levels of personal Vision Mentor support that would accommodate variations in the ability of churches to pay for the services of the Vision Explosion Company. While it is anticipated that the two lower levels of Mentor support (with the combination of teleconference calls and personal visits) will not have the same impact upon the church as the full Vision Journey, it is expected that those churches will still be able to benefit from the processes and dynamics of the Vision Journey to some degree, and certainly be much better off than when they started. It is the desire of the Vision Explosion Company's leadership to provide the Vision Journey with the full schedule of personal onsite visits to every church, but that is not financially possible for the company if the church is not able to pay for it. This variable level of direct Mentor support is seen as a win-win situation, where the company will have more business than otherwise possible, and the churches will have some significant benefit from the Vision Journey they would not have experienced if the cost was out of their reach.

The typical business plan, as described in the introduction to the Business Owner's Toolkit, is "an essential document used to raise money and communicate business vision and strategy to the management team, suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders."⁴ Then on slide #4, it takes a little different twist by recording "A business

⁴ Business.GOV, "Business Owner's Toolkit: Total Know-How for Small Businesses." Interactive CD-ROM. 2008. Also available as an Online Reference.

plan is a written document describing the current activities of a business, setting out its future aims and objectives and how they are to be achieved over a set period of time.”⁵

The Toolkit goes on to identify the five primary areas covered by the business narrative, which is a summary of the business plan, as:

- Business Concept & Product/Service
- Market Opportunities & Strategy
- Management Team
- Financial Expectations
- Funding and Investment⁶

Much of what would be included in the typical business plan has already been recorded in the preceding chapters, so they will only be summarized and highlighted here. The financial expectations will not be included because they are private information only for the owners use. The marketing plan, which is normally a part of the business plan, will be addressed more fully in Chapter 6 – Marketing of the Vision Explosion Company. Since one of the primary purposes of the typical business plan is to seek funding from outside sources, like venture capitalists, and the owners have no intention of approaching anyone outside themselves for additional funding, that section will be minimized here.

To summarize the business plan, the Vision Explosion Company was started in 2008 with the founder’s background of disciple making and vision development fostered

<http://startuptoolkit.org/webinars/wabp/player.html> (accessed February 24, 2010). Introduction.

⁵ Ibid. Slide #4.

⁶ Ibid. Slide #14.

through using the ministry approach to church capital campaigns with TLC Ministries. In addition to leading church capital campaigns, the founder has led visioning events since 1981, when he began his last pastoral assignment. Over the years he realized that most churches are in need of both of those essential ingredients of vision development and disciple making, but many do not need a capital campaign. So the Vision Explosion Company was started to fill that need in those churches, with the Vision Journey process as its primary vehicle.

The following statement describes the Vision Explosion Company in a concise way, with enough information for churches to understand the nature of the company, the reason it exists, and the passion of its objectives, but avoiding the multitude of details involved with the process:

The Vision Explosion Company is an organization of Christian ministers committed to the building of God's Kingdom, both in our local churches and throughout Christendom. Our passion is to mentor pastors and church leaders through the process of understanding who they are, identifying their mission, clarifying and embracing their Focused Vision, and helping them to develop dynamic disciples while fulfilling their mission and vision.

We come from various denominational backgrounds and theological persuasions. We are evangelical in orientation, but we do not promote nor limit our ministry to any one group or tradition. Our mentoring staff are ordained ministers who have been carefully selected for their personal and professional qualities, and who have been successful and respected in their own ministry settings. We are headquartered in New Castle, Indiana, but extend our ministry through regional offices.

The Vision Explosion Company's business concept is a simple, yet a complex, one. In brief, it employs a Vision Mentor (Consultant) working with the leaders of each local church to lead them through the Vision Journey process to help the church reinvent itself to become the most dynamic and vision-oriented church it can be within its local

setting. It creates a vibrant movement in the church that is fueled by personal ownership, where dynamic disciples embrace the church's distinct mission, and who serve with passion and commitment to fulfill its vision. While the Vision Journey is divided into seven phases, there are four tracks that will dominate all of those phases, and will bring cohesion to the process. These four interwoven tracks are:

- Defining and developing the church's distinct Mission Mandate and Focused Vision with involvement by both the church leaders and the entire congregation;
- Aligning and impacting the ministries and programs of the church with a singular focus;
- Maturing disciples through purposeful and significant ministry experiences; and
- Mobilizing dynamic, passionate, and committed disciples to do effective ministry while fulfilling the church's mission and vision.

The service provided by the Vision Explosion Company is a consulting one whereby a Vision Mentor contracts with a local church to lead them through all the details and phases of the Vision Journey, and to provide training and resources for the various teams involved. This mentoring occurs onsite as much as possible, and is designed to equip and empower the leaders of the various teams to accomplish specific tasks and assignments, and to coordinate their efforts with the other teams involved. Based upon the prior experience of the company's ownership with vision development and disciple making in the visioning seminars and church capital campaigns, it is expected that by following this process, the church will be reinvented to the extent that it facilitates dynamic disciples to fulfill their church's Mission Mandate and Focused Vision.

“Explosive Vision Journey” is the first part of the Vision Explosion Company’s motto. Once the mission and vision are developed, this process propels them with an explosive trajectory to align and impact all the ministries and programs of the church around the singular focus of the church’s Mission Mandate, creating the church’s Focused Vision.

“Developing Dynamic Disciples” is the other part of the motto for the Vision Explosion Company, and provides the format for the identifying, enlisting and recruiting, training, and deploying disciples to specific ministry assignments. Disciple making is a worthy goal in and of itself because it gives fulfillment to our Lord’s command to make disciples. There is a greater potential for disciples, however, than just to make disciples. After all, disciples developed in a vacuum away from the rest of society are untried, untested, and often unfruitful for the Kingdom. Discipling efforts are not complete without specific assignments and opportunities to express those principles in real life situations. The effectiveness of classroom disciples falls far short of disciples that are developed in the trenches. In the Great Commission, our Lord placed disciple making within the context of the church fulfilling its mission. That is today’s mandate as well.

Personal ownership of the church’s mission and vision are essential to disciple making. One is not complete without the other. Just as a seminar on leadership is not as effective as personal mentoring in producing leadership qualities within leaders, effective disciple making can be most effective when the disciples operate within the context of serving in significant ministry experiences as they fulfill the church’s Focused Vision. That is the connection that makes the Vision Journey process work, but which is most often overlooked by church leaders.

The market for the Vision Explosion Company is one church at a time. It is for those churches whose pastors hunger and thirst after the potential their churches have to impact their communities with the Gospel of Christ, and to develop dynamic disciples in the process. It will be accepted and work best in evangelical churches that have not yet started the downward curve of the typical Church Life Cycle, and whose pastors lay aside their feelings of pride, self-sufficiency, and independence to the extent that they are willing to accept help from someone outside themselves. As it was with capital campaigns, it is expected that the larger churches, those over 400 in Worship attendance, will be the first ones to catch the vision for this ministry. Once a track record has been established for the larger churches, then the smaller churches are also expected to be open to employing the Vision Journey process. More specific marketing plans will be developed in Chapter 6 – Marketing of the Vision Explosion Company.

The management team of the Vision Explosion Company is the driving force behind the company's formation and its entrance into a ministry field that is not defined yet. While his background is described in the earlier chapters, the one-page resume of the company's Founder and President, Rev. Robert S. Hallett, is found in the Vita.

In addition to Rev. Hallett as President, Dr. David T. Allen serves as the company's Vice-President on a part time basis. He was the Associate Pastor of a church in Allentown, Pennsylvania where Rev. Hallett led a capital campaign in 2006-2007. After the initial phase of the campaign concluded, he liked what he saw happening through the capital campaign so much that he asked to be considered for a Consulting position with TLC Ministries. That occurred once he completed his Doctor of Ministry

degree from Dallas Theological Seminary in 2008, and he went to a part-time relationship with his church in 2009.

Dr. Allen has been instrumental in assisting Rev. Hallett with developing many of the concepts of the Vision Journey since then. In 2010, he resigned his position at his church to accept the newly created lead position of his denomination – Executive Director of the Bible Fellowship Churches. He will lead church capital campaigns and Vision Journeys as time and opportunity permit.

Once the demand for mentoring services goes beyond what Rev. Hallett and Dr. Allen can provide, additional Vision Mentors will be recruited and trained as needed. Here is a brief overview of Dr. Allen's background and experience:

Formal Education:

- Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas
- University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- Dropsie College, Philadelphia, PA
- Jerusalem University College, Jerusalem, Israel
- Biblical Theological Seminary, Hatfield, PA
- Philadelphia Biblical University, Philadelphia, PA

Ministry / Professional Experience:

- Executive Director, Bible Fellowship Churches
- Ordained Ministry, Bible Fellowship Church
- Pastoral Staff, Four Churches in Pennsylvania
- Christian School Administrator, Ephrata, Pennsylvania
- College Professor, Philadelphia Biblical University
- Software Analyst, Design Data Corporation
- Business Consultant, Frick Consulting Group

While the fees for the services of the Vision Mentor have been defined as to what is necessary to make the Vision Explosion Company self-sustaining, the financial projections are an unknown at this time. Those fees will need to cover all company operational costs, including salaries, travel expenses, office facilities, supplies and

equipment, printed materials, promotional materials, marketing costs, conferences, contingencies, profit margins, business costs, taxes, etc.

In addition to extensive expenses for the operations of any company, there are many obstacles to a strong start for the Vision Explosion Company. They can be summarized as:

Since this is a new ministry field, there is no track record for any company who has done this in this context before. There are a few companies that specialize in vision development for churches and other nonprofits, but since they are privately held, their financials are not available. These companies, however, do not go to the extent of developing the disciples – they stop at vision development. There is no other known company that will take churches through an extensive process similar to that of the Vision Journey. This more extensive process will obviously cost more than the more limited vision development programs of the other companies, and will be more difficult for the churches to accept.

In addition, few pastors are brave enough to be the first ones to risk what appears to be a substantial amount of their church's funds on a concept that has not been tried and proven yet. They would also risk their credibility, and the strength of their leadership.

Another factor to consider is that pastors do not know what to look for in seeking our help, nor where to find that help. Marketing will be big in defining this new field.

Added to these factors is the negative effect the economy has had on church budgets and their discretionary spending – it is not a good time to be starting a new business in a segment of the economy that is suffering so much.

Perhaps the biggest limiting factor is that many pastors are not open to the assistance and guidance that someone from the outside can bring to them, especially when there is no track record yet. The big question is why pastors would trust the Vision Explosion Company and the Vision Journey when no one else has done so.

Add all these factors together and it has the appearance of being a very risky business venture, with a bleak financial forecast. Without a doubt, the fledgling company would fail without extended outside support. That is the precise reason why the Vision

Explosion Company was started under the business and financial umbrella of TLC Ministries, and its personnel leased from them as needed. This way, the need for a quick return on the startup costs is diminished, and the timeline for immediate business activity is not as critical as it would be otherwise. This arrangement with TLC Ministries gives the Vision Journey time to prove itself, and to allow its leaders time to evaluate and refine the process from the pilot church (currently in progress) without having to shut the company down for lack of funds. This cannot last forever, however, and productive business activity must be developed in the near future.

Sources for outside funding will not be sought for the Vision Explosion Company. With all the negative financial factors overshadowing this business venture, it is highly doubtful that it would receive serious consideration from banks, venture capitalists, or even the Small Business Administration. Thus the owners have decided to fund it themselves out of funds earned by TLC Ministries, and to augment those funds by personal investments as needed.

Once the church decides to engage the services of the Vision Explosion Company, then an Agreement is signed, and the payments begin. Typically, there will be seven monthly payments for Vision Explosion's services – one payment at 10%, and six payments at 15%. Travel expenses are in addition to the Mentor's fee, and are billed as they are incurred. The other expenses to the church will be handled directly between the church and their chosen vendors. The Agreement records these arrangements.

There are many factors that need to be considered fully by the churches before embarking on this Vision Journey. Since the Vision Journey is designed for those churches that are serious about focusing their vision and developing their people, they

need to be prepared both financially and otherwise. The seven primary factors to consider for the Vision Journey are:

- **Time** – The Pastor, Journey Guides, and church leaders must commit themselves and their time to following the Vision Journey’s format, as described by the Vision Mentor. Journeys take time, and the time needed for the first five phases is about six months.
- **Energy** – While the Journey Coaches will lead the various phases of the Journey, they will ask several others to join them in working on their projects. These projects will necessitate noticeable energy on the part of many in order to be completed on schedule.
- **Comfort Zones** – The Journey itself will involve many people working on several non-typical projects for most churches. The results will create changes, impacting the current ministries of the church. Comfort zones and complacency may be affected by these new challenges, but the end results will much more than compensate for the temporary discomfort.
- **Participation** – The Journey is designed for people to become engaged in the process, calling them from the spectator stands to the players’ bench. This is new territory for many, but will allow them the freedom both to express themselves and to take an active role in their church’s future. This will increase the level of ownership, and is necessary for the success of the Journey’s ultimate objective of engaged dynamic disciples.
- **Materials** – Several items will need to be prepared during the Journey. Some are simple ones like surveys, and some are more complex and professional like promotional items. The Mentor will give samples where available, and the church may want to engage a professional for some items. Those decisions will be made by the church leaders.
- **Vision Defining Retreat** – This is an overnight offsite retreat for the church leaders. This non-interrupted setting is essential for the defining and focusing of the church’s vision. The church usually picks up the expenses for the entire group of leaders.
- **Mentor’s Fee** – The Mentor’s fee will be determined separately for each church, and is calculated according to the time spent on the church’s behalf, any materials provided by Vision Explosion, and travel expenses for the Vision Mentor. The fee will be presented to the church before any decisions are made, and is payable in installments.

The business side of ministry may be seen as an unwanted distraction by some ministers, and it may be scary and overwhelming to others. Taking care of business matters properly, however, is a reflection of the quality and credibility of that ministry, and deserves the time and energy to do it right. If the business side of ministry is allowed to be sub-standard, then the ministry itself will be suspect and sidelined by those it tries to serve, and will bring disrepute upon the name and work of our Lord in general. While given in a different context, Paul's admonition in Romans 12:17 would still apply, "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody." And I Corinthians 14:40, while also in a different context, is still a standard for the business side of ministry, "everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."

The owners of the Vision Explosion Company have been careful to follow the best business practices possible, which is one of its core values. It is acknowledged that this company could not survive the initial start up expenses and delayed collection of Mentor fees if it were not for the business and financial umbrella provided for it by TLC Ministries. This has placed a heavy financial strain on the owners because of operating two companies out of the income from just one company, and that one income is currently reduced because of the hard economic times in which we live. In the long-term, however, it should prove to be a stronger situation for both companies with the expected income from the Vision Explosion Company. It is anticipated that the current risk will soon be replaced with both eternal and temporal rewards.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS AND MATERIALS OF THE VISION JOURNEY

This chapter will define and describe in general terms the methods that will be used to lead churches through their Vision Journey process, along with approximate time frames for each of the seven phases. It will also identify the materials used to support the seven phases. These materials have been developed specifically for the Vision Journey. Their purpose is to equip the Vision Mentors with the tools they will need to lead the Vision Journey in the churches, as well as to provide resources for the Journey Coaches as they tackle their various tasks.

The theme of a journey was chosen because of its positive support for the overall objectives of this process, for several reasons: 1) it is acknowledged that most churches will need to move from where they are now in order to be where they need to be so they are better positioned for their future plans, and a journey indicates some type of forward movement for a purpose; 2) a journey usually has some unexpected events along the way, as well as some type of rewards and results at the journey's end, and the church needs to have a sense of anticipation both for the results of this process, as well as for the

unexpected events along the way as the process unfolds; 3) a journey has a sense of positive excitement surrounding it, like something important is about to happen, or will be accomplished by the doing of it, and the church people need to have positive thoughts towards this process in order for them to embrace its objectives; and 4) while some journeys are individual ones, a journey in a church context usually means there are several that take the trip together, and one of the objectives of the Vision Explosion Company is for the congregation to take this journey as a group.

There needs to be positive anticipation created by the church leaders for this Vision Journey, sort of a vision to embrace the Vision Journey. Behind it all is the acknowledgement that it is not enough for the leaders simply to pronounce a vision for all to support, because the congregation will support something they have had a part in much more than someone else's plans and ideas – it is called developing ownership. The people need to see the need of an improvement in their mode of operation if they are ever to fulfill their church's mission, and the Vision Journey incorporates the process to accomplish the goal of the church reinventing itself.

In addition to the journey theme, the term vision gives the people some positive thoughts about where this journey will lead them. Most church people already have a mental picture of what their church could or should be like. They will appreciate a vision of what could happen in their church, especially when they know that the Vision Journey is designed to get them there in the best way possible.

It is easy for churches to fall into an attitude of compliancy and routineness, having understood their general mission theologically, but do not have it specifically defined for their local church. What is even worse, once churches have tasted of success,

it is very easy to relax their efforts, and to lose the passion it takes to continue those victories. The Vision Journey process is designed to remedy that situation with a mentoring approach that takes each church from their current situation to become the church they really want to be. Perhaps the people and the pastor have even been praying for something to cause it to happen. The process and processes developed for the Vision Journey is an answer to their prayers because it is designed to work naturally with what the church leaders expect of a project of this magnitude. The Vision Journey process delivers the church their leaders have envisioned.

A. The Phases of the Vision Journey

The first five of the seven phases of the Vision Journey together will take approximately six months to complete. The last two phases are ongoing phases that are continually repeated, and do not have any time limits imposed upon them. While there is a natural progression to the phases, one phase will not necessarily cease before another one starts, which produces some overlap in time frames. Most of the Vision Journey is not on a rigid time schedule, but some key dates and events will need to be protected early because of their important place in the sequence and overall timing of the Vision Journey. The timing is not too loose, however, because most people work best with deadlines and time parameters. It maintains the balance between structure and the freedom to be creative.

The seven phases and corresponding materials are highlighted on the following pages. Since, however, these methods and materials are very proprietary to the Vision Explosion Company, they will only be identified and briefly described here. The actual

materials together will total over 100 pages in the workbooks and supplemental materials. These materials will be grouped by phases, not by position or team. Each phase will have a Journey Coach, but there are more Coaches than there are phases because some Coaches will serve the larger purposes of the Vision Journey, and crossover between the phases. The seven phases, and the materials associated with them, include:

1. Decisions Phase

During the Decisions Phase, the church leaders will select, interview, and enlist the Journey Coaches according to the directions given by the Vision Mentor. The Journey Coaches will serve as the leadership group for this Journey. The Mentor will train them in a special three hour Preparation Session, set target calendar dates, and describe their responsibilities and projects for each of the phases. The Decisions Phase will be activated first, and usually covers the first month of the Vision Journey, up through the Preparation Session for the Coaches. The materials used in this phase are progressive, with the earlier materials (except the Agreement) being incorporated into the later materials. The materials for the Decisions Phase include:

Agreement

The Vision Explosion Company and the local church enter into a formal Agreement to define the responsibilities of each party, and to describe the working relationship between them. It also specifies the financial arrangements for the Vision Journey, and other matters like the unauthorized use of the Vision Journey materials.

Leadership Positions

The various leadership positions of the Vision Journey are identified and defined in a “Job Description” format. It also explains the enlistment process for the Journey Coaches. From this information, the church leaders select or appoint the Vision Leader.

Enlistment Packet

In addition to the material found in the Leadership Positions file, the Enlistment Packet will include an extensive overview of the Vision Journey, the factors to consider for a successful Vision Journey, and a checklist for immediate action. It is given to the pastor and Vision Leader at a Preliminary Planning Session led by the Vision Mentor. From these materials, the pastor and Vision Leader, and perhaps the church ministerial staff and other church leaders, identify and enlist the rest of the Journey Coaches.

Preparation Workbook – Coaches

In addition to everything found in the Enlistment Packet, the Preparation Workbook for the Journey Coaches includes much additional material related to accomplishing their various tasks in the Vision Journey, like the Church Life Cycle information, information on establishing the church's mission and vision, the teaching on Example Leadership, and the projected timeline for the Vision Journey. It also includes step-by-step guidance for each of the various phases, how the Journey Coaches relate to those phases, and the timeline for any projected events of the Vision Journey. This is used at the main training session for the Journey Coaches.

Mentor's Workbook

The Mentor's Workbook includes everything in the Preparation Workbook for the Journey Coaches, plus notes and materials that are necessary for the Mentor to lead the Vision Journey. It also includes the schedule for the Mentor's visits, what is expected in those visits, and various other Mentor-related items like the schedule of payments, and what is expected to occur between the meetings. It is the most comprehensive of the materials for the Vision Journey.

2. Discovery Phase

The Discovery Phase includes the researching of facts, understanding the unique dynamics of the church, identifying its local demographics, and conducting surveys and focus groups for both the leaders and the entire church, etc. It is important for the church to have this information as it considers its future. The results of these efforts will be provided to the appropriate groups later in the Vision Journey to help define the church's Mission Mandate and develop its Focused Vision. This is also one of the prime times

when the congregation is asked to have input into their church's future, which in turn will help to develop ownership. This occurs during the first six to eight weeks of the Vision Journey, with the timeline for the Vision Journey starting at the Preparation Session for the Coaches. The support materials for the Discovery Phase include:

Life Cycle Questionnaire

The various stages of the typical life cycle of churches are defined, along with approximate time spans. Also included is a Questionnaire that is given to various groups at different times to have them evaluate the characteristics of their own church. These completed Questionnaires will be tabulated, and the church's life cycle stage will be identified. This will assist the leaders in knowing how to move forward with their plans, and how to address the various factors that are common within their life cycle stage. The Church Life Cycle Chart will be described later in this chapter.

Online Demographic Resources

This is a simple reference form to assist the leaders in researching their local demographics. It provides websites that the Discovery Coaches may access, some of which are free, and some of which have a fee attached to them.

Helps and Welcome

These two forms, Helps for Enlistment and Welcome to the Vision Journey, will be sent by the Vision Leader to every person who joins any of the teams of the Vision Journey, along with a letter from the Vision Leader.

Organizational Chart

This is a sample of the Organizational Chart, which is used to record all those who are serving on any of the teams of the Vision Journey. It will be placed in a highly visible location for all to see.

3. Defining Phase

The Defining Phase features conducting a "Vision Defining Retreat" for the church leaders (including Coaches) and their spouses, and is led by the Vision Mentor. It will result in a defined Mission Mandate. The leaders will complete the Current Church

Ministries Survey, which will be used in defining the church's distinct Vision focus. This phase will also include the Vision Focus Groups for the church members, which will be conducted following the Vision Defining Retreat. The Defining Phase will cover the first three months of the Vision Journey. The support materials for the Defining Phase include:

Current Church Ministries Survey

The Current Church Ministries Survey will be completed as an evaluation item at the Vision Defining Retreat, tabulated later, and will be considered as the Focused Vision is developed.

VDR Materials

The Vision Defining Retreat is a major part of the entire Vision Journey, and is identified separately because of its importance. It includes much of what was formerly the Vision Defining Seminar, but has been modified and updated to function within the scope of the Vision Journey. These materials contain the full operational format for the Vision Defining Retreat, and all the supporting items and samples that are related to it. The Vision Defining Retreat will produce the church's Mission Mandate, and well as a priority listing of many of the items to be considered for the church's Focused Vision.

The Vision Defining Retreat is for the church leaders (including Coaches) and their spouses, and is led by the Vision Mentor. It is usually conducted away from the church, with the participants staying overnight, which fosters a very favorable atmosphere for the leaders to come together to determine their church's future. This retreat is designed to bring the leaders together in a positive setting of work, worship, and witness in such a way that all will know that their input is requested, expected, and valued. It is not a time to deliver a mission that is already determined by a few, but rather a time to determine that mission together. It creates a focused approach in which the leaders are able to narrow all their ministry and programming options into one highly defined Mission Mandate.

4. Development Phase

In the Development Phase, the leaders create a Focused Vision, and use it to evaluate existing ministries, align focused ministries, discontinue any ministries that do

not support the church's Focused Vision, and propose any new ministries. The final Focused Vision will be presented to the entire congregation at the Roll-Out Event. This process takes approximately one month following the Vision Defining Retreat. While there is considerable activity during this phase related to developing the new Focused Vision, there are no additional support materials. Some items from the next phase, however, will be utilized during this time.

5. Deployment Phase

The Deployment Phase turns the corner from idea development to people development. MAP (Mission, Action, and Prayer) Visits and a Prayer Vigil are conducted, culminating in the Deployment Service. Also during this phase is when the people of the church will identify their spiritual gifts and abilities, and indicate an interest in where they would like to serve in the ministries of their church. This phase normally lasts about a month following the Roll-Out Event, and will conclude with the Deployment Service, which features the Focused Vision as individual ministries and programs, and the volunteers who staff them. The support materials for the Deployment Phase include:

MAP Training

The MAP (Mission, Action, and Prayer) Training materials will be used to train the MAP Visitors to conduct the visits with every family of the church.

MAP Card Sample

This form is a sample of the information card used in preparation for the MAP Visits. One of these cards will be produced for every family in the church.

MAP Locator Board

This chart is a sample of the visible display used to keep track of the MAP Visits as they are completed, and to locate each church family on a local map as to where they live.

Gifts & Service Form

This is a form to be used during the MAP Visits to record the results of the Spiritual Gifts Assessment (included in the VDR Materials) for each participant, as well as to indicate their preferred area of service. This form is a key resource for making the assignments as to which person will be assigned to which ministry or program of the church.

Prayer Vigil Training

The Prayer Vigil Training materials will be used to train the Prayer Vigil Team in preparation for the Prayer Vigil that will be conducted at the end of the MAP visitation period, and just prior to the Deployment Service.

Prayer Chart

The Prayer Chart is a sample of how the Prayer Vigil Chart is made to organize the Prayer Vigil into hourly segments, and where the Prayer Partners are to be listed in the time slots as to when they plan to pray.

6. Documentation

The Documentation Phase is an ongoing phase following the Deployment Service where the ministries and programs identified in the Focused Vision are examined for ways that the mission and vision of the church are being fulfilled. If any ministries are found to be needing help, or even failing, they will be offered support to bring them back on track. Also, monthly reports are given to the congregation on the general status of the ministries, successes of the various ministries are highlighted, and examples of victories from those ministries are shared with the congregation. This is the time when heroes are brought to the surface and appreciated for their service to the church and the Kingdom of God. The theme is – “What gets appreciated gets repeated!”

7. Duplication

The Duplication Phase is also a continuing phase that follows the Deployment Service, and functions at the same time as the Documentation Phase, but with a different purpose. The agenda for this phase includes various forms of accountability, the establishment of a procedure to duplicate the process for incorporating any new ministries or programs into the church's Focused Vision, bringing any new families into the Vision Journey process by developing an assimilation program for the church (or assuring that any current such program is adapted to work in this context), organizing and conducting the recurring training sessions for those serving in the various ministries and programs of the church, and available ongoing support from the Vision Mentor. There are no additional support materials for the Duplication Phase.

B. Church Life Cycle Stages

Churches go through various stages throughout their life spans, and create typical life cycles. The various stages have certain qualities that are mostly consistent from one church to another. By defining these qualities, a church can determine which stage it is in at any one particular time in its history. Some qualities overlap the various stages, but some are unique to each stage. The Church Life Cycle Chart as developed by the Vision Explosion Company is a non-scientific way to identify approximately where a particular church may be on its journey of usefulness and effectiveness throughout its corporate life.

Not everyone agrees on the number or size of the stages in the Church Life Cycle Chart – considerable variations exist between church consultants as to how the cycle of church life should be identified. They all agree, however, that it looks something like a

“bell curve” type of graph between when the church starts and when it has effectively died, even if the doors are open and it continues to function on a limited basis. George Bullard, for example, lists 10 stages of the typical church’s life cycle: birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, maturity, empty nest, retirement, old age, and death.¹ Steve Mills, on the other hand, identifies only five major stages: infant, growth, prime, aging, and dying.² Gary L. McIntosh, in his Growth Points Newsletter, also identifies five primary life cycle stages: emerging church, growing church, consolidating church, declining church, and dying church.³ Other authors have identified other stages on a typical Church Life Cycle Chart, and have listed various characteristics associated with each stage. While there are many distinctives, there are also many similarities among the findings of these consultants that move the church along its path from the beginning of its history to its dying stage. On the Vision Explosion’s Life Cycle Chart, this author has identified the following five categories of characteristics that are compared within each of the life cycle stages to determine which stage a particular church may be experiencing at any one time:

- Vision and Energy
- Volunteerism & Organization
- Success & Morale
- Effectiveness & Leadership
- Authority & Ministry Style

¹ George Bullard, “The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development,” Online Resource, http://sed-efca.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/stages_of_church_life_bullard.pdf (accessed April 16, 2010). 2.

² Steve Mills, Assemblies of God. “Organizational Life Cycle,” Online Resource. 1997. http://webuildpeople.ag.org/WBP_library/9608_organization_lifecycl.cfm. (accessed April 16, 2010).

³ Gary L. McIntosh, Church Growth Network. “There Is Potential For Rebirth,” Website: www.churchgrowthnetwork.com Growth Points Newsletter - Hardcopy. January, 2009. Volume 21. Issue 1

There have been many descriptions for the typical life cycle of churches. After all the research, it appears to this author that there are seven primary and identifiable life cycle stages, as noted on the graph below, and can be specified as infancy (0 to 2 years), childhood (3 to 10 years), adolescence (10 to 20 years), adult (20 to 40 years), maturity (40 to 50 years), retiring (50 to 65 years), and dying (65+ years). The timing for these stages is highly variable, and is approximate at best. Many factors (including, but not limited to, the age of the congregation) influence the moving from one life cycle stage to another. By cross-referencing the categories and the characteristics typical of each life cycle stage, it is an easy task to pinpoint fairly closely what an individual or a group may consider to be the life cycle stage for their church. That chart will be used as a survey for the congregation during the Vision Journey. The various characteristics of the Vision Journey's Life Cycle Stage Chart are shown in Appendix A.

Throughout their life spans, churches do not stay at the same stage on the typical church life cycle charts. Churches usually move from one stage to another without much notice – it just all seems to blend together. But the changes can be seen more clearly when they are reviewed over the long-term history of the church. Stephen C. Compton of the Alban Institute sees the importance of identifying the life cycle stages of churches in an effort to help them see themselves more clearly, and to be able to move forward, as he says,

Each year, I work as a consultant with dozens of churches, and through years of accumulated experience in ministry as a pastor and in congregational development, I have found the effects of this life cycle on congregations to be readily apparent. Demonstrating this life cycle and helping a church find itself in the progressive route between life and death has become an important tool for

helping church leaders find their way out of stability and decline to vital ecclesial health.⁴

Compton then proceeds to list the five life cycle stages, which he feels are appropriate for typical congregations, along with descriptions of each stage. They are: birth, vitality, equilibrium, decline, and death.⁵

Major events in the life of the church can cause the church to extend its life cycles, so the later life cycle stages are delayed. While the Vision Journey can benefit churches in any of the life cycle stages, the primary target groups are those prior to the declining curve, as well as church plants that are looking forward to refining their vision as they have enough strength to do so.

Those churches that are on the down swing of the curve would also be candidates for the Vision Journey, but they will find it more difficult to go through the process without a strong commitment to reinventing themselves. The intent of the Vision Journey process is to lead each church back to the principle dynamics of the earlier stages that are still on the upward curve of the chart. These dynamics will help the church to extend the successes and strengths of that stage, and postpone the forces that would pull it toward a downward trend.

The following chart identifies the approximate order for the various stages of the life cycle for the typical church. The ages that identify the stages of the typical church life cycles are approximate, and vary considerably from one church to another. Many factors within the life of the church can either speed up or slow down this process. Unlike human

⁴ Stephen C. Compton, The Alban Institute, Online Resource, 2003. <http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=2404> (accessed April 17, 2010).

⁵ Ibid.

life cycles, the life cycles of churches are not inevitable – churches do not have to die.

The church may experience some type of renewal, and reset itself to an earlier life stage, and thus prolong its life. Bullard said it so well,

Death is not inevitable for any congregation. The life cycle and stages of development are not deterministic; that is, if a congregation has a Birth, it is not inevitable that it will have a Death. Congregations can and do redevelop and move forward to a new partial life cycle that may last a minimum of seven to nine years. Congregations at Death can have a Resurrection.⁶

Ideally, the church will experience renewal regularly, and be able to maintain the “Adult” stage. But the church should never forget that the downward trend is always lurking should it fail to renew itself periodically. The Vision Journey is design to be the catalyst that provides that renewal framework for the church, and to keep in on an upward track.

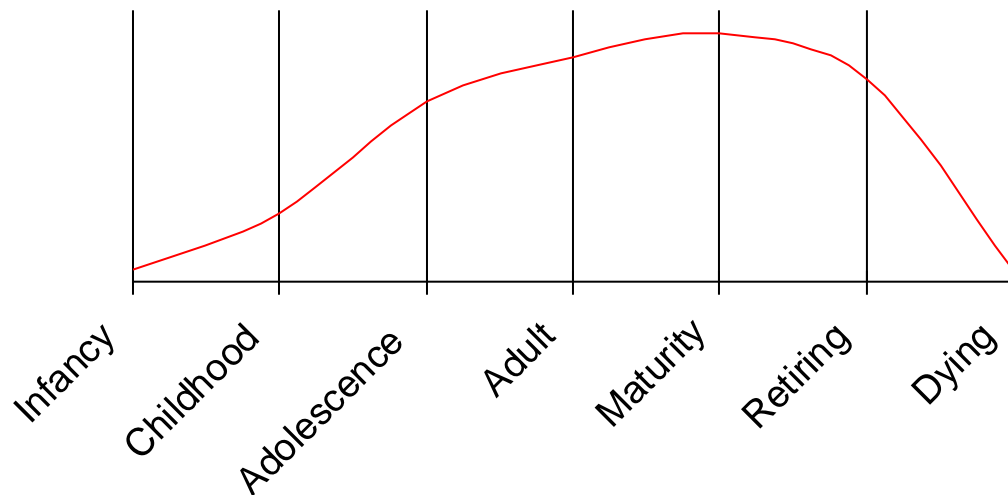
Church aging is a natural process. Unless purposefully intercepted, each local church will march forward to its own demise. It takes a new/renewed vision to interrupt that march to irrelevance and ineffectiveness! Each local church must reinvent itself regularly according to its situation, people, and opportunities. Otherwise, it will become outdated, irrelevant, foster much activity without effectiveness, burn out its people, and hope that each new program will be the answer. The best time for a church to reinvent itself is when everything is going well! Otherwise, it must address many extra problems.

The Vision Mentor is not all talk – there are a significant number of support materials at his disposal that will be used throughout the Vision Journey process. These materials are used to guide the process itself, as well as to provide the resources for the church leaders and the various Coaches to accomplish their tasks. These methods and

⁶ Bullard, 21-22.

materials are designed to provide direction, coordination, and momentum for the Vision Journey so the church is able to reinvent itself into the Gospel Station it envisions. Thus the church will be able to accomplish its Mission Mandate through a Focused Vision that is designed specifically for the church. It is also anticipated that the Vision Journey will be the catalyst for the church to reset its Life Cycle Stage to an earlier time, and to keep moving on an upward trajectory without taking the typical turn towards death. The Vision Journey is expected to stop the church on its natural march to its own destruction, and will allow the congregation to look into a mirror to see the picture of a reinvented church. This process creates substantial energy that is channeled into serving in the various ministries of the church, and provides significant ministry experiences as disciples are matured, trained, and deployed in the service of God’s Kingdom. Truly the Vision Journey is the catalyst for an “Explosive Vision Journey – Deploying Dynamic Disciples!”

The Vision Journey’s Typical Church Life Cycle Chart



CHAPTER 5

MENTORS FOR THE VISION JOURNEY

The role of the Vision Mentor is a very specific one in this Vision Journey. In this chapter, the mentor concept will be discussed especially as it relates to what it will take for the people to embrace the mission and vision of the church. The role of the Vision Mentor as the leader of the Vision Journey process will be discussed as to how he impacts the church and Vision Journey leaders, as well as the members of the congregation. Of special note is the discussion on how the opposing concepts of lay involvement in the decisions of the church can be compatible with the authority of the leaders to make those decisions. This chapter will also address the value of a Vision Mentor being onsite for several occasions throughout the Vision Journey instead of just giving the leaders a book to follow or sending them to a seminar.

This chapter will identify the qualifications and commitments necessary to become a Vision Mentor, as is recorded in the company's Core Values. It will also explore the Scriptural principle of Example Leadership, and how it relates to the Vision Mentor and the church, and the Vision Journey leadership in particular. Example Leaders

are not bosses as in an employer-employee relationship, but lead the building of the Kingdom of God as purposeful examples.

Church Consultants are called by different names by their respective companies, usually with the motive of trying to define the type of consulting they do, or to distinguish themselves from other Church Consultants to give them some type of perceived market advantage. TLC Ministries, for example, identifies their consulting staff as Stewardship Consultants because they lead capital campaigns for churches with the Ministry Approach. The consulting staff of the Vision Explosion Company, on the other hand, are called Vision Mentors as they lead churches through the Vision Journey process. While each company has different names and different functions for their consulting staff, they both share the same purpose – to help build the Kingdom of God in local churches through consulting services. The Stewardship Consultants are ministers whose specific assignment is to help churches raise major funds for their facility needs while developing more responsive stewardship disciples. The Vision Mentors are also ministers whose specific assignment is to help each local church reinvent itself through the Vision Journey process by developing its mission, vision, and dynamic disciples.

One of the major functions of leadership in the Vision Journey is the Scriptural concept of Example Leadership. Example Leadership begins with the Vision Mentor, draws in the church staff, and extends to all the leaders and Coaches of the Vision Journey. Example Leadership is comprehensive, and in the context of the Vision Journey, it means that:

- The leaders understand what Scriptural leadership is all about;
- They resolve any issues in their personal lives;

- They personally embrace the purposes of the church especially as it relates to its mission and vision;
- They purposefully become an example to the congregation of the principles, values, and commitments embodied within that mission and vision; and
- They actually lead others in accomplishing the purposes of the church's mission and vision.

There is a difference between being an example by accident, and being an Example Leader on purpose. Even the secular world knows that being an example is a key factor in leadership. Sports figures of today are often looked to as role models. Sadly, very few can stand the scrutiny of a spotlight on their personal lives, habits, and behavior. Such was the case at Thanksgiving time (USA), 2009, when an auto accident led to the public exposure of the private sins of Tiger Woods. After three months of extensive media coverage and mountains of speculation, Tiger Woods held a Press Conference on national TV on February 19, 2010 to apologize to everyone for his many sins, and for betraying the trust of so many. Part of his confession at that time was completely overlooked by the media, but he acknowledged that the importance of being a valid leader also requires character and integrity in order to be credible. In recognizing that he had lost that credibility, he said, "Achievements on the golf course are only part of setting an example. Character and decency are what really count."¹ He is right, but this type of leadership refers to being an example because of something he has done. He did not try to become an example, that simply came with him being great in a sport. Being an example by accident, as he was, is not the same, however, as the purposeful Example Leadership principle that is found in the Bible.

¹ Tiger Woods, "Tiger Woods' Apology: Full Transcript," Online Resource, February 19, 2010. <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/02/19/tiger.woods.transcript/index.html> (accessed April 17, 2010).

The Christian principle of Example Leadership also includes the importance of personal integrity, as the secular society considers example, but the Christian principle goes much further. It includes becoming a purposeful example so others can see the reality of the Scriptural teachings in real life situations. An accidental example is where someone is noticed for doing well, or for his/her position. But being a purposeful example takes a major step up where a leader first personally embodies the truths being taught, and then purposefully does well so when people do notice, they will see a real live example of the Scriptural teachings.

This is important because humans are social beings, and as such we take our cue as to what we should do, how we should live, and what we should think about something from other people. We may not always do what they do, but we look to see anyway. We especially give serious consideration to the example set by those whom we respect and trust. While this has been abused at times, yet the Scriptural principle of Example Leadership is a God-given quality of human nature. So it should not be denied nor depreciated, but used for the purposes God intended. When raising funds for the building of the Temple, I Chronicles 29:9 records a significant insight into this dynamic, “The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.” The people rejoiced when the leaders were the first to give, and to lead them where the people really wanted to go, which was to build the original Jewish Temple.

In addition to becoming an example of the truths of Scripture, the ultimate purpose of Example Leadership is to represent God fairly to a world that cannot see Him with physical eyes. Nature is a powerful revelation of God, and so are the miracles, signs,

and wonders done in His name. Even though our Lord was a perfect example to those who witnessed His life, the closest thing that the rest of the people of this world have to seeing God is to see God revealed in the lives of those who call His name. After all, we are made in the image of God. Matthew 5:14-16 is a challenge to all Christians to let their lights so shine that God will be glorified by what they see in the Christians. While that light has flickered and has been weak on many occasions, yet the principle is still there. Hear our Lord's charge to purposeful Example Leadership,

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Leadership, to be valid and credible, must come from the experience and personal life of the leader. Contrary to popular opinion, leadership in the church and this Vision Journey is much more than the normal perceptions of talking, making decisions, and giving directions. It involves the character strengths of the leaders, as well as the quality of their personal examples. Regardless of what people say, their examples prove what they really believe.

In this Vision Journey, the leaders resolve their own issues first, then put those principles into practice in their own lives, and then provide an example for others to follow. Since this Journey is built on the four tracks of defining and developing the church's mission and vision, aligning and impacting the ministries of the church around a singular focus, maturing disciples through significant ministry experiences, and mobilizing dynamic disciples, it is expected that its leaders will become models in all these areas.

Jesus led the way in being an Example Leader. He not only taught what was right, He also became the example for others to live and think and act correctly. Everything He did can be safely copied, because it was always done right! Remember when He washed the disciples' feet, how He told the disciples to do the same? John 13:14-15 says, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." Not only in foot washing, but our Lord's example is valid for all people to follow in every area of life.

Paul noticed the value of this principle for his own personal example when he said in Philippians 4:9, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." He also said in I Thessalonians 2:10, "You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed." Paul recognized that because of his leadership position, he needed to be an example of such high quality and impeccable character that he could encourage others to do and to be exactly as he was. Paul even told King Agrippa in Acts 26:29, "Short time or long – I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." Paul also said in I Thessalonians 1:6-7, "You became imitators of us and of the Lord... And so you became a model to all the believers..." He affirmed this in I Corinthians 11:1 by saying, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." Paul was willing to open himself to public review so that others might see in him the reality of what he was advocating. He knew that the example of his life was essential in order for his hearers to believe him fully.

Paul also recognized the need of leaders in the church becoming such an example that others could follow. He spoke to this issue in nearly every Epistle. A typical example is what he told Titus in 2:7, “In everything set them an example by doing what is good.” And in I Timothy 4:12, he tells the young pastor to, “Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” Paul went so far as to say in II Thessalonians 3:9, “We did this... in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.” This same principle of Example Leadership is true today for leaders within the church, and especially in this Vision Journey.

The old adage is still true – we must become good followers before we can become good leaders. As Paul said in Philippians 3:17, “Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”

A popular marriage and family speaker of a few years ago had many very good things to say about married life, and conducted many marriage seminars. But when her own marriage failed, everybody canceled their speaking engagements with her, acknowledging that if she cannot make her own marriage work, then they did not want her to be the one to talk to them about marriage issues. Regardless of the reason for the failure of her marriage, that failure had cost her the credibility to speak about marriage. We automatically demand that people in leadership exemplify what they are promoting, whether it is their marriage, a diet workshop, or a Vision Journey.

Leaders can no longer get by with that devil-inspired saying of “Don’t do as I do, but do as I say!” That is a sure mark of a hypocrite, and should not be said of leaders in any field. It certainly does not work in churches, where Example Leadership is absolutely necessary to the Gospel message! We do not believe people who may preach well, but

who cannot verify their teachings on Scriptural truths in their own lives. What they say is undermined by what they do, and their actions prove what they really believe!

Leadership is never exercised in a vacuum, because people under someone else's influence depend upon the examples set by those leaders. The more influence people have, the more important it is that the lives of the leaders are upright! Scriptural leaders are willing to resolve things in their own lives, and then become purposeful examples to those around them of the Scriptural truths they proclaim! Transparent Example Leadership is that important!

Business schools focus on teaching people how to be successful in leadership positions without much concern of how to be an example of integrity. A lot of people want to be the boss, even if they must sacrifice their characters and integrity to get there. The Scriptures, however, teach us to be Example Leaders without worrying about who is the boss! In talking to the elders (shepherds) of the church in I Peter 5:3, Peter tells them and all Christian leaders, "Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

Many today talk about servant leadership, which is a solid scriptural concept. But servant leadership is only one aspect of purposeful Example Leadership. True Scriptural leaders are not allowed to stop at being servants, as holy an ambition as that is. Notice that the phrase is not just being servants, but being servant leaders. The concept of leadership is not diminished, but it is modified by the concept of serving so the leaders do not become conceited. The natural tendency of those who have positions of authority and importance is to think too much of themselves, and need to heed Paul's admonition in Romans 12:3, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought." The Scriptural

concept of servant leadership is to serve while leading, as Jesus did. Jesus took His rightful place of leadership, but did not use that as a position of privilege, as we see in Matthew 20:25-28,

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served , but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Our Lord makes it clear that the concept of serving has no direct relationship with the position that a person may have. Nor does He negate the concept of striving for a higher position. What He is doing here is not position related, but attitude related. The Christian is to have the attitude of serving regardless of the position he/she may hold. Paul emphasizes this in the great Kenosis passage of Philippians 2:5 where he says, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” and then continues with describing how Jesus came with the humble attitude of serving the people in order to show them what God is really like. Leadership itself is not wrong, it just needs to be modified by the attitude of serving instead of being served. Servant leaders maintain the delicate balance of taking their rightful place of leadership, as assigned, without going off on an ego trip. Scriptural leaders do not have that position of leadership so they may be served while leading, nor is this an excuse for others to trample on them.

If all leaders had to face an inspection of what is really on the inside, what would be revealed? Many people are afraid to let others see the “real me” either because of embarrassment, or of not wanting to be exposed. They think others will not understand them, or will not like them because of what they see. For many people, it is easier to hide behind some mask than it is to deal with unresolved personal issues. One type of mask in

the church is to approach leadership primarily from an administrative level. But administrative leadership alone cannot accomplish the effectiveness of purposeful

Example Leadership.

Regardless of what people say, their examples prove what they really believe. Whether openly or subtly, people look for evidence that their leaders really do not believe what they are saying. And if they find problems in the lives of their leaders, it becomes an excuse for them. Leaders must be aware that their lifestyles will either enhance or destroy their credibility. Rick Warren commented on his website (www.pastors.com – cannot locate the comment again), “You don’t have to have charisma to be a leader. You do have to have character – credibility – because leadership is influence, and if you don’t have credibility, nobody is going to follow you.”

One of the primary principles of this Vision Journey is to provide leaders for its four major tracks, and to ask others in the church to follow their examples. The examples of the leaders must be clearly seen by others in order for them to follow! The people must have confidence in who the leaders are on the inside in order for them to consider their own support! Thus the leaders for the Vision Journey, the Journey Coaches, will be selected very carefully with this principle of Example Leadership in mind. Andy Stanley, in his excellent book on Visioneering, describes the importance of leaders being personal examples of the vision they are trying to cast when he says, “There is something inauthentic about a man or woman who casts a vision for which he or she is not willing to personally sacrifice. It is hypocritical to ask others to take risks we are not willing to take ourselves.”²

² Andy Stanley, *Visioneering*, 135-135.

The term Vision Mentor was chosen to reflect a different type of consulting than that which is used by other church consulting companies. Vision Mentors work closely with the church leaders and the Journey Coaches to enable them to draw from within their own congregation the Mission Mandate and Focused Vision for their own church. The Vision Mentor will not try to hand the Mission Mandate and Focused Vision to the church leaders, but will guide the church in developing it themselves both through a study of the Scriptures and the response within their own hearts for the opportunities at hand. This way the people own the vision personally, and ownership is essential to support and participation.

While the typical Church Consultant is present to tell the church leaders what to do and how to do it, the Vision Mentor is present to guide the process so the people of the church rise up and discover what has been hidden within themselves all along as they determine their own future. Perhaps a better way to say it is that the Mentor is present to help the people identify and remove the barriers that have prohibited them from hearing and acting upon what they already believe to be from God. Pastors over the years have been preaching and leading their best trying to help their people act upon the Word of God, and are often frustrated with their responses. They know there are barriers in the lives of their people, but are not always successful in helping people to identify and remove them. The Vision Journey process is designed to do just that.

The more response that is being asked of people, the greater is the need for personal ownership. Serving and giving are the two areas where this is seen most clearly because of the personal investment being asked of people for their time, skills, and resources. The church capital campaign is the ideal format to ask people to serve

extensively and to give sacrificially to support a purpose for which their church is undertaking, which is usually facility related. The response of the people is a very clear picture of their level of ownership and vision for their church's project – people will not invest their extensive time in serving, nor give to the level of being sacrificial, without the ownership and vision to do so. Especially among capital campaign consultants, ownership and vision are seen as a very necessary ingredient to a successful capital campaign.

Doug Turner, former President of Resource Services, Incorporated, (RSI), is a competitor of TLC Ministries, but shares much of the same understanding of what it will take to make a capital campaign successful. He and some other capital campaign company leaders were interviewed by Rev! Magazine on Successful Capital Campaign Strategies, as reported in its September/October 2007 edition. In his answer to the “What are the most common errors of churches that do not reach their financial goals?” question, he states both the lack of an adequate vision, as well as the lack of ownership and buy-in by the laity,

Too little buy-in. A vision for ministry may be exciting and compelling, but in order for it to move from thought to reality there must be widespread buy-in from laity. The congregation and its members, visitors, and regular attendees must share the vision for ministry. During a capital stewardship campaign, careful attention should be given to the process of building laity ownership.

Lay ownership is best cultivated by created opportunities for people to participate in campaign activities. By inviting people to lead, volunteer, and contribute to the vision casting, each person begins to take responsibility for the success of the campaign. Before a campaign asks the congregation to respond by pledging gifts of time, talent, and treasure, there must be evidence of widespread enthusiasm and support for the future ministry of the church from the congregation as a whole.³

³ Doug Turner, Rev! Magazine. Online Resource. “Successful Capital Campaign Strategies,” September/October 2007 edition. <http://www.rev.org/ArticlePrint.asp?ID=2784> (accessed April 21, 2010).

There is widespread support for the concept of buy-in and ownership, but the question that surfaces is what it takes to develop a level of ownership that is sufficient enough for people to invest of their time and sacrificial giving. Mr. Turner's reference to "inviting people to lead, volunteer, and contribute to the vision casting" is right on target, and could easily be characterized by the involvement of the laity. Preaching will not do it. Promotional materials will not do. Motivating speeches will not do it. Technology will not do it. Administrative programs will not do it. Ownership is developed by the involvement of the people into the future of their church because people will support their own ideas more than someone else's ideas! It is not enough that the tasks of the campaign are completed, it is vitally important that the people do the tasks, because that will have a major impact upon their concept of ownership. That is why the Vision Explosion Company will focus its efforts upon drawing the vision out of the church people rather than trying to impress it into them from an external source.

The reason for the difference between telling people what to do and drawing it out of them is crucial to the purposes of the Vision Journey. A vision imposed from the outside is still someone else's vision, and will soon be tossed aside when it becomes inconvenient or irrelevant. A vision that is developed from within, however, has the passion of ownership and the support of commitment. That is why a "top down" vision so often loses steam once the original excitement wears off, and why a grassroots movement rises up with passion and sustains itself over time.

It takes this ownership type of vision for the church to reinvent itself! The best way to develop that ownership is with a Mentor who draws it out of the people and helps

them remove their barriers so they are now free to be the church and people they envision and have been praying for. A Consultant who just tells them what to do does not produce the same results. The same is true with a pastor who just tries to tell the people what their vision ought to be – external information and motivation cannot compete with internal ownership and internal motivation when it comes to a personal commitment to a cause!

Doug Turner's comment that the laity need to "contribute to the vision casting" is also significant to highlight that this is not a vision that is developed solely by the leaders. That raises a leadership style issue that, over time and repetition, has risen to the level of a theological issue in some churches where they teach that the pastor is the only one to receive the vision, tell everyone else what the vision of the church ought to be, and then expect the people to support it. Certainly the church needs one leadership voice to speak as to the direction of the church – the need for leadership is not in question. This need for leadership, however, needs to be balanced with the realization that if a vision does not come from within the people, it will not be supported by them with a high level of passion and commitment. This raises the question of why leaders would want to try to push something, no matter how good, onto people who do not support it.

This author remembers a conversation a few years ago at a Super Conference event at the Vine Auditorium at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia with a pastor from Ohio. The pastor told of a family that had recently left his church, and he (the pastor) was distraught because that family, he believed, waited for the right moment to challenge his authority. He could not believe the audacity of the man saying in a public meeting that, "I believe that God would have us to..." In relating the story, that pastor became very animated and angry, and shouted, "How dare they challenge me? I am the

pastor. God does not speak through lay people. God only speaks through the pastor. The pastor is the channel for God's direction for the church." Then he announced that he was leaving this church that was so ungrateful for his leadership. This pastor had been at that church for 15 to 20 years, and it was the same size numerically at this point as it was when he first came.

Prior to this conversation, this author had visited this church at the pastor's request, and talked with his leaders about a capital campaign for a building project the pastor had announced to them. It stood out to this author that these leaders were so beaten down that they were unresponsive. The pastor had announced his plans to build, but they did not support it – it was not their vision. They never did conduct a capital campaign or start a building project, even though one was needed. While this is an extreme example, it brings out the weaknesses of a vision imposed upon the people without a sense of ownership by the people.

Indeed, strong feelings do exist over this issue. While there are leadership style issues at stake, they are too often accompanied by ego and prestige issues. As one church business administrator told this author in a private conversation, "I think every Senior Pastor has ego problems." That is not true, of course, but there are enough examples to make a church member wonder if it is true. The Vision Explosion Company leadership is not ignorant of these strong feelings. Nor are they ignorant of the need people have for personal ownership and buy in.

The Vision Journey incorporates a process to accommodate both of these seemingly opposing concepts. It is the difference between the necessary input of the people and the inherent authority of the leaders to make the decisions. The answer is

surprisingly simple – encourage the people to have significant input, and allow the leaders to make the final decisions.

One reason for the conflict between the top down and the grassroots approaches is the confusion over what is being discussed. There is no question about whether the pastor should cast the vision of the church. Of course he should – that is one of the roles of the pastor. Having a single point person to be the one to cast the vision and to keep the church on target with that vision is essential. The problem comes when church leaders do not understand the difference between casting a vision and developing a vision. Properly understood, casting a vision comes from a single voice, usually that of the pastor, who is sharing what has been developed by drawing the often latent passions out of the church people for the ministry, opportunities, and needs they sense that God has placed before them. The pastor certainly has a strong voice in the development of the church's vision, but it is not wise for the pastor to have the only voice.

Pastors and church leaders have not always been open to the input of their people. They have often confused what their authority entails, thinking that their authority gives them exclusive rights to the ideas about whatever they are considering. In doing so, they have excluded the essence of ownership, and undermined the fulfillment of their plans. Since people will support their own ideas better than someone else's ideas, why should the leaders squelch the ideas of their people? It is a simple equation – if the people are expected to support the plans of the church, then the people must have input into those plans. Otherwise, ownership will not occur, and the support will not be there. The difference between understanding the church's mission, and personally embracing its

vision, is congregational input! That input must be in the developmental stages of the planning, not as acquiescence of the ideas and plans of the leaders.

Andy Stanley has described a balance between having a shared vision and a point spokesperson when he says “All God-ordained visions are shared visions. Nobody goes it alone. But God generally raises up a point person to paint a compelling verbal picture. A picture that captures the hearts and imaginations of those whom God is calling to embrace the task at hand.”⁴ Since his book is written from the perspective of developing a personal vision, and not a corporate one, the one thing he does not describe is how to develop ownership among the people. He seems to be focusing on casting the leader’s vision by the leader, which the people will be expected to embrace, as he comments further,

No one accomplishes a God-given vision alone. Whether your vision involves the salvation of a friend or the launching of an organization, it is going to take a team. A team whose imaginations are in alignment. A group whose hearts have been knitted together by what could and should be.

If God has birthed a vision in you, he is in the process of developing a similar vision in the hearts of others around you. When the time comes to share your vision, it will ring true in the souls of those He has been preparing.⁵

In his companion book, Making Vision Stick, Stanley makes the assumption very clear of the vision of the church depending even more on it being cast by the church leaders, and gives no allowance for the vision being drawn out of the people themselves. He says,

⁴ Stanley, *Ibid.*, 85.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

This is not a book about discovering or developing vision. My assumption is that you've done the difficult work of crafting a statement or paragraph that describes the preferred future of your organization.

It is the leader's responsibility to insure that people understand and embrace the vision of the organization. We are all tempted at times to blame the people around us for their inability to understand and act upon the vision we have cast. But when a leader blames the follower for not following, the leader has ceased to lead. If the followers don't get it, we probably haven't delivered the vision in a way that makes it get-able. We are responsible for keeping the vision of our organization at the forefront.

If the people around us don't know where we are going, it's because we haven't made it clear.⁶

While it is the leader's responsibility to keep the vision in the forefront, that does not preclude that the vision comes only from the leaders. The fallacy of this "top down" approach to developing a vision for the church was clearly seen at a recent follow-up meeting to a capital campaign led in a church near Chicago a year earlier. This author heard those on the Follow-Up Team lament that the church people were not giving nearly what they had promised to give. In answer to some prying questions, the Follow-Up Team summed up the situation as the church having a very good pastor who regularly preached excellent messages on vision, stewardship, sacrificial giving, and the need to be faithful in their giving. While these things are excellent and necessary, the primary problem was that the people had never been given the opportunity to "contribute to the vision casting" of the church, nor the project, nor feeling the pain of not doing the project, nor wrestling with the solutions to their facility problems. Everything was communicated in such a way so as to impress upon people the need and the vision itself. Ownership, however, cannot be impressed upon people – it must be drawn out of the people in order for it to be valid and supported with passion by the people. Someone

⁶ Stanley, *Making Vision Stick*, 16-18.

else's good idea or vision does not command the same level of response and support of personal vision.

Will Mancini, in describing how his company (Auxano) develops the vision for client organizations, does not give any allowance for the "top down" approach where the leaders are the ones to develop and announce the vision to their organization. He embraces leaders who do the vision casting, as does the Vision Journey, but not leaders who develop the organization's vision in a small circle and then hand it to the people. He starts his visioning process by defining their Kingdom Concept, which he describes as,

The first step in ascertaining a unique vision is to discover your Kingdom Concept. The Kingdom Concept is the simple, clear, "big idea" that defines how your church will glorify God and make disciples.... Your Kingdom Concept is what differentiates you from every other church in how you develop followers of Christ for God's ultimate honor. The Kingdom Concept answers important questions such as "What is our greatest opportunity to have an impact on the Kingdom?" and "What can we do better than 10,000 other churches?" Think of it as your organizational sweet spot. It is the place where your church's unique experiences flow as a body of Christ.⁷

Mancini then proceeds to describe the three phases of developing the Kingdom Concept by using the illustration of three intersecting circles. While the particulars are different, the concepts are roughly consistent with those of the Vision Journey, as far as they go. Vision development is only part of the Vision Journey. While Mancini does not go to the extent of extensive and purposeful discipleship development as the Vision Journey does, his approach would most closely resemble that of the Vision Journey as anything else available. Mancini's defining of the Local Predicament compares to the Vision Journey's Discovery of the local, church, and community needs, demographics,

⁷ Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008. 84.

and dynamics. His Collective Potential is similar to the Vision Journey's Deployment activities where each family identifies their spiritual gifts and preferred areas of service. And his Apostolic Esprit draws the passion out of the leaders as does the Vision Defining Retreat. In addition, there are several opportunities for heartfelt input by the people at various stages of the Vision Journey. He describes these three elements of the Kingdom Concept individually as:

Circle One: Local Predicament

Your community has all kinds of specific challenges. Do you know what they are? Defining your local predicament answers the question, What are the unique needs and opportunities where God has placed us? Understanding your local predicament is about having an intimate grasp of the soil where God has called you to minister. It is about walking firsthand your contours of locality.⁸

Circle Two: Collective Potential

The second circle looks at the collection of individuals in your church and answers the question, What are the unique resources and capabilities that God brings together in us? The resources reflecting cooperative potential are multifaceted: spiritual gifts, training and education, shared experiences, financial capabilities, motivated abilities, common possessions, a particular anointing of Holy Spirit, and so on.⁹

Circle Three: Apostolic Esprit

A church's "apostolic esprit" is the area of focus that arouses an energetic style in its leaders. By apostolic I mean this source of liveliness and animation is anchored in a missional mind-set – the self-understanding of "being sent." Esprit is more than your passion. Esprit captures both the empowering and direction of the Holy Spirit and the human side of fervor and vitality that springs from team morale.

Although the local predicament finds its locus outside of the church and collective potential finds its meaning within the congregation, apostolic esprit lives in and through the leadership community.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., 85-86.

⁹ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰ Ibid., 94.

There is nothing in a proper understanding of Scriptural leadership that should close the ears of the leaders to the ideas of their people. In the early church, for example, the church leaders in Jerusalem, and specifically James, decided which of the Jewish traditions and laws would be required of the Gentiles in order for them to become Christians. Before the decision was made, however, James heard from all sides of this issue. In Acts 15:6-7a we read, “The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion ...” The “much discussion” meant that everyone had an opportunity to voice their opinion, to share their thoughts and concerns, and to challenge the thinking of the others. No hint is given how many were present, but it appears it was far more than a few. Though they are identified as leaders (apostles and elders), they were all a part of the process. Even though James voiced the decision, it was considered to have come from all of them – it was not just James handing it down from the top. When James delivered the final judgment in verses 19-21, it was evident that he had valued the input from everyone, especially that of Peter, Paul, and Barnabas.

Leadership, especially leadership in the church, does not mean dictatorship. Far too many leaders have ignored the noble ideals of their people and tried to ramrod their own ideas through against the objections of the people. It is even objectionable in the government when the party in power has the votes to override the wishes of the people. The reason for the founding of the Tea Party movement started in 2009 in the United States is a prime example.

Peter shows remarkable insight into the role of the leaders (elders) in the churches, providing a good balance between leadership and serving, when he says in 1 Peter 5:2-3, “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers —

not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” While it is obvious that leaders in the church need to lead, and God has gifted certain people to do so, there is no allowance in the New Testament Scriptures for the church leaders to be dictators. Precious little is said about the preferred leadership style of the leaders, which allows for the different personality types for those that are called to lead the churches. Even in selecting men to serve in organizing the daily needs of the group of early believers, the Apostles ran the idea of appointing men to serve in this capacity by the entire group of believers for their approval, which was given in Acts 6:5 – “This proposal pleased the whole group.” Then the group selected the seven men, and presented them to the Apostles for commissioning.

Participatory leadership has been around since the early days of the church, but throughout that time some leaders have either grabbed sole leadership for themselves, or presumed it was their right to do so. For example, the priests in the Middle Ages refused to let the people read the Bible for themselves, which gave the priests a monopoly on representing God. They even killed those who tried to place the Scriptures in the hands and language of the people. William Tyndale is just one of many Bible translators that were killed because of their Bible translation efforts, as we read, “At the time that Tyndale published his New Testament translation, it was a crime punishable by death, according to the Roman Catholic Church, and eventually he was hunted down and killed for fulfilling his goal of putting the Word of God into the hands of the common

people.”¹¹ His martyrdom was in 1536. There was such a heavy reaction against that restrictive practice throughout the Middle Ages that it eventually brought about the Protestant Reformation.

While martyrdom was an extreme example, there are many pastors today that are very protective of their leadership roles, and act like dictators, as in the conversation with the Ohio pastor at Super Conference as noted above. While the protective tendencies of the majority of pastors may not go to that extent, there is still a lot of misunderstanding of what it takes to create a vision and to develop ownership among the people. As stated earlier, much of the problem appears to be confusion over the difference between the pastor casting the vision, and the development of that vision with the input of the people.

It is true that someone needs to make the decisions and to cast the vision, and that falls the lot of the leaders. That leadership responsibility, however, should not ignore the input and suggestions of the people. People will accept that their ideas were not used as long as they know that their ideas were honestly considered. When church leaders present a project to the congregation without this input and personal ownership already developed beforehand, any congregational vote may reflect a nod of approval, but it will not be supported with passion unless the people own it. This is seen very clearly in church capital campaigns, because people will not give at a sacrificial level unless it is their own idea, or they have had sufficient opportunity for input that was valued by the leaders. Leaders should not forget that authority does not transition into support. It takes ownership to have support.

¹¹ Jason Earls, “William Tyndale: Bible Translator and Martyr,” Online Resource, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2278173/William-Tyndale-Martyr-and-Bible-Translator> (accessed April 21, 2010).

The balance in the Vision Journey for this emotional issue is found in the process itself. The people will be alerted ahead of time to come on a certain Sunday (Vision Sunday) prepared to do two things: complete a brief survey about the characteristics of their own church, and to submit written answers about their dreams for their church. The leaders will then consider these answers when it narrows in on the church's Mission Mandate. These ideas will also be considered in developing the church's Focused Vision. In addition, the Vision Focus Groups will give people ample opportunity to discuss the Church's newly developed Mission Mandate, and to make suggestions of how to fulfill it through the Focused Vision. Then during the MAP visits, people will be able to identify their spiritual gifts, and to volunteer for the ministries and positions where they would prefer to serve. While the leaders make the decisions as necessary, those decisions are made considering the input and suggestions of the people. This maintains the balance between the input of the people and the authority of the leaders to make those decisions.

If church leaders expect their people to support the mission and vision of the church, then they must allow and encourage the people to have significant input into the development of that mission and vision. Further, if church leaders want their people to volunteer to serve with enthusiasm in the various ministries and programs of the church, the people must be given a voice not only in which ministries the church should be doing, but also in which ministries they should be serving. If church leaders expect their people to grow, develop, mature spiritually, and to serve with passion, they will make sure their people are involved in the decisions that would impact them personally.

Watching our Lord teach and reach people is a great example of positive motivation and developing personal ownership. He spoke to the people in parables so

they could see themselves and His teachings in real life situations. He asked for their (or someone nearby) response before He healed them. He asked them questions to involve them in the conversation so it was a learning instead of a telling experience. He helped them face their objections and barriers so they could see the solutions. He gave them the proper perspective so they could do what they knew was the right thing to do, not just because He said it, but because He helped them to want to do it.

This emphasis on motivation more than administration is important because it is a church setting, not a business or institutional setting. If it were a business or institutional setting, then a small leadership group or the board could possibly make the decisions, and impose it upon the organization as a final decision. It is still not the best way, but often works that way. Operating in a church setting, however, is not the same as in any other type of organization. Because a church is participatory by nature, its people are volunteers, and they attend and serve because they want to do so. It is not a job where they are obligated to participate, but an extension of the desires of their hearts. Without the hearts of the people being on board the purposes of the church, it will surely die. And since their attendance and serving are voluntary, they want to know that the church is going and doing what they want it to do and where they want it to go. At least they want to know that they can buy-in personally to the overall mission and direction of the church. Then they will attend and serve with commitment and passion. Thus the future of the church is in the hearts of its people. When leaders ignore this dynamic, they might as well start working on the funeral plans for their church. Depending upon the agenda of the leadership of the church, their planning will either be for their future or their funeral.

The Vision Journey captures the hearts of the people like little else can because it draws out the real passion and desires of their hearts. It takes a lot of effort, however, to do that, especially if a church has become complacent in the status quo, and have resigned themselves to the current situation until they die. If that is the case, then they will be protective of what they have (or used to have), and approach church life with a sense of needing that security. If, however, people are focused on the possibilities of their future, and know that they have had a part in that planning, then they will approach church life with hope, excitement, passion, and commitment. The Vision Journey is an ideal vehicle to help churches make that transition.

At a recent Launch of a church capital campaign, for example, this author encountered a very angry gentleman in the church who felt bypassed in the planning process for the church's remodeled facilities – he was one of the oldest members and led the last church construction project many years ago. The pastor, who was the brunt of his anger, later admitted to avoiding a conversation with him which would have given this man a sense of contributing to the plans, possibly developing a sense of ownership, and may have brought him on board with the changes. Instead, he left with his anger intact, and vowed not to support the project even though he could have funded the entire project himself. He displayed the attitude of protecting the past because he had not been allowed to contribute to the vision for the future of the church. Ownership is very personal, and must be drawn out instead of being imposed from the outside.

To do this, the Vision Mentor needs to be onsite frequently both to guide and maintain the momentum of the Vision Journey. If not, the people will soon falter and revert back to their old ways. One of the distinctives of the Vision Explosion Company is

its commitment to providing frequent onsite visits from the Vision Mentor. Vision Explosion is responsive to the hearts of many pastors who feel that their churches need more guidance than what is now available.

Vision Explosion's purpose is to go far beyond the development of the church's vision – the Vision Journey helps churches go the rest of the way by mentoring them through the process of knowing how to incorporate those plans into their church's ministry efforts through “enlisted volunteers” or “Gospel troops.” This is in contrast to other Vision Development companies that limit their availability to books, seminars, phone calls, and only one or two visits for administrative leadership, if any visits are included at all. Admittedly, that would be less costly up front, but it would not get the job done like an onsite Mentor would do it. The Mentor keeps the process moving forward, on target, and on schedule. This philosophy of the Mentor being onsite is seen in the company's distinctives, as found in their promotional materials, and includes:

Interactive Onsite Mentoring

- **Onsite Vision Mentor** – We utilize the extensive onsite guidance of a Vision Mentor. We don't just tell you what to do, we mentor you in doing it. Our Mentors go beyond the role of a Consultant or Coach – we purposefully provide an example, samples, and training for the Vision Journey Coaches as they fulfill their leadership roles.
- **Onsite Feedback** – We provide direct, immediate, and onsite feedback and input from the Vision Mentor to the Journey Coaches and church leadership. The relationship is very interactive. This personal touch goes far beyond a seminar or phone conversation format. Words do not tell the whole story – much of our communication with each other comes from body language and follow-up questions.
- **Integrity and Accountability** – Our Vision Mentor being onsite frequently will bring integrity to the Vision Journey process by giving overall guidance and training, providing appropriate accountability, and making course corrections as needed.

- **Long-Term Support** – We make continuing support and accountability for the long-term available to the church that your success may continue to expand.

Dynamic Vision Focus

- **A Proven Process** – We take a big load off the shoulders of the church leadership by providing a proven process and onsite guidance that will make their Vision Journey an ongoing success. The church leaders do not need to reinvent the process in determining how to implement their dreams.
- **Customized Approach** – We customize the approach according to the needs and circumstances of each church. This process is much more effective than the generalized approach available through seminars and phone calls. The Vision Mentor will discover the unique setting and circumstances of each local church, and will guide their Vision Journey accordingly.
- **Experience and Objectivity** – The Vision Mentor brings both experience and objectivity to the church. The background of the Vision Mentors is vocational ministry and church consulting in a variety of church traditions. This outside objectivity is crucial for the church to move beyond its current circumstances. In addition, Vision Explosion expects the church to receive its primary direction from the Vision Mentor, not from leaders of other churches who are also seeking answers and guidance.

Energized Ministry Involvement

- **Extensive Congregational Involvement** – We work with both the church leaders and the entire congregation to seek direct input and suggestions for their church's future. Our process is designed to enlist and involve the congregation without violating the authority and role of the church leadership. We know that people will support their own ideas better than someone else's ideas, so the early involvement of the congregation in their church's future is a key component for their feelings of ownership. And this ownership is necessary to staff the ministries that are developed to support the church's vision.
- **Ministry As A Mandate** – We provide a proven format to involve a significant number of the congregation in staffing and fulfilling the church's ministries. People need to catch their church's vision personally before they will support it fully. We guide the church in knowing how to identify, enlist, engage, train, and deploy the "Gospel Troops" in those ministry settings. Pastors have long struggled with how to implement their plans for ministry in a way that incorporates extensive congregational support – this proven process gives them the tools to do so.

- **Format to Maintain Enthusiasm** – We have drafted a process to maintain the support and enthusiasm of the congregation over the long term as they fulfill their ministries. We also build frequent training sessions into the Vision Focusing process, because people will serve better when they are properly trained!

The Vision Journey can be described as a movement, and a movement needs qualified and trained leaders to keep it on the proper course. Delays and diversions are common destroyers of a movement, which is why the church benefits so much from having a Vision Mentor onsite as much as possible. Without those onsite visits, the Vision Journey would revert to an administrative format, and soon die for lack of a motivated leader. The Vision Mentor can keep the process moving forward because of the accountability built within the process. It will especially help the church to complete the process when the natural tendency would be for it to falter after a good start, as so many other good ideas die the same death in far too many churches.

The requirements for a Vision Mentor reflect a high bar, and only a few of the best with special gifts and skills will qualify. They are listed in the company's Core Values, and reflect the company's commitment to provide churches with a Vision Mentor of the highest caliber. At first, the Vision Mentors will be drawn from the current consulting staff of TLC Ministries, who have already been chosen in light of those high standards. It is expected, however, that additional Vision Mentors will be needed once the Vision Journey experiences a greater demand for its services. Select men from the current consulting staff will be cross-trained to serve in either capacity as a Stewardship Consultant or a Vision Mentor.

The Vision Mentor will partner with churches to give diligent and professional leadership to each church's Vision Journey in a way that is consistent with and supportive

of each church's identity, mission, and objectives. Each Vision Mentor will have proven credentials in prior ministerial settings, and is carefully chosen and trained to be:

- Experienced in ministry and local church leadership
- Experienced and knowledgeable in leading the Vision Journey in local churches
- Possessive of leadership abilities and style that create confidence and comfort
- Competent to adapt the Vision Journey to the unique nature of each church
- Above question in integrity, character, and commitment
- Able to relate well with people, establishing warm and friendly lines of communication
- Both a listener and a leader, with experience, wisdom, common sense, and foresight

Ministers are commissioned to function within the scope of their Ministerial Mandate, which is defined as being ambassadors for our Lord, with the specific assignment to bring about change in the lives of people as the result of an encounter with Christ. The Ministerial Mandate is the charge to help people address various issues in their lives, and to effectuate change as they apply Scriptural truths to the specifics of their lives. Far too many pastors have succumbed to the style of ministry where they lay out the options, and then let people consider those options on their own without any Scriptural injunction. If people are given an option on stewardship, for example, most will take the easy way out and not deal with the real issues of the heart.

The Vision Mentor is a Christian minister first before he is a Consultant / Mentor. As such, he is to use the Ministerial Mandate as his mantle of authority and responsibility. In II Corinthians 5:16 through 6:10, Paul uses himself as an example to identify the assignment of the Christian minister as being an ambassador for Christ in this

world, carrying God's message of repentance, reconciliation, redemption, renewal, and responsible love to all people. As such, it is the Minister's Mandate:

- To represent God accurately to all people as revealed in His Word;
- To resolve all issues personally so the beliefs and behavior of the minister are consistent with and representative of Scriptural truths;
- To provide themselves and their lifestyles as visible examples of God's grace for the human condition;
- To be an encouragement to others on their journey towards God; and
- To effectuate change in people in their response to God.

In addition to the Vision Mentor, the Vision Journey depends upon Journey Coaches who are willing to set the proper example in their commitment to defining and developing the church's mission and vision, in the willingness to consider God's Kingdom agenda over their own in aligning the church's ministries around its mission, in the church's disciple making efforts so disciples are matured in their faith while serving in significant ministry experiences, and in mobilizing the church people as dynamic disciples who are fulfilling the church's mission and vision with passion. To be effective, the church needs its leaders to be an example of total support for its Vision Journey. They are counting on the leaders, for they assume that what they do is right. They will take their cue from the leaders for the extent of their own support.

Be assured, they will need more than words, and more than administrative leadership. They will need the active example of the leaders in three major areas: 1) in their attitudes, 2) in their dedication to their tasks, and 3) in their willingness to support the principles and values of this Journey. The pattern they set in all three areas will be a

definite encouragement to others for them to become involved, and to serve with commitment and excellence.

This type of leadership creates both vulnerability and realness. When the leaders are willing to become examples, they will resolve issues so there are no embarrassing secrets to hide, no double standards, no hidden agendas, and no subversive motives. When the leaders become people of truth and genuine character, others will take hope and rise to their full potential. The masks and surface relationships will need to be discarded in order for God to be glorified, and for His Kingdom to advance in each church. Then the church will be able to accomplish its mission!

A Vision Mentor is more than a Church Consultant, and more than an administrator. The Vision Mentor is a minister who is able to draw people into the presence of Christ so they can draw the deep things out of their hearts that will impact the future of their churches. The Vision Mentor functions under the mantle of the Ministerial Mandate, and becomes a model of the Vision Journey itself so the church leaders can see a real live Vision Journey in action. The Vision Mentor is able to guide the Vision Journey process so the local church can define its Mission Mandate, develop its Focused Vision, and thus reinvent itself to become the church that both God and the people envision. The Vision Mentor is Christ's ambassador, and speaks on behalf of God to bring about change in the lives of people. The Vision Mentor's task is a high and holy one, so the Vision Mentor must himself be of a high and holy caliber. Only this way can the Vision Mentor be a part of preparing and presenting the church to Christ as His bride.

Paul's charge to the young pastor, Timothy, is one for Vision Mentors, and indeed all ministers, to take to heart. It combines the concepts of purposeful Example Leadership

with the Ministerial Mandate, and places them in the context of Godlessness in the last days. What better word for ministers, whether they be pastors, teachers of pastors, other ministers, Consultants, or Mentors, to emblazon upon our own hearts? May this charge guide us through the challenges and opportunities presented to us as we embrace our own personal mission and vision challenges, as well as when we lead the churches as they face theirs. May Paul's words found in II Timothy 3:10-11, 14-17, and 4:1-2 be foremost on our minds and quick in our hearts that we may be found as faithful ambassadors of our Lord, and may we accept this charge as our own,

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings ... the persecutions I endured ... 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.

CHAPTER 6

MARKETING OF THE VISION EXPLOSION COMPANY

Businesses need money to operate and to produce a profit for the owners, and those funds come primarily through the sale of products and services offered by the business. Some businesses, however, receive a substantial portion of their income from investments and/or government subsidies, but that is not the case with the Vision Explosion Company. While some businesses can survive by simply opening their doors and watching the customers flow in, sales are not that automatic in most businesses – the marketing and eventual sale of their products and services is absolutely necessary as the primary vehicle that produces stability and a profit for them. In that vein, the Vision Explosion Company must depend upon extensive marketing efforts to enlighten the church world of its services because there are no walk-in customers, the church world does not know about the company or its services yet, and the pastors are not aware that this type of consulting even exists. The sales aspect enters the picture when the marketing produces some type of interested response by the pastors for the services offered.

Since marketing is a major key to the financial success of most businesses, including the Vision Explosion Company, the various options and opportunities available

(both paid and free) will be identified and discussed as to their potential effectiveness, and, where appropriate, their relative cost. This will involve identifying the target audience for this ministry, when and how would be the best way to present this service to them at a time and in a way that they would respond positively to it, and the type of approach that would be most productive in the marketing and sales process. In addition, special attention will be given to starting this ministry in an economic downturn.

A. CATEGORY, TARGET MARKET, and BRANDING

One of the major challenges of the Vision Explosion Company will be to develop the market for this ministry since no consulting category is already identified that would directly encompass the purposes of the Vision Journey. To place it in either the visioning or discipleship areas would not do this concept justice, and would create an incomplete perception of its offerings. The marketing, then, would involve creating the awareness of the need for this type of consulting service in such a powerful way that church leaders will look for someone to help them, would establish this category of consulting as valid, and will position the Vision Explosion Company as the chosen source to help church leaders accomplish their ministry objectives through the combined efforts of vision and discipleship development. It is also intended to brand the Vision Explosion Company as the country's premier vision and discipleship development company. Thus, before any meaningful discussion can take place in the specifics of marketing, the consulting category for the Vision Journey must be created and developed.

Many have started businesses in the secular world under similar conditions, but it is admittedly tough. For example, this author is encouraged by the tenacity of Fred Bear,

the father of modern archery, who faced many of these same challenges when starting a company during the height of the great depression. He and a friend first started the Bear Products Company in 1933. Although it was a printing company, he also made bows in the corner of his print shop for his friends. After six years, the archery business grew to the point it could sustain itself full time, and in 1939, Fred Bear started the Bear Archery Company. The Bass Pro company, which bought his museum, records his story on their website of how he expanded the market for his bows, and describes him as a man who was dedicated to his ultimate purpose of making bows for the general public.¹ It is fortunate that such a good bow maker was also such a good shot with a bow, as is recorded about him on that same website,

To make a living building bows, Bear first had to expand the market for his products. He was instrumental in promoting a bowhunting season in Michigan (1936). He also tackled target archery, winning Michigan's state championship in 1934, 1937 and 1939. In those days, Bear traveled the sports show circuit, demonstrating his instinctive shooting skills at exhibitions in major urban areas.²

There are many circumstantial similarities between starting the Fred Bear Company and starting the Vision Explosion Company:

- Both were started in a major national economic downturn;
- Both were started under the business umbrella of another company;
- Both were started with the primary efforts of a single person; and
- Both were started when no appropriate market was recognized for its products and/or services, and both had to create such a market.

¹ Bass Pro Website, Outdoor Site Library. "Fred Bear Museum." Online Resource. <http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/CFPageC?storeId=10151&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&&mode=article&objectID=29996&catID=&subcatID=0> (accessed December 15, 2009).

² Ibid.

While the Vision Explosion Company cannot do anything about the economy nor the fear that is so prevalent among church leaders, it appears that the company will have to develop and expand the market for its Vision Journey consulting services, as Fred Bear did for his company. Hopefully, it will not take as long as it took Bear before the company becomes self-sustaining. Since no category already exists for this type of service, that also means the company must create an appropriate venue for it, and differentiate this type of consulting service from all other types of consulting services available to churches.

This author suggests that this new category of church consulting be defined as “Visionary Discipleship Mentors” to set it apart from the various other types of church consulting, as well as being descriptive of its objectives. Visionary Discipleship Mentors picks up on three of the essential elements of the Vision Explosion Company: 1) mission and vision development; 2) deliberate disciple making while the disciples are serving in the trenches of significant ministry experiences; and 3) the mentoring type of consulting that is done by the consultant. Since the category is being defined by the company, it is also expected that the Vision Explosion Company will become synonymous with Visionary Discipleship Mentors, which should translate into a significant portion of the market share for churches looking for this type of consulting.

The target audience for the Vision Explosion Company for their first Vision Journey includes churches that are in the Adult to Maturity stages of their Church Life Cycle, as defined in Chapter 4 – Methods and Materials of the Vision Journey. This Vision Journey will bring the most benefit to those churches that want to reinvent

themselves and refine their Focused Vision in their current context so they maintain their upward trajectory in effectiveness for fulfilling their church's Mission Mandate. It is expected that the church leaders in these Life Cycle stages will be the most open to considering the need for reinventing themselves through the Vision Journey when they see signs of plateauing and complacency in their own churches. The Vision Journey is also ideally suited for new churches that want to establish their church's future and ministry efforts on a solid mission and vision foundation. Churches that want to consider repeating the Vision Journey to keep themselves on that upward trajectory are encouraged to do so every five to ten years.

Since this type of consulting directly involves the direction and quality of the church's ministry, the primary contact point with each church must be the church's Senior Pastor. It is expected that if the Senior Pastor is not the initial one to embrace the Vision Journey and to bring it to his church leaders as his recommendation, then the Senior Pastor would feel threatened if someone else brought it to him and/or to the other leaders. If the experience of this author in the context of leading church capital campaigns has any value, it appears that the biggest challenge to marketing the Vision Journey will be the ego of the Senior Pastors who display the attitude of a child in saying, "I do not want any help, I will just do it all by myself." So the ideal target audience of any marketing efforts must be the Senior Pastors of churches before they enter the Retiring and Dying stages of their respective Church Life Cycles. Pastors of start-up churches, who want to lay a purposeful foundation for their new ministry, as well as to develop a sense of ownership among their people, are also included in that ideal target audience.

In addition to having the right target audience, those Senior Pastors must also be in a receptive mood in order to receive those marketing efforts in a positive way. Finding that target group when they are in a receptive mood is one of the major challenges of any marketing strategy. For example, the best venue for the marketing of TLC Ministries is to have a display booth set up at church building and construction conferences, because that is an ideal setting for face-to-face contact with the Senior Pastors and/or business administrators of churches that are planning to build, and are looking for ways to raise the funds to do so. Other conferences, however, that focus on various ministerial-oriented items, like preaching conferences, have been found to have only a minimal response from those same pastors – their minds are on preaching not problems, which, for many, would include funding for their facilities.

The church building and construction conference venue, however, is not a good setting for the Vision Explosion Company. While the right target audience would be those pastors at those building conferences, they are focused on construction and funding issues, not on church growth issues. To be effective in reaching them when they are in the right mood to hear about the Vision Journey, these same pastors would need to be in a different context where they would be looking for church growth answers. The best receptive setting for the Vision Explosion Company is when Senior Pastors are struggling with the growth, vision, disciple making, and focusing issues of their churches, and are looking for answers for these problems.

Another one of the first things to consider in any type of marketing venture is the branding of the company, or a particular product or service provided by the company. In this instance, three items will need to be branded in order to produce results from the

company's marketing efforts: the category (Visionary Discipleship Mentors), the company, and the service (Vision Journey). The InfoGroup identifies branding as,

Branding is a pretty simple process. Think about it this way – even if a potential customer isn't currently in need of the product or service you're peddling right now, seeing your company name on a consistent basis is going to make them much more likely to buy when they are ready. Read my lips: "Get your name out there." You'll not only be generating increased revenue, you'll be building a good relationship with your customers, and encouraging brand loyalty.³

Mahesh Murthy emphasizes the importance of branding in internet marketing, which would also apply to all types of marketing, when he comments,

One thing I learned from my days in traditional advertising is that a brand doesn't exist on shelves—it exists in the hearts and minds of people. Your brand is the sum total of perceptions about your product in the heads of your relevant audience.

If that's true, then online media are the most important place for your brand image to be established, defended and grown. This is where your offering comes face-to-face with your audience and where its responses can be measured, shaped and – if need be – countered in real time. This is where perceptions can be built, person by person.

This brand building is more effective than the mode we've employed until now: TV commercials with 30 seconds of well-produced fiction that try to sell a brand image. It is more credible and much less expensive. In fact, it can cost you nothing, if you have the knack and can do it right. Not too many TV campaigns can match that.

Zero-budget advertising is a phrase no traditional advertising firm wants to hear. The old ad business is predicated on your spending lots of money buying space and time in media vehicles such as this one. But if you look at recent times, it's a model that is dying.

Today, the best way to establish your brand among big-hitter rivals is to make it remark-worthy and generate conversations free of charge. The new axiom, call it

³ InfoGroup, "Deliver the One-Two Punch: Email and Direct Mail," White Paper, Online Resource. September 26, 2009. <http://infogroup.com/index.php/article-library/email-marketing/393-deliver-the-one-two-punch-email-and-direct-mail-> (accessed April 9, 2010).

Mahesh's Law, is this: your marketing IQ is inversely proportional to your marketing budget.

Start on your brand by answering a simple question: Are you remark-worthy? When someone talks about your offering, is there a 10-second sound bite that is "re-tweetable" on Twitter? If not, go back to basics and craft a simple, clear hook that that sets you apart.⁴

The Vision Explosion Company purposefully will brand itself in the Visionary Discipleship Mentoring field, and take pains to establish and protect its reputation. Harry Beckwith sums up the branding issue by describing its most important element – its heart, when he reminds business owners about the heart of their brand,

When a prospect agrees to use a typical service, what does he own? Nothing but someone's promise that they will do something. The most desirable services, then, are those that keep their promises.

This also means that the heart of a service brand – the element without which the brand cannot live – is the integrity of the company and its employees. The value of any brand rises or falls with each demonstration of the company's integrity. The balance is fragile: every slip can be costly.

A service can be faster, cheaper, better, and still fail if it does not win the confidence of people that it will keep its promises and tell the truth. The heart of a service brand is not artful packaging, slick advertising, or the company name emblazoned on everything from sweatshirts to keychains. The heart of a service brand, and a key to a service's long-term success, is the integrity of the people behind it.⁵

⁴ Mahesh Murthy, "Establish Brand Image in Online Media," Online Resource. February 22, 2010. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703791504575070151291532366.HTML> (accessed March 29, 2010).

⁵ Harry Beckwith, *Selling the Invisible: A Field Guide to Modern Marketing*, New York: Warner Books, 1997. 154-155.

B. MARKETING

There are several areas of marketing that will determine how the company will expand the market for this type of service. The marketing itself will need to focus both on establishing the need for this new category (Visionary Discipleship Mentors), as well as identifying the Vision Explosion Company as the ideal consulting firm to lead churches through this process. It is expected that Senior Pastors who are struggling with the growth, vision, disciple making, and focusing issues of their churches will usually look for those answers in five major venues:

- Credibility marketing, including books on related topics, related articles in periodicals, and online white pages;
- Enticement marketing, including advertisements in the print media, mailings, promotional materials, and the company's website;
- Internet marketing, including websites for pastors, online web searches, email newsletters, and online magazines;
- Conferences that focus on church growth and pastoral enrichment topics; and
- Ministerial seminars on church growth.

Thus the marketing for the Vision Explosion Company will be concentrated in these five areas, as it is appropriate to do so, with the type of marketing being dependent upon the venue used.

Harry Beckwith addresses the issue of how marketing has changed in this new economy, and focuses on the change necessary in the marketer's thinking to accommodate that change in conditions. In essence, he describes the new thinking as being service oriented more than product oriented. He says,

So marketers in this new economy must think like service marketers.

These new marketers focus more on relationships and less on features and benefits; they focus more on reality – and getting “better reality” – while recognizing the powerful influence of perceptions; they are learning more about the seemingly irrational ways in which people think and act; they recognize the huge influence of tiny things; they understand the near impossibility of being heard, and the growing difficulty of being understood, in our busy and over-communicated society. Perhaps more than anything else, these marketers recognize that in our increasingly complex world, nothing works more powerfully than simplicity.⁶

1. Credibility Marketing

There is something about written materials that makes a statement, proposal, or selling point believable. While this is not always the case, and many deceptions are in written form, still the perception is that if something is written down, then it is more credible, and is accompanied with a sense of accountability, both legal and otherwise. While many have learned how to foster a lifestyle of deception and regularly write things to scam others into buying what they are selling, it is usually a lot easier to tell a lie than it is to write a lie. In addition, things that are written are usually perceived to be more researched, thought through, and factual than off the cuff remarks. People instinctively know that salespeople and politicians can wiggle out of something they say quicker than something they write.

Because of this perception of credibility, and the fact that it is much easier to hold people responsible for what they have written than it is for what they say, others will believe a written article before they will put their faith in a verbal sales pitch or a casual remark. In nearly every sales presentation for TLC Ministries, this author has been asked to verify the company’s exceptionally high track record with actual written figures, which

⁶ Ibid., xx.

are immediately provided. Written materials are also used as future reference points to help people understand what was actually communicated.

The Vision Explosion Company will use different types of written materials to attract the attention of its target market, Senior Pastors, and to give credibility to what it does. These, for example, would include such items as news releases (for the initial launch of the Vision Explosion Company) in various magazines which are normally read by Senior Pastors. Also, articles will be submitted for publication to these magazines to establish the credibility of this author. In addition, white pages will be written on various Visionary Discipleship Mentoring topics and posted to the company's website. These will help establish the credibility of the author as being an authority on the subject. Mahesh Murthy affirms this as he states bluntly "Are you seen as the one to talk to in your industry? What will make it so? Issue white papers or surveys, or give out fun statistics. Do the things regularly that give you thought leadership in your niche."⁷

These items normally do not carry any cost factors for the authors of these articles, and the authors are seldom reimbursed for them. It is a win-win situation where the magazines, etc., have credible articles to offer from experts in the field, and the authors receive a broader base of credibility from which to operate.

It is also anticipated that some books on the Visionary Discipleship Mentoring theme will be forthcoming by this author, as well as a manual for the Vision Journey for the smaller churches. This author also has intentions of writing some additional materials for pastors and ministerial students about the Ministerial Mandate and Example Leadership (identified in Chapter 5 – Mentors for the Vision Journey), as well as books

⁷ Ibid.

for Senior Pastors as they face the age-old problem of motivating their people to fulfill the Great Commission and Great Commandments as were given by our Lord. Books have a way of establishing credibility for the author, and a Consultant/Mentor needs all the credibility he can get in order to entice Senior Pastors to seek out his services. These books will require an initial investment by this author because there is no track record as a reference point for publishing houses to consider any type of advance payment. It is anticipated, however, that the return from the sales of these books will more than cover the cost for publishing them.

The Scriptures use the credibility factor to underscore the importance of what is being said, and by whom it is being said. Moses, for example, asked God why the people should believe him when he went to the Israelites to lead them out of captivity in Egypt, and why the Egyptians should let them go. God answered his questions in Exodus chapters three and four in various ways, both verbal and visual. Then the 10 plagues were given to bring credibility to the authority of God to bring His people out of slavery – that He would be the one to control the future of His people rather than the Egyptians. Several of the prophets also used many miracles to verify that they spoke on behalf of God.

In the New Testament, our Lord often used the phrases, “It is written...” and “You have heard it said...” to bring credibility to His teachings. In the early days of our Lord’s ministry, His baptism by John the Baptist, the dove, and the accompanying voice from heaven were all given to establish His credibility as the Son of God. Our Lord used miracles that clearly established the power of God, and gave Him the credibility to speak on behalf of God – the people saw the connection, and could not deny it. As Jesus Himself said in John 14:11, “Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father

is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.” And Peter also used the miracles of our Lord to bring validation to His message, as he said in Acts 2:22, “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.”

John sums up his purpose for writing his version of the Gospel in 20:30-31, “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” And in 21:24, he goes so far as to say, “This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.” Peter and Paul also used Old Testament references and miracles to verify their teachings.

Matthew frequently used the Old Testament Scriptures in writing his version of the Gospel so those familiar with those writings would have reason to believe him, as did the writer for the book of Hebrews. The Scriptures are plain – credibility is essential for the Gospel message to be believed and embraced. While the Vision Mentor will not be expected to do miracles to validate his credibility, he will need to be able to speak from a position of authority in order for the Senior Pastors to believe that he can bring value to their churches. That credibility will be a combination of the written materials that bring wisdom, insight, and direction to his verbal communications, the personal qualities of leadership, mentoring, prior ministerial success, and integrity which he brings to the church, as well as the track record he develops as a Vision Mentor by leading the Vision Journey in various churches.

When credibility is claimed without collaboration, it is usually questioned and treated with suspicion. But when other factors verify the credibility of the one who speaks or writes, that person is much more believable. It takes that kind of credibility to be a respected church consultant that is sought after for his wisdom and guidance. That is the objective for the credibility type of marketing that will be used by the Vision Explosion Company.

2. Enticement Marketing

The enticement marketing venues have been designed to provide some overview information about the Vision Explosion Company and the Vision Journey process with the purpose of enticing Senior Pastors to request more information. This is usually the first step by the Senior Pastor to start a conversation with a Vision Explosion Company representative, which will hopefully lead to the company leading a Vision Journey in the Senior Pastor's church. This marketing venue will include advertisements in the print media, mailings, promotional materials, and the company's website. Other online types of marketing will be discussed separately.

The print promotional materials were developed first, and the rest of the materials were based on them. The large tri-fold multi-colored brochure is the primary printed piece for the Vision Explosion Company. It has six panels, each 9" by 12" in size, with graphics and text on each panel, and folded twice to form a finished 9" by 12" tri-fold. It will be sent out as requests for information are received. The text for this tri-fold is included in Appendix B.

A smaller quad-fold flyer will be the primary hand out piece at conventions. It will fit in a #10 envelope, or a pocket, so it can be carried easily, and contains an abbreviated version of the text as is found in the large tri-fold. This quad-fold has a total of eight panels of 4" by 8.5" and is folded three times to form a finished 4" by 8.5" size. It is also a multi-colored flyer, with graphics and text included on each panel. The text for this quad-fold is included in Appendix C.

In addition to the tri-fold and the quad-fold, the normal array of business cards, stationary, and envelopes for these items have been produced. They were all designed by a graphic artist (with significant input by the Vision Explosion Company officers) to maintain a consistent marketing theme, with the text written by this author. The same graphic artist also designed the company's website. This material was developed in anticipation of Senior Pastors requesting information, thus it is expected that the enticement marketing will translate into the response of those Senior Pastors.

In addition to the promotional materials, print advertisements will be developed and submitted to some of the magazines which are normally read by Senior Pastors as they search for solutions for their church growth concerns. These will all provide an invitation and an avenue for Senior Pastors to request more information. Past experience with TLC Ministries indicates that the response rate for print advertisements is not cost effective, is very difficult to track, and is seen more as a branding campaign than an enticement effort. Thus, some print advertisements will be used, but in a limited fashion, and often would accompany articles written to be included in those same periodicals.

The broadcast type of direct mail is another type of enticement marketing because it gives the Senior Pastors something to hold in their hands. While there are many

different types of direct mail pieces, a postcard mailing would be the initial contact mailer, with a letter accompanied by the flyer as another (or follow-up to the first postcard) possibility. The postcard format is chosen because it does not need to be opened – it only needs to be flipped over. Regardless of the type of mailer, the InfoGroup (www.infogroup.com) has put out a marketing white paper entitled Anatomy of a Good Direct Mail Campaign, in which they list several essential ingredients of a successful direct mail campaign:

- A targeted mailing list. Your mailing list is the #1 factor in the success of any direct mail campaign. If your target audience is wrong, even the best of pieces will receive little to no response.
- A simple message. You only have a few seconds to get your customers' attention — do it with a simple, powerful message that clearly explains what you're selling and the benefits. Use potent words that paint a vivid picture.
- A compelling offer. Offers come in all shapes and sizes – a discount, a free trial, promotional items, or coupons. According to a DM News/Pitney Bowes survey on direct mail, as many as 94% of consumers say they took action on promotional offers and coupons received in the mail.
- A clear call to action. Make it easy to do business with you. Lay out exactly what you want the recipients to do – do you want them to call you, visit your website, fill out an enclosed response form, or send you an email? Design the call to action so it's clear and easy to follow.
- A follow-up mailing. In today's busy world, your prospects will miss your message 2 out of every 3 times. So repetition is crucial – the more they see your message, the likelier they are to buy. For the highest response rates, mail three to four times. At the very least, follow up your initial mailing with a phone call, an email, or a second mailer within two weeks.
- A bonus ingredient – testing, testing, and more testing. Many variables can affect the response to a mailing – the list, the offer, the price, etc. Try mailing only a few hundred or thousand pieces to refine these variables before rolling out a big mailing. This will help you prevent major, costly mistakes.⁸

⁸ InfoGroup, "White paper: Anatomy of a Successful Direct Mail Campaign," www.infogroup.com. May not be available without payment. (accessed April 3, 2010).

In a phone conversation on March 25, 2010, Joan Matosic, a Premier Accounts Manager for American Church Lists, a division of the InfoGroup Company, recommended these additional guidelines:

- 5.5” X 8.5” medium sized postcards are best. 4” X 6” postcards are too small, and the print is too small to read without a magnifying glass.
- Change the design with each mailing.
- The postcard rate of return is hard to track, because some will keep them a year before making contact. The rate of return varies, and is higher for immediate action items than for branding purposes. The normal rate of return is usually about 1% for branding mailers, and in the 1-2% range for immediate action items.
- Use different codes to track demographics of when the postcard was sent, to whom (denomination or other group), the size range, the geographic locations, mailing date, etc. Be sure to ask for the code when they contact the company.
- For email advertising, unless the email list targets the specific individual, it is essentially wasted money because it will not be forwarded to the right person, unlike a postcard which may be passed to another staff person.⁹

To accomplish the follow-up suggestions earlier, it is expected that a series of postcard mailings will be developed for this purpose. The postcards will be different from each other, and sent out periodically, but the same series of postcards may be sent to different church groups at different times. These postcards are intended to attract the attention of Senior Pastors, and elicit their response. Each postcard will have a catchy and colorful cartoon related to the Visionary Discipleship Mentoring theme, along with a brief statement relative to what the Vision Journey can accomplish in their churches. Various marketing companies keep lists of churches and their Senior Pastors, and will use

⁹ Joan Matosic. American Church Lists. Phone Conversation. March 25, 2010.

their marketing capabilities to produce mailings to targeted groups of churches. American Church Lists, a part of the InfoGroup Company, is one such company with which this author has purchased lists over the past several years for those churches that are contemplating construction. It would be one of the options to be considered for their mailing list and services for the broadcast mailing of this postcard series.

The Vision Explosion Company's website at www.vision-explosion.com was designed to be both informative and encouraging of Senior Pastors to request more information. It is colorful and easy to navigate (there is no place on the website that is more than one click away from any other place on the website), and contains much of the same information as the large tri-fold brochure. There is also a response page to request more information. Eventually, it will include a place for white papers, as well as an opportunity for Senior Pastors to complete the Church Life Cycle Survey to determine their church's general Life Cycle stage. The text for the website is found in Appendix D.

3. Internet Marketing

"The times, they are a-changing" is as true in today's society as at any time in history, and perhaps even more so with the rapid multiplication of knowledge and the proliferation of the electronic ways to access it. The internet has become a big part of American life in today's culture, including the concept of internet marketing. Aaron Schoenberger of The Brainchild Group, remembers the recent old days in his article "Ad Agencies Revamp Business Models for Internet Marketing" as a reflection on how much and how quickly the times have changed,

Many of top ad agencies have focused on television commercials, print ads and other costly mediums in the past, and are now recognizing the power of the internet. When I created internet marketing proposals for Fortune 500 companies 4-6 years ago, I was laughed at by most. But, as it turns out, the same suggestions are now being utilized by Marketing Directors of renowned businesses around the world. The times have changed and marketing via the internet is here to stay.¹⁰

While not a scholarly reference, Wikipedia, the consumer-driven online encyclopedia, seems to accurately describe and summarize internet marketing for the purpose of this thesis as,

Internet marketing, also referred to as i-marketing, web-marketing, online-marketing, Search Engine Marketing (SEM) or e-Marketing, is the marketing of products or services over the Internet.

The Internet has brought media to a global audience. The interactive nature of Internet marketing in terms of providing instant response and eliciting responses, is a unique quality of the medium. Internet marketing is sometimes considered to have a broader scope because it not only refers to the Internet, e-mail, and wireless media, but it includes management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management (ECRM) systems.

Internet marketing ties together creative and technical aspects of the Internet, including: design, development, advertising, and sales.¹¹

While some pastors are travelling slowly along this electronic highway, many, if not most, are so familiar with it that they embrace its potential personally, as well as use it for their ministry efforts. This is true especially of those who want to reach the younger generations – it takes up-to-date leaders to reach the up-to-date generations. Since many, if not most, of these same pastors will search the internet for sources to help in their

¹⁰ Aaron Schoenberger, The Brainchild Group, “Ad Agencies Revamp Business Models for Internet Marketing,” Online Resource. March 17, 2010. <http://www.thebrainchildgroup.com/blog/2010/03/advertising-agencies-changing-business/> (accessed April 8, 2010).

¹¹ Wikipedia, Online Resource, “Definition: Internet Marketing,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_marketing (accessed April 8, 2010).

ministry efforts, or research those companies in which they are interested, it becomes imperative that the Vision Explosion Company has a viable marketing presence on the internet. While this was not as crucial 10 years ago, it has become standard operating procedure for today's pastors that are in step with the times. Regarding any business, Emerson Quinn simply states, "Just about every business enterprise, whether primarily online or local and mostly offline, would need to have a quality Internet presence. As a consequence of that need, a secondary need emerges – that of website promotion and Internet Marketing."¹²

Since today's marketplace demands that if the company wants to be found by those who search for the Visionary Discipleship Mentoring type of consulting, and to be taken seriously by those who find the Vision Explosion Company, the question is not "if" the Vision Explosion Company should have an online presence – that question has already been answered in the affirmative. The questions, however, center on what type of marketing presence would best reach the company's target market of Senior Pastors, what would be most beneficial in creating interest in the Vision Journey, what would be the most cost effective type of marketing, and what would bring the greatest return on the company's investment (ROI). It would appear that marketing on websites designed for pastors, especially those that deal with church growth issues, facilitating online web searches, drafting online email newsletters, and marketing in online magazines would best serve to answer those questions, especially in the early stages of the company. Other venues may be considered at a later time, including the possibility of marketing to a "fan" base by way of the white papers in the social media arena.

¹² Emerson Quinn, "Website Promotion – Are They Typically Similar Or Are They Different?" Online Resource. March 22, 2010. <http://www.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474978122312> (accessed March 29, 2010).

Online Websites for Senior Pastors

There are many websites and search engines to which pastors can go to find resources for their various ministry endeavors, and all support these sites with advertising. But internet marketing is not a simple matter. Banner ads, buttons, and logos are standard advertising fare. In addition, and some have advertising blocks which they sell, and some have a “mini-article” type of advertising. A few of these sites have lists of vendors who advertise with them, which are divided into various categories that would relate to the type of services available.

This author’s experience with TLC Ministries has been best with the lists of categories type of advertising, primarily because the church capital campaign market is very well defined, and pastors would intuitively know where to find such a company. The Vision Explosion Company would seek to be included in such lists under the categories of visioning and disciple making. They would also request the development of the new category of visionary discipleship mentors. It is expected, however, that these lists will not produce the necessary results since both the company and the category are still unknown. Thus, the banner, button, logo, block, and mini-article type of advertising will all be researched for effectiveness and cost efficiency, and considered as a part of the company’s overall advertising strategy. The advertising slogans developed for a particular advertising campaign will largely determine the type of internet advertising used at any one time.

There are many concepts in internet marketing that can be confusing to the casual observer, especially the distinction between Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM). Diana Ransom of Smart Money’s Small Business

Suite, describes in her article entitled “Quick Tips: 7 Ways to Make Pay-Per-Click Pay” the difference between the two concepts,

SEO stands for search engine optimization, a process that seeks to boost a site’s traffic by helping it rise within a search engine’s organic, or un-paid, search results. It is often seen as the Holy Grail for Internet marketers, as people tend to click those links over their paid counterparts. However, the conversion rate – that is, the number of shoppers that turn from browsers to buyers – tends to be lower in organic search listings.

Search engine marketing (SEM), popularly referred to as pay-per-click, on the other hand, is a form of Internet marketing that promotes websites on search engine result pages through paid placement (in search engines, these links appear on the right side of the screen or they’re highlighted at the top of organic search results.) The conversion rate from these paid links is 2.03% versus 1.26% from organic links, according a 2009 study from Engine Ready, an Internet marketing company in San Diego. What’s more, those clicking over from sponsored links also tend to spend more. According to the study, those who clicked through a paid link spent on average \$11 more, or \$117.06 versus \$106.64, than those who traveled to sites via un-paid links.

The reason for the differential: Conversion rates tend to improve as shoppers progress through the buying cycle, says Alhan Keser, an SEM specialist at Blue Fountain Media, a boutique website development and online marketing firm in New York. Although search engine users typically troll organic results to conduct online research, they start favoring sponsored links when they’re ready to buy, he says. “Most people who click on ads are ready to be sold to; they are at the buying stage,” Keser says.

Still, SEM can be expensive – especially for resource-strapped small businesses. Business owners normally set the price they’re willing to pay for keywords – the words or phrases that Internet users type into search engines – which may be purchased daily from search engines like Google’s Adwords, Yahoo! Search Marketing and Microsoft adCenter. However, broader keywords and phrases are often pricier. Also, setting up an SEM campaign usually costs more initially, as marketers or owners may wind up choosing keywords that don’t pan out.¹³

¹³ Diana Ransom, Smart Money’s Small Business Suite, “Quick Tips: 7 Ways to Make Pay-Per-Click Pay,” Online Resource. March 2, 2010.
http://www.smsmallbiz.com/marketing/Quick_Tips_7_Ways_To_Make_Pay_Per_Click_Payoff.html
(accessed March 29, 2010).

In conjunction with these advertising venues, and often an integral part of them, is how the payment is handled for these ads. The various payment options for direct internet advertising would often include one or more of the following:

- Some will have specified fees with the placement of these ads, with different fees for different positions on the page, but it is the same price regardless of the number of responses received from them, and the ad is always shown for a certain period of time;
- Some ads will be shown all the time for a certain period of time, but will have charges related to how many responses (clicks) that are tracked as related to the ad, known as pay-per-click, which can become very expensive if there are no maximum number of clicks in place;
- Some will have rotating ads for a certain period of time for a fixed price, so the ad appears a certain number of times (impressions) in a specified sequence, but is not shown all the time;
- Some will have rotating ads for a certain period of time but for a pay-per-click price, so the ad appears a certain number of times (impressions) in a specified sequence, but is not shown all the time, and the price depends upon the number of clicks;
- Some are set up so the advertiser buys in advance a certain number of impressions for the ad to be shown on the rotating basis, and when that number is reached, the ad disappears;
- Some are set up so the advertiser buys in advance a certain number of responses (clicks) for the ad to be shown on the rotating basis, and when that number is reached, the ad disappears; and
- Some of these ads will have landing pages (usually with additional costs) with a form to fill out, while others will connect the pastor directly to the company's website.

Each option offers certain benefits, and each has certain drawbacks that other options may offer. Advertising on the internet is like going through a jungle or a maize, and the truth is hard to find – each marketer for these various options will promote their type of advertising as the best, most efficient, most effective, and least costly. When this

author asked for details, however, the figures changed dramatically, and were often disguised or combined so clear and direct comparisons were difficult to obtain. Truly it is, “advertiser beware!”

After researching all of the above options, it has been decided that the Vision Explosion Company will use a banner type of internet advertising on one or more of the major search engines known to be a favorite search engine used by Senior Pastors when they are searching for church growth options. While there may be some movement within the banner ad itself, it will be shown all the time for the fixed rate so there are no surprises with regard to payment. In addition, when someone clicks on the banner, it will lead first to a landing page where information is requested from the searcher relative to their contact information, and once submitted, will take them to the company’s website. This will provide the most consistent presence for the Vision Explosion Company, and will be at a fixed rate regardless of the number of clicks registered. It will also help the company to track the source of the lead, and to provide information on those requesting it so the company’s materials may be sent to them in hard copy. The location of these ads will vary from time to time with the various websites and search engines, with feedback gathered as to the results and effectiveness of the various ads in the various locations. Informed decisions can then be made for any future advertising relative to the design and placement of these ads.

Another type of internet marketing is known as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which Quinn describes as,

Search engine optimization is a process that website owners and webmasters follow to help to make your website acceptable to Google and other search engines in hopes of being ranked highly on search results pertaining to key terms

that describe what the business offers. This may be critical merely because when most people search online for things they typically only pay attention to the top 10 results with the “clicks” going far more often than not to those websites shown in the top 5.¹⁴

Keyword searches do more than find some keywords on the internet. They bring a company’s name, or their brand, to the forefront in order to give them priority placement in the minds of the searchers, validating their importance as related to the subject of the search. Thus it is important to be as high in the findings of the search engines as possible. This has given rise to many companies that will act on behalf on the client, for a fee, to place them high in the rankings. It is also possible to purchase the highest rankings to improve traffic to the advertiser’s website. Colon Cornwell states in his article “The Importance of Page-One Visibility,”

A brand’s position on search engine result pages (SERPs) is critical to driving site traffic. iCrossing analyzed natural search results for non-branded keywords for 10 clients and found that more than 95 percent of all site traffic from search engines comes from page-one results. Our findings also validate the trend towards longer keyword search strings by users and that there are opportunities for marketers to improve their page-one rankings by optimizing for keywords that show up lower in the results. In order to compete for today’s sophisticated online consumers, brands must have a deep understanding of how users arrive at their website, and the tools and know-how to optimize their site to stay in front of the consumer at every step of the purchase cycle.¹⁵

TLC Ministries, for example, has already taken advantage of the keyword search procedure, and has submitted the keywords in a way that improves the results. The company purposefully designed their website for the repeated inclusion of some

¹⁴ Quinn, Ibid.

¹⁵ Collon Cornwell, iCrossing. “The Importance of Page-One Visibility,” Online Resource. February, 2010. <http://www.icrossing.com/articles/The-Importance-of-Page-one-Visibility.pdf> (accessed March 29, 2010).

keywords, so the heading at the top of each page was recorded as “Capital Stewardship Programs/Church Capital Campaigns” and then followed by the appropriate identification for each individual page. Another purposeful keyword inclusion was “design... build.” Thus when someone types in a search for “Church Capital Campaigns” on Google, for example, the results show TLC Ministries on the first page, which is very good. “Capital Stewardship Programs” shows up on the second page, and “Design... Build” (which was the only one of the three that was recommended to TLC Ministries by the experts) did not make it at all. Since the search process by the major search engines can be manipulated, there are companies that sell their services (for a fee) to bring about those high (first page) results.

Since keyword search is so important to the overall success in a search finding a company’s website, Ron Jones of ClickZ gives some fundamental guidelines to implementing the appropriate keywords into a company’s website,

Keyword research is near and dear to my heart because it is the foundation for Internet marketing, including social media. Keyword research can be the glue that holds your Internet marketing campaigns together and provides strategic oversight. If you skip this important step, you could waste resources, time, and money.

Keywords tell us a lot about people. They help us understand intent or where a searcher is in the buying cycle. There are four segments that represent each phase in a searcher’s buying cycle: research, shop, buy, and inform. Really, the first three are part of a “purchasing” cycle, and the last one is more for searchers who are just looking for information like tips or how-to info.

Another important aspect of keyword research is to understand your audience. Try to anticipate keywords they might use, not keywords you or your industry would use.

Another very important principle is keyword relevance. When a person types in a keyword, he already has a certain expectation of what he will find. If your ad or organic listing includes that keyword, you are helping to make a connection with

the searcher and building on their expectation. The next step in the process is for the searcher to click on a link to a Website or destination page.

If at this point you don't deliver with quality and relevant content, then you are probably going to lose the searcher. Be sure you include relevant content that is rich with targeted keywords in copy and with properly tagged images and video. This will help to provide continuity across the whole searcher experience, thus assisting in searcher conversion. So, drive-to-site channels like SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and PPC (Pay-Per-Click) help establish an expectation and your Website or blog helps to deliver on that expectation.¹⁶

Website submission is another internet marketing tool, which allows some type of data submission to influence how high a particular website is listed in the search engines. While Google and other major search engines will not reveal the secrets of how their search spiders work, they seem to look for three primary things: listing with other search engines, keyword search, and links to other websites. Because of this, links to various other related websites is one thing that was done purposefully by the leadership of TLC Ministries. As a result of these data items, they index the pages of the website, and the results are listed in the results presented to the searcher. Quinn feels like this type of internet marketing is not as important as it once was, however, but many people still depend upon it. He comments about website submission,

This is basically the process of listing your website with the various directories so that the search engines may find it and hopefully index your pages. This stage was once critical, but in recent years its fallen in popularity because of the way search engine spiders go about their work of indexing pages for presentation to searchers. Google would prefer to find your site through other sites that are linked to yours and only looking to you to provide them a site map so these firms can find your most important pages.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ron Jones, ClickZ, "Keyword Research 101," Online Resource. March 8, 2010. <http://www.clickz.com/3639707> (accessed March 29, 2010).

¹⁷ Quinn, Ibid.

What should online ads do? To be effective, they must get a person's attention and move them to action – quickly. Herndon Hasty, in an article entitled “SEM: A Call to Action” on the Search Engine Watch website, gives several insights into how to make online marketing effective,

A call to action in your ads and your site, no matter how simple, is important. Getting your potential customers' attention is important, but getting them to direct that attention to doing what you want them to do is an absolute – whether it's getting them to sign up for an e-mail newsletter or purchase a six-digit-priced piece of equipment.

Online marketers should have this ad element top of mind and begin taking steps to get the gears in motion through the following ways:

- **Paid search ads:** Your ads should contain some kind of call to action, be it in the headline (where it's most prominent) or the description (where you have more room to work with). Even something as simple as “shop” or “browse” is enough to command a viewer's attention and give them direction.
- **Title tags and meta descriptions:** These two hugely important pieces of SEO function the same as your PPC headlines and ad copy on the paid side. However, while your meta description is ideally the copy that shows up as the description, depending on the keywords and the engine's mood it could be anything on the page. So, if you can work it into the title instead of the description, you can guarantee that it shows up every time.
- **Display ads:** Difficult given size and image limitations, but an opportunity nonetheless. Search marketers who think they have it hard with character counts should try writing for a banner ad.
- **Landing page:** Push to have a call to action either in text or in a more forceful add to cart button on the page, preferably using the same language as you use in your other messages.

You can use your PPC performance (traffic and CTR) and analytics (traffic) to determine the best variants to use in your ads. Be sure to always keep intent in mind – product searches and pages should be more direct than category searches.

So, go forth. Use more calls to action in your ads and content. Give your customers direction and they will follow. And validate this message by Twittering or Facebooking this article.¹⁸

Email Newsletters

Emails have become a way of life in modern American culture, and as such, they both communicate and irritate. Personal emails are a way of keeping in touch with friends and business associates, and have become a mainstay of communications between willing parties. These emails seem to receive priority attention, and are usually opened regularly. This group includes the many emails that are forwarded by people who are somehow connected to the recipient. The experience of TLC Ministries suggests that pastors are more likely to open and read personal emails than they are to answer a phone call made to them.

There are three other email categories that encompass the balance of the emails: 1) the newsletter (or links to magazine) emails from valid sources that are requested (“opt-in” or have not “opted out”); 2) the advertising emails (often combined with a newsy type email) whether from an “opt-in” as a “fan” for a company, or unsolicited from a valid source that just arrive in people’s inboxes without any prior connection to the sender; and 3) the spam emails. Spam emails are sent out with a malicious purpose, and an industry has emerged just to protect people from those threats. They will not be discussed here.

The other two email types, however, have become very popular for internet marketing purposes. Briefly stated, the newsletter emails, along with its expanded version called the online magazine, contain newsworthy articles that would have some interest to

¹⁸ Herndon Hasty, “Search Engine Watch,” Online Resource. Mar 16, 2010. <http://searchenginewatch.com/3639794> (accessed March 29, 2010).

those receiving them, and are accompanied by various types of advertising embedded within the newsletter. The advertising (or sales) emails, on the other hand, feature an article related directly to the sale of one product or service in particular. It is these two types of emails that are of marketing interest to the Vision Explosion Company.

Advertising for the newsletter and online magazine type of emails would fall under the same general type of advertising as addressed earlier under the Online Websites for Senior Pastors heading, but to a more limited extent. That discussion will not be repeated here, except to recognize that there is some incentive for people to open and read newsletter emails that is of interest to them, which, in turn, provides a more receptive audience for the advertising that accompanies those articles of interest. These newsletter emails are usually “opt-in” emails, where the receiver requests them, and thus would be more open to receiving them. Advertising in the newsletter type of emails has a short life span, however, and needs repeat exposure in order to be effective. Still, targeted advertising to this warm market will be considered as a part of the company’s overall internet marketing strategy.

Sales (advertising, marketing) emails that feature one product or service will not receive such a warm reception, and do not have the same open rate as the newsletter type of emails that feature articles of interest. To counter this tendency, as well as to increase the open rates for the sales emails, some well-known brand names have sold marketing emails that are received under the brand name heading, but feature just one sales article. The advantage here is that these are usually on an “opt-in” list, or at least they have not been opted out, and the products or services offered have some relevance to church life. The companies, products, and services offered have usually been screened both for

credibility and relevance to the targeted email audience, and would be seen as a viable purchase. Sometimes, the sales emails are alternated with some legitimate copy to increase the open rate. Christianity Today International, for example, does this with its Church Laughs email newsletters – some of these emails have a catchy cartoon about church life, while others are direct sales articles. Since people seem to migrate towards cartoons, they will open these emails, not knowing which emails contain the cartoons. Even the cartoon emails contain advertising from various church related organizations. Once opened, the marketing emails will have at least a brief exposure to potential clients, and if the product or service is relevant, it could result in action by the recipient. This will also be considered as a part of the overall internet marketing strategy of the Vision Explosion Company.

InfoGroup has drafted a white paper for successful email campaigns that is available to its customers, or accessed by special permission. Its primary focus is permission based emails, which it calls “YesMail” to indicate its high level of responsible management. They give this overview of permission based emails,

As an email marketer, you have two choices: You can either send unsolicited email or send email to people who have requested to hear from you. Unsolicited email is, of course, spam, and you definitely don’t want to be known as a spammer – it can harm your business reputation and brand.

By taking the time to build a permission-based email marketing list – that is, a database of people who have agreed to receive your messages – you will build stronger, more trustworthy relationships with your customers and prospects. You’ll stop wasting time and money on prospects who are not interested in your services. And you’ll also stay on the right side of the government (visit www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/canspam.html for details on the federal CAN-SPAM Act). While the act merely requires you to have a “pre-existing business relationship,” it’s best to go above and beyond the standard and get permission first.

You should always remember that being a successful marketer isn't about building the biggest list; it's about getting the biggest results. When you engage in permission-based email marketing, you will get:

- **Better response rates** – People who sign up for your email list generally have a direct interest in your product or services. That makes it more likely that these subscribers can be converted into buyers.
- **Improved deliverability** – People who want to hear from you are more likely to provide a legitimate email address. They're more likely to open and respond to your offers, and you're less likely to wind up on a blocked email list.
- **Increased trust and brand affinity** – By sending emails to subscribers who have granted you permission to do so, you can avoid being labeled as a spammer. And by sending only quality information, you'll build goodwill with your readers because you're providing them something of value.

As writer and Internet marketing pioneer Seth Godin says, permission marketing is about “turning strangers into friends and friends into customers.”¹⁹

In addition to the “opt-in” emails from the respected names, there are many other marketing emails that are broadcast to people on various lists that are purchased from list vendors. The people on this list normally do not have any prior relationship with the business, although it is required by law to do so. While some of these broadcast emails are unquestionably spam, others are from legitimate businesses that are trying to sell their products to anyone who would respond to their offers. These businesses know that the response rate to these unsolicited emails is low, but may be profitable if the broadcast numbers are high enough. Patricia Noris has published an online article that breaks down the process into five stages that people normally take when viewing emails. This is significant information when designing emails for maximum impact. She writes,

¹⁹ InfoGroup, White paper: “Email Marketing. Permission: Say “Please” Before Hitting Send,” www.infogroup.com. May not be available without payment. (accessed April 3, 2010).

Research has shown that people tend to breakdown their email into five levels of viewing. As readers go deeper into the process, your chances increase that they will read your entire message. Here's an overview of the five stages:

Stage 1: From the Name

During this stage viewers determine if they want to initially read your email based on your store/brand name.

Stage 2: From the Subject Line

The next test is whether or not your subject line captures their attention.

Stage 3: Preview Pane

If you have made it past the subject line then they will look down at the email while it's in preview mode and quickly scan it.

Stage 4: Opened Email

If you made it past the scan test, then readers will click open your email and read it "above the fold line," which means the portion of the email that fits on their screen.

Stage 5: View Full Email

Lastly, readers will read your entire email. The best scenario is if you have a strong call to action and they click through to the website from your email or if they print it out to bring to your store.

You should keep all these stages in mind as you develop your emails.²⁰

Another marketing concept is to combine emails with direct mail advertising, as with a postcard campaign. Joan Matosic's comment about ensuring the emails are sent to the right person or it will not be forwarded to the right person is significant for this approach to be effective. Assuming the lists are accurate, the InfoGroup has published a white paper describing this approach,

One of the most effective approaches to reaching customers is by delivering the one-two punch of an email combined with a postcard in the mail.

²⁰ Patricia Noris, Publisher – Gift Shop Magazine. "Design Your Emails for the Five Stages of Viewing," Online Resource. February 16, 2010. <http://www.snapretail.com/retailer/library-advisor-article-detail.asp?aid=2165> (accessed March 29, 2010).

The concept is simple – no single marketing strategy will be as effective as a combination of two or more marketing strategies. This doesn't mean it's necessary for you to roll out every marketing idea known to man to promote your business, but simply put – it's so much more effective to market from a couple of different angles to achieve your business related goals (greenbacks, cabbage, moolah, cold-hard-cash).²¹

One area not mentioned above is the social media marketing that is capturing so much of the attention in marketing circles. Because the motivation of the fans (friends, followers) is related to repeat sales, it is considered to be a staple especially for retail and e-retail businesses. Kevin Ertell says that “Among online shoppers who engage in social media, more than 80 percent are using Facebook,” and then explains why fans are following the retail businesses in the social media,

Although more and more companies employ social media (especially Twitter) as a means of answering their customers' technical questions, our study shows that while technical support is one option essential to the medium, far more people use social networking with retailers to learn about sales and product information. 49 percent of respondents who “friend” or “follow” companies through social media do so to learn about special deals and options. Close behind, 45 percent of users do it to learn about products. Only 5 percent use social media primarily for customer support. This should be exactly what marketers want to hear: they want our information, sales and specials. We just have to learn how to give it to them effectively... Although snappy content can help to engage consumers, they follow retailers because of brand, deals, and products, not our witty repartee. If we're smart about our Facebook content, we won't turn anybody off.²²

Social media has no track record, however, in the church consulting market, and specifically with vision and discipleship development. Therefore, it was decided not to

²¹ InfoGroup, “White Paper: Deliver the One-Two Punch: Email and Direct Mail,” Online Resource. September 26, 2009. <http://infogroup.com/index.php/article-library/email-marketing/393-deliver-the-one-two-punch-email-and-direct-mail-> (accessed April 9, 2010).

²² Kevin Ertell, “Social Media for Retailers: Focus on Facebook,” Online Resource. February 25, 2010. <http://www.retailcustomerexperience.com/article/4557/Social-media-for-retailers-Focus-on-Facebook> (accessed March 9, 2010).

use the social media marketplace for the Vision Explosion Company because of several reasons:

- It has no relevance to the church consulting market;
- It is very doubtful someone would go to the social media sites to find church consulting resources;
- Limited prior experience by this author with unsolicited comments from people wishing to address a particular point of view on a favorite controversial topic has been negative, and has drawn out the worst in people – they want someone to attack who holds different opinions than their own, and will find opportunities to do so even if they are not relevant; and
- Church Consulting where the company is attacked for frustrations of prior negative experiences with someone else is not good public relations for the non-involved company (like Vision Explosion), and would simply destroy the good public relations that is being attempted by the Vision Explosion Company – a church consulting company does not need the unearned negative publicity.

4. Church Growth Conferences

Conferences for the church market are ideal settings for church-oriented organizations to initiate and maintain contact with their customer base and target market. While the conferences are usually centered around certain educational and inspirational themes, and usually feature some high visibility speakers, they also frequently include an exhibit hall to help defray the expenses of the conference itself. It is a win-win situation where the organizations make their products and services available to the churches that may need them, and where the churches may go to find products and services they need.

There are many conferences held each year that focus specifically on church growth and pastoral enrichment themes. Some of these conferences are sponsored by denominations, while others are sponsored by groups that attract pastors and church leaders from across denominational lines, like the Innovate Church Conference held

annually at the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. There are conferences for pastors and church leaders that focus on other themes, like building and construction, but those conferences are not the most conducive setting for the target market (Senior Pastors) for the Vision Explosion Company. The Senior Pastors will be most likely to respond in a positive way to the company's message at the church growth and pastoral enrichment conferences when they are considering how to enhance those issues in their own churches.

Why exhibit at conferences at all – do they do that much good for the exhibitors and the churches? It all depends upon the type of products and services offered, and the local availability of those products and services for the churches. For example, it would not be a wise thing for a hardware store chain to exhibit at a church growth conference, even though the churches that attend may find reason to purchase items they need at the local hardware store of that same chain – that is not the proper setting nor the best target market for that type of exhibit. But exhibitors that feature church growth products and services will find these same conferences to be an ideal type of setting. It is especially true for church consulting companies like the Vision Explosion Company.

For more than a quarter of a century, this author has had exhibits at approximately 500 conferences, and has learned that there is something about meeting the church consultant face-to-face that will help the Senior Pastor to wrestle with the issues of whether to engage an outside firm or not, and if so, which firm and which consultant. The representative's body language, eye contact, depth of information, extent of understanding, company philosophy, listening skills, relational dynamics, demeanor, energy, and overall perception will subtly be examined by the Senior Pastor during the

conversation to determine whether he wants to work with this firm and consultant, and whether this firm and consultant will relate and work well in his church. While the Senior Pastor may learn some of these things through written articles, web searches, or phone conversations, the extent of those qualifiers cannot be learned in any other way than being in a face-to-face situation. Simply stated, the Senior Pastor must be comfortable with this company and consultant, and convinced that they can bring value to him and his church, before he will even bring them to his church for consideration.

The Convention Industry Council has recently addressed this issue in their newsletter entitled “Face Time Matters” as they reviewed the widespread decline in attendance for 2009, and hope to spark greater attendance at conferences and conventions in the future. It states,

“FACE TIME. It Matters.” is a grassroots industry campaign theme designed to promote the benefits of meeting face-to-face. The campaign was developed in response to one of the most challenging years ever faced by the meeting, convention and exhibition industries. It was based on the findings of a recent national survey of corporate and association meeting planners, plus in-depth personal interviews with the industry’s leading executives as well as focus groups consisting of corporate and association executives, business travelers and professional meeting planners. According to the research:

- Face-to-face meetings build trust and relationships;
- Education and training are more effective in a live setting;
- Live meetings actually save time and money;
- Live meetings result in a more effective exchange of ideas;
- Face-to-face meetings provide the human connection that powers business;

- Face-to-face meetings create jobs and powers the economy.²³

Since the Vision Explosion Company has developed a new category of consulting (Visionary Discipleship Mentors), and is a new company itself without branding or name recognition, it is imperative that it make itself available to churches and Senior Pastors in a setting that will enhance this face-to-face contact at a time when they are considering church growth issues. Since the church growth and pastoral enrichment conferences provide that ideal setting, the Vision Explosion Company will seek to exhibit with a display at as many of those conferences as is possible and reasonable to do so. It will be a key component of the company's marketing strategy.

5. Ministerial Seminars

There is an enhanced credibility factor that accompanies the teaching of a seminar, and opens the door to further private conversations between the leader and the participants when the individual's circumstances can be addressed. Many of the conferences and conventions referenced above also incorporate seminars and workshops as educational features in their schedules, and they will often solicit leaders for these seminars and workshops from among the vendors, who have a high level of expertise in their chosen fields. The leading of these seminars usually leads to additional business for the seminar leaders, so the vendors compete for the opportunity to lead them.

It is with this in mind that the representative for Vision Explosion's display booth will seek to lead these ministerial seminars on topics related to the Visionary Discipleship

²³ Exhibitorial E-Newsletter, Convention Industry Council, The International Center for Exhibitor and Event Marketing, The Center's Exhibitorial News for 19 March 2010. "Face Time Matters," Online Resource. www.iceem.net News tab. Newsletter button. Newsletter 19 March 2010. (accessed March 29, 2010).

Mentoring theme. It will be another important component in the company's marketing strategy, but unlike the other components, it will be dependent upon the company's exhibit schedule, and the availability of leadership possibilities for the seminars.

C. **SALES PROCESS**

Marketing and sales go hand-in-hand to provide income for a business. Marketing without sales is fruitless and leads to frustration and poverty. Sales, on the other hand, are very limited without some type of marketing. Tsague and Mooring addresses the sales professionals, some of whom are honorable, and some not. But they state that the salesperson is necessary, as they comment about the overall place of the salesperson in the economics of daily life, "Yet however irritating we may find salesmen at various times of our lives, no one ever succeeded in business without selling something."²⁴

They also relate any type of transaction to selling, even if a person is employed by someone else in a salaried or hourly position, when they say, "Remember that even if you have a more traditional job, you are still selling. You are simply selling your talents, time, abilities, and effort to your boss. Selling is the key to any kind of provision."²⁵ Selling, then, is not something to be done timidly, but with consideration, confidence, courtesy, conviction, commitment, skill, and considerable effort, knowing that selling is what makes buyers out of interested prospects.

A good branding and marketing program is necessary in order for the Vision Explosion's type of consulting service to create interest by the Senior Pastor. Interest alone, however, will not bring revenue to the company – that takes the actual selling of

²⁴ Tsague and Mooring, *Ibid.*, 47

²⁵ Tsague and Mooring, *Ibid.*, 48

the company's services to the Senior Pastor and the church leaders. Selling picks up where marketing ends by helping the Senior Pastors and their leaders come to the point of saying, "We want this service, and we are willing to pay you for it." Anything short of that commitment is still window shopping, no matter how strong the interest is among these church leaders. Tsague and Mooring go on to say,

As a Biblical Entrepreneur, the keys to your long term success lie in the quality of your product or service and how well you are able to market it and sell it. Unfortunately, many people look down on sales professions. What they do not understand is that all legitimate and honest sales produce win-win situations. You (the salesman) are providing something of value at an amount someone else (the customer) is willing to pay.

No honest salesman can succeed without producing situations that benefit all concerned.²⁶

Sales, when done properly, should be a positive experience for all parties concerned. But when one party feels manipulated, taken advantage of, or somehow getting less than fair treatment, then the sales experience can turn negative rather quickly. A salesperson with integrity is one who will properly assess the buyer's needs, wants, and preferences, and provide a product or service that most closely matches the buyer's ideal. A salesperson without integrity, however, will place profit above fairness, and will endeavor to manipulate the buyer into buying something the seller has for sale, whether it is best for the customer or not. The selling transaction should be a win-win experience for all concerned. Michael Q. Pink has described the sales process as,

Selling, when done properly, is about lifting and elevating your prospect's future. It's not something you do to someone to achieve your goal, but rather a process

²⁶ Ibid.

you walk through with someone to discover their goals and help them get there.²⁷

Pink explains his company's philosophy when he says, "The sales profession is simply the process of building bridges between vendor and customer over which we transport our goods and services."²⁸ He also puts sales in a different competitive context with other sellers when he says,

Succeeding is not about being a smarter wolf, a nicer wolf, or even a Christian wolf... it's about out-serving your competition in the best interest of your customer. It's about understanding their goals, their dreams, their vision for the future, then coming alongside, shouldering the burden and helping them get there.²⁹

Pink further describes the sales approach of their company, Selling Among Wolves Without Joining the Pack, using the acronym of GIVE NOW,

Greet: Earn the right to enter their space
Investigate: Earn the right to speak to their wants and needs
Value Presentation: Earn the right to be taken seriously
Establish Validity/Substantiate: Earn the right to enter negotiations

Negotiate/Reason Together: Earn the right to enter into agreement
Open The Account/Secure the Sale: Earn the right to serve
Walk it Out Together: Earn the right to repeat business & referrals³⁰

This high level of integrity in the selling process is the commitment of the leaders of the Vision Explosion Company. When the product or service has sufficient value built

²⁷ Michael Q. Pink, Selling Among Wolves Without Joining the Pack, "God Love Sales," E-Mail sent on March 1, 2010. (accessed March 1, 2010).

²⁸ Michael Q. Pink, Selling Among Wolves Without Joining the Pack. Online Resource. <http://www.sellingamongwolves.com/index.php?module=content&sid=5>. (accessed March 1, 2010).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

within itself, there is no need to be manipulative, dishonest, or forceful in the sales process. That does not mean to say that the company's Mentors will shy away from representing the Vision Journey in such a way as to help the church leaders see its value for their church in their situation – if they saw its value already, there would be only a minimal need to market, and then just record the sales.

People often do not see that need until someone points it out to them. Mordecai needed to “sell” Queen Esther on the need for her intercession, and once she saw its value, she stepped forward with action. Pastors often have to “sell” unbelievers on the need of their repentance and belief in Christ as Savior – very few people come to Christ without someone “selling” Christ to them in such a way that they see the value of their personal faith in Christ. That was the case with this author on February 10, 1962 when his pastor led him into the Kingdom of God.

Another issue for sales relates to the profit margin. It is essential that there be enough profit margins to sustain the business without being out of range with competitors. Not enough profit will cause a company to close because of the lack of revenue, while charging too much will cause the company to lose business, and also to close. Tsague and Mooring have also addressed the profit margin issue from a Christian perspective, which is much more than financial profit, when they write,

All sales transactions should generate what we call Biblical Profit. Biblical Profit is the spiritual and natural gain remaining after all costs are deducted from the gross revenue of the business. Not only does this include income, but also relationships, wisdom, experience, and general goodwill. Unprofitable sales demonstrate poor stewardship... Yet the fact remains that without a profit you will not be in business for long. Profit is the key to achieving your financial freedom.

Profit does more than generate personal income. It enables you to build a reserve for down times, enhance your produce or service, increase your capacity to produce, and most importantly, fulfill God's covenant. Profit is not just something that is coveted by greedy sales people but rather it is an essential part of the ministry of business. Every unprofitable Biblical Entrepreneur will not be able to fulfill God's perfect plan for his or her life. This is why Matthew 25:30 states that the master cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.³¹

D. PERCEIVED VALUE

Historically, churches have looked differently at how their funds are allocated than businesses do. For example, business leaders know that they must spend money ahead of time in order to make more money later. Church leaders, on the other hand, are accustomed to paying for services after the fact if it can be verified that the charges are legitimate. Even business leaders who are also church leaders are accustomed to switching how they look at the expenditure of funds depending upon whether they are in a business context or in a church context. They also look differently at the sales process. In the business world, they expect a "sales" event when they need to purchase something, but they are uncomfortable with the same approach in a church setting where they just want the facts without the "sales pitch" of a sales person.

Sales people represent the full spectrum of transacting business from order takers to complete frauds, and so do their motivations for doing so. Sales is a necessary part of transacting business, but how the sale is conducted will determine the level of satisfaction with the sales process, as well as with the other party(ies) in the transaction. In the most simplistic of terms, a selling experience is more than a business deal – it is an emotional experience when the buyer exchanges something of value (usually some form of money) to obtain something of greater value to the buyer. The seller, on the other hand,

³¹ Tsague and Mooring. Ibid., 49-50.

exchanges something owned (or handled) by the seller for something the owner would rather have – usually some form of money. While many sales experiences between the buyer and seller represent very few emotional tugs of the heart, like buying a tool or a part at the hardware store, there are certain items that are so significant to the buyer and/or the seller that it is a trauma point for them, like buying a house or a car, or some other high ticket item. The key for the difference is both the perceived value and the accepted value of the items being bought or sold, as well as what is to be sacrificed or gained in the transaction.

Securing the services of the Vision Explosion Company will be an emotional experience for church leaders. Since the Vision Journey, with extensive personal on-site mentoring, will be a comparatively higher cost item than the excess that most churches would normally carry in their operational budgets, it will not be an easy sell to those churches because there is no clearly identifiable benefit or cost savings to the church.

The problem with the cost of the Vision Journey is the perception of its value to the churches. Value comes in different forms, but usually the first reference point for church leaders is the financial one – will it pay for itself? The primary financial problem, at least in the early days, with churches seeing the value of the Vision Journey is that there is no track record of increased giving because they will not have known of other churches that had experienced such a Vision Journey. Even those churches that have completed a Vision Journey may not be alert enough to realize the increase in offerings that have come as a result of the Vision Journey.

Another aspect in the perception of value is that there are no benchmarks for progress already in place in the churches so they can see direct financial results from their

investments in ministry programs such as the Vision Journey. With today's sophisticated marketing tools, it is becoming easier for a business to track their marketing efforts and calculate the return on their marketing investment (ROI), usually with increased business. Thus they can see what marketing campaigns have brought in what level of income for their businesses. But no such tools are available for the churches, and they are left to their perceptions of the value of an item, even items that would be good for them, based upon their experiences of the past.

There are many benefits, of course, for the long term ministry of the church, which in turn will bring in more people, which will normally increase the financial base of the church. Thus the Vision Journey will much more than pay for itself over the long term with the extra funds it will bring in for the church, perhaps as soon as a year or two. But that is a hard thing for church leaders to consider when they see this primarily as an expense item rather than an investment in ministry.

In addition to the funds that need to be allocated for the Vision Journey, there is a level of commitment by the church leaders to follow this process that takes it beyond an option or a "test drive" type of experience. Where the church funds are spent will reveal what are the real objectives and priorities of the church, not just the talking points of its leaders – the highest commitment of the church is seen in what actually gets funded. That level of commitment relates directly to the commitment of the church leaders to fulfill its Mission Mandate. This, in turn, changes the emphasis from financial value to ministry value.

Whether the Vision Journey will pay for itself may be the surface issue discussed among the church leaders, but the real underlying question is whether it is worth it as it

affects the ministry efforts of the church. If the church is really on a mission to fulfill the Great Commission, then their discussions will consider whether this Vision Journey will bring in more souls for the Kingdom, and whether it will improve the effectiveness of the church's disciple making programs. If the church leaders are not serious, however, about their fulfilling the Great Commission, no matter the amount of energy brought into those talking points, then the Vision Journey will not be seen as a strong value to them. Church leaders will find a way to pay for something they believe in, but they will not sacrifice items of greater perceived value for something they do not see as urgent, necessary, and effective.

Assuming the church has a real commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission, the challenge for the Vision Explosion Company in marketing and selling the Vision Journey to churches will be to change the perception of the church leaders from an expense mentality (financial) to an investment mentality (ministry), and to help the church leaders see its perceived value (ministry), resulting in the church leaders embracing its accepted value (financial). So the key to "selling" the Vision Journey to churches is to establish its value to them in both the financial and ministry areas. The first question to be answered is whether their ministry values would require it. The second is whether it is worth the cost (value). And the third relates to its track record and the experiences of other churches. The bottom line for the selling experience is value, both perceived and accepted.

There is a difference between perceived value and accepted value. The greater the price of something usually means its perceived value is greater. After all, isn't "you get what you pay for" true? On the other hand, the greater the price usually means its

accepted value for that person or entity, which would include churches, is less than its perceived value. That is because church leaders usually see the cost of something before they see the value of their investment in it. Another way to say it is that churches are usually “on the cheap.”

The secret of successful marketing and sales for the Vision Explosion Company is to have the perceived value and the accepted value at the same level, or preferably, for people to think they are getting something of higher perceived value at a price that is a bargain for them. That is very difficult to do when there is no context for churches to see the perceived value of something they are considering. Church leaders usually look to the experiences of other churches to determine the value of something. But when there are no other churches in their area, or in their tradition, that has any experience with something, then it is difficult to see its value. Talking to the first church to do something makes sales very difficult.

For example, TLC Ministries was contacted by a church in the Seattle, Washington area for a capital campaign. The company had never worked with a church in that tradition before, and since there seemed to be some serious obstacles to a successful campaign within their tradition, the company had not marketed itself to churches in that tradition. But the church leaders heard of the company’s Ministry Approach and track record, and decided this is what they wanted. The Consultant made sure the church leaders understood that TLC Ministries would lead its own Scriptural Funding Campaign, and would not change it to include the type of institutional campaign to which the churches in their tradition were accustomed. They accepted those terms, and insisted that the Consultant lead their capital campaign. When the campaign had

concluded and the church experienced a level of financial success and personal victories among their people that exceeded their expectations, the church leaders started recommending TLC Ministries to other churches within their tradition. That Consultant has subsequently led capital campaigns in several of their other churches as well.

The same can be expected with the Vision Explosion Company. Once there are several churches in an area that have experienced a Vision Journey, the accepted value for other churches considering their own Vision Journey will be greater. But until then, marketing and sales will be a major challenge. It is especially so since the leaders for the first church in an area to consider this Vision Journey will probably not have an accurate understanding of the processes, dynamics, and results of the Vision Journey. So the vision of the results will have to be created, as well as establishing its perceived value. A sale will occur when the leaders see its accepted value for them.

Perhaps the biggest hindrance to the sale of the Vision Journey to the various churches is in the mind of the Vision Mentor, who must represent and sell it to the churches. If the Mentor sees the problems more than the potential of this Vision Journey, then he will subtly communicate to the church leaders that it is not worth the cost. But if the Mentor sees the potential more than the problems, then he will be obvious in communicating its value to the churches. Patrice Tsague recounts his story of wrestling with and resolving the issues of selling a Christian product for profit. He writes,

“These stories helped me realize that many successful entrepreneurs started with nothing but an idea or a product. The key to their successes lay in their abilities to sell that idea or product to others.”

After coming to Christ, however, he struggled to sell BE (Biblical Entrepreneurship) since the product was biblically-based and targeted Christian individuals and churches. “After years of wandering in the desert like the children

of Israel, and several encounters with the Lord in prayer, I realized that I was in my current financial situation because I was unwilling to sell what I had for profit.”³²

Tsague then took the appropriate steps to correct the situation. This author has wrestled with the same issues over the years of consulting with churches on as slim a profit margin as possible, and has taken the lessons shared by Tsague to heart.

Starting a business in a down economy is a challenging thing to do, especially when that business does not have a ready made market for its products. It would appear that starting the Vision Explosion Company during the national economic problems of 2009-2010 (and beyond?) was the wrong thing to do at that time, but nobody could see into the future to determine whether the timing would be good or bad. There is seldom an ideal time, however, to do something new and good, and it seems to be a typical occurrence that every intention for good will be tested. During these economically challenging times, there were many hurdles to the successful start of the Vision Explosion Company, with the three largest ones being: 1) the reduced income experienced by many churches – their leaders could not see the value of investing in something that did not bring them immediate and direct financial benefit when they were already struggling to meet their regular budgets; 2) the general climate of fear that permeated the United States as related to the economy, whether there was any reason to fear within the constituency of that particular church or not (many pastors have told this author, “We are doing well in our church, but we know the economy is bad, so now is not a good time to do anything with our facilities”); and 3) there was no ready made market for this type of ministry.

³² Tsague and Mooring, *Ibid.*, 51.

CONCLUSION

The value of any effort is not determined solely by its financial status. While it is a significant factor in a business context, the ultimate value of any effort is considered by the extent of its investment in things eternal. At this point in time, the value of the Vision Journey is unknown by the churches of this country, and beyond. Interest has already been expressed in the Vision Journey by groups of churches overseas, but a strong foundation must be laid for it at home first. The real value of the Vision Journey is seen in the renewal it brings to the churches that use it. While those renewal efforts come with a price tag, they produce much greater results than the time, energy, and funds expended.

The potential for this Vision Journey is far beyond what anyone can envision today because it has the capacity to impact churches far beyond their dreams. Pastors hope, pray, plan, and strive to bring renewal to their churches. Could it be that the process developed for the Vision Journey is one of the answers to their prayers? If it is, what impact would that have upon the entire Christian world? May God use this process to bring renown to His Name, renewal to the churches, reinvigoration to the Christians, and redemption to a lost world on its way to destruction! Lord, may it be so! Amen.

APPENDIX A

Characteristics of the Stages on the Church Life Cycle Chart

The following is a summary (in notation form) of the typical stages of Church Life Cycles, as used by the Vision Explosion Company. The dates are approximate, and reflect the normal Life Cycle stages of churches. Many factors, however, impact the actual Life Cycle stage of any particular church, including the time related to each stage. There are also many variations depending upon leadership style, denominational polity, and organizational structure. These factors are general in nature, and may overlap stages:

Infancy (1 to 2 years)

- Everything is fresh & new / leaders have vision & passion / usually targets a specific demographic
- Members are involved & unified / uncommitted leave the church / lots of energy / anxious to serve
- Activity & action are spontaneous / haphazard / no systems to interfere / flexible / quick decisions
- Much energy / focused on evangelism, growth, discipleship, ministry, & leadership development
- Pastor is primary/sole leader / everything originates from or needs approval of founding pastor

Childhood (3 to 10 years)

- Unorganized but willing / “gets into everything” stage / strong sense of mission & purpose
- Many volunteers / much excitement / we have a scarcity of space because of growth / new people
- Beliefs, values, goals, structures, & actions are becoming formalized / very high morale
- Urgency to build programs, ministries, & activities to accommodate our growth / positive mood
- Leaders are developed purposefully / pastor begins to share leadership with team leaders

Adolescence (10 to 20 years)

- Growing & active / exciting / high level of goal ownership / vision guides action
- Systems intentionally established & operational / volunteerism & morale are high
- Much success / excited about future / learning to work within the systems / church as community
- Some conflict with certain issues & pastoral leadership style / new leaders want more authority
- Probable change of pastoral leadership – want different style / leaders challenge pastor’s authority

Adult (20 to 40 years)

- Prime of life / strong support of common mission & purpose / our specific vision is being fulfilled
- New ministries are created in response to needs / people willing to serve, if asked
- Excellence is expected and demanded / attendance soars / morale is very high
- Results-oriented / seeing much success / the best it will ever be / gain stature in community
- Specialized staff added / pastor still in charge, but shares authority with staff and key volunteers

Maturity (40 to 50 years)

- Reaping success, but slacking off / not aware of losing a clear vision or of mission being plateaued
- Continue routine activities / intentional ministries successful / burned out & reluctant volunteers
- Productive / people are in a building mood for legacy / morale plateaued / ministries plateaued
- Senior saints have become our fastest growing group / ministry shifts to maintenance
- Leadership authority shifts more to committees and boards than with the pastor

Retiring (50 to 65 years)

- Set in our ways / just “doing church” / a lack of empowering vision / purpose is lost / complacent
- Volunteerism down / want to hire staff (if possible) to do ministry / continue irrelevant programs
- Focused on past achievements / no ambitious plans / content to attend only / morale down
- Sentimentalism for building & nostalgia increase / “the way it was” is common / change is a threat
- Pastoral initiatives for renewal often fail / pastor often frustrated / leaders entrenched / church boss

Dying (65+ years)

- Primary goal is preservation of rituals & traditions / survival mode / just hanging on / no vision
- Programs are dropped for lack of funds / few volunteers / some weak renewal efforts / many leave
- “Church Hospice Care” mode / know something is wrong, but not what / morale is very low
- Mood shifts from appreciating pastor to evaluating & blaming pastor / not willing to be challenged
- Chaplaincy style of ministry / pastor discouraged & has little authority / leaders protect authority

Church Life Cycle Questionnaire

Churches go through various stages throughout their life spans, and create typical life cycles. The various stages have certain qualities that are mostly consistent from one church to another. By defining these qualities, a church can determine which stage it is in at any one particular time in its history. Some qualities overlap the various stages, but some are unique to each stage. Within each of the sections below, please circle the number next to the quality that most closely represents your church most of the time for most of your people – do not factor in occasional or lone exceptions. Select only one response from each section, and do not miss any section:

Vision and Energy

1. Everything is fresh & new / leaders have vision & passion / usually targets a specific demographic
2. Unorganized but willing / “gets into everything” stage / strong sense of mission & purpose
3. Growing & active / exciting / high level of goal ownership / vision guides action
4. Prime of life / strong support of common mission & purpose / our specific vision is being fulfilled
5. Reaping success, but slacking off / not aware of losing a clear vision or of mission being plateaued
6. Set in our ways / just “doing church” / a lack of empowering vision / purpose is lost / complacent
7. Primary goal is preservation of rituals & traditions / survival mode / just hanging on / no vision

Volunteerism & Organization

1. Members are involved & unified / uncommitted leave the church / lots of energy / anxious to serve
2. Many volunteers / much excitement / we have a scarcity of space because of growth / new people
3. Systems intentionally established & operational / volunteerism & morale are high
4. New ministries are created in response to needs / people willing to serve, if asked
5. Continue routine activities / intentional ministries successful / burned out & reluctant volunteers
6. Volunteerism down / want to hire staff (if possible) to do ministry / continue irrelevant programs
7. Programs are dropped for lack of funds / few volunteers / some weak renewal efforts / many leave

Success & Morale

1. Activity & action are spontaneous / haphazard / no systems to interfere / flexible / quick decisions
2. Beliefs, values, goals, structures, & actions are becoming formalized / very high morale
3. Much success / excited about future / learning to work within the systems / church as community
4. Excellence is expected and demanded / attendance soars / morale is very high
5. Productive / people are in a building mood for legacy / morale plateaued / ministries plateaued
6. Focused on past achievements / no ambitious plans / content to attend only / morale down
7. “Church Hospice Care” mode / know something is wrong, but not what / morale is very low

Effectiveness & Leadership

1. Much energy / focused on evangelism, growth, discipleship, ministry, & leadership development
2. Urgency to build programs, ministries, & activities to accommodate our growth / positive mood
3. Some conflict with certain issues & pastoral leadership style / new leaders want more authority
4. Results-oriented / seeing much success / the best it will ever be / gain stature in community
5. Senior saints have become our fastest growing group / ministry shifts to maintenance
6. Sentimentalism for building & nostalgia increase / “the way it was” is common / change is a threat
7. Mood shifts from appreciating pastor to evaluating & blaming pastor / not willing to be challenged

Authority & Ministry Style

1. Pastor is primary/sole leader / everything originates from or needs approval of founding pastor
2. Leaders are developed purposefully / pastor begins to share leadership with team leaders
3. Probable change of pastoral leadership – want different style / leaders challenge pastor’s authority
4. Specialized staff added / pastor still in charge, but shares authority with staff and key volunteers
5. Leadership authority shifts more to committees and boards than with the pastor
6. Pastoral initiatives for renewal often fail / pastor often frustrated / leaders entrenched / church boss
7. Chaplaincy style of ministry / pastor discouraged & has little authority / leaders protect authority

Church Life Cycle Questionnaire

Answer Key

(Church / City / State)

Tabulate ONLY those Questionnaires that have answers for EVERY section

Tabulation Worksheet – record the # of times each answer is selected, multiply, and total:

1.....1. _____ X 1 = _____
 2.....2. _____ X 2 = _____
 3.....3. _____ X 3 = _____
 4.....4. _____ X 4 = _____
 5.....5. _____ X 5 = _____
 6.....6. _____ X 6 = _____
 7.....7. _____ X 7 = _____

Total Score _____

Divided by # of Forms Tabulated _____

Equals the Average Score _____

Use the Average Score to Locate the Church’s Life Cycle Stage within the Range Below:

- Infancy (1 to 2 years) 5 to 8.5
- Childhood (3 to 10 years) 8.51 to 13.5
- Adolescence (10-20 years) 13.51 to 18.5
- Adult (20 to 40 years) 18.51 to 23.5
- Maturity (40 to 50 years) 23.51 to 28.5
- Retiring (50 to 65 years) 28.51 to 32.5
- Dying (65+ years) 32.51 to 35

APPENDIX B

Vision Explosion Company **Text for Large Tri-Fold Brochure**

Front Page: (larger print, and purposeful spacing)

Vision Explosion is a passion-driven ministry – the passion for churches to understand, define, and develop their distinct mission mandate for Kingdom growth, as well as the passion to assist Pastors as they seek to fulfill their God-given assignment.

This passion will guide the church's vision journey.

The Vision Explosion Company

The original format for the Vision Journey was first developed in 1981 by the company's founder and president, Rev. Robert S. Hallett, during his last pastoral assignment. Rev. Hallett transitioned from a pastoral ministry to a church consulting ministry in 1985, which allowed him to work very closely with many churches from a wide variety of denominational and theological traditions. Once he started his own church consulting company (TLC Ministries) in 1990, he was free to incorporate these principles in that context.

Soon after Rev. Hallett came to personal faith in Christ in 1962, he received the call to Christian Ministry. His life ever since then has been one of preparing for and fulfilling that call. His formal ministerial training includes Bethany Bible College in Sussex, NB, Canada (Ministerial Diploma – 1967), Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana (B.A. – 1969), Anderson (Indiana) School of Theology, Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky (M.Div. – 1974), and Doctoral studies at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois, and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Rev. Hallett has personally consulted with hundreds of churches and frequently teaches seminars at various conferences. The Vision Journey is the culmination of his many years of experience working with churches in discipleship development campaigns. He is joined by other highly qualified ministers with outstanding track records of their own – they share his vision and passion for Kingdom growth, and have dedicated themselves to this much-needed ministry.

Those who have benefited from Rev. Hallett's ministry (both pastoral and consulting) know of his passion for the involvement and development of disciples for the Kingdom. The Vision Explosion Company is a natural outgrowth of that passion. It is dedicated to helping Pastors lead their churches through an Explosive Vision Journey while Deploying Dynamic Disciples.

Distinctive Features of the Vision Explosion Company

Vision Explosion is responsive to the hearts of many Pastors who feel that churches need more guidance than what is now available. Our purpose is to go far beyond the development of the church's vision – we help churches go the rest of the way by mentoring them through the process of knowing how to incorporate those plans into their church's ministry efforts through “enlisted volunteers.” Our distinctives include:

Interactive Onsite Mentoring

- **Onsite Vision Mentor** – We utilize the extensive onsite guidance of a Vision Mentor. We don't just tell you what to do, we mentor you in doing it. Our Mentors go beyond the role of a Consultant or Coach – we purposefully provide an example, samples, and training for the Vision Journey Guides as they fulfill their leadership roles.
- **Onsite Feedback** – We provide direct, immediate, and onsite feedback and input from the Vision Mentor to the Journey Guides and church leadership. The relationship is very interactive. This personal touch goes far beyond a seminar or phone conversation format. Words do not tell the whole story – much of our communication with each other comes from body language and follow-up questions.
- **Integrity and Accountability** – Our Vision Mentor being onsite frequently will bring integrity to the Vision Journey process by giving overall guidance and training, providing appropriate accountability, and making course corrections as needed.
- **Long-Term Support** – We make continuing support and accountability for the long-term available to the church that your success may continue to expand.

Dynamic Vision Focus

- **A Proven Process** – We take a big load off the shoulders of the church leadership by providing a proven process and onsite guidance that will make their Vision Journey an ongoing success. The church leaders do not need to reinvent the process in determining how to implement their dreams.
- **Customized Approach** – We customize the approach according to the needs and circumstances of each church. This process is much more effective than the generalized approach available through seminars and phone calls. The Vision Mentor will discover the unique setting and circumstances of each local church, and will guide their Vision Journey accordingly.
- **Experience and Objectivity** – The Vision Mentor brings both experience and objectivity to the church. The background of the Vision Mentors is vocational ministry and church consulting in a variety of church traditions. This outside

objectivity is crucial for the church to move beyond its current circumstances. In addition, Vision Explosion expects the church to receive its primary direction from the Vision Mentor, not from leaders of other churches who are also seeking answers and guidance.

Energized Ministry Involvement

- **Extensive Congregational Involvement** – We work with both the church leaders and the entire congregation to seek direct input and suggestions for their church's future. Our process is designed to enlist and involve the congregation without violating the authority and role of the church leadership. We know that people will support their own ideas better than someone else's ideas, so the early involvement of the congregation in their church's future is a key component for their feelings of ownership. And this ownership is necessary to staff the ministries that are developed to support the church's vision.
- **Ministry As A Mandate** – We provide a proven format to involve a significant number of the congregation in staffing and fulfilling the church's ministries. People need to catch their church's vision personally before they will support it fully. We guide the church in knowing how to identify, enlist, engage, train, and deploy the "Gospel Troops" in those ministry settings. Pastors have long struggled with how to implement their plans for ministry in a way that incorporates extensive congregational support – this proven process gives them the tools to do so.
- **Format to Maintain Enthusiasm** – We have drafted a process to maintain the support and enthusiasm of the congregation over the long term as they fulfill their ministries. We also build frequent training sessions into the Vision Focusing process, because people will serve better when they are properly trained!

Vision and Mission Mandate

In addition to the general mission given by Christ to His Church, each local church has its own distinct mission mandate that is reflective of its people, situation, and opportunities. However, not every church is accomplishing its mission mandate. The most common reason is the lack of a dynamic vision that guides its ministries and inspires its people. Without vision, the people will focus inward – they may "do" church very well without actually fulfilling their mission mandate!

A clearly-defined vision is important in the normal operations of the church. It is especially important when a church is considering a major new venture. It takes frequent refining of that vision for the church to stay on a focused track, to make any necessary course corrections, to accomplish its ultimate objectives, and to keep its people inspired and faithful in service. The Vision Journey can help the church reinvent itself in a way that mobilizes its people to do effective ministry, and thus fulfill its mission mandate.

There are three major tracks for Vision Explosion's Vision Journey:

- Defining and developing the church's distinct vision with involvement by both the church leaders and the entire congregation;
- Developing mature disciples through their training and involvement in the ministries of the church; and
- The distinct vision and mission of the church being fulfilled with passion by maturing disciples.

Explosive Vision Journey

The Vision Journey involves both church leaders and the congregation in a dynamic venture to determine the future direction and appropriate ministries for their local church, as well as creating a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm to fulfill those ministry opportunities. The Focused Vision, which will be developed onsite with appropriate ministries, will be specific to each church and situation. The people will be enlisted and prepared for ministry, and will have strong feelings of ownership and personal mission as they embark on the ventures associated with those ministries.

Deploying Dynamic Disciples

It is the desire of disciples to grow and to serve with a sense of mission and effectiveness. Not all disciples are naturally dynamic – they need to be developed, especially if they have become complacent in their church lives, or are facing burnout and discouragement.

Vision Explosion uses several venues to build both maturity and passion into disciples. We provide a format where all the church people are encouraged to make recommendations for the future direction and ministries of their church. This early involvement creates ownership for Kingdom efforts as expressed through the ministries of their church.

We also guide the church leaders in knowing how to identify the right people for the right positions, then enlisting, engaging, training, and deploying them to staff those ministry settings. This process produces an energized dynamic where people fulfill their ministries with delight, dependability, and joy. Dynamic disciples serve much more effectively in Kingdom causes!

The Vision Journey

The Vision Journey has a beginning but no ending. The Vision Mentor will guide the church's Vision Journey through seven primary phases, with each phase focusing on a different, but complementary, aspect of the Journey. Each phase is designed in the following sequence to build upon the results of the prior phases. It will ultimately bring

the church to the point where it is able to move forward into its future with a set of tools designed to reinvent itself as it fulfills its mission mandate.

Defining and developing a church's vision, along with knowing how to implement their ministries with trained and mature disciples, is much more than an academic pursuit. Vision Explosion's process creates a vibrant experience that incorporates both an Explosive Vision Journey and the Deployment of Dynamic Disciples.

Phases of the Vision Journey (with the graphic)

The Seven Phases of The Vision Journey (in boxes above and below the graphic):

- **Decisions** – The Decisions Phase will select and train the Journey Guides, who serve as the leadership group for this Journey. They are interviewed, target calendar dates are set, and responsibilities and projects for each of the phases are introduced, etc.
- **Discovery** – The Discovery Phase includes the researching of facts, understanding the church and local demographics, and conducting surveys and focus groups for both the leaders and the entire church, etc.
- **Defining** – The Defining Phase features conducting a “Vision Defining Retreat” for the church leaders, completing the Current Church Ministries study, and defining the church's distinct Vision focus.
- **Development** – In the Development Phase, the leaders create a Focused Vision, and use it to evaluate existing ministries, align focused ministries, and propose new ministries. The final Focused Vision will be presented to the entire congregation at the Roll-Out Event.
- **Deployment** – The Deployment Phase turns the corner from idea development to people development. MAP (Mission Action Prayer) Visits and a Prayer Vigil are conducted, culminating in the Deployment Service.
- **Documentation** – The Documentation Phase is an ongoing phase where the ministries are examined for ways that the vision of the church is being fulfilled, reports and examples of the victories are given, and successes of the various ministries are highlighted.
- **Duplication** – The Duplication Phase is also a continuing phase, and includes various forms of accountability, the establishment of a procedure to duplicate the process, training sessions for ministries, and available ongoing support from the Vision Mentor.

Factors to Consider for the Vision Journey

The Vision Journey is designed for those churches that are serious about focusing their vision and developing their people. They need to be prepared both financially and otherwise. The seven primary factors to consider are:

- **Time** – The Pastor, Journey Guides, and church leaders must commit themselves and their time to following the Vision Journey’s format, as described by the Vision Mentor. Journeys take time, and the time needed for the first five phases is approximately six months.
- **Energy** – While the Journey Guides will lead the various phases of the Journey, they will ask several others to join them in working on their projects. These projects will necessitate noticeable energy on the part of many in order to be completed on schedule.
- **Comfort Zones** – The Journey itself will involve many people working on several non-typical projects for most churches. The results will create changes, impacting the current ministries of the church. Comfort zones and complacency may be affected by these new challenges, but the end results will much more than compensate for the temporary discomfort.
- **Participation** – The Journey is designed for people to become engaged in the process, calling them from the spectator stands to the players’ bench. This is new territory for many, but will allow them the freedom both to express themselves and to take an active role in their church’s future. This will increase the level of ownership, and is necessary for the success of the Journey’s ultimate objective of engaged dynamic disciples.
- **Materials** – Several items will need to be prepared during the Journey. Some are simple ones like surveys, and some are more complex and professional like promotional items. The Mentor will give samples where available, and the church may want to engage a professional for some items. Those decisions will be made by the church leaders.
- **Vision Defining Retreat** – This is an overnight offsite retreat for the church leaders. This non-interrupted setting is essential for the defining and focusing of the church’s vision. The church usually picks up the expenses for the entire group of leaders.
- **Mentor’s Fee** – The Mentor’s fee will be determined separately for each church, and is calculated according to the time spent on the church’s behalf, any materials provided by Vision Explosion, and travel expenses for the Vision Mentor. The fee will be presented to the church before any decisions are made, and is payable in installments.

APPENDIX C

Vision Explosion Company Text for Small Tri-Fold Brochure

Front Page: (larger print, more spacing between lines, and purposeful spacing)

Vision Explosion is a passion-driven ministry – the passion for churches to understand, define, and develop their distinct mission mandate for Kingdom growth, as well as the passion to assist Pastors as they seek to fulfill their God-given assignment.

This passion will guide the church’s Vision Journey.

The Vision Explosion Company

The original format for the Vision Journey was first developed in 1981 by the company’s founder and president, Rev. Robert S. Hallett, during his last pastoral assignment. Rev. Hallett transitioned from a pastoral ministry to a church consulting ministry in 1985, which allowed him to work very closely with many churches from a wide variety of denominational and theological traditions. Once he started his own church consulting company (TLC Ministries) in 1990, he was free to incorporate these principles in that context.

Those who have benefited from Rev. Hallett’s ministry (both pastoral and consulting) know of his passion for the involvement and development of disciples for the Kingdom. The Vision Explosion Company is a natural outgrowth of that passion. It is dedicated to helping Pastors lead their churches through an Explosive Vision Journey while Deploying Dynamic Disciples.

Distinctive Features of the Vision Explosion Company

Vision Explosion is responsive to the hearts of many Pastors who feel that churches need more guidance than what is now available. Our purpose is to go far beyond the development of the church’s vision – we help churches go the rest of the way by mentoring them through the process of knowing how to incorporate those plans into their church’s ministry efforts through “enlisted volunteers.” Our distinctives include:

Interactive Onsite Mentoring

- **Onsite Vision Mentor** - We utilize the extensive guidance of an onsite Vision Mentor, who will customize the Vision Journey for each church.
- **Onsite Feedback** - We provide direct, immediate, interactive onsite feedback and input from the Vision Mentor to the Journey Guides and church leadership.

- **Integrity and Accountability** - Our Vision Mentor will be onsite frequently to bring integrity and accountability to the process.
- **Long-Term Support** - We are available for the long-term for continuing support and accountability.

Dynamic Vision Focus

- **A Proven Process** - The church leaders do not need to reinvent the process in determining how to implement their dreams.
- **Customized Approach** - We customize the approach according to the needs and circumstances of each church.
- **Experience and Objectivity** - Outside objectivity from an experienced Vision Mentor is crucial for the church to move beyond its current circumstances.

Energized Ministry Involvement

- **Extensive Congregational Involvement** – Our process is designed to enlist and involve the congregation without violating the authority and role of the church leadership.
- **Ministry As A Mandate** – We guide the church in knowing how to identify, enlist, engage, train, and deploy the “Gospel Troops” in various ministry settings.
- **Format to Maintain Enthusiasm** – We have built frequent training sessions into the Vision Focusing process, because people will serve better when they are properly trained!

Vision and Mission Mandate

In addition to the general mission given by Christ to His Church, each local church has its own distinct mission mandate that is reflective of its people, situation, and opportunities. However, not every church is accomplishing its mission mandate. The most common reason is the lack of a dynamic vision that should guide its ministries and inspire its people. Without vision, the people will focus inward – they may “do” church very well without actually fulfilling their mission mandate!

The Vision Journey can help the church reinvent itself in a way that mobilizes its people to do effective ministry, and thus fulfill its mission mandate. There are three major tracks for Vision Explosion’s Vision Journey:

- Defining and developing the church’s distinct vision with involvement by both the church leaders and the entire congregation;

- Developing mature disciples through their training and involvement in the ministries of the church; and
- The distinct vision and mission of the church being fulfilled with passion by maturing disciples.

Explosive Vision Journey

The Vision Journey involves both church leaders and the congregation in a dynamic venture to determine the future direction and appropriate ministries for their local church. This newly developed Vision focus will create a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm to fulfill those ministry opportunities.

Deploying Dynamic Disciples

It is the desire of disciples to grow and to serve with a sense of mission and effectiveness. Vision Explosion uses several venues to build both maturity and passion into disciples. We also guide the church leaders in knowing how to identify the right people for the right positions, then enlisting, engaging, training, and deploying them to staff those ministry settings. This process produces an energized dynamic where people fulfill their ministries with delight, dependability, and joy. Dynamic disciples serve much more effectively in Kingdom causes!

The Vision Journey

The Vision Journey has a beginning but no ending. The Vision Mentor will guide the church's Vision Journey through seven primary phases, with each phase focusing on a different, but complementary, aspect of the Journey. Each phase is designed in the following sequence to build upon the results of the prior phases. It will ultimately bring the church to the point where it is able to move forward into its future with a set of tools designed to reinvent itself as it fulfills its mission mandate.

Defining and developing a church's vision, along with knowing how to implement their ministries with trained and mature disciples, is much more than an academic pursuit. Vision Explosion's process creates a vibrant experience that incorporates both an Explosive Vision Journey and the Deployment of Dynamic Disciples.

- Decisions – Determining the current reality, objectives, schedules, and leaders.
- Discovery – Understanding the demographics of the church and community, and discerning the expected future of the church.
- Defining – Listening to the people, and a Vision Defining Retreat for the leaders.

- Development – Developing plans for a comprehensive Vision Focus for the future direction and ministries of the church.
- Deployment – Transitioning from idea development to people development, matching the right people with the right positions, and enhancing ownership and passion for ministry.
- Documentation – Highlighting ways the church is fulfilling its vision, and providing encouragement over the long term.
- Duplication – Continuing the process through accountability, training, and support.

Factors to Consider for the Vision Journey

The Vision Journey is designed for those churches that are serious about focusing their vision and developing their people. They need to be prepared both financially and otherwise. The seven primary factors to consider are:

- **Time** – A commitment to follow the Vision Journey’s format, usually about six months for the first five phases.
- **Energy** – The projects will necessitate noticeable energy on the part of many in order to be completed on schedule.
- **Comfort Zones** – The Journey will impact the current ministries of the church, and may affect traditional comfort zones and complacency.
- **Participation** – The Journey is designed for people to become engaged in the process, calling them from the spectator stands to the players’ bench.
- **Materials** – Several items (both self produced and professionally produced) will need to be prepared during the Journey.
- **Vision Defining Retreat** – This is an overnight offsite retreat for the church leaders.
- **Mentor’s Fee** – The Mentor’s fee will be determined separately for each church, and will be presented to the church before any decisions are made.

APPENDIX D**Text for the Vision-Explosion.com Website**

These directions were given to Bill (graphic artist who designed the website):

General Structure:

E-Mail to Bill on 4/28/09: Concerning the website, here are some ideas that we have talked about in the past, but there are some changes.

Please use the following Buttons, so the pages under an underlined button would show up, and be a direct link to it. There will not be a separate page for a button when there are other pages under that button. For example, the “About Us” button will not have a page of its own - the button just refers to a grouping of pages, like “What Is Vision Explosion?” etc. The “Home” page, however, will have a separate page of its own.

Please use the following both as the Description and Keywords for each page:

Vision Explosion Company – Vision and Mission Development, Vision Journey, Vision Focus, Strategic Planning, and Discipleship Development for Churches

Make the length of the pages flexible so we can vary it according to the amount of text we use for that page. And make it so we can add or subtract text as we wish.

The full contact info is at the bottom of every page, and the “Contact Us” button includes a form to be completed. Nowhere is our email address listed, but there should be an “email us” place at the bottom of every page with our contact information, and should be sent to office@vision-explosion.com

Use the following Buttons (shows included items when the cursor moves over it).

MARK – Use a font that is easy to read (like Arial), and big enough to read.

The following pages have been adapted from the original – USE THIS TEXT

The Buttons (across the top):

Main Button: **Home**

Welcome to the Vision Explosion Company

God has already assigned a certain Mission Mandate to each church, which is based on the Great Commission. Once the church's Mission Mandate is established, developing its distinct Focused Vision will depend upon each church's situation, circumstances, opportunities, passion, and ministry resources.

Vision Explosion is dedicated to helping each church fulfill its Focused Vision through an Explosive Vision Journey while Deploying Dynamic Disciples. Our comprehensive Vision Journey process delivers the ministry you envision for your church, within reasonable expectations, of course.

Vision Explosion is a passion-driven ministry – the passion for churches to understand, define, and develop their distinct Focused Vision for Kingdom growth, as well as the passion to assist Pastors as they seek to fulfill their God-given assignment. This passion will guide the church's Vision Journey, which is one of the most significant tools in the Pastor's toolbox.

Pastors have a passion to see their churches produce significant ministry results, both among their people, as well as for the effectiveness of their church's ministries in fulfilling the Great Commission. While there are seven steps involved in the Vision Journey, there are three major tracks to help the church accomplish these objectives:

- Defining and developing the church's distinct Focused Vision with input by both the church leaders and the congregation
- Developing mature disciples through ownership, enlistment, training, and serving in appropriate ministry experiences of the church
- Deploying dynamic and maturing disciples in the fulfillment of the church's distinct Focused Vision

Main Button: About Us

Secondary Button: What Is Vision Explosion?

What Is The Vision Explosion Company?

The Vision Explosion Company is an organization of Christian Ministers committed to the building of God's Kingdom, both in our local churches and

throughout Christendom. Our passion is to mentor churches through the process of clarifying and embracing their Focused Vision, and to help them develop dynamic disciples while fulfilling their vision.

We come from various denominational backgrounds and theological persuasions. We are evangelical in orientation, but we do not promote nor limit our ministry to any one group or tradition. Our mentoring staff are Ordained Ministers who have been carefully selected for their personal and professional qualities, and who have been successful and respected in their own ministry settings. We are headquartered in New Castle, Indiana, but extend our ministry through regional offices.

Secondary Button: **The Leadership Team**

Leadership Team of Highly Qualified Mentors

Vision Explosion's representative to the local church will be a Vision Mentor. The Vision Mentor will partner with churches to give diligent and professional leadership to each church's Vision Journey in a way that is consistent with and supportive of each church's identity, mission, and objectives. Each Vision Mentor will have proven credentials in prior ministerial settings, and is carefully chosen and trained to be:

- Experienced in ministry and local church leadership
- Experienced and knowledgeable in leading the Vision Journey in local churches
- Possessive of leadership abilities and style that create confidence and comfort
- Competent to adapt the Vision Journey to the unique nature of each church
- Above question in integrity, character, and commitment

- Able to relate well with people, establishing warm and friendly lines of communication
- Both a listener and a leader, with experience, wisdom, common sense, and foresight

Secondary Button: **Our Mission and Vision**

Vision Explosion's Mission Statement

The mission of the Vision Explosion Company is to build Kingdom disciples by mentoring church leaders through their Vision Journey process.

Vision Explosion's Vision Statement

The vision of the Vision Explosion Company is to see churches discover, define and develop their Mission Mandate and distinct Focused Vision with input by both the church leaders and the congregation, to develop mature disciples through ownership, enlistment, training, and serving in appropriate ministry experiences of the church, and to deploy dynamic and maturing disciples in the fulfillment of the church's distinct Focused Vision.

We will do this by mentoring churches through their Vision Journey process to provide Pastors and other church leaders the tools to reinvent the church in a way that will mobilize its people to do effective ministry, and thus fulfill its Mission Mandate. We will accomplish this by helping churches determine their leaders, discover their identity, define their Mission Mandate that is based on the Great Commission, develop a distinct Focused Vision (strategic plans) to fulfill that Mission Mandate, deploy (enlist, assign, and train) the people to staff the ministries identified in the Focused Vision, document the success stories as the vision is being fulfilled to encourage people's continued service, and provide resources and effective ongoing training as a way to duplicate the Vision Journey.

Secondary Button: **Our Core Values**

Vision Explosion's Core Values

The leadership and staff of Vision Explosion have committed ourselves to several Core Values, which express who we are, as well as underscores the extent of our commitment to this ministry. We consider these as investments into building Kingdom disciples, knowing that eternal values are at stake. They can be summarized as follows:

COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY:

We are Christian Ministers first, and then Vision Mentors as our ministry assignment. Thus our first commitment is to God to serve as His ambassadors to this world, and our second commitment is to the churches we serve. Therefore, we will speak the truth in love to each church, no matter how hard it is to hear, and we will give guidance based on what is best for God's Kingdom more than what is comfortable for the church.

COMMITMENT TO BIBLICAL TEACHINGS AND STANDARDS:

We believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God, inerrant in the originals, and complete in the 66 Books of the Old and New Testaments. Further, we have adopted The Apostle's Creed as our Statement of Faith. Therefore, we will follow the Scriptural teachings as our guide for all matters of faith, practice, business, and mentoring. We will depend upon Scriptural teachings as the foundational principles for all we do in conducting our personal lives, in the operation of the Vision Explosion Company, and in mentoring churches through their Vision Journeys. We will employ current business and mentoring practices only to the extent as the Scriptures allow and teach.

COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST:

The church is the body, building, and bride of Christ. As such, it is the visible manifestation of Christ's Kingdom here on earth. Those who have come to personal redemptive faith in Christ are members of His universal church, and are intended to be members of local communities of believers called local churches. Together, these believers hold a very special place in the heart of God, upon whom He lavishes His love, His gifts, His resources, and His blessings. Therefore, each local community of believers is to live in response to God's graciousness, and to be the lighthouse God intended them to be to this world of how His grace is sufficient for the needs of all humankind.

COMMITMENT TO THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH:

The role of the local church can best be seen as three parallel tracks that intermingle with each other. One track is the fulfillment of the Great Commission by aggressively making Kingdom disciples. Another track is to develop believers

into mature disciples through individual and corporate growth experiences as their relationships with God mature into the oneness of nature with God that He desires. The third track is to become the outreach arm of God to take the message that God has already recorded in the Scriptures to a wayward world in an effort to bring it back to God, and to establish God's values throughout the world. Therefore, each local church is to engage in such activities and mission-oriented ministries as would accomplish all three objectives. Each church is assigned the Great Commission. Believers need these mission-oriented activities in order to mature and develop in their own discipleship journeys. The world also needs the witness of the church so they can be aware of God's values, judgments, and mercy. And the world is in desperate need to hear from the messengers of God the need to restrict their activities to those that can be approved and sanctioned by God.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE:

The Vision Explosion Company is committed to excellence as an expression of our belief that God calls us to excellence, and requires excellence of us in all we do. After all, whatever we do is to be done for the glory of God, and God is not glorified by substandard attitudes or practices. Therefore, we will express our commitment to excellence in the things we do through our:

Methods and Materials

We have developed a proven process by which most churches can accomplish the objectives of the three tracks of disciple making, personal growth, and being a witness to the world. We have also developed the most comprehensive materials possible to help churches along their Vision Journeys. In addition, we will constantly monitor both the methods and materials to make sure they reflect the highest standards possible, and are appropriate for each individual church.

Business Practices

Our first priority in conducting our business is to do things God's way, as revealed in the Scriptures. After that, we commit ourselves to maintaining a proper balance between what is required by applicable laws, the best business practices available for our profession, and valuing individuals and churches more than profit margins. We insist upon integrity and honesty in all dealings, both personal, personnel, vendors and suppliers, and with the churches we serve.

Highly Qualified Mentors

Vision Explosion's Vision Mentor will partner with churches to give diligent and professional leadership to each church's Vision Journey in a way that is consistent with and supportive of each church's identity, mission, and objectives. Each Vision Mentor will have proven credentials in prior ministerial settings, and is carefully chosen and trained to be:

- Experienced in ministry and local church leadership
- Experienced and knowledgeable in leading the Vision Journey in local churches
- Possessive of leadership abilities and style that create confidence and comfort
- Competent to adapt the Vision Journey to the unique nature of each church
- Above question in integrity, character, and commitment
- Able to relate well with people, establishing warm and friendly lines of communication
- Both a listener and a leader, with experience, wisdom, common sense, and foresight

Main Button: **Our Distinctives**

Secondary Button: **Overview**

Distinctive Features of the Vision Explosion Company

Vision Explosion is responsive to the hearts of many Pastors who feel that churches need more guidance than what is now available. Our purpose is to go far beyond the planning and development of the church's vision – we help churches go the rest of the way by mentoring them through the process of knowing how to incorporate those plans into their church's ministry efforts through "enlisted volunteers." Our distinctives, as described on subsequent pages, include:

- **Interactive Onsite Mentoring**
- **Dynamic Focused Vision**
- **Energized Ministry Involvement**

Secondary Button: **Interactive Onsite Mentoring**

Interactive Onsite Mentoring

- **Onsite Vision Mentor** – We utilize the extensive onsite guidance of a Vision Mentor. We don't just tell you what to do, we mentor you in doing it. Our Mentors go beyond the role of a Consultant or Coach – we purposefully provide an example, samples, and training for the Vision Journey Guides as they fulfill their leadership roles.
- **Onsite Feedback** – We provide direct, immediate, and onsite feedback and input from the Vision Mentor to the Journey Guides and church leadership. The relationship is very interactive. This personal touch goes far beyond a seminar or phone conversation format. Words do not tell the whole story – much of our communication with each other comes from body language and follow-up questions.
- **Integrity and Accountability** – Our Vision Mentor being onsite frequently will bring integrity to the Vision Journey process by giving overall guidance and training, providing appropriate accountability, and making course corrections as needed.
- **Long-Term Support** – We make continuing support and accountability for the long-term available to the church that your success may continue to expand.

Secondary Button: Dynamic Focused Vision

Dynamic Focused Vision

- **A Proven Process** – We take a big load off the shoulders of the church leadership by providing a proven process and onsite guidance that will make their Vision Journey an ongoing success. The church leaders do not need to reinvent the process in determining how to implement their dreams.
- **Customized Approach** – We customize the approach according to the needs and circumstances of each church. This process is much more effective than the generalized approach available through seminars and phone calls. The Vision Mentor will discover the unique setting and circumstances of each local church, and will guide their Vision Journey accordingly.
- **Experience and Objectivity** – The Vision Mentor brings both experience and objectivity to the church. The background of the Vision Mentors is vocational ministry and church consulting in a variety of church traditions. This outside objectivity is crucial for the church to move beyond its current circumstances. In addition, Vision Explosion expects the church to receive its primary direction

from the Vision Mentor, not from leaders of other churches who are also seeking answers and guidance.

Secondary Button: **Energized Ministry Involvement**

Energized Ministry Involvement

- **Extensive Congregational Involvement** – We work with both the church leaders and the entire congregation to seek direct input and suggestions for their church’s future. Our process is designed to enlist and involve the congregation without violating the authority and role of the church leadership. We know that people will support their own ideas better than someone else’s ideas, so the early involvement of the congregation in their church’s future is a key component for their feelings of ownership. And this ownership is necessary to staff the ministries that are developed to support the church’s vision.
- **Ministry As A Mandate** – We provide a proven format to involve a significant number of the congregation in staffing and fulfilling the church’s ministries. People need to catch their church’s vision personally before they will support it fully. We guide the church in knowing how to identify, enlist, engage, train, and deploy the “Gospel Troops” in those ministry settings. Pastors have long struggled with how to implement their plans for ministry in a way that incorporates extensive congregational support – this proven process gives them the tools to do so.
- **Format to Maintain Enthusiasm** – We have drafted a process to maintain the support and enthusiasm of the congregation over the long term as they fulfill their ministries. We also build frequent training sessions into the Vision Focusing process, because people will serve better when they are properly trained!

Main Button: **Vision Journey**

Secondary Button: **Vision and Mission Mandate**

Vision and Mission Mandate

Christ has given the Great Commission to His church generally, and to each local church specifically. Each local church is to develop their own distinct Mission Mandate that is based on the Great Commission, and is reflective of its people, situation, and opportunities. This is often called their Mission Statement.

However, not every church is accomplishing its Mission Mandate. The most common reason is the lack of a dynamic vision that guides its ministries and inspires its people. Without vision, the people will focus inwardly – they may “do” church very well

without actually fulfilling their Mission Mandate! The church's Vision Statement, however, is designed to identify the various ways the church is to accomplish its Mission Statement, as well as stirring up the energy and passion to do so.

A clearly-defined vision is important in the normal operations of the church. It is especially important when a church is considering a major new venture. It takes frequent refining of that vision for the church to stay on a focused track, to make any necessary course corrections, to accomplish its ultimate objectives, and to keep its people inspired and faithful in service. The Vision Journey can help the church reinvent itself in a way that mobilizes its people to do effective ministry, and thus fulfill its Mission Mandate.

To accomplish this, the Vision Explosion Company will mentor the church through the process of establishing its distinct Mission Statement, as well as directing the planning to develop its Vision Statement, which we identify as a Focused Vision. This Focused Vision will serve to define, select, and guide the specific ministries that are appropriate to fulfilling the church's Mission Statement, and will also serve to inspire its people in doing so.

Secondary Button: Explosive Vision Journey

Explosive Vision Journey

The Vision Journey gives structure to the church's efforts of disciple making, disciple maturing, and maturing disciples fulfilling the church's Mission Mandate. It will involve both church leaders and the congregation in a dynamic venture to determine the future direction and appropriate ministries for their local church, as well as create a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm to fulfill those ministry opportunities.

The Focused Vision, which will be developed onsite with appropriate ministries, will be specific to each church and situation. The Vision Journey also provides a proven format for people to be enlisted and prepared for ministry, and to have strong feelings of ownership and personal mission as they embark on the ventures associated with those ministries.

The Vision Journey will refine the church's understanding of their own distinct Mission Mandate, and serve to guide the selection of ministries to fulfill that mandate. It will also help the church to evaluate their current ministries, and either reaffirm them, redesign them to conform to their Mission Mandate, or eliminate the ones that are not in line with their Mission Mandate.

Secondary Button: Deploying Dynamic Disciples

Deploying Dynamic Disciples

It is the desire of disciples to grow and to serve with a sense of mission and effectiveness. Not all disciples are naturally dynamic – they need to be developed, especially if they have become complacent in their church lives, or are facing burnout and discouragement.

Vision Explosion uses several venues to build both maturity and passion into disciples. We provide a format where all the church people are encouraged to make recommendations for the future direction and ministries of their church. This early involvement creates ownership for Kingdom efforts as expressed through the ministries of their church, and is crucial as the church seeks to staff those ministries that are selected in the Focused Vision.

We also guide the church leaders in knowing how to identify the right people for the right positions, then enlisting, engaging, training, and deploying them to staff those ministry settings. This process produces an energized dynamic where people fulfill their ministries with delight, dependability, and joy. Dynamic disciples serve much more effectively in Kingdom causes!

Secondary Button: Factors to Consider

Factors to Consider for the Vision Journey

The Vision Journey is designed for those churches that are serious about focusing their vision and developing their people. They need to be prepared both financially and otherwise. The seven primary factors to consider are:

- **Time** – The Pastor, Journey Guides, and church leaders must commit themselves and their time to following the Vision Journey’s format, as described by the Vision Mentor. Successful and productive journeys take time, and the time needed for the first five phases of the Vision Journey is approximately six months.
- **Energy** – While the Journey Guides (leaders of the phases of the Vision Journey) will lead the Journey in their own church, they will ask several others to join them in working on their projects. These projects will necessitate noticeable energy on the part of many in order to be completed on schedule.
- **Comfort Zones** – The Journey itself will involve many people working on several projects regarding their church’s future. The results will create changes, and will impact the ministry offerings of the church. New ministries may be added as a result of the Focused Vision. The church will also evaluate their current ministries, and either reaffirm them, redesign them to conform to their Mission Mandate, or eliminate the ones that are not in line with their Mission

Mandate. Comfort zones and complacency may be affected by these new challenges, but the end results will much more than compensate for the temporary discomfort.

- **Participation** – The Journey is designed for people to become engaged in the process, calling them from the spectator stands to the players’ bench. This is new territory for many, but will allow them the freedom both to express themselves and to take an active role in their church’s future. This will increase the level of ownership, and is necessary for the success of the Journey’s ultimate objective of engaging maturing and dynamic disciples in the fulfillment of the church’s Mission Mandate.
- **Materials** – Several items will need to be prepared during the Journey. Some are simple ones like surveys, and some are more complex and professional like promotional items. The Mentor will give samples where available, and the church may want to engage a professional for some items. Those decisions will be made by the church leaders.
- **Vision Defining Retreat** – This is an overnight offsite retreat for the church leaders. This non-interrupted setting is essential for the defining and focusing of the church’s vision. The church usually picks up the expenses for the entire group of leaders.
- **Mentor’s Fee** – The Mentor’s fee will be determined separately for each church, and is calculated according to the time spent on the church’s behalf, any materials provided by Vision Explosion, and travel expenses for the Vision Mentor. The fee will be presented to the church before any decisions are made, and is payable in installments.

Main Button: **Journey Overview**

The Vision Journey

The Vision Journey has a beginning but no ending. The Vision Mentor will guide the church’s Vision Journey through seven primary phases, with each phase focusing on a different, but complementary, aspect of the Journey. Each phase is designed in the following sequence to build upon the results of the prior phases. It will ultimately bring the church to the point where it is able to move forward into its future with a set of tools designed to reinvent itself as it fulfills its Mission Mandate.

Defining and developing a church’s Focused Vision, along with knowing how to implement their ministries with trained, maturing, and dynamic disciples, is much more than an academic pursuit. Vision Explosion’s process creates a vibrant experience that incorporates both an Explosive Vision Journey and the Deployment of Dynamic Disciples.

The Seven Phases of The Vision Journey are:

Decisions

The Decisions Phase will select and train the Journey Guides, who serve as the leadership group for this Journey. They are interviewed, target calendar dates are set, and responsibilities and projects for each of the phases are introduced, etc.

Discovery

The Discovery Phase includes the researching of facts, understanding the church and local demographics, and conducting surveys and focus groups for both the leaders and the entire church, etc.

Defining

The Defining Phase features conducting a “Vision Defining Retreat” for the church leaders, completing the Current Church Ministries study, defining the church’s distinct Mission Statement, and identifying items for the church’s Focused Vision.

Development

In the Development Phase, the leaders create a Focused Vision, and use it to evaluate existing ministries, align focused ministries, and propose new ministries. The final Focused Vision will be presented to the entire congregation at the Roll-Out Event.

Deployment

The Deployment Phase turns the corner from idea development to people development. MAP (Mission Action Prayer) Visits and a Prayer Vigil are conducted, culminating in the Deployment Service.

Documentation

The Documentation Phase is an ongoing phase where the ministries are examined for ways that the vision of the church is being fulfilled, reports and examples of the victories are given, and successes of the various ministries are highlighted.

Duplication

The Duplication Phase is also a continuing phase, and includes various forms of accountability, the establishment of a procedure to duplicate the process, training sessions for ministries, and available ongoing support from the Vision Mentor.

Main Button: Capital Campaigns

The mission of the Vision Explosion Company does not include leading capital campaigns. However, our sister company, TLC Ministries, has been leading Scriptural Funding Campaigns since its founding in 1990. TLC has pioneered the Ministry Approach, which focuses on raising the most funds possible while leaving very positive “feeling tones” among the church people – a win-win combination. The TLC campaign is a dynamic and spiritually uplifting experience because they put into practice the Scriptural principles of how God works with the human heart. The essence of their Ministry Approach is to develop more responsive Stewardship Disciples.

Follow this link www.tlcministries.com to learn more about them, or contact them directly at (800) 473-5352.

Main Button: Contact Us

Full contact information.

Another form to sign up for the E-letter.

A form to request information or send an e-mail to VEC.

Main Button: Recommended Links

NOTE: TLC is first, with a banner ad.

Use the following section **ONLY WHEN REQUESTED**

Main Button: Leadership Letters

Secondary Button: FREE Leadership Letter (with form)

The Leadership Letter, “Developing Kingdom Leaders,” is a weekly email sent to those who request it. It is designed to provide brief Scriptural insights on leadership, stewardship, and vision issues. All “Developing Kingdom Leaders” email content is copywrited by Rev. Robert S. Hallett, President of Vision Explosion Company, but may be used as a reference when proper credit is given.

Remember to add LeadershipLetter@Vision-Explosion.com to your allowable emails.

Form:

Email Address: _____ Required

Repeat Email Address: _____ Required

Optional: Name _____

Title/Position _____

Church _____

Address _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Send Information: Yes No

Contact Me: Yes No

Click to unsubscribe.

Secondary Button: Current Leadership Letter

The Leadership Letter, “Developing Kingdom Leaders,” is a weekly email sent to those who request it. It is designed to provide brief Scriptural insights on leadership, stewardship, and vision issues. Remember, all “Developing Kingdom Leaders” email content is copywrited by Rev. Robert S. Hallett, President of Vision Explosion Company, but may be used as a reference when proper credit is given.

The current issue of the Leadership Letter is listed below. For prior issues, click on this link for the Archived Letters.

Secondary Button: **Archived Leadership Letters**

Archived “Developing Kingdom Leaders” emails are listed below, and are cross-references as ot both date sent and title. Click on the appropriate link below to find the one you want. Remember, all “Developing Kingdom Leaders” email content is copywrited by Rev. Robert S. Hallett, President of Vision Explosion Company, but may be used as a reference when proper credit is given.

Link to date

Link to title

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Leith. *A Church for the 21st Century*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1990.
- Armstrong, John H., ed. *Reforming Pastoral Ministry: Challenges for Ministry in Postmodern Times*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001.
- Askew, Thomas A. and Richard V. Pierard. *The American Church Experience*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Barna, George. *The Power of Vision: How You Can Capture and Apply God's Vision for Your Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992.
- _____. *Turning Vision into Action: Defining and Putting into Practice the Unique Vision God Has for Your Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996.
- _____. *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom Advice and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997.
- _____. *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches: Being Strategic in Your God-Given Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999.
- _____. *Revolution*. Carol Springs, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005.
- Barna, George and Mark Hatch. *Boiling Point: It Only Takes One Degree*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001.
- Bass Pro Website, Outdoor Site Library. "Fred Bear Museum." Online Reference. <http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/CFPageC?storeId=10151&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&mode=article&objectID=29996&catID=&subcatID=0> (accessed December 15, 2009).
- Beckwith, Harry. *Selling the Invisible: A Field Guide to Modern marketing*. New York: Warner Books, 1997.
- _____. *The Invisible Touch: The Four Keys to Modern Marketing*. New York: Warner Books, 2000.
- Bennis, Warren and Patricia Ward Biederman. *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 1997.
- Berkley, James D., ed. *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994.

- Blanchard, Ken, Bill Hybels and Phil Hodges. *Leadership by the Book: Tools to Transform Your Workplace*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1999.
- Boortz, Neal, John Linder, and Rob Woodall. *FairTax: The Truth*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008.
- Breen, Mike and Walt Kallestad. *The Passionate Church*. Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministry, 2005.
- Brown, W. Steven. *13 Fatal Errors Managers Make: and How You Can Avoid Them*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1985.
- Bullard, George. *Spiritual Strategic Journey: Tutorial for Congregational Redevelopment*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2004.
- _____. "The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development." Online Resource. http://sed-efca.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/stages_of_church_life_bullard.pdf (accessed April 16, 2010).
- Burchill, Tim. "Letter of Reference." West Lafayette, IN: St. Andrew United Methodist Church, 2006.
- Burkett, Larry. *Business by the Book: The Complete Guide of Biblical Principles for the Workplace*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998.
- Business. GOV. "Business Owner's Toolkit: Total Know-How for Small Businesses." Interactive CD-ROM. 2008. Also available as an Online Reference. <http://startuptoolkit.org/webinars/wabp/player.html> (accessed February 24, 2010).
- Chand, Samuel R. and Cecil Murphey. *Who's Holding Your Ladder?: Selecting Your Leaders – Leadership's Most Critical Decision*. Hyland Park, IL: Mall Publishing Company, 2003.
- 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.
- Clowney, Edmund P. *The Church*. Contours of Christian Theology Series. General Editor Gerald Bray. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- Collins, James C, and Jerry I. Porras. *Built to Last*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994.
- Compton, Stephen C. The Alban Institute. Online Resource. 2003. <http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=2404> (accessed April 17, 2010).

- Cordeiro, Wayne. *Attitudes that Attract Success: You Are Only One Attitude Away From a Great Life*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001.
- Cornwell, Collon. iCrossing. "The Importance of Page-One Visibility," Online Resource. February, 2010. <http://www.icrossing.com/articles/The-Importance-of-Page-one-Visibility.pdf> (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Covey, Stephen R. "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." CD Audio Book. Niles, IL: Nightingale-Conant Corporation, 1990.
- Covey, Stephen R., A. Roger Merrill, and Rebecca R. Merrill. *First Things First: To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Earls, Jason. Online Resource. "William Tyndale: Bible Translator and Martyr." <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2278173/William-Tyndale-Martyr-and-Bible-Translator> (accessed April 21, 2010).
- Ellis, Lee. *Leading Talents, Leading Teams: Aligning People, Passions and Positions for Maximum Performance*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 2003.
- Engstrom, Ted W. *The Making of a Christian Leader*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976.
- Ertell, Kevin. "Social Media for Retailers: Focus on Facebook." Online Resource. February 25, 2010. <http://www.retailcustomerexperience.com/article/4557/Social-media-for-retailers-Focus-on-Facebook> (accessed March 9, 2010).
- Ewing, Bruce A. "Design and Program Evaluation of Leadership Training and Development for Ministry Leaders in the Local Church." Dallas Theological Seminary, 1995.
- Exhibitorial E-Newsletter. Convention Industry Council. The International Center for Exhibitor and Event Marketing. The Center's Exhibitorial News for 19 March 2010. "Face Time Matters," Online Resource. www.iceem.net News tab. Newsletter button. Newsletter 19 March 2010. (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Fagerstrom, Douglas and James Carlson. *The Lonely Pew*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993.
- Falwell, Jonathan, ed. *InnovateChurch: Innovate Leadership for the Next Generation Church*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2008.
- Finn, Bruce. "Small Churches Can Plant Churches." Dissertation, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2000.

- Fontana, Andrea and James H. Frey. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Editors Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2000.
- Ford, Kevin G. *Transforming Church: Bringing Out the Good to Get to Great*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008.
- Funk, Tim. "Doing God's Business." Charlotte, NC: Charlotte News Observer, 2/18/2010. Online Reference. www.newsobserver.com/2010/02/18/343955/doing-gods-business.html (accessed February 26, 2010).
- Gaede, Beth Ann. *Size Transitions in Congregations*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2001.
- Gaub, Ken. *Dreams – How to Have Them; Plans – How to Make Them; Goals – How to Reach Them*. Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1993.
- Getz, Gene A. *The Measure of a Church*. Ventura, CA: Regel Publishers, 1975.
- _____. *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1974.
- Getz, Gene and Joe Wall. *Effective Church Growth Strategies*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000.
- Gillogly, Matt. "The Difference Between Worldly & Kingdom Entrepreneurship." Online Resource. March 25, 2010. <http://www.christianbusinessdaily.com/> (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Grenz, Stanley J. *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.
- Graves, Stephen R. and Thomas G. Addington. *Life @ Work on Leadership: Enduring Insights for Men and Women of Faith*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Guder, Darrell L. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.
- Hallett, Robert S. "A Sacrifice of Love." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. December, 2009.
- _____. "Assignment of a Steward." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. June, 2005.

- _____. "Capitalize on Lay Support to Reach Campaign Goals." Church Executive Magazine. <http://www.churchexecutive.com/article.asp?IndexID=387> (October, 2004).
- _____. "Checklist for Success." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. February, 2006.
- _____. "Conspiracy of Silence in Financial Matters." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. April, 2005.
- _____. "Developing a Vision for the Project." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. January, 2005.
- _____. "Faith and Obedience." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. January, 2005.
- _____. "Finding Support for a Capital Campaign." Religious Product News. <http://www.religiousproductnews.com/archives/2005/oct/findingSupportForACapitalCampaign.htm> (October, 2005): 44-46 (accessed December 17, 2009).
- _____. "Goal Setting." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. January, 2005.
- _____. "How to Make the Tax Man Squirm." Church Solutions Magazine. <http://www.vpico.com/articlemanager/printerfriendly.aspx?article=127026> Posted September 28, 2006 (accessed December 17, 2009).
- _____. "Journey to a Changed Heart." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. December, 2003.
- _____. "King David – Fundraising God's Way." Religious Product News. <http://religiousproductnews.com/archives/2007/aug/tlc.htm> (August, 2007): 32-36 (accessed December 17, 2009).
- _____. "Ministerial Mandate for Change." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. December, 2003.
- _____. "Overcoming Excuses." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. December, 2003.
- _____. "Sales Presentations." Have Developed and Made Well Over 2000 Sales Presentations (with visual aids for Overhead Projector, Slides, PowerPoint, etc.) in Churches of Many Denominations and Traditions Throughout the USA and International. 1985-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign." Led Capital Funds Campaigns in Over 250 Churches – USA and International (including Hyland Heights Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA in 2006), 1985 to 2009.

- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Campaign Preparation Manual." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Campaign Training Manual." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Celebrate Our Church Service." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Consultant's Guidebook." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Ebenezer Service." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Follow-Up Guide." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Marketing Materials." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: New Vision Sunday Mini-Campaign." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Preliminary Campaign Preparation Manual." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: TV Commercial." Noblesville, IN: WHMB-TV 40, 2007-08.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Video Campaign (12 Tape Set)." Noblesville, IN: WHMB-TV 40, 1999.
- _____. "Scriptural Funding Campaign: Website (www.tlcministries.com)." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Stewardship Lesson Materials: Teacher's Edition for Adults and Teens." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Stewardship Lesson Materials: Teacher's Edition for Children." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Soft & Ministry." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. January, 2005.
- _____. "Stewardship Mandate." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. January, 2005.

- _____. "The Capital Campaign Committee." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. July, 2004.
- _____. "The Costs of Love." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. September, 2002.
- _____. "The Marketplace Has Changed." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. June, 2009.
- _____. "TLC Foundations." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. February, 2009.
- _____. "Understanding the Church Capital Campaign." Taught Seminar, annual meeting of the National Association of Church Business Administration, Long Beach, CA, July 19, 2009. (Have Taught Over 25 Seminars on Church Finances, Budget Development, Discipleship Development, and Church Capital Funds Campaigns in Several Different Types of Settings). 1990-2009.
- _____. "Vision Defining Seminar: Leaders Workbook." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Vision Defining Seminar." Led Visioning Seminars (Weekend Retreats) in Six Churches in Indiana and Michigan, 1981-2008.
- _____. "Vision Defining Seminar: Preparation Manual." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1990-2009.
- _____. "Vision Explosion Company: Marketing Materials." New Castle, IN: Vision Explosion Company, 2009.
- _____. "Vision Explosion Company: Website (www.vision-explosion.com)." New Castle, IN: Vision Explosion Company, 2009.
- _____. "Vision Journey: Processes and Materials." New Castle, IN: Vision Explosion Company, 2009.
- _____. "What Guarantees Funding Success?" Religious Product News. <http://religiousproductnews.com/archives/2006/apr/whatGuaranteesFundingSuccess.htm> (April, 2006): 30-33 (accessed December 17, 2009).
- _____. "When Your Church Needs to Build: Helpful Insights for Each Phase of the Building and Funding Process." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 1997-2009.
- Hallett, Robert S., ed. "Follow-Up Reports & Skits." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 2008.
- Hallett, Robert S., ed. "Leaders Discussion Guide: The Treasure Principle by Randy Alcorn." New Castle, IN: TLC Ministries, Inc. 2000-2009.

- Hasty, Herndon. "Search Engine Watch," Online Resource. Mar 16, 2010. <http://searchenginewatch.com/3639794> (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Hybels, Bill & Lynne. *Rediscovering Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Hull, Bill. *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker: Rediscovering Jesus' Strategy for Building His Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984.
- _____. *The Disciple Making Pastor: The Key to Building Healthy Christians in Today's Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988.
- _____. *The Disciple Making Church: Apply the Dynamics of the First-Century Church to Your Church Today*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990.
- Indiana Government Website. "An Entrepreneur's Guide to Starting A Business in Indiana." Online Reference. <http://www.in.gov/sos/business/2428.htm> (accessed February 24, 2010).
- InfoGroup. "White paper: Anatomy of a Successful Direct Mail Campaign." www.infogroup.com. May not be available without payment. (accessed April 3, 2010).
- InfoGroup, "White paper: Deliver the One-Two Punch: Email and Direct Mail," Online Resource. September 26, 2009. <http://infogroup.com/index.php/article-library/email-marketing/393-deliver-the-one-two-punch-email-and-direct-mail-> (accessed April 9, 2010).
- InfoGroup. "White paper: Email Marketing. Permission: Say "Please" Before Hitting Send." www.infogroup.com. May not be available without payment. (accessed April 3, 2010).
- IRS Website. In the "operations" list of requirements for a nonprofit organization, page 3, Online Reference. <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4220.pdf> (accessed December 31, 2009).
- Iverson, Dick, and Larry Asplund. *Building Churches that Last: Discover the Biblical Pattern for New Testament Church Growth*. Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing, 1995.
- Jones, Ron. ClickZ. "Keyword Research 101." Online Resource. March 8, 2010. <http://www.clickz.com/3639707> (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987.

- MacArthur, John F., Jr. *The Master's Plan for the Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991.
- Mack, Michael C. *The Synergy Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1997.
- _____. *Developing a Dynamic Mission for Your Ministry: Finding Direction and Making an Impact as a Church Leader*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998.
- _____. *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999.
- _____. *Doing Church*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999.
- _____. *Values-Driven Leadership*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.
- _____. *Advanced Strategic Planning*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005.
- Malphurs, Aubrey, and Will Mancini. *Building Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.
- Mancini, Will. *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
- Martin, Glen and Gary McIntosh. *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends that Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993.
- Mast, Brian and Wendy Wood, eds. *Profiles of Success: Stories of Real Men Who Have Shaped Our Heritage*. Orlando, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1999
- Maxwell, John C. *Developing the Leader Within You*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993.
- _____. *The Winning Attitude: Your Key to Personal Success*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993.
- _____. *Developing the Leaders Around You: How to Help Others Reach Their Full Potential*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.
- _____. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.
- _____. *The Power of Partnership in the Church*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999.

- McIntosh, Gary L. Church Growth Network. "There Is Potential For Rebirth." Website: www.churchgrowthnetwork.com Growth Points Newsletter - Hardcopy. January, 2009. Volume 21. Issue 1.
- Miller, C. John. *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986.
- Miller, Robert D. *A Legacy of Church Planting: Passing Truth From One Generation to the Next*. Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2009.
- Mills, Steve. Assemblies of God. "Organizational Life Cycle." Online Resource. 1997. http://webuildpeople.ag.org/WBP_library/9608_organization_lifecycl.cfm. (accessed April 16, 2010).
- Muratori, John Louis. *Rich Church Poor Church: Unlock the Secrets of Creating Wealth and Harness the Power of Money to Influence Everything*. Cheshire, CT: GateKeeper Publishing, 2007.
- Muratori, John Louis and Michael Q. Pink. "Christian Wealth Building." CD Audio Book. *Selling Among Wolves*, 2007
- Murthy, Mahesh. "Establish Brand Image in Online Media," Online Resource. February 22, 2010. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703791504575070151291532366.HTML> (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Noris, Patricia. Publisher – Gift Shop Magazine. "Design Your Emails for the Five Stages of Viewing," Online Resource. February 16, 2010. <http://www.snapretail.com/retailer/library-advisor-article-detail.asp?aid=2165> (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Pink, Michael Q. *Selling Among Wolves Without Joining the Pack*. "God Love Sales," Online Resource. E-Mail sent on March 1, 2010. (accessed March 1, 2010).
- Pink, Michael Q. *Selling Among Wolves Without Joining the Pack*. Online Resource. <http://www.sellingamongwolves.com/index.php?module=content&sid=5>. (accessed March 1, 2010).
- Shook, Kerry and Chris. "One Month to Live 30-Day Challenge." CD Audio Book. The Woodlands, TX: OneMonthtoLive.com, 2009.
- Passmore, Tim. *Outcome: A Blueprint for Becoming an Effective Church*. Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2006.
- Pink, Michael Q. "3 Levels of Sales Acceleration: How to Gain Mastery, Leverage & Velocity." CD Audia Book: *Selling Among Wolves*, 2005.

- _____. "7 Laws of Persuasion: How the Holy Spirit Persuades the Heart." CD Audio Book: *Selling Among Wolves*, 2005.
- _____. "7 Points of Lights: 7 Disciplines of Marketing." CD Audio Book: *Selling Among Wolves*, 2005.
- _____. "Taking Back the Gates of Commerce." CD Audio Book: *Selling Among Wolves*.
- _____. *Rainforest Strategy: The Planet's Most Successful Business Model*. Lake Mary, FL: Excel Books, 2008.
- _____. "The Raincatcher's Secret: 7 Paths to the Wealth, Wisdom & the Wonder of God." CD Audio Book: *Selling Among Wolves*, 2005.
- _____. "Vision: Getting It Right, Seeing Clearly & Following Through." CD Audio Book: *Selling Among Wolves*, 2005.
- Pope, Randy. *The Prevailing Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2002.
- _____. *The Intentional Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2006.
- Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2000.
- Quinn, Emerson. "Website Promotion – Are They Typically Similar Or Are They Different?" Online Resource. March 22, 2010.
<http://www.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474978122312> (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Radmacher, Earl Dwight. "The Nature of the Church." Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1962.
- Rainer, Thom S. *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.
- Rainer, Thom S. and Eric Geiger. *Simple Church*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006.
- Ransom, Diana. Smart Money's Small Business Suite. "Quick Tips: 7 Ways to Make Pay-Per-Click Pay." Online Resource. March 2, 2010.
http://www.smsmallbiz.com/marketing/Quick_Tips_7_Ways_To_Make_Pay_Per_Click_Payoff.html (accessed March 29, 2010).
- Russell, Bob. *When God Builds a Church*. West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., 2000.

Sandler Sales Institute. "Close the Deal: The Sandler Sales Institute's 7 Step System for Successful Selling." CD Audio Book. Niles, IL: Nightingale-Conant Corporation.

_____. "Why Salespeople Fail...and What to Do About It: A Bay Head Marketing Report." Stevenson, MD: Sandler Systems, Inc. 1997.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1970.

_____. *The Church Before a Watching World*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971.

Schaller, Lyle E. *The Middle Sized Church: Problems and Prescriptions*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985.

Schoenberger, Aaron. The Brainchild Group, "Ad Agencies Revamp Business Models for Internet Marketing." Online Resource. March 17, 2010.
<http://www.thebrainchildgroup.com/blog/2010/03/advertising-agencies-changing-business/> (accessed April 8, 2010).

Sherman, Larry L. "The Big News in Church Growth - Is Your Church Small Enough? A Re-Examination of the 'Three C's' of Church Growth." *Covenant Quarterly*, no. 51 (1993): 3-9.

Southerland, Dan. *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.

Stanley, Andy. *Visioneering*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1999.

_____. *Making Vision Stick*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2007.

Swindoll, Charles R. *The Bride: Renewing Our Passion for the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Taylor, Steve. *The Out of Bounds Church?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Tsague, Patrice and Melvin Mooring. *Nothing but a Jar of Oil: Seven Steps to Achieving Financial Victory Through Biblical Entrepreneurship*. Damascus, MD: Nehemiah Publishing, 2009.

Turner, Doug. Rev! Magazine. Online Resource. "Successful Capital Campaign Strategies." September/October 2007 edition.
<http://www.rev.org/ArticlePrint.asp?ID=2784> (accessed April 21, 2010).

- USA Government Website, IRS. "S Corporations." Online Reference. <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=98263,00.html> (accessed December 15, 2009).
- Walton, Robert C. *The Gathered Community*. London: Carey Press, 1946.
- Warren, Rick. "Character: Leadership Messages." CD Audio Book. Pastors.com, 2003.
- _____. *The Purpose-Driven Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- _____. "The Purpose Driven Conference: A Ground Breaking Paradigm for Church Growth." CD Audio Book. Pastors.com, 2003.
- _____. "Vision: Leadership Messages." CD Audio Book. Pastors.com, 2003.
- Wikipedia. Online Resource. "Definition: Internet Marketing." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_marketing (accessed April 8, 2010).
- Wolston, W.T.P. *The Church: What Is It?* Edinburgh, Scotland: John Menzies & Co., 1924.
- Woods, Tiger. "Tiger Woods' Apology: Full Transcript." Online Resource. February 19, 2010. <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/02/19/tiger.woods.transcript/index.html> (accessed April 17, 2010).
- Wuthnow, Robert. *Sharing the Journey*. New York: Free Press, 1994.
- Ziglar, Zig. *Zig Ziglar's Secrets of Closing the Sale*. New York: Berkley Books, 1984.
- _____. "Goals: How to Set Them How to Reach Them." CD Audio Book. Niles, IL: Nightingale-Conant Corporation, 1988.

VITA

Robert S. Hallett

FORMAL EDUCATION (*Post High School*)

Studies in the DOCTOR OF MINISTRY Program (2006-Present)
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, Virginia

Studies in the DOCTOR OF MINISTRY Program (1996-1998)
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois

MASTER OF DIVINITY Degree (1974)
Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky

Studies in the MASTER OF DIVINITY Program (1969-1971)
Anderson School of Theology, Anderson, Indiana

BACHELOR OF ARTS (Theology) Degree (1969)
Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana

THREE-YEAR MINISTERIAL/BIBLE Diploma (1967)
Bethany Bible College, Sussex, New Brunswick, Canada

CAREER SUMMARY

Founder and President, The Vision Explosion Company
New Castle, Indiana 2008-Present

Founder and President, TLC Ministries, Inc.
New Castle, Indiana 1990-Present

Planned Giving Officer, Wheaton College
Wheaton, Illinois 1989-1990

Senior Consultant, Cargill Associates, Inc.
Fort Worth, Texas 1985-1989

MINISTERIAL OVERVIEW

Appointed to Interchurch Service (The Wesleyan Church) – 1985-Present

District Evangelist (Indiana Central District, Wesleyan Church) – 1984-1985

Pastorate (Indiana & Wisconsin – Wesleyan & Friends Churches) – 1969-1984

Ordained to the Gospel Ministry (The Wesleyan Church) – 1970

Licensed to the Gospel Ministry (Reformed Baptist Alliance of Canada) – 1966

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Christian Leadership Alliance (CLA), San Clemente, California

National Association of Church Business Administration (NACBA), Dallas, TX