

**LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**FROM VISITOR TO MINISTER**

DESIGNING A PROGRAM FOR THE ASSIMILATION OF NEW MEMBERS INTO  
THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

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BY

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## ABSTRACT

### DESIGNING A PROGRAM FOR THE ASSIMILATION OF NEW MEMBERS INTO THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

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The assimilation of new members into the mission of the local church is often unintentional and ineffective. Many churches do not recognize the great need to train new members to become ministers and missionaries, which carry on the work of the church. The purpose of this project is to briefly expose the need for an intentional assimilation program in a local church and provide a systematic methodology for developing an assimilation program along with a usable outline that can be modified for use by any church. The project will provide information necessary for any church to create its own new members assimilation program.

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The evangelical church in America, especially in the later part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century, has seen some significant growth through a resurgence of interest in religion. George Bama states, "Across the nation, ministries of all shapes and sizes have responded with a frenzy of religious activity, producing more programs, buildings, events, and resources than would have been imaginable at the turn of the century."<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that even though there are more church buildings, more activities and even more attendance, the impact of the church on its culture is not at all equal to the amount of time, effort and expense put into these activities. The reason for this rush of activity is the increased interest in religion by people, and the attempt of the church to meet the challenges set before it. These challenges have forced the church to look for ways to not only reach the masses but to also assimilate them into the life of the church and help them become Disciples of Christ. Barra goes on to say, "Despite the activity and chutzpah emanating from thousands of congregations, the Church in America is losing influence and adherents faster than an

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<sup>1</sup>George Barra, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998), 1.

other major institution in the nation".<sup>2</sup> This should alarm the church and church leaders. The fast pace being kept by the church is helping it to go nowhere fast. Frustration and frantic activity is making the church look busy, but the results are clear and undeniable-the church is taking two steps forward and three steps back.

In contrast, there seems to be a reformation in the church that is attempting to confront the challenge of losing ground and people. Greg Ogden addresses this concept in his book, *Unfinished Business*,<sup>3</sup> and is characterized by the church moving from *a served church to a serving church* (emphasis mine). Ogden says, " we need to go from a pastor-centered to a people-centered ministry."<sup>4</sup> This is a vital paradigm shift that will help the church retain its new members by training them and getting them involved in ministry. Where people are involved they begin to claim ownership and where they begin to own something they begin to invest in it. The ownership leads to participation, investment of time, resources and produces a desire to see it succeed. It appears the church is beginning to see the need to make the transition from being a spectator sport at an event to being a participant in the event.

One of the dilemmas facing the church today is the transient lifestyle of the post-modern culture and the younger generations. There is no longer allegiance to organizations, jobs, hometowns or even denominations. This attitude is affecting the way churches must reach out to the changing culture. According to Barna, only forty three

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1 .

Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business. The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990). This note is in reference to the thesis of the book and not a quote from the author.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 111.



percent of adults have confidence in the Christian churches.<sup>5</sup> This means that less than half the American people has confidence in the church to meet their needs suggesting that the church is no longer relevant to over half of the population, which further suggests the church must not be doing what it is designed to do-make disciples of believers (Matthew 28:18-20).<sup>6</sup> It makes sense that the more disciples there are the more the gospel will be shared resulting in even more adherents to the faith. Being a part of a local church should nurture and build a close relationship with God as well as other believers. It was interesting to read that almost half of the adults associated with mainline Protestant Churches, and more than half of all Catholics do not have a strong desire to be an integral part of the church in the future. The question must be asked-why? Is the church no longer relevant or is it not doing its job in training the converts to become dedicated followers of Christ? It seems the church is fast becoming less relevant in the lives of people, which makes the need for church even less important and its lack of importance comes from a lack of assimilation of people into the life and ministry of the local church. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus will build His church (Matthew 16:18). He chooses to do this through human beings and it is the church that should help people grow in their faith. The question might be asked, "but doesn't the Holy Spirit lead people to truth?" The answer is yes, but He uses people, and the church is struggling to make this happen consistently.

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<sup>5</sup> Barna, *What Americans Believe* 167.

<sup>6</sup> All references will be taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>7</sup> Barna, *What Americans Believe*, 167.

### The Statement of the Problem

The lack of a systematic, easy to use, practical model of assimilation seems apparent in many churches. It seems apparent because many churches are not growing spiritually or numerically and the effectiveness of churches in the communities is limited or non-existent. Since evangelism is often the main emphasis of many Southern Baptist churches, the front door is wide open but the back door has become a large revolving door that never stops turning. In his book, *Exit Interviews*, William Hendricks points out that churches and denominations are doing whatever it takes to attract "un-churched" people to the front door of the faith. Meanwhile people who have been in the program of the church for years can slip out the back door for a variety of reasons.<sup>8</sup> It seems one of the main reasons is a lack of proper training and assimilation into the ministries and life of the church. This means too many "church members" do not know what they can do, how to do it or what they are even capable of doing.

A common problem seems to be the failure of the church to help new members build lasting relationships, become trained in ministry, and then be assimilated into the ministries of the church according to their gifts. This failure leads to frustration in the life of the individual and finally to an exit from the church, either emotionally or physically. Because the church fails to train converts in the fundamentals of the faith and encourage active participation in the mission and purpose of the church, the mission of the church suffers. People are given a beautifully painted picture of Christianity, but are never taught what the Christian life is all about. When reality sets in they become discouraged and often fall away.

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<sup>8</sup> William D. Hendricks, *Exit Interview* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 20.

In the author's church a study was conducted that evaluated the number of positions held by people in the church. It was discovered that the 80/20 rule is in effect. This simply means that eighty percent of the work is done by twenty percent of the people. The average church member does very little except attend church. All the teaching, ministry leadership and team membership is accomplished by people who have been in the church for many years. It was concluded there are two reasons for this. First, many new members are considered outsiders and it is difficult for them to break this "small community" exclusivity barrier. It usually takes people years to gain the confidence of the established church members. Second, many new church members *do* not know what is available to do or what the protocol of the local church actually is. They need to know what the church believes, who is in charge and what the requirements are for getting involved. This is where a well-planned and biblically sound assimilation program can help tremendously. A biblically sound, well-balanced assimilation program will help create a church when people can and will get involved and thus make for a healthy church.

There are churches effectively assimilating members, but the successful ones seem to be geared toward the mega-church setting and must be drastically altered to fit the smaller church setting. A great example and one of the programs used to model this project after is the assimilation program of Saddleback Valley Community Church in California whose goal is church health not church growth. Senior Pastor Rick Warren says, " The key issue for churches in the twenty-first century will be church health, not church growth".<sup>9</sup> This seems to imply an emphasis on the individual is a vital to church

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<sup>9</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 17.

health and proper assimilation is the way to accomplish this. Individuals must be given special attention in the assimilation process to assure each individual becomes a healthy part of the church. The success of Saddleback's assimilation of new members is based on that premise-being more concerned about getting people grounded in the faith than in getting the numbers. Growth is a bi-product of church health and church health comes from healthy members who know their God given abilities and are equipped to serve. If the small church attempts to duplicate Saddleback's assimilation program it will become frustrated for several reasons. First, the culture is much different in southern California than it is in the rest of the country. Churches should not attempt to duplicate Saddleback's model but rather simply use it as a guide. If the smaller church attempted to duplicate Saddleback's program, without major modification and adaptation to its own culture, it would only confuse the people and compound any problem produced from a lack of any assimilation. Second, small churches struggle to keep programs going and do not believe they can place such steep restrictions on membership. At Saddleback there are strict requirements for membership. They require a one-time four-hour class taught in one session.<sup>10</sup> Although it is not necessarily a long class, It seems long when it is a block of time out of one day in an already busy schedule. It is difficult enough in a small church to motivate people to attend a Sunday morning service, much less convince them to give a four-hour block of time to a single class *required for* membership. In the cases witnessed by this author, people would rather join without any requirements or sacrifices. If high sacrifices are required then they do not want to follow through. However, since the Christian life involves sacrifice it should be modeled in the new members class but not be

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 316.

required in order to become a member. This means the church must be innovative in creating ways to implement an assimilation program in its culture. Third, there is not a limitless resource of people to train these new believers. In a small church the responsibility usually falls to the pastor, which makes it extremely difficult for the church with only one staff member. There are ways to assimilate members without putting a strain on one or two people and without requiring so much time to share the necessary information. This project will discuss the process for developing such an assimilation program.

### Key Terms

During the course of this project there will be key terms used which need to be defined in order to understand the assimilation program. These terms are as follows:

1. Assimilation, for the sake of this project is the process of taking a person from being an interested visitor to becoming active in the ministries and mission of the church. One definition of assimilation is the task of moving people from an awareness of your church to attendance at your church to active membership in your church. <sup>11</sup>
2. Membership in a local church carries the idea of purposefully joining together with other believers to carry out the purpose of the church as a unified body.
3. A Minister refers to a born again believer gifted by God and trained to use his gifts to carry out the great commission in the local church. The term is not limited to the ordained or licensed clergy.

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<sup>11</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 309.

4. The front door of a church refers to the purpose of evangelism, which is introducing people to Christ in such a way that they have the opportunity to accept Him as their personal savior and then begin the process of becoming a disciple of Christ.
5. The local church is the visible body of Christ active in the community fulfilling the great commission as a unified team under the leadership and power of the Holy Spirit. One writer gives the definition of the local church as a company of professing believers in any one locality or a group of such local assemblies (Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1).<sup>12</sup> So the local church is the body of believers God has placed in a certain location to carry out His purpose in that location.
6. The *term* revolving back door refers to the exodus an individual makes, from the church, after he begins attending. He shows interest in joining, but never does, or does actually join but does not get connected and does not stay in the church. The challenge of training people is the most important part of assimilation-the process of systematically taking a person from the new birth, through the disciplines of the Christian faith, to discovering his spiritual gifts and the use of those gifts in the service to the Lord and others.
7. The small church, for the sake of this project, is a local Southern Baptist church with a Sunday morning attendance of less than three hundred and a staff of no more than three.
8. A disciple refers to a person who follows Christ and serves Him with his gifts.

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<sup>12</sup> Lewis Sperry and John Walvoord Chafer, *Major Bible Themes, Rev. ed.*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 236.

9. A mentor is a church member already assimilated who will help a new member make the journey from being a visitor to becoming a minister in the local church. A mentor will help the new member learn in a safe environment so he will not become intimidated.
10. A missionary is a member who has been trained and assimilated into the church and is learning to understand his culture in order to effectively share his faith.
11. The mission of the church is what God wants to do through the church in its community. The mission of the church is why God has a church in a particular community.
12. A lay shepherd is a member of the church who has already completed the assimilation program and has been assigned to care for members of the church under the guidance of the elders and deacons.

The goal of this project is to assist a small church in developing and implementing an easy to follow and easy to use assimilation program, which can be used by the local church in preparing people for and involving them in their God ordained purpose in the community. The assimilation of new members will be the focus with the goal of closing the back door or at least slowing its rotation. Churches are being inundated with people looking for answers to the problems of life. The 90's has ushered in an era in which American's are highly interested in religion, but not enamored by the Christian faith.<sup>13</sup> For this reason it is imperative that each church define its beliefs and purpose. It must intentionally pass this on to new and old members alike in order to make them a disciple of Christ who will help to carry out the God given purpose of the church.

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<sup>13</sup> Barna, *at Americans Believe*, 24.

### Statement of Limitations

There are limitations to this project, which should be taken into consideration when designing a program for another church. This project is designed for a small church cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention. The theological beliefs are conservative and rely *on* the truth of scripture as the final authority. The project will also deal with biblical beliefs and practices that rely on the inerrancy of scripture. It is this consistency of beliefs and practices, which make it possible to create a program of assimilation that will assist anyone from any culture to be assimilated into the church as long as he believes *in* the inerrant, infallible word of God.

It is apparent that no program is a one-size-fits-all. This project is designed to be used in a small local church in Central Florida in an agricultural rural setting with a Sunday morning worship attendance of two hundred and fifty and an average Sunday school attendance of one hundred and eighty. However, adaptation to other settings is possible and encouraged.

This project is not designed to instruct the reader how to open the front door of the church, rather it is designed to help slow the revolving back door by creating a workable assimilation program. It is assumed, for the purpose of this project, that the church has already discovered a need to begin assimilating new members and already understands the culture to which it is ministering.

### Theoretical basis

As the need for assimilation is examined, the question must be asked-is it a biblical mandate or just a need conjured up by the local church to keep the programs



growing and going? The answer is yes and no. Yes, it is a biblical mandate and yes, it is necessary to keep the church growing and going, but it is not something conjured up by the church to perpetuate the growth of the church. Christ commands the church to share the good news and then make disciples of those who believe. This means the church must assimilate individuals into the life and ministries of the church and then help them become active ministers and missionaries.

The Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, refers to himself as a wise master builder laying a foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10). By identifying himself as a builder, Paul strongly implies that believers do not *automatically* become great Christians, but are made into great Christians and this is accomplished on purpose through assimilation. The place to begin building a church, which is the body of Christ gathered together to fulfill the great commission, is to lay a proper foundation. According to Rick Warren, a church's foundation will determine both its size and strength. You can never build larger than your foundation can handle.<sup>14</sup> Of course, the foundation of the church is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11) and that foundation is the truth that Jesus is the Christ (Matthew 16:18). This means there is an unchanging truth on which to build up believers and make them ministers of Christ. However, the foundation Warren refers to is the responsibility of making disciples. It takes strong people to make a strong minister. Once a believer becomes a disciple, he *will* become an active minister and missionary in his community. This will produce the foundation needed to build a strong church that impacts the world for Christ. The more people that are assimilated into the ministry of the church the more people there will be to impact lives.

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<sup>14</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 86.

Throughout the New Testament there are examples of instruction to train others. The main emphasis of Jesus' teaching is that believers are to train other believers (Matthew 28:19-20) and become disciples. The word disciple means "a learner" and learning is what assimilation is all about. The church is given the mandate to evangelize, baptize, then stabilize. Assimilating every new believer into the life and ministry of the church is giving him stability. This stability comes as a result of each new believer learning who he is in Christ, where he fits into God's plan and how he will carry out his purpose through the local church.

Paul instructed young Timothy to find faithful people and train them so they could, in turn, in others (2 Timothy 2:2). This responsibility is not just given to pastors, elders, deacons and the spiritually elite-it is given to all believers. One fallacy of the modern church is the idea of the professional pastor. Our culture has been taught since the pastor is trained he is the professional and only a professional should attempt to do ministry. This, however, is not biblical. The Bible clearly teaches that pastors are to train believers to "do" the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:1 1M. So then, the only pre-requisite for the trained to be able to train others is that he must be born again and be properly trained himself. It is then he will be able to train others. People must be trained to "do" the ministry not "watch" the ministry. Once the new believer has been trained a cycle should begin. This cycle is the pastor training someone and then the one trained will train another-this is assimilation. The one trained will eventually become a minister and missionary to others.

A biblical doctrine that strongly supports assimilation is the priesthood of the believer. This is the teaching that all believers are meant to be ministers and servants. It is

not reserved for only the vocational pastor, but includes every believer as part of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 1:9), and therefore all are priests. The biblical use of the word *priest*, in the New Testament, is different than that of the Old Testament. The office of priest, according to Greg Ogden, is eliminated as it pertains to a select group of people.<sup>15</sup> If the people of God can be taught that they are as much a part of the ministry as the pastor and that they are capable of doing ministry as well as the pastor, they will rise to the challenge and the ministry will flourish.

The time is right for all believers to join in and help train other believers as Paul instructed Timothy; become faithful then train others to be faithful. This is assimilation at its finest. Ogden goes on to say, "God is unleashing upon us in our day a power that I believe will usher in the New Reformation. We are priests to each other."<sup>16</sup> Galatians 5:13 stresses that the church is to serve one another with love and serving is what ministry is all about. This cannot be accomplished with someone first being taught how-this is assimilation. To minister to another means to serve another and once a new member is taught this concept through assimilation, he will begin to serve and the ministry of the church will expand and prosper. It seems the church has assumed, to its own demise, that a member will become a champion for Christ by osmosis. If he listens to enough sermons or attends Sunday school long enough he will become a powerful minister. This attitude is crippling the church because there is no real depth in doctrine or how to use the doctrine within the structure of the church organization. Hebrews 5:12 implies there comes a time in a believers life when he should be teaching others and

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<sup>15</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 87.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

intentional assimilation into the church is how this will take place. This same passage goes on to teach that these same people continually have the need to be taught over and over again the simple basic tenets of the faith. Why? Because they have never been properly assimilated into the life and mission of the church. It is important to keep in mind that assimilation is not just designed to make someone feel welcome and a part of the family--it is to equip others. Church members have long remained stagnant in their growth being either unwilling to grow or not knowing how. Hence the biblical mandate for every believer to become a priest, minister, teacher and missionary t h e need for assimilating him into the life and mission of the church.

### Methodology

This project will address the need for a person to begin the process of becoming a member of the church, becoming frustrated in the practice of his new found faith, and then leaving the church or just becoming inactive on the pew because he has never been assimilated into the church. Once the reason for ineffectiveness is identified, it will then be possible to design an assimilation program to deal with the problem. It should be noted here that simply enrolling a person in a program is not enough, especially if the program is not specifically designed for the church and its specific mission and purpose. This project will give basic instruction in the design and implementation of an assimilation program so a church can help its new members become effective ministers and missionaries.

Assimilation should be a requirement for any new member regardless of his past membership, previous participation in another church or his years as a believer. This

project will help assess the need for a program and then walk the developer through a simple system for developing an assimilation program for his own church. Once the program is designed it will be evaluated by a select group of leaders and finally the finished product will be implemented. This process will take the reader through the evaluation, development, implementation and finally evaluation of the new assimilation program. This *project* is not intended to be the finished product for anyone who reads it. It is simply the process taken by the author to create a working assimilation program in his own church. It is recommended that modifications be made to adapt the basic material contained in this project to the specific setting of the church creating the program.

### Literature Review

There are helpful books written on this subject that will provide examples of assimilation programs already in place in various churches. These works illustrate how some churches implemented their programs and some explain the process for developing the programs. There are also helpful Doctor of Ministry projects available for review concerning this subject that can be found through "*Resources in Ministry*".<sup>17</sup> These projects are either programs designed by an individual for a particular church or are an evaluation of a program being used in a particular church. Most of the programs for assimilation require a new member class and then follow with various methods and models for training as well as the material used in that training. An example would be, "An assimilation program for Adult Members at Trinity Baptist Church", Ken Bogle (Doctoral Thesis,

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<sup>17</sup> 117 references found in *Research in Ministry* (RIM), Liberty University Library Data Base Search. The Program already referenced is used as an example only.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary), 2004. This project evaluates the church, identifies a problem and then creates a program to deal with the identified problem.

Books used in this project are resources that deal specifically with various aspects of assimilation. Two specific books used *for* models of assimilation are, "*The Purpose Driven Church* ", and "*The Equipping Church*". Both give details of the assimilation program of particular churches and how the program was implemented in the culture of that church. These two books were chosen because of the success and simplicity of the programs in use in the respective churches. They contained elements that are similar to the desired elements wanted in the setting and culture of the church for which this project is written.

The assimilation program of Saddleback Valley Community church was used because of the thoroughness of the program. It is an easy to follow program that makes it easy to adapt its key components to any program. The idea behind the program, as it is presented in the book *The Purpose Driven Church*, is that every person is important and every person can be a successful part in achieving the purpose of the church if he is assimilated properly.

The assimilation process, as presented in the book *The Equipping Church*, is a model used at Brentwood Presbyterian Church<sup>18</sup>, and focuses on the idea of equipping the church membership to do ministry. The idea is similar to the model used at Saddleback, but views equipping from a different perspective. The premise of the book is to eliminate the exclusivity of the ministry reserved for the professionals and return it to the people.

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<sup>18</sup> Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 11. The author worked for this church and documented her pilgrimage as she helped lead the church to become an equipping church.

Mallory says, " An equipping church measures success by the number of members who understand God's call in their lives and are finding ways to live out that call inside the church and out in the world".<sup>19</sup> This is the idea behind any good assimilation program and it is the goal of this project. Not only does this book give the journey of the author, but it also gives examples of other successful churches and the challenges they faced in developing an equipping church.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 79.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ASSESSING THE NEED FOR AN ASSIMILATION PROGRAM

It seems apparent that there is a need for a biblically sound and user-friendly assimilation program in the local church. In order for a believer to be equipped to do the work of the ministry he must know about the ministry and all that is available to him. However, in order for him to receive everything he needs to be assimilated, so the church must develop a workable program. It would be much easier to simply adopt an assimilation program already in use in another church. The idea is, if it works there it should work just fine here. However, this is not the case at all. Each program can consist of some basic designs and elements common to other programs, but the program itself must be custom fit to the culture and setting in which it will be used. In order to do this some simple basic questions should be asked. To simplify this process each church should ask the five "W" questions-who, what, when, where, and why? Who should be assimilated? What should he be taught? When should he be taught? Where should he be taught and why should he be taught? Answering these five simple questions will give adequate information to begin developing an assimilation program unique to the specific church and culture in which it is ministering.



### Who Should be Taught?

Careful examination of Jesus' method of assimilation makes it clear that everyone that desires to be assimilated should be. However, even Jesus narrowed his focus down from a multitude, to seventy, to twelve, to three, and finally to just one--Peter. This was the model Jesus used to begin His assimilation program and once the program was successful the amount of people able to be assimilated increased. If this model is used then the program, in its infancy, must narrow its focus down to a few in order to get the program up and running. Therefore, this project will approach the development of an assimilation program using this model. The program will target key leaders in the church to fine tune the program before it is introduced to the entire church.

In order for anything to gain support the leader must support it. If the leader does not totally support it and pour his heart into it then it will never become a successful reality. As a leader, Jesus poured his life into making disciples. His three *years* of earthly ministry was spent training key leaders. This can be seen in Matthew 5:1-2 : " And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him . Then He opened His mouth and taught them saying:" The ones He taught were His disciples. Matthew 10:1 states, " And when he had called His twelve disciples to Him..." . The power He gave was not to a large group, but to twelve men He had specifically chosen. The narrowing of Jesus' focus can be found in Matthew 17:1: " Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;" . Why not all the Apostles? Because Jesus narrowed his focus in training so He could pour himself into these men. Finally in Matthew 16:18, the scriptures indicates that Jesus focus narrowed even more to point to Peter specifically. Training can be seen

in His entire ministry and His philosophy was to train others who would, in time, take over the ministry and eventually spread His teaching throughout the world (Acts 5:28). A notable accusation leveled against the disciples gives strong credence to the power of the assimilation process Jesus used. In Acts 4:13, the religious leaders of that day could only attribute the power of their ministry to the teaching of Jesus. The disciples were uneducated men who had never been formally trained, yet they acknowledged they had *been* with Jesus. Therefore, successful assimilation is a sold out leader who believes in assimilation and pours his life into others. Jesus trained a select group of men and eventually he turned his earthly ministry over to them. If Jesus had not been totally convinced of the need and had not poured his life into it then it would never have had the impact it had. Any leader wishing to impact the world around him will find it begins in his own heart first. That passion is then transferred to others who will in turn take over the ministry and eventually take it to new heights.

An important leadership principle to remember is, in order for a leader to increase his influence he must duplicate himself. This means he must realize he cannot do everything alone, so he must find and train other leaders. The day of the super pastor is over. In order to accomplish more, a pastor must invest in others. Greg Ogden says, "An inordinate amount of time is spent with emotionally dependant people, and minimal attention is given to strong, more mature believers who could be motivated and trained to minister."~ Instead of trying to disciple the multitude, Jesus chose a few and poured his life into them. In order to develop and implement a strong and lasting assimilation program the leader, usually the pastor, must find mature, willing people and train them.

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<sup>1</sup> Ogden, 121.

Some might say leaders are born, but it is more accurate to say that leaders are made. The first step, then, is to identify the leaders in the rough. These are people already ministering who display leadership qualities. One of the best ways to do *this is* to carefully watch people as they go about their daily lives. If a person needs a title in order to become involved then he will eventually lose his motivation. Why? Because a title can maintain its allure for only so long before it diminishes its power to motivate. However, if someone is already living out his convictions and attempting ministry, without a title, then he can be trained to do even greater things. It is this type of person that can be a part of building a great church and who will be invaluable in the design and implementation of a successful and powerful assimilation program.

Once the "*already active*" believer is identified by his consistent actions, it is important to begin an inconspicuous assimilation. Inconspicuous assimilation is simply giving someone simple tasks that will involve him in ministry and then walking him through the tasks. Caution should be exercised when doing this so the *already active* believer does not become overburdened or so the leader does not take on too many apprentices. It would be wise to limit the tasks in both scope and depth to make sure burnout does not occur. Keep in mind that beginning an assimilation program is not something accomplished overnight, but rather it is a process that grows with the leader and the followers. Just as Jesus chose 12, then three, then one, so the successful leader will do the same except in the opposite order. From the very beginning Jesus had his focus on Simon Peter (Matthew 16:18), and from that moment drew him closely into his inner circle with one goal in mind—to eventually make him a key leader who would be able to teach others.

Once the assimilation process becomes more stable and the leader has others who can help with the task of assimilation, more people will be able to be included in the assimilation process. It will not take long, then, to multiply the number of disciples. A key principle to note here is---the more people trained, the more people who can be trained.

### What Should He be Taught?

Content can be determined in several ways. Tradition can dictate what is taught or a survey of the present culture of the church and community can determine the needs to be covered in the assimilation program. Both determinates can be helpful, but left alone can leave an assimilation program unbalanced. A careful review of traditions and of the present culture can help the leader create a balanced and effective assimilation program.

If tradition is used caution should be taken to make sure the traditions are biblically based and not just *pre-set* standards passed down and implemented "just because it has always been done that way". Traditionally the church has always had some basic components of assimilation. Rick Warren points out that many churches' membership classes cover the wrong material. Their content is based on spiritual growth or basic doctrine".<sup>2</sup> People need to be taught more than just facts and figures. Each new member must be taught a well-balanced program in order to properly equip him for the tasks ahead. This, of course, depends on whether a church even has a new members class of any kind. The author's church has previously done a poor job of assimilating members.

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<sup>2</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* 316.

Any material taught was not done on purpose or by design but did contain the following elements, which are usually included in most haphazard assimilation programs:

- Prayer - Prayer is one of the most if not the most important spiritual discipline a new believer can learn. However, the way it is taught and the content of that teaching is often shallow and steeped in tradition. Methodology is usually taught by using the teachers personal practice as a model, so what a new believer is getting is personal preference and style, not necessarily the biblical practice.
- How to Study the Bible - Actually what a new believer usually gets is a guilt trip about loving the Bible, reading the Bible and having a personal quiet time with God. Very little is taught about simple methods of interpretation or how to understand the Bible.
- Leadership positions available - This list is usually limited to vacant seats that no one else wants. In a smaller traditional church people usually have to "earn" a spot in the church so *very* little opportunity is given.
- Ceremonies - Usually, in a small traditional church, a person is given the, "this is the way we do things here" speech. This is the way we do baptism, the Lord's Supper and any other ceremonies carried out in the setting of the local church. The attitude here is usually for the new believer or member to watch and see how things are done.
- Opportunities in ministry - This is closely related to leadership positions available. If there is a vacancy or a need in a class then a person will be recruited. We give him a class roster and lesson guide then push him into service. For the most part it is on the job training.

Traditions passed down can be healthy while at the same time a detriment. They can be healthy as long as they are biblically based and serve a biblical purpose. For example: if tradition teaches that title gives privilege, such as being a Deacon, then it can be a detriment. However, if tradition teaches that title brings responsibility and that responsibility serves to produce a living example for ministry then tradition is healthy.

When the culture of the church, and the community in which it ministers is examined, the church can adjust the contents of its assimilation program to fit the culture and increase the effectiveness. Just as things can be learned from traditions so things can be deduced from examining the culture. Two specific things can be gleaned from examining the culture; effective terminology and the basic needs of those being assimilated. It is important to make sure those being assimilated can easily understand any terminology used in the program. It would be ridiculous to fly to Russia to minister to the people in that culture by speaking Spanish. In order to be effective, the Russian language should be spoken. The same applies with terminology used in an assimilation program. If the church finds itself in a farming community then the terminology would be different than if that church is ministering in downtown New York City. If a church finds itself ministering in an area where people are predominately unchurched then that church would want to adopt terminology that is less "churchy". Finding the basic needs of those being assimilated means that the people being assimilated might not need to attend a graduate theological class, but rather might need some very basic understanding of the Christian life. Teach a person where he is not where you want him to be. Correct teaching will take him to the place he needs to be.

In order to better understand the cultures of the author's church and community, two teams were assembled and each one was led by a pastor. The "Community Needs Team" consisted of one pastor and four laypersons. The purpose of this team was to investigate the demographics of the community to make sure the church would be relevant and effective. In order to accomplish this it was necessary to order a demographic study provided by the Florida Baptist Convention. This study is free to any Southern Baptist Church in Florida and is useful in understanding the culture. The second team assembled was the "Church Needs Team". This team also consisted of one pastor and four laypersons. This team created a questionnaire that was distributed to the Sunday school. The questions dealt with spiritual needs, ministry opportunities, organizational structure and general theological questions. It was a short survey that could be filled out in fifteen minutes. This design was necessary so it could be completed during Sunday school and the teacher could collect the questionnaires and return them to the Church Needs Team. The questions to be used by the Church Needs Team could be as follows:

1. Why does God have this church in this community?
2. What are three spiritual disciplines you practice every day?
3. Do you know what your spiritual gift is? If so what is it?
4. In what ministries can you use your spiritual gift?
5. Who do you consult to become involved in a ministry?

While this is not a comprehensive questionnaire, it served to identify some weak areas in the churches training. After the information was gathered the team assimilated the information and presented a simple profile of the church to be used in helping to create the assimilation program found in Appendix A. It was concluded that basic

information about the church, church organizational structure, ministries offered, spiritual gifts, and spiritual disciplines should be included in the assimilation program.

### When Should He be Taught?

The answer to this question is simple- as soon as possible. In the infancy of the assimilation program it is important to take the time to thoroughly train leaders. This does not imply that reckless abandon should be the attitude when teaching future members in the assimilation program but laying a strong foundation, at the inception of the program, is critical. Therefore it takes a little more time to get a successful program off the ground. Of course time will vary but from inception, through development, and through implementation could take more than six months. The program presented in Appendix A took approximately eight months to complete.

Once the assimilation program is in place, each new believer should begin the assimilation process within weeks of joining or at least of indicating an interest in joining the church. In fact, the very first step a person should take in becoming a member should be an introduction to the church and the faith. The content of this is covered in Appendix A in Discovering Membership 101. This covers when the material should be covered in the process of the assimilation program, but leaves the question concerning the actual presentation of the material? When should the new members be gathered together, as a group, to be taught the material? What is the best time to present the material if it is to be presented at an already scheduled service time? There were several options tried, which produced various results.



- During Sunday morning Sunday school - This was the best option tried simply because the church has a strong traditional Sunday school and it is strongly emphasized. It should be noted that this church has a double Sunday school that operates in conjunction with double worship services. One worship service begins at 9:30am and the early Sunday school is operating at the same time. The second worship service begins at 11:00 am, as does the second Sunday school. The late Sunday school was chosen because of the availability of a majority of those wishing to partake in the program. This seemed to have been successful because it was convenient for those who were already attending church at that particular time. There did not seem to be a problem with people giving up four weeks of being in worship or a Sunday school class to attend this membership class. In fact the willingness and participation was amazing.
- Sunday afternoon before the evening service - This was traditionally the Bible training hour. Time has proved that this was a slowly dieing tradition that gave way to busy schedules and hectic lifestyles. This was not an option because most of the leadership meetings are held at this time in an attempt to make it more convenient for the leaders to attend the meetings without having to give up another night of the week.
- During the Sunday evening service - the culture this church finds itself ministering in makes this a very difficult time to have a desired level of participation. The percentage of those attending Sunday evening, compared to Sunday morning, drops approximately fifty percent. Most of the potential new members are younger families that have the philosophy that they will give two

hours per week and that time is usually given on Sunday morning. It was a challenge to try to provide quality childcare on Sunday evenings simply because those in attendance were older established believers who felt they had already "done their time" in child care and did not want to spend another hour watching someone else's child.

- During Wednesday evening service - This was a viable option, but it created some challenges. Wednesday evening is traditionally a strong children and student ministry night. With an AWANA program for children and an attendance of over forty students, the worker pool was small and the staff, as well as church leadership, had to perform double duty on this night. It was possible to enlist teachers, but the teacher would have to come from a small worker pool making it even more difficult to have a quality ministry.
- One of the options offered in the future, will be for the new member to take the material home and treat it as a home Bible study. This was the method used by the control group used in evaluating the program. It worked well for the control group and offers a viable option for presenting the material to new members in the future.

#### Where Should He be taught?

Should the new member be required to attend a class during scheduled church hours, such as during Sunday School, worship services, Sunday evening, Wednesday evenings or could he be allowed to take the material home and complete it as a home Bible study? The answer to this question depends on several factors such as; the person

involved in the assimilation program, the time he is willing to contribute, the results being sought and the method of accountability used. What might work well for one church might not work well for another. Keep in mind that the questions "when and where" concern methodology. Methods are many, principles are few; methods always change, but principles never do. The principle is that new members must be assimilated, but where that takes place involves a method that can be changed.

For a traditional church, with a strong Sunday school, it would be wise to treat the new members class, Discovering Membership 101, as a recurring class taught every three months during the Sunday school hour. This proved to be effective because it gave a chance for the class to be large enough to keep discouragement low while making it convenient for those wanting to attend. It could also prove to be a good motivator to help the new member build the habit of attending Sunday school. The new members class could and should include a section on the organization of the church and would give the facilitator an opportunity to introduce new members to a class and teacher.

For a contemporary church, such as Saddleback Valley Community Church, a one time four-hour class could be the best answer. This takes commitment, and the culture a church finds itself in will help make this determination. Warren believes that this challenge is a way to nurture commitment from a potential new member. He said, "The very best way to elicit a strong commitment from your members is at the moment they join. If little is required to join, then little can be expected from your members later on"? *While* this works well for Saddleback, it might not work well for others churches and an attempt to force this requirement on a church and culture, differing from Saddleback,

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<sup>3</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 315.

would create confusion. Some churches have even more strict requirements for membership, such as a six-week course for all new members.<sup>4</sup> Whatever the requirements it is important to make sure it fits. Requirements that are too strict might discourage new members whereas requirements that are too weak might not challenge the new members. Regardless of how others successfully implement their assimilation program, each church must decide what will work best for its particular church and community culture.

### Why Should He be Taught?

The "why" has already been covered in Chapter One. The need for assimilating new members is a biblical doctrine that has been placed on the back burner for too long. With so much emphasis on evangelism, discipleship is often ignored. The answer to this question is so simple it almost seems complex-without assimilation the commission Jesus gave the church will not be carried out. If the church desires to maintain status quo it can simply do nothing at all. However, people do not grow by chance but by intentional training. Jesus knew this and that is why He taught the church to make disciples. Everything Jesus did was intentional and it shows in His ministry. A perfect example of this can be found in John 4:1ff. In these passages Jesus did something out of the ordinary and there were two purposes accomplished. First, He introduced the woman to eternal life in such a way that she received Him as her personal savior and then she became a witness to her family and friends (v.28f). Second, He did it so His disciples could see and learn

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<sup>4</sup> Ray Fulenwider, *The Servant-Driven Church*, (Joplin: College Press Publishing, 1997), 104.

(v.27). They were afraid to ask Him, but His example spoke volumes. It is true that more is caught than taught, but without teaching an example can only accomplish so much

## CHAPTER THREE

### DEVELOPING AN ASSIMILATION PROGRAM

Developing an assimilation program might seem like a monumental task if there is not an assimilation program in place, but it is actually easier than one might think. With so much material available and with successful programs, such as the one found in *The Purpose Driven Church* already in use, the task will only be as difficult as the level of intensity desired by the one developing the program. The task can be broken down into five easy steps. While this is not a comprehensive method for developing an assimilation program it did serve as a good method for developing the assimilation program used in the authors church. The six steps are as follows:

1. Develop a mission statement - This is a brief overview, stated in one paragraph, of what the assimilation program will accomplish. *Every* church should have a mission statement for the ministry to guide it in fulfilling its vision. Even so, in developing something as important as an assimilation program, a church should have a mission statement for the development of that program.
2. Develop a workable outline - This will be the basic skeleton of the program and will be the guide used to keep the development of the program on track. Begin with a very basic outline, which might include basic elements taught in traditional programs. This basic outline will help to create a more detailed outline for writing the manuscript for the program.

3. Insert the gathered material into the outline - All the material gathered from other assimilation programs and the material gathered by answering the 5 "W" questions, can be used here. Design a system for inserting the information into the outline that is easy to use. Whatever works best for the one developing the program is the best method to use.
4. Write the program in manuscript form - This should be a rough draft of the entire program that will include all the information needed for the program to be taken as either a Home Bible Study or with a facilitator in a formal class setting.
5. Test the rough draft on a few church leaders- this is to help with grammar, order, and style as well as the content of the information covered. It will help to identify omissions and repetitions in the program as well.
6. Complete the final draft using the input from the church leaders used to test the rough draft and the rough draft is just that. This will help better organize the program and add or delete information before it is implemented.

This chapter will address each of the six steps in order to give insight into the development of the program and to assist the developer in creating a program unique to his church. The goal should is not to be original in every aspect of the assimilation program, but caution should be taken not to take credit for something that is not original. Always give credit for anything borrowed from another program.

### Develop a Mission Statement

Most organizations, which are making an impact, have a simple, definitive mission statement. The author's mission statement for developing this program is simple:

"Develop and implement an assimilation program that will give the new member everything he needs to successfully complete the journey from being a visitor to becoming a minister."

The mission statement is critical because it will guide the development of the entire project. It helps to include the necessary components and eliminate the unnecessary ones. This is separate from the mission statement of the church and the two should not be confused. In fact, the average church member will probably never see or even hear of this mission statement it is strictly for use by the one developing the assimilation program. This statement can be developed using a group of leaders or by the pastor. Either way it should reflect the vision God has given the church.

In the assimilation program presented in this paper, the target group consists of all new members. A new member is a new believer, a person transferring from another church or a person who has never been a member of a church. The goal is to make sure everyone wishing to be a member has the same information and opportunities. The mission statement should reflect the great commission given to the church as found in Matthew 28:18-20 which should be the ultimate goal of the assimilation program. Keeping the mission statement simple is important since it will be this statement that will provide much of the direction and inspiration for developing the program.

The setting of goals will also help to stay focused and eliminate having too much material. The goals should reflect the culture of the church, as well as the community in which the church ministers. These goals should be simple, concise and easily attained.



Goals that are not attainable will only lead to discouragement and frustration. The following goals were used in the development of the program found in Appendix A.

1. The assimilation program should be easy to use and not place an excessive burden

on the new member. It would be easy for the average pastor to write a program that is above the average church member. Deep theological truths and terminology that is foreign to the average person should be avoided. The more simple the program the more effective it will be. It is important to keep in mind that many times a person will not ever go beyond church membership, but he should be given the tools he needs to do so if he desires. If the very first class is too deep and only confuses the new member, he will probably not become an active participant. It would be much easier to simply be an observer than to be a participant, especially if the introduction to the church is beyond the ability to grasp. There should not be any part of the assimilation program that produces fear or intimidation. If the program puts any kind of burden on the new member, he will probably shy away from any other aspect of the program because he will probably assume the remainder of the program will be even more intense.

2. The assimilation program should include a broad overview of the entire church.

This *would* include the beliefs, practices and even the organizational structure of the church. This simply provides the individual with information to familiarize him with the church in such a way he would no longer feel like an uninformed outsider. He would have basic information about the church that would help him make an informed decision about becoming a part of the church. It would be helpful for the person developing the program to put himself in the shoes of the

new member. He should try to think like a new member and consider the questions he might ask himself.

3. The program should include a brief study of the basic spiritual disciplines of the Christian life. After reviewing the spiritual development of the church, it was concluded that there were five basic spiritual disciplines necessary for a new believer to practice; Worship and celebration, study, prayer, evangelism and supporting the ministry of the church. These basic disciplines are believed to be necessary for every believer to understand and practice in order to grow as a Christian and as a church member.
4. The program should include a thorough understanding of spiritual gifts. Too many people have misconceptions concerning spiritual gifts. It is often a misconception that spiritual gifts are reserved for the Pentecostals or the spiritually elite. It is important to dispel that misconception in such a way the new believer can be confident in using his gifts once he understands what his gift is. This part of the assimilation program should identify the gifts, explain them and then provide an opportunity, through a spiritual gifts inventory test, for the new member to discover his gifts and then explain how to use them.
5. The program should provide an understanding of the organizational structure of the church and how an individual can become involved. This is an appropriate conclusion for the assimilation program because it gives the new member the opportunity to take what he has learned and begin to get plugged in with a basic understanding of the church as a whole. This should include some kind of

organizational structure chart that would make it easy to identify who is in charge of what.

As the goals are set for the development of the assimilation program, care should be given to make sure the program is kept on track and its purpose of helping the new member become an active minister and missionary is always in focus. These are simple goals that should be easy to meet without making the assimilation process too difficult.

### Develop a Workable Outline

As with goals and the mission statement, an outline gives clear direction. It can be viewed as a road map directing the developer to a specific conclusion. There are several questions that should be asked when developing an outline. Some of the following questions are taken from Rick Warrens Book.<sup>1</sup>

1. If the new member could only attend the first class what should he walk away with? Many new members will only participate in one class simply because it is required for membership. With this in mind it is important to give as much information about the church and its beliefs as possible.
2. at disciplines does a new believer need to understand, in order to begin living a successful Christian life? Disciplines are practices or habits in the life of the believer that helps him grow spiritually. These should be an integral part of the believer's daily life, but caution should be taken to not place a guilt trip on the individual. We are in God's family by grace and what we do should be out of the motivation of love.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 311.

3. In order to become active in the church and avoid frustration what should the member know about his God given design and place in the church? This is in reference to spiritual gifts and a spiritual gifts inventory. When the new believer knows what he is gifted for and understands the gift and its use, he can be of better service.
4. How does the new member know to whom to go for what? This is the organizational structure of the church. Too often a new member sits on the sidelines simply because he does not where to get information and who is in charge. Answering this question will help eliminate much frustration in the life of the new member.
5. How can we insure that our members are loved and cared for? As previously mentioned, building relationships is vital to the retention of members. If a person feels like he belongs he will feel comfortable enough to stay and get involved. The lay shepherd ministry is an excellent way to make sure this happens. This question will help identify key ways to insure people get plugged into relationships.
6. What resources or services could we offer our new members? Like it or not, people like being served. Most people will look for the restaurant or business that provides the most for the money. The same can be true of a church. Identify what is available and inform the new member early and frequently through out the program.

### Insert the Gathered Material into the Outline

The assimilation program presented in Appendix A is similar to the assimilation program used in Saddleback Valley Community church. Saddlebacks program was chosen because of its effectiveness and success. Once the questions in the previous section have been answered and the content as well as the outline is established then the material can be inserted into the outline to prepare for the writing of the manuscript.

According to Rick Warren, "Some churches' membership classes cover the wrong material. Their content is based on spiritual growth or basic doctrine. These subjects are vitally important, but they are covered more appropriately in a new believer's class or a Christian doctrine class".<sup>2</sup> With this in mind, a class is needed for a potential new member to be able to make an informed decision about the church. He should know about the church and should be able to decide if he wants to be a part of what the church will do through its mission and purpose. The basic outline was just a guide for developing the final program. The basic outline used by this author to develop the assimilation program presented in Appendixes A through D, is as follows:

- I) Discovering Membership 101 - The title, "Discovering Membership" comes from Saddlebacks outline? It seemed logical to begin with Discovering Membership because that is where relationships begin and where the most impact can be made. It is only fair for a person to have adequate information to make a decision about the place he will serve the Lord. The remainder of the outline came from the ideas presented in Saddlebacks program.

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<sup>2</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* 316.

Ibid., 318.

- a. Introduction to Facilitator - A facilitator was used so the assimilation program can be taught using a teacher in a formal class setting or it can be taught as a home Bible study. Either way, this introduction will serve a helpful purpose in either directing the instructor in a formal class setting or as a more detailed introduction for the individual taking the program as a home Bible study..
- b. Salvation and Assurance -- It is not wise to assume that everyone who wishes to join a church is really saved. A clear and non-threatening presentation of the gospel should encourage a true believer while also giving the potential new member an opportunity to make sure they are indeed saved.
- c. Mission and Purpose Statement - The mission and purpose of a church are important for every new member to know and understand. If he knows where the church is going and why the church exists he will have a better chance of understanding where he fits in.
- d. History of the Church - Every church has a history. History can tell much about any organization. Humans are repetitive and usually repeat habits- good or bad. It is important that the new member see the progress of the church so he can see his own future involvement in the church.
- e. Organizational Structure of the Church - The organizational structure of the church simply tells the new member how the church operates and where he can find the answers he needs.

- II) Discovering Maturity 201 - Maturity of believers also comes from Saddleback 4 Mature believers make faithful servants and that is what assimilation is all about. This was placed second in the assimilation program because it is believed it is critical for a new member to practice some basic spiritual disciplines. Without these basic disciplines in his life he will never have the character to help the church fulfill its mission and purpose.
- a. Introduction to Facilitator
  - b. Worship - Worship is the highest form of service a believer can give. If he learns what worship is and how to worship he will increase in his devotion and service to Jesus.
  - c. How to Study the Bible - Too many new believers are given a Bible and then told to read and study it daily. Without a basic understanding of what that means, an individual will become frustrated with the Bible and just use it as an ornament under his arm when he attends church.
  - d. How to Pray - This section is one of the longest section is Discovering Maturity. Prayer will be the greatest tool the new believer will have and it is important that he understand as much as he can about the subject.
  - e. Enjoying Fellowship - As previously mentioned in this paper, building relationships is a vital part of an assimilation program. This should cover the fellowship an individual has with God and with other believers.
  - f. Giving and Tithing --- Supporting the ministry is an option while at the same it is not optional. A new member can be a part of the church without
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supporting it financially, but he cannot experience the fullness of the Christian experience and the blessings of God without participating in giving to the ministry. This part should introduce the new member to giving and teach him, from a biblical perspective, what giving is all about.

g. Workbook

- III) Discovering Ministry 301 - Discovering spiritual gifts is foreign to many smaller Baptist churches. Most people who serve in smaller Baptist churches are in positions because of tenure. However, in order *for a* church to be able to drastically impact its community "all" members should know their gifts and how to use them. A thorough understanding of spiritual gifts, their operations, purposes and how to find them is critical. Therefore, this section in the assimilation program must be more detailed than the other sections.

a. Introduction to Facilitator

b. Understanding Spiritual Gifts - The most carnal church in the New

Testament had a problem understanding and using spiritual gifts, so it is assumed that many smaller churches will also. It is not because they are ungodly people, but because they have never been properly trained concerning spiritual gifts. Proper use will come from proper understanding and a consistent teaching concerning the gifts will help provide this understanding.

- e. Biblical Support - One important point to remember, when dealing with smaller churches, is the tendency to often refer to the Bible. This is a wonderful attitude to have, but traditional views and teachings that refer to

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 331.



the Bible yet do not rightly divide the word of truth, can create problems. It is important to make sure the biblical support is not out of context and is supported by plain and accurate references.

- d. List of Gifts - The list of the gifts taught depends on the church and the beliefs of the one creating the assimilation program. The spiritual gifts inventory used will also determine this. Whatever gifts are covered in the spiritual gifts inventory should also be covered in the teaching of this section of the assimilation program.
- e. How to discover your Gift - This is where the spiritual gifts inventory comes into play. For the purpose of this project, the spiritual gifts inventory used was by Larry Gilbert.<sup>5</sup>
- f. How the Gifts Match the Five Purposes - The five purpose of the church helps the church to understand why it is here and what is supposed to accomplish. If the individual can discover his spiritual gift and clearly see where that gift can be used to fulfill a purpose of the church, he will be more likely to participate. The five purpose are identified using the acrostic "WIFES"; Worship, instruction, fellowship, evangelism and service.
- g. How to use your Gift - this is simply a brief guideline to help the individual to begin the process of getting involved. It will attempt to match gift with ministry.

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<sup>5</sup> This inventory can be obtained through Church Growth Institute. The author is Larry Gilbert and the inventory can be purchased by contacting Church Growth institute, F.O. Box 9176, Oxnard, CA., 93031-9176 or phone (800) 553 -4769.

#### h. Workbook

IV) Discovering Mission 401 - Ministry is active mission. When a person knows his ministry abilities and how he is equipped he will find it easier to be on mission.

- a. Introduction to Facilitator
- b. Organizational Structure - Discovering Membership 101 briefly addressed this. However, for an individual to know where to go, what to do and who to go to for direction, a clear understanding of the organizational structure of the church is necessary. This cannot possibly explain the entire organizational structure but it can give enough information so the new member can find answers.
- c. Ministries and the Five Purposes - This part of Discovering Mission should attempt to identify all the ministries a new member could become involved in. By linking the ministries to the five purpose of the church the member can gain a clearer understanding of where he will best fit it and be able to minister.
- d. How to Get Involved - It is not enough to arm the individual with information about the church. It is vital that he know how to use the information he has learned. This section should give him direction in getting started.

This is a basic skeletal outline that was used to begin the process. As the outline was expanded information was added and titles were refined to create the final outline used to write the manuscript. The order of the outline was chosen based on the authors

own style of learning, which is to build systematically on what was previously learned in order to gain a thorough understanding of the subject being taught. Each part of the outline was put on a separate sheet of paper and the gathered material was assigned to the page using reference numbers. For example: When the information was gathered on assurance of salvation it was assigned the number-"I.a.". This meant it was under the Roman numeral "I", Discovering Membership and under the letter "a", which was salvation and assurance. This made it much easier to keep up with the material and place it where it needed to be in the manuscript.

#### Write a Manuscript for the Program

This is the most critical part of the development process. The content has already been gathered and arranged to coincide with the outline. Now the decision must be made if it will be taught as a home Bible study or if it will be taught in a formal setting. This project was designed in such a way that it could be taught either way. The introduction to the facilitator was for anyone teaching the program in a formal setting. If it was to be treated as a home Bible study, then the introduction to the facilitator could be dropped and the lessons with the workbook could be taken home and treated as a home Bible Study.

This process will take at least one re-write before it is presented for review. It is a good idea to get someone who is proficient in grammar to go over the manuscript to help with any grammar or spelling problems. Using a computer word processor makes re-writes and revisions much easier. Once the re-write is complete and a final rough draft is

finished it is time to test the program by asking several of the church leaders to go through the program as if they were j o i n i n g the church.

### Test the Rough Draft

The implementation stage will be a time when the church gets its first preview of this program. If there has never been an assimilation program in the church before now, then implementation will be easier since there is nothing to compare to. If this is a revision of a previously used program the process might be a little more difficult. Either way key leaders, who have the trust and respect of the people, should be chosen. Caution should be exercised not to choose only leaders who agree with the one developing the program. If this is done the program will not reflect a balanced view. People who disagree are not always a bad thing- constructive criticism is always beneficial. As these key leaders go through the program have them write down helpful insights that can be used to finalize the manuscript.

Once the selected leaders have completed the program have them turn in their insights so they can be assimilated into a list. This list can then be used to make necessary and helpful alterations to the manuscript before implementation takes place. Re-write the manuscript to come up with the final draft to be used as the program.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSIMILATION PROGRAM

Implementing something with the potential impact this type of program can have on a church can be difficult simply because it is different. How it is implemented is determined by the heart and attitude of the church and church leadership. If the attitude of the church is opposed to change then this might be more difficult to do. If, on the other hand, *the* church and its leadership are sold out to evangelism and discipleship, the content itself will be the strongest selling point because it is biblical, simple and designed to strengthen the church. An important principle to remember is this; if someone invests in something they will own it and if they own it they will support it. If it is biblical and will benefit the future of the church there should not be any problems. However, implementation does involve change and change can be a source of contention even in a good church. Correctly dealing with change can make the difference between a *at* program and a mediocre one.

#### Change Issues

There are several areas that will be affected by changing the way new members are received into the church. Identifying change issues before they become an issue can be helpful in making a smooth transition. The following three issues were found to be of concern in the implementation of this program.

Changing the way a new member is brought into the church Small churches have their own way of doing things. Many are glad to see new people decide to join the church and most of the time these new people are welcomed with open arms- almost too open. A traditional method of accepting someone into the church is for the individual to come to the altar during the invitation and if he professes to know Christ then he is voted in at that very moment. This creates several problems. First, the church knows very little about the individual. The day of "small towns" where everyone knows everyone is, for the most part, over. Today's society is more mobile and transient than ever before. People can travel from city to city and state to state with relative ease and can carry with them hidden agenda's and issues. This presents two problems. People can join a church and earn the trust of the people and in doing so put the church in difficult situations because they are in a position to influence lives. God's people can be almost too forgiving and accepting, which can make the church vulnerable. Another problem is less serious. People move from church to church and bring with them bad attitudes and destructive habits. It usually takes at least a year to really get to know someone and by the time the destructive habit or bad attitude is discovered the damage is done. The bad attitudes or destructive habits could include incorrect biblical beliefs, problems with authority and even a troubling spirit. Second, the individual knows very little about the church. If a pastor has a charismatic personality and the church makes a good first impression the person might be inclined to join out of emotion. Once the individual joins they begin to

build relationships and make lasting friendships. Over time, the new member discovers things about the church that does not agree with his belief system *or his* own philosophy of ministry. When this realization sets in so does disappointment and disillusionment because the church is not what he thought it was. Third, over expectations or under expectations lead to disappointment. If a person joins a *church* without knowing what is expected of him and if the church does not know what the new member expects from the church then disappointment and detachment will follow. It is a wise church that will lay all expectations on the table. Part of the assimilation program should let the new member know what the church expects of those who desire to join and in turn the new member should let the church know he expects.

2. Requiring a class to become a member - The Bible teaches that if a person is truly born again then he is baptized into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). While salvation makes him a part of body of Christ it does not make him a part of the local church. Most Southern Baptist Churches require a person to be saved and scripturally *baptized by **immersion in** water*, in order to become a member of a local church. This is usually the extent of membership requirements. These limited requirements have failed to produce a stable membership and make disciples that will impact the community and world for Christ. It is easier to join a Baptist church than it is to join most lodges. The time has come for the individual to expect more from the church and for the church to expect more from the individual. When an individual, especially in a smaller church, decides to join the church, the church does not usually want to require too much of the individual

because it either wants new members to join in order to bolster the yearly report, or because it needs the financial resources or because the older members do not want to hurt anyone's feelings. These three reasons are not godly or scriptural reasons to allow a person to join a church. The purpose for joining a church should be so the new believer can join with other believers to carry out the great commission.

3. Changing the way leaders are chosen - Usually, in smaller churches, leaders are chosen by using three different methods. First, *an individual earns the right to hold a title or position because of his tenure at the church - this is the "good ole boy system."* This system does not take into account giftedness, passion or desire. It simply allows an individual to assume responsibilities because he has been faithful to the church and has earned the right to be in charge. Overcoming this can be difficult because, after all, he is a Christian, he loves God and he was here before you came and will be here after you are gone. Second, *a leader is chosen because there is no one else to fill the position.* This is one of the worst policies for promotion a church can have. The church creates new ministries in an attempt to make the church grow or to keep up with the latest trend. In doing this, people without any burden for the ministry, passion in the ministry or giftedness to do the ministry are thrust into ministry and this creates discouragement as well as anxiety and making it even more difficult to find workers and keep them. The church must narrow its focus down and do ministry with excellence. Instead of doing many things with mediocrity, the church should do a few things well. Third, *someone with a strong personality decides he wants to start a ministry.* This is not



a wise move for two reasons. Ministries takes time and resources and if everyone has a new idea and that idea needs man hours and financial resources then some other ministry, that really does help fulfill the mission, will lack what it needs to be successful. Another reason this is not wise is because it creates a free-for-all mentality in the church. Everyone is free to do his own thing and no one really accomplishes anything. Jesus gives the vision to the church and then the vision should become the boss. It is not up to individuals to create a new ministry rather it is the job of the vision to do this. Once the vision creates a new ministry the leader is chosen through training and giftedness. It should be the policy of a church not to create a ministry until a need is identified and a leader is in place. This does not mean that individuals should *be* discouraged from dreaming and working, but it does mean there should be a healthy level of accountability along with reasonable expectations.

### Dealing with Change

Dealing with change can be an educational experience that can also be a blessing to everyone involved. Although change is sometimes painful it is also necessary. As this program is implemented it will require change and this change is accomplished in three stages.

1. Recognize the inevitability of change - Change is inevitable in every living creature or organization. If a human being does not change he will eventually die. Human life has seasons of change that makes it possible to live in this world. If a baby remains a baby then eventually he will die simply because his caregiver will

eventually be gone. Even so, a church cannot remain the same in a constantly changing society. If the church and the church leadership recognize that change is inevitable, they can plan and prepare for it.

- Embrace the change process - Change is not something that occurs overnight.

Change is a process that takes time and planning. How change is presented and when it is presented will determine how the process progresses and the success of the change. In order to introduce the change this program brought, there were four pre-change events that had to take place. First, *the pain of remaining the same had to become greater than the pain of change itself*. Any leader who finds himself living with status quo and does not become stirred out of his complacency, will soon find himself declining and irrelevant. If someone thinks change is painful he should try irrelevance. Second, *key leadership had to see the need for change*. This includes the pastoral staff, elders and deacons. If the leadership does not see the need for change and the change does not make sense to them then the congregation will never buy into it. In presenting this assimilation program, the leadership was included in the process from day one. While all the leadership did not have input on every aspect of writing of the program, they were consulted. Third, *there had to be a commitment by the leaders to see the change through*. It is easy to talk about change behind closed doors and even dream of the success that will come as a result of change. But tenacity must be a characteristic of the leader. Jesus taught this principle in Luke 14:28. This principle teaches that a person should make up his mind that he will finish what he starts before he even attempts to

begin. Fourth, *the change must have a biblical purpose and goal*. It is important to make sure every aspect of the new program is biblically based and reflects the true beliefs of the church. There are not many who will oppose it if it has, as its foundation, biblical principles. If an individual \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> does not oppose it then he is showing his true colors by opposing the Bible itself. Embracing the change process involves introducing the change to key leaders, power brokers and then to the church. Following are suggestions for making these key introductions. Keep in mind this process takes time and tact.

- When introducing the change to key leaders take the time to meet with the leaders, as a group, and discuss the need, process and goal of the change.
- When introducing change to the power brokers do not fight them, rather join them. "Power brokers" are those John Maxwell learned to us in order to implement change using the law of E.F. Hutton. Maxwell says, "The real leader holds the power, not just the position."<sup>1</sup> The power broker is someone who the church looks at before casting a vote in a business meeting. Many pastors have made the mistake of fighting the power brokers, only to find themselves on the losing team. It is good idea to befriend these people and spend some time with them in order to gain their confidence and support. Maxwell decided early on to use the law of "E. F. Hutton" when dealing with needs in his early ministry. When the time came to get some things accomplished he decided he could either fight the power brokers or use the power brokers to get things done. Dr. Maxwell, a week before an important

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John Maxwell *The 21 Irrefutable laws of Leadership* {Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1998) 44.

business meeting where he would propose some changes, called to ask his power broker, Claude, if he could spend some time with      As the two did chores together Dr. Maxwell presented ideas and gained the approval of the power broker. He went on to say, "If I wanted to accomplish anything at that church, I just went out to the farm and did chores with Claude. I could always count on him to bring those things before the people, and whenever Claude spoke, people listened."<sup>2</sup> Instead of fighting a battle that cannot be won, use the law of E.F. Hutton to take advantage of the power brokers in the church to accomplish the necessary change.

2. Evaluate and celebrate the affect of change - Evaluating the change is not something done at the end of the change, but rather it is something done through out the change process. Every aspect of the change and the implementation of the change should be evaluated so that minor adjustments can be made along the way. The goal and purpose of the change must not be altered, but the methodologies involved in the change must be flexible enough to be altered from time to time. Change should never be viewed as an obstacle, but rather as an opportunity. It is an opportunity to improve and impact something for good. Too often church leaders, as well as church members, believe that change is the enemy when status quo and complacency is actually the enemy. Change is inevitable and it can be embraced and used effectively or it can be fought and then it will eventually take place anyway without proper planning or purpose.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 47.

The subject of change has been discussed from a relatively negative perspective because change usually creates negative emotions. With this in mind it is important that the leaders acknowledge and appreciate the things the church is doing well. One author points out, "When we acknowledge and appreciate what shouldn't be changed in our churches, we create a trusting atmosphere."<sup>3</sup> Creating and maintaining trust is of paramount importance in the life of the church. Celebrate what is good and gracefully change that which is not healthy and a healthy, vibrant, growing church will be the result.

#### Deciding When to Teach the Program to the Church and New Members

By this time in the process a tentative decision should have already been made about how to present the assimilation program to the church. There were two options for initially presenting this assimilation program to the entire church and two options for teaching the program to future new members. Examination of these options can help a church decide which is best. The two options for teaching the initial program to the church are as follows.

1. Replace the present Sunday School Curriculum with this Twelve-Week Series.

Again, if a church has a strong traditional Sunday school this will be the best time. The drawbacks are not major, but do need to be considered when desiring to use this option. There are only two drawbacks that are worth mentioning. The first drawback would be disrupting the flow of the traditional Sunday school. A church that uses published material from the denomination might find itself off track if the material is replaced with this twelve-week series. It is understood a

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<sup>3</sup> Mallory, *The Equipping Church*, 62.

series can be passed over, but this might create a problem for traditionalist. This did not create a problem in the author's church, but it did come up in the discussion. The second drawback would be the lack of accountability with the teachers. Most of the Sunday School teachers, even though they are godly people, are not qualified to teach this material without having been more thoroughly instructed in every aspect of the program and its material. To adequately train every Sunday school teacher would take much time and effort and would present a scheduling problem. In order to adequately train all the teachers, in the two Sunday schools, there would *need* to be classes held at a separate time and the training would have to be intense-- more intense than most teachers would want to participate. Although the program is designed to be simple and easy to follow, there will be questions arise that would need to be answered by the trained church leadership. This would help to avoid any confusion concerning specific beliefs or the church organization structure, not to mention theological questions that might arise.

2. Present the material on Sunday evening as a twelve-week series. This seemed to be the best option simply because the series could be presented by the pastor and any questions could be answered by the person who designed the program. It is granted that not all of the membership will attend the services for the entire new members assimilation program, but that is to be expected. However, the dedicated members who support the church with their giving and with their attendance will be a great place to implement the program. While the program is designed to last twelve weeks, provision should be made to extend the series if the presentation

takes longer or if there are extensive questions. It is important not to rush through this part of the design and implementation of the program. because the future success of the church depends on it. Success depends on it because a building's strength is determined by the foundation and make no mistake about i t assimilation is building a foundation.

Once the church has been taught the assimilation program the time comes to begin teaching the new members. Previously, some options for teaching times were discussed. The author's church had two options for presenting the program to new believers. Both were viable options with pro's and con's for each. Following are the two options with suggestions and insights for the presentation of the program. 1. Teach the New Members on Sunday Morning during Sunday School - This was the option chosen for teaching discovering Membership 101 and there were three specific reasons this was chosen. First, *the leadership believed this was the most convenient time to gather new members together.* With the busy schedules of most families in the twenty first century no time is really convenient. However, since most new members already attend services on Sunday morning and the church already provides child-care, this option seemed to be the least intrusive and requiring the least amount of sacrifice. This made it possible for one of the staff to teach the class, thus making it easier for one of the pastors to be involved. Second, *there was a necessary element of accountability.* Accountability is essential if a new member is expected to follow through in this four-week commitment. The new member is accountable to the facilitator as well as the other members in the class. The time spent together in this class can help build critical relationships as well as encourage the new member to

continue in the assimilation program. Third, *it made it easier for a new member to transition into a Sunday school class once the program was over.* One of the most critical elements necessary for the retention of new members is their inclusion into the life of the church. This can only be accomplished by helping the new member build relationships. Rick Warren says, "One of the biggest fears members have about growth is how to maintain that "small church" feeling of fellowship as their church grows. The antidote to this fear is to develop small groups within your church".<sup>4</sup> Holding the class during a scheduled Sunday school time will make this transition much easier. In the implementation of this program part of Discovering Membership 101 can include an introduction to the various classes and make an attempt to get them "plugged" into a class.

2. Allow the new members to take the material home and treat it as a home Bible study - This was not an option for Discovering Membership 101, but was the best choice for the remainder of the assimilation program. The reason for allowing and encouraging this was two fold: It was easier on the people and it was less demanding on the church schedule. It was easier on the people in that it allowed them to complete the classes at their own pace and on their own schedule. It was even suggested that the new members make this a part of a family devotion time, which would strengthen the family. This however created a problem with measuring success and promoting accountability. There was not a way to measure if the new member comprehended the material or even finished it. One option for measuring the success and completion would be to require anyone wishing to become a ministry leader to

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Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 325.



interview with a ministry leader or a pastor. A simple questionnaire could be used to measure their understanding of the material covered. Since this is a new program and the church is still working through the process, this part of the program has not been dealt with. Over the next six months the program will be re-evaluated by a team consisting of church leaders, ministry leaders, and those recently assimilated, in order to determine the best way to improve the program and the methods of teaching. In the author's church the presentation to the church on Sunday evening went very well. It might be wise to learn from the experience of someone who has already implemented the assimilation program with success. Here are some strong recommendations for presenting the assimilation program for the first time to the church on Sunday evenings.

- a** Plan ahead - If a church has not previously had an assimilation program this will be new to the church as a whole. Although the material might seem to be common material taught in the church before, as a series it is a new concept. Give plenty of time for the people to get used to the idea of a new program and to adjust their schedule so they can participate.

Make sure there is ample time set aside to present the entire program without interruption. This means it should be implemented during a time of the year when the most people will be able to attend and there are not any special days such as homecoming or special holidays such as Easter or Christmas, to interrupt the series. Of course, it is granted that people will miss portions of the presentation, but as a whole, the members usually attending on Sunday evenings will make plans to be in attendance. One alternative used in the authors church, for helping

to assure people get the information, is to provide a workbook that is kept at the church, then when the people come in each Sunday evening they can pick up their work-book with an answer key and a cassette tape of the previous weeks teaching.

- Make sure the leadership talks positively about the series and often puts it before the people. It is imperative that the members know, for certain, that the church leadership totally supports this. Key leaders should mention it, in a positive light, in conversations and the pastor should mention it with enthusiasm when giving announcements or during his sermons. There is no doubt that communication is a key to successfully implementing any program or change and it should be a priority of the leadership to find the best way to communicate. At Brentwood Presbyterian Church, they learned this lesson early. Sue Mallory writes, " Finding he doors through which communication flows in your congregation will largely determine how clearly you convey any idea."<sup>5</sup> Take the time to clearly and often communicate.
- Provide the same printed material to the existing members that will be provided to the new members. It is important to make the presentation as much like the new members class as possible.

### Implementing the Actual Program

The question might be asked, "Who develops the assimilation program?" In the authors church the development of this program was a joint effort among the pastoral team. Each church must decide, for itself, who will be the developer of the

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<sup>5</sup> Mallory, *The Equipping Church*, 87.

program. It is the belief of this author that the pastor is responsible for and should be the one responsible for creating the content. This is believed because Ephesians 4:11 teaches that the pastor is the one who is to equip the saints. If he is a wise pastor he will share this duty with others so that he can glean from the insight of others. The actual

implementation passed by three specific groups and this part of the paper will very briefly identify these three groups, why they were chosen, and what the results were.

1. Presentations to the Elders - The Elders are the spiritual advisors to the senior pastor. Together they set the direction for the church, through the senior pastor. They know the heartbeat of the church and have a God-given ability to make wise choices. This is the very first group that had to buy into the new program. This presentation was very easy in the author's church because all the pastors and elders are proponents of evangelism and discipleship. The results were that the Elders owned the program and enthusiastically embraced it.
2. Presentation to the deacons - The deacons can be an asset or a liability. Like it or not, the deacons are in a position of influence. They might not be able to stop the process, but they can hinder it and make the implementation process longer than necessary. Take the time to share the information with them and solicit their advice and input. The result was that the deacons embraced the program and supported it. This meant that there was absolutely no opposition to the program or its implementation.
3. Presentation to the church - The final phase in adoption of the assimilation program was the presentation to the entire church. This was accomplished by presenting the material on Sunday evenings as a series. If the church is advised of

the goals and purpose and then included in the process it will pass with flying colors and will enthusiastically embraced. The result was a clearer understanding of the mission, vision and purposes of the church by the church membership.

4. Presentation to the new members - This is the sweetest part of the whole process.

The leaders have bought in as have the church membership. It is now time to begin making disciples. Now the process begins of helping people take the journey from being a visitor to becoming a minister. The results are yet to be seen, but scripture makes it clear that when people are properly trained they will impact the world around them

## CHAPTER FIVE

### EVALUATION OF THE ASSIMILATION PROGRAM

The development of the assimilation program has been a rewarding study and has yielded some long-term benefits. The church now understands who it is, where it is going, what is expected of each member and the role of its leaders. While it is almost impossible to survey the entire church, in order to measure the success of the program, it is possible to give the program to pre-selected people to evaluate it. In order to be able to objectively evaluate this program there were four pre-selected groups asked to answer different questions. The groups were, the developer of the program, the pastoral staff, twenty previously assimilated members and three pastors from area churches.

#### The Evaluation from the Developer

This is a difficult task for the one developing the program. For months he has been in the development and implementation of the program and the lines can get blurred. This evaluation consisted of four questions and a time set aside from the daily demands of the ministry to honestly answer the following questions.

1. *Was this program designed for the good of the church or for your own ego?* In answering this question, honesty was not easy. Pastors usually take personal responsibility for the health and growth of the church. A growing church must mean the pastor is doing something right. In evaluating my own motives, I realized there was a little of both. The church and its health are of utmost

importance. On the other hand, if the church is healthy I must have had something to do with it.

2. *Do you really believe everything being taught in this program?* This program is a reflection of the author's beliefs and convictions. If the material is not imbedded deep in the heart of the person developing and implementing the assimilation program, it will never have the impact it could have otherwise.

3. *Are there any beliefs being taught just to keep the peace? This was* a difficult question. The only part of this assimilation program that was possibly included for this purpose was the inclusion of people into the leadership structure that did not belong. Authority without responsibility only leads to tyranny and this program has attempted to make this clear.

4. *Do you really believe assimilation is **as important as** is presented in this paper?* There is no doubt that the church has failed in the task of assimilating new members into the church. Although assimilation and training is hard work, it will yield amazing and lasting results. It is the one thing the church can do to turn the tide of apostasy and change the impact spiritual immaturity is having on the church. Anything worth doing is worth doing right and assimilation with purpose and on purpose is a great place to start.

#### The Evaluation by the Pastoral Staff

In order for this part of the evaluation to be helpful there must be an atmosphere that promotes honesty without fear of retribution. It is easy to ask for input, but it is

another to accept it. Asking the staff to honestly evaluate something the "boss" created can put the staff in the hot seat so caution should be used when asking the staff to participate. There were three **simple** questions **asked**:

1. *Did you agree with the beliefs presented in this program?* It is important that the staff agree with the beliefs of the senior pastor. Without the same beliefs and convictions, except for minor differences, a church will soon become divided. The staff agreed that doctrine must be agreed without compromise, but a difference in opinions concerning methodology and implementation is acceptable as long as the differences are not public. The staff should always show a united front.
2. *Would you change anything and if so, what?* Again, only        or changes were suggested. One of the changes was the timing of the classes and the order the classes would be taught. One of the staff agreed with teaching the material in the Sunday school hour and the other staff believed the class should be a separate time set aside for the specific purpose of teaching new members. A suggestion for the order for teaching the classes was only slight. One staff member thought it might be better to teach on spiritual gifts before teaching on Maturity. The idea behind this was if the new member knew his spiritual gift he might be better able to understand and apply the spiritual disciplines.
3. *Do you believe this program will benefit the church?* There was not any conflict concerning the benefit to the church. The staff agreed that the program would be a vast improvement of the present method of assimilation.

### The Evaluation by Church Members

The Twenty previously assimilated members were asked to evaluate the program using a six-question survey. This was not a true cross section of the congregation, but it was a group of people that could give a fair and balanced overview of the program.

The group of twenty previously assimilated people can be broken down by the following five different characteristics:

1. Of the twenty, twelve were males and eight were females.
2. The ages ranged from twenty seven to seventy years of age.
  - a. Six were between the ages of twenty seven to thirty five years of age.
  - b. Ten were between the ages of thirty-six and fifty years of age.
  - c. Four were between the ages of fifty-one and seventy years of age.
3. The ethnicity of the group is broken down as follows
  - a. Two Hispanics - This was a husband and wife who are bi-lingual.
  - b. Eighteen Caucasian - The majority of the church is Caucasian. This is a clear reflection of the demographics of the church.
4. Religious Background
  - a. Four non-denominational - This group represents those from Pentecostal backgrounds or contemporary evangelical backgrounds that did not carry a denominational title.
  - b. Four were former Catholics - This group represented those who were raised as Catholics and later converted to evangelical Christianity.



- c. Two were from an Independent Baptist background. Those from the Independent Baptist background were from the fundamental, independent Baptist movement.
- d. Eight were Southern Baptist - Everyone in this group was raised in a small Southern Baptist church. Some remained in the same church their entire life and some joined the church from another congregation.
- e. Two had no church background.

#### 5. Education level

- a. Two had graduate degrees - One had a Doctor of Ministry degree and the other had a Masters degree in education.
- b. Two had College degrees \* Both had a Bachelors degree.
- c. Sixteen had High School diplomas or its equivalent.

The responses were somewhat the same with only slight differences. Following is a summary of the results of the evaluations. It was interesting to see that even though many came from various backgrounds, the responses were remarkably similar. The results will be broken down by questions and will be a brief overview of the responses.

*I. Was the assimilation program easy to follow?* \_The general consensus of the group was that the program was easy to follow. There were only three slight difficulties indicated. First, there was a lot of information. Although the program is not a comprehensive program, it does contain enough information for a clear understanding of the overall picture of the church. Second, the information seemed to be repetitive in certain areas. Chapters one and four both repeated information about the operations of the church. This was done on purpose. Third,

it seemed to almost be too simple. This is a compliment when it is remembered that simplicity was one of the goals. It seemed simple because the people in this group were mature believers who had been involved in churches for some time.

2. *Was the assimilation program informative?* The group agreed that the information was informative and that they had learned some new facts about the church they did not previously know. All felt the information given was balanced and the range of information was broad enough for anyone coming into the church to be able to have a clear and basic picture of the overall church.
3. *Was the information helpful?* The overall answer to this question was that it helped to better understand the vision of the church and where the ministry was heading. Many people only get a taste of the vision on Sunday or Wednesday. Unless a person spends an extra amount of time with the pastor or one of the staff, it is almost impossible to get a feel of the vision of the church. The assimilation program is a view into the heart of the leader and the direction he wants to take the church.
4. *Were you able to discover your spiritual gifts?* All of the participants indicated that they had previously discovered their spiritual gifts. However, the section on spiritual gifts more clearly answered some questions they had concerning spiritual gifts. It was a refresher course for most of the participants and they believed it would be beneficial to anyone wishing to understand spiritual gifts.
5. *Did you understand the organizational structure of the church?* One of the area's of concern for these "churched" people was the idea of the organization verses the organism. Some were concerned about the *business* side of the church. The

concern was that new members might find the organizational structure to seem more like a business than a church. A suggestion was to present a more detailed breakdown of the organizational chart so that the new member might have a better understanding of where they might fit once they become an active part of the church.

6. *How long did it take you to complete each class?* This was a little more difficult to identify simply because the group took the program home and completed it as a home Bible study. The average time spent on the program was three hours. Of the three hours most of the time was spent on the spiritual gifts section. The problem most of the group encountered was the lack of free time in their personal schedule to take parts of the program without interruption. One of the strong points about taking the class as home Bible study was that it served as a family devotion and study time.

Each person in the group was asked to write a one page or less review of the overall program as a whole. One of the reviews seemed to sum it all up:

"As I read through and studied this program I tried to approach it as a new believer, someone who has never been church, but has recently turned to Jesus for Salvation. So many times we reach the lost, they proclaim Jesus as savior and it seems as though we allow them to get lost in the church scene and they simply do not understand who they are in Christ, and the power they now possess to know who the enemy is and how to battle him.

Discovering Membership 101 shows the steps necessary to earn trust just to be able to share the "Good News" of Christ. Learning what certain words mean can be vital to someone who is a new believer. Knowing about baptism by immersion is very important as a first act of obedience. A new believer must know that being saved is not being perfect and salvation is a free gift offered to everyone by God. If a new believer can realize who they are in Christ can be a major accomplishment. Getting plugged into a Bible class is essential for spiritual growth.

Maturing in Christ is the next important step in the developing believer. A young Christian will find quickly that living the Christian life is not easy. Disciplines should become a daily routine (ex. Reading the Bible, prayer time and application). These are

necessary as the newness wears off and the enemy will attack your every weakness and tempt you in every way. Only the ones who are disciplined to read, pray and submit your life to Christ will be able to withstand the wiles of the devil.

As you mature, finding your spiritual gift can be really exciting. Knowing the best way to be used by God can be really rewarding and fulfilling. On the other hand doing ministry outside of your gifts can be discouraging and sometimes defeating. Everyone has a gift, but no one has all of the gifts. Spiritual gifts should be used to edify the body, not self.

Finally, knowing the mission, vision and goals of the church will help a believer find his or her place and realize why the church is here and how it would or would not be missed if it no longer existed. A growing maturing Christian will be able to determine if the church is what God wants it to be or if it's just another social club. To summarize this review, these classes or learning floors are necessary for a new believer. It is important to teach, train and disciple new converts for their spiritual growth and placement in the kingdom of God."

#### The Evaluation by Pastors from the Area

In the Southern Baptist Convention there are state conventions and local associations. These local associations give pastors an opportunity to build friendships and offer assistance to each other. Pastors from other churches can be a valuable asset when evaluating ministry and ministry tools. Three pastors, from the local association were given the assimilation to review and were then asked in a telephone conversation, to evaluate this program using four simple questions. The church demographics of the pastors surveyed were as follows:

1. Pastor One - The church is a small Southern Baptist Church with a Sunday Morning attendance of 150. It has a traditional Sunday school with an average attendance of 100. The church has one only full time pastoral staff member, which is the pastor, and a paid secretary. The worship style is traditional with the church being led by the pastor and deacons. The congregation is of mixed age with a majority of the congregation being Caucasian.

2. Pastor Two -. The church is a Southern Baptist Church with a Sunday Morning attendance of 200 and a Sunday school of 175. The church has two full time pastoral staff and one full time secretary. It has a blended worship style with a traditional leadership structure of pastor and deacons.
3. Pastor Three - This church is a non-denominational church with Southern Baptist roots and follows the models of Willow Creek and Saddle back. The church has two contemporary worships service and uses a pastor/elder style of leadership. It has one full time pastor and one full time secretary. This church does not have a Sunday evening service and uses small group studies during the week in lieu of a traditional Sunday school.

The questions and a brief summary of the results are as follows:

*1. Do you presently have a program of assimilation in **your church**?*

- First Pastor - There is no formal assimilation program in this church. Visitors are contacted and invited to attend a Sunday school class.
- Second Pastor - This church has a simple one-class approach to assimilation. The program is not required for membership, but it is strongly suggested.
- Third Pastor - This church requires new members to attend a new members class. The class is treated as a small group study and new members are strongly encouraged to participate. If a member decides not to attend the class, they are allowed to attend the church, but are not considered a member with voting privileges.

2. *Did you agree with the beliefs presented in this program?*

- Pastor one - All of the theological beliefs used in the program agree with the doctrinal stance of this church. We believe in the inerrant, infallible word of God and emphasize this in everything we do.
- Pastor two - All of the theological beliefs, used in this program, are the doctrinal stance taken by this church. We are conservative and place a very high value on being doctrinal correct. Our beliefs are consistent with a vast majority of the Southern Baptist Convention. The only thing we might disagree on is the way the content is taught, but not with the actual content.
- Pastor three - While this church does not officially fellowship with the Southern Baptist convention, it does hold to the Baptist Faith and Message. Our methods for teaching and performing ministry might be different, but our beliefs are essentially the same.

3. *Would you use **this** program **in** your **church**?*

- Pastor one - This is a very informative program with much information. The program could be used in this church if it was condensed and modified. The modification would have to include a revision of the organizational chart, which would put more emphasis on the leadership of deacons.
- Pastor two - The program was informative and could easily be adopted by this church. The outline is usable except for the length of Discovering Maturity 201 and Discovering Ministry 301. Discovering Maturity 201 would need to be increased since this church places a strong emphasis on discipleship. Discovering Ministry 301 would need to be shortened. Until this church learns

more about spiritual gifts, it will not be able to put such emphasis on this teaching simply because of the perception of older members in leadership. Although I do believe in spiritual gifts and the need for believers to understand them, the teaching would take time.

- Pastor three - The program is familiar material. This church presently uses portions taken from Willow Creek and Saddle Back. The outline would be easily adopted into the program at our church. In fact, some of the components found in this program will be helpful in modifying our present program.

*4. What would you change about this program?*

- Pastor one - There are three specific changes I would make. First, I would definitely shorten the program. It is hard enough to get people to come to church for Sunday school, much less to attend a separate class in order to attend church. Second, I would not require it for church membership. This church is in a small community and has a small community mind set. While I do believe it is a good idea to teach new members, it would be very difficult to make it a requirement for membership simply because membership is considered a right and not a privilege. Third, I would place less emphasis on the organizational structure of the church. This could be because most of the people already understand the church government and only a few would not already assume the pastor is in charge.
- Pastor two -- I would most certainly shorten the program. I do not believe my church would be willing to spend this much time of what would be considered

basic doctrine. I hope I will be able to incorporate a program similar to this in the future, but for now it would not work. I would also have to change the teaching on the organizational structure of the church. It would be necessary to place more of an emphasis on the deacons and would have to also include the use of committees. I also do not believe I could require the entire program for membership into the church. Eventually, I would like to see a program with this intensity required, but for now it would have to be less intense.

- Pastor three - The present program used in this church is similar in many ways.

The model used for the development of this program is essentially the same as the models we used to develop ours. I would probably use small groups for teaching the material and would not allow it to be taken as a home Bible study, except in special extreme cases such as someone who is homebound or someone who works shift work, such as law enforcement or firefighters.

### Conclusion

The development of an assimilation program is a rewarding and challenging undertaking. One insight gained from this experience is that nothing of great value is accomplished without great effort. While it is a tedious task it still remains a better option than status quo. The evaluation surveys have shown that there are many different attitudes concerning the assimilation of members. Some churches like the intentional assimilation and some are content with the way it is already being done. No matter what the consensus it seems obvious the time has come for the church to awaken out of its



sleep and intentionally fulfill the great commission. On purpose assimilation of God's people will yield powerful and lasting results that will be seen in eternity, as well as experienced in the present, as the church intentionally helps people make the journey from being a visitor to becoming a minister in the life and ministry of the church.

## APPENDIX A

### DISCOVERING MEMBERSHIP 101 - THE FIRST FLOOR

#### Introduction to the Facilitator

It is difficult enough to get people into the church one time, but even more difficult to get them to remain and become fully functional disciples of Christ. Many churches make the mistake of presenting a poor first impression so the chance of getting a second chance is slim. However, if a person is interested, how does the church get him to the place he desires to become an active part of the church and become a minister and missionary?

To begin the process of assimilation the church must build a relationship with the prospective new member and establish trust. One of the best ways to get people to go through this assimilation program is for them to have a relationship with someone in the church. It is friends reaching out to friends that best build these vital relationships. Once a good first impression is made the door is open for assimilation. The use of the seven touches seems to be effective for getting individuals to begin the assimilation program. This means an attempt is made to make at least seven contacts with the person using the telephone, letters and visits. The method is simple, but it is not flawless; first, the pastor calls the guest the afternoon after the morning service. The guest is not usually home, but he knows, by the call, that the church appreciates his presence that morning. The next day a letter is sent to thank him for his visit. By Tuesday, a second contact is made by phone, which is the third touch, and once again he is thanked for his visit and asked if the church can be of help in any way. That Saturday the guest is contacted by a Sunday school

teacher in order to invite him to an age appropriate class or by a small group leader to invite him to participate in a small group-this is the fourth touch. With this the attempt is made to make sure everyone in the family has a place to go. The fifth contact comes on the following Monday with a call to ask if one of the pastors may visit in the home. If he will allow a visit, an appointment is set up and the sixth contact is made. The seventh touch is a follow up letter thanking him for the visit in his home. Of course there will be times when this process is shortened either by unresponsiveness or obvious interest in becoming a member. If he is unresponsive or seems uninterested a notation will be made *and the* process will be discontinued. If the guest indicates he desires to become a member, then the seven-touch process will also be discontinued at that point. In the latter case the process of assimilation begins.

Once a person has indicated an interest in becoming a member then a pastor, elder, deacon or ministry leader makes a visit to the home and gives the prospective member a "new members packet". Included in this packet is a copy of the bylaws and constitution, mission and vision statement, and a new members information form (Appendix E). At this initial visit with the potential new member, the process of becoming a member of the church is explained then a time is arranged for him to take the first step into the church. It is required that all new members attend Discovering Membership 101 during Sunday school for four separate 45 minutes classes over a four week period. This program, at the present time, does not give the option to have the prospective member complete this requirement for membership as a home Bible study. At the time he is scheduled for the first class he will be assigned a lay shepherd to help him through the process of the classes, assessments and becoming involved in ministry. A lay shepherd is simply a

faithful member who has already completed the assimilation process and will serve as a guide to the prospective member through the assimilation program.

### Introduction

Welcome to the new members class- Discovering Membership 101. This is the first step to becoming a member of First Baptist Ministries of Davenport. Participation in this class will provide important information to increase the understanding of the identity and purpose of this church.

### *Important words to Remember*

If someone was previously a member of another church or has just become a Christian there are "church words" used which might not be understood. It is important to take a few minutes and explain the meaning of these "church words." Please keep in mind these exact words do not have to be used in order to fit into this fellowship. The purpose for explaining these words is to make sure they are understood in case they come up in conversation. The intent of this portion of the class is to assure relevance to the culture while remaining true to God's word.

- Salvation - This is simply the gift of eternal life. It means man's sins have been forgiven and he will spend forever with God. The word "salvation" is derived from a word meaning, "deliverance." Mankind has been delivered from the wrath of God (Romans 5:9).
- Wrath - When the wrath of God is referred to, it defines God's intense anger against something. In the case of the born again believer and salvation, he is saved from the wrath of God because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 1:10).

- Saved - This is also a term used to indicate forgiveness. It simply means God has forgiven sins and the sinner is no longer going to go to hell when he dies. Man has been "saved" from the wrath and judgment of God. However, the person who has never been saved has the wrath of God still abiding on him (John 3:36).
- Born Again - Jesus said, "you must be born again" (John 3:3). Each person is physically born into this world and given a physical body that will one day die. Being born again means that a person has confessed their sins, been forgiven and has been made a new creation in Jesus Christ. All the old things are gone and everything is new that person has been born again. There will still be struggles with the old nature, but now there is a new life and that new believer is presently living in everlasting life (II Corinthians 5:17-21).
- Sin/Sinner - Sin is a church word used to describe human actions that offend God. Since God is holy then anything that is not holy is sin. The Bible teaches that all are sinners (Romans 3:10, 23). It is just another word used to describe people or actions that are contrary to the holiness of God. It is great to know that even though all people are sinners and will continue to sin, God will never judge the individual for his sins after he has received Jesus Christ as his personal savior.
- Repent - The word repent means that a person has confessed to God that he is a sinner and needs to be forgiven. Repentance takes place when a person stops doing what he is doing wrong and begins doing what is right according to the word of God (Acts 17:30).

- Lost - This is a term used to identify an individual who has never trusted Jesus Christ as his savior. He is without direction and cannot find God-hence he is lost. He could be referred to as being unsaved or an unbeliever.
- Minister - This usually refers to an ordained pastor. However, in this church and in the Bible, the word simply means a servant. It is a person who is saved and has committed his life to obey the Lord and serve Him as well as others. In fact the Bible instructs believers to serve each other (Galatians 5:13).
- Missionary - This usually refers to someone that leaves his home and travels to a foreign country to preach the gospel message. However, in this church it is also someone who has learned to understand the culture he is living in and shares his faith in that culture. The Bible teaches that believers are ambassadors for Christ and are given the responsibility, by God, to represent Him in the world (2 Corinthians 5:20).

#### Assurance of Salvation

Once a person has been saved, it is important for him to be baptized. Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it is the first command Jesus gives a believer to obey after he accepts Him by faith. Some will tell you that baptism is the doorway to church membership. While this church does not believe baptism is necessary to go to heaven, it is believed that baptism is essential to be a growing believer and an active part of this local body. The reason for this belief is in order to be a follower of Christ a person must be willing to publicly identify with Christ by baptism (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism will be covered more fully at a later time.

This journey of becoming a minister and missionary has begun because there has been a profession of faith and a desire to be a part of what God is doing through this church. There will be times in the Christian life when a person doubts his salvation. This is one of the most effective tools of Satan- to get a believer to doubt God. However, the Bible teaches in 1 John 5:13, that a believer can know he has eternal life. When this chapter is carefully examined, there are three clear indicators of salvation.

- First, if each person will believe, by faith, that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is his Savior then he is a child of God (1 John 5:1). It is not according to his feelings, but according to what God said in His word, "For by Grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast", (Ephesians 2:8-9).

- \*Second, if the believer overcomes the world he is saved (I John 5:4). This does not mean he kicks every habit and lives a sinless life because he will always struggle with doing wrong. The word overcome is the word that means "keeps on conquering".<sup>21</sup> If a person leaves the faith then it is an indication he is not born of God. However, it is the power of God that keeps him in the battle and won't let him quit (1 Peter 1:3-5). It is impossible for a true child of God to stop being a child of God. A person can leave the church or stop acting like a believer, but if he is really born again, he cannot stay away from God or His people.

- Third, if a person has the Son he has life (I John 5:12). Life is more than the physical life lived in the body. The life spoken of here is the hope that comes with the assurance of salvation. The life of Christ is the light that illuminates and exposes the sin in a life, convicts the soul and moves the soul to confession and

repentance. Life is the calm assurance that everything is under God's control and the believer belongs to Him. These things He has written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may *know* that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

*An opportunity to make sure*

Salvation is a free gift offered to everyone, by God, through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that if a person will confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in his heart that Christ was raised from dead he shall be saved (Romans 10:9). In order to be saved he must confess his sins to God, repent of his sins and ask for Christ to forgive him. If anyone here is not sure this has taken place then this is a perfect opportunity to do that right now. Just a simple prayer of faith will settle this question. Here is a simple prayer to pray:

**Jesus, I know I am a sinner and have offended you. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and take control of my life. I trust you right now to be my savior and my Lord. Thank you for saving me.**

If anyone has just prayed that prayer for the first time the church rejoices. This body of believers is so glad that question has been settled forever. It is important that anyone *who has made that choice* tell someone else about this wonderful decision that has been made and he should let his lay shepherd know so a time can be arranged for baptism. If he needs to talk with someone further about this then he should let his lay shepherd know or stop one of the pastors and they will be glad to help him to more fully understand.



### *Our Mission*

This church has adopted a mission statement that helps maintain the proper focus; *"Our mission is to be a culturally relevant, innovative, kingdom minded church impacting our community and world for Christ in such a way that we would be missed if we ceased to exist"* (See Appendix D). There are some key words that must be briefly defined.

- Culturally relevant- Everything the church does meets the culture where it is and ministers according to that understanding.
- \*Innovative - This is thinking outside of the traditional box. It is thinking of new ways and methods to share the unchanging message of Jesus Christ.
- Kingdom minded- this simply means that the *church* does not operate out of a selfish mentality. Everything the church does is to expand the kingdom of God, knowing that He will build His church. This eliminates competition between churches.
- Impacting - The church engages the culture in such a way that people are forced to make a choice. The choice is to either follow Jesus or reject Him. It is the desire of this church to radically affect the life of every person in the community. We live in a world that is lost and dying without hope and these same people are continually trying new strategies to find fulfillment in life. This church believes the only remedy for the downward spiral of the world is to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ, for a person to turn to Christ they must be told about Him and they must see the reality of His resurrection displayed in the lives of His followers. As the body of Christ, the church is the visible representation of Christ to the world and every church has a two-fold mission--lead people to faith in Christ {Matthew 28:19-20}, and help them to mature in their faith (II Timothy 2:2). This is often referred to as the great commission.

This simply means that Jesus has commissioned (sent) the church to the lost to tell them about Him and help them become His followers.

### *Our Purposes*

This church has decided to be a church driven by purpose. This means whatever is done with time, talent or resources has an eternal God given purpose. This church has adopted an acrostic (WIFES) to remember the purposes. This part of the class will explain each purpose.

I. Worship- The purpose for the church being on earth is to bring glory to God.

Worship is one of the most vital, if not the most vital functions of the church.<sup>22</sup>

Worship is not limited to music or church services. Worship is more about attitude. It is not form, whether traditional, liturgical, contemporary or a combination of the three. Form may help people worship, but worship is any activity in which believers experience God in a meaningful, spiritually transforming way.<sup>23</sup>

2. Instruction Instruction is referred to as discipleship. Discipleship is just a church term for training. It comes from the word *disciple*, which means "a learner"<sup>24</sup> This church believes each believer should learn all he can about Jesus and then implement what he has learned into his life. There will be many opportunities for each new member to receive solid instruction in the Bible and

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<sup>22</sup> Gene Mims, *Kingdom Principles of Church Growth* {Nashville: Convention Press, 1994}. 56

<sup>23</sup> Mims, 57

<sup>24</sup> I. W.E. Vines, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words* {Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997}.

his faith. From Sunday school, small groups, preaching and teaching in the services, to college level classes offered during the week. Each person will have the opportunity to receive the instruction needed to grow in his faith.

3. Fellowship - Fellowship has been described as two people in the same boat rowing in the same direction. While this may be a simple working definition it does convey the spirit of true fellowship. Human beings are made to have fellowship with God and once a person is born again he is to also have fellowship with other believers. Fellowship with God was broken by sin in the garden, but the potential to have fellowship with God is restored when Jesus Christ is accepted by faith. Once a person receives Christ as his savior he enters into an everlasting *relationship* with Jesus. However, his *fellowship* with God, from the time of his salvation can be broken by his own actions. Simple repentance will help restore the fellowship God desires to have with him through His Son Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1: 9). The restoration of fellowship comes when sins are confessed and then the broken fellowship with God and other believers is restored. (I John 1:7-9).
4. Evangelism - Evangelism is a very important part of the purpose of any true church. It is the first part of the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Evangelism is simply sharing with other people what Jesus has done in the life of the believer. This is the task of a missionary. A missionary takes the message of Jesus Christ to people who are not saved and shares that message so the people can be forgiven of their sin and be born again. Basically all believers are called to be preachers/missionaries (Romans 10:14). It is not just the responsibility of a

pastor to preach, it is the responsibility and privilege of all believers to share His story. A pastor may preach during the weekly services, but each believer preaches with his life every day.

5. service - This is the purpose of ministering-- serving. It is serving Jesus and others. Ministry is meeting another person's need in the name of Jesus.<sup>26</sup> Matthew 20:26-28 shows the importance Jesus placed on serving others. In fact, serving others can also be a form of evangelism. By serving others in the name of Jesus, the trust of people is won and an opportunity is gained to share the gospel message with those served.

### The History of this Church

This portion of Discovering Membership 101 will give an understanding of what the word "church" means and share the history of this local church. The word "church" in the New Testament means, "the called out ones". It is important to remember that "the church" is the people of God not the buildings. The church is a living organism--a group of believers joined together to carry out the mission and purpose of God on the earth. If the buildings were destroyed the church would still exist.

The First Baptist Church of Davenport was formerly called Davenport Baptist Church. It was begun in the summer of 1925 and was chartered in 1926 with eight members. The church continued to grow under the leadership of godly laymen and God-called pastors. In 1967, A.V. Aldridge was called as pastor and under his leadership two other churches were started and are still ministering today. Our present pastor came in

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<sup>26</sup> Mims, 44

January 1998 and over the last seven years God has added a great team of pastors to lead this church to become a purpose driven church.

*What this church believes - the Essentials*

1. Scripture - The Bible is God's word to mankind, written by human authors under the supernatural inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is truth without error and the only source for belief and guide for holy living (II Timothy 3:15-17)

2. God - God is the creator, ruler and the one who sustains the universe. He exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is known as the doctrine of the trinity. These three are co-equal and are one God (Genesis 1:1-2, 26). Although the word "trinity" is not used in the Bible it is used to describe the completeness of God. It is the teaching of the tri-unity of God. The tri-unity of God is simply the teaching that God is one God in three persons.

3. Jesus Christ - Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. This church believes in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. He gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. He died on the cross, was buried, and on the third day He was resurrected from the grave, by God, in glorious power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven's glory and lives forever as the High Priest, advocate and intercessor before God (1 John 1:1-18).

4. The Holy Spirit - The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of the need for Jesus Christ. He lives in every believer from the moment of salvation, providing power for living the Christian life and understanding spiritual truth. The "fullness of the Holy Spirit" is manifested by the presence of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22-23), and the power for living a victorious life. This church does not

embrace the modern day charismatic movement, which promotes "tongues", "holy laughter", and other extreme practices (John 16:7-15).

5. Salvation - Before salvation, all people are hopeless and helpless sinners facing the certainty of eternal punishment for their sins in a literal place called the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15). Salvation is God's free gift. All who fully trust in Jesus Christ alone and accept by faith His death as payment for their sins are saved forever. Salvation is obtained by grace, maintained by grace and secured by the power of God. Grace is the undeserved favor of God. Because this does not depend on the self-effort of the Christian, this church believes and teaches that true believers can never lose their salvation. Jesus Christ has prepared a place for every believer to dwell with Him for eternity (Romans 6:23; John 14:1-3; Ephesians 2:8-9).

6. The Ordinances - The Lord Jesus Christ gave two ordinances to the church. An ordinance is a command or direction. While Jesus did command the church to do more than these two things they are the only two commands He gave to the church to keep as a body. The first ordinance is baptism. This church believes in the total immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This symbolic act of obedience is an outward expression of an inward reality. A believer is baptized, because he is saved, not in order to be saved. Baptism testifies of the believer's faith in and identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16). The context of this verse follows believing with baptism. However, the end of this verse eliminates the mention of baptism, which indicates that salvation is a result of faith, not the result of obeying an ordinance. The second ordinance is the Lord's Supper or communion, which was instituted by Christ to help believers remember His death (I

Corinthians 11:23-26). The elements of the Lord's Supper, the unleavened bread and the juice, are symbolic. The unleavened bread is bread without yeast representing the purity of the body Christ. The grape juice represents the blood of Christ. This church practices "close communion", which simply means any true believer who has been saved and scripturally baptized, is invited to partake of this ordinance. However, the decision to partake of this ordinance is left up to the individual. This ordinance is not practiced weekly, but periodically as led by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 11:26).

7. The Church - Jesus Christ is the head of His body, the church, composed of all true believers. The local church is made up of a company of baptized believers associating together for worship, instruction, fellowship, evangelism and service. This local church is self governed and independent of denominational controls. However, the need and value of associating and cooperating with other groups of like-minded Christians for the common cause of evangelism is recognized by this church and found to be very valuable (Ephesians 1:22-23).

8. The End Times - This church believes the Bible teaches the pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ, first for His bride the church, and then His return to the earth after seven years for the establishment of His literal one thousand year earthly reign. After the thousand years all the dead, who have not trusted Christ by faith, will be brought before God to be judged for their sin and be cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

#### at This Church Practices

There are the distinctives of a Baptist church and these seven distinctives describe the basic beliefs and practices of this church. The use of the acrostic BAPTIST helps to remember these distinctives. It is important to keep in mind that not all Baptist churches

are the same and do not have the same practices, however, the following practices are usually common among Baptists cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention.

1. The Bible - The Bible is the final authority for living. This is why Baptists read, study, memorize, teach, preach and practice the truth of the Bible. Every message will be Bible centered and every principle will be Bible based.

2. Autonomy - This Church is self-governin<sup>g</sup>. Christ is recognized as the head of the church. This church is not subject to any denominational authority but voluntarily affiliates with other churches for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of Christ. This church is a kingdom minded church that desires to use the resources God has given to build the kingdom of God first and the growth of this church is a bi-product of building God's kingdom.

3. Priesthood of Believers - Each believer has the privilege of direct access to God through personal prayer and Bible study. Every believer, young or old, male or female, has equal access to God. Jesus Christ is "the" High Priest (Hebrews 8:1), but all believers are His priests representing Him before mankind (I Peter 2:9).

4. Tithing - God owns everything and all believers are stewards of His resources. This church believes and teaches that every believer should give to God, through the local church, out of a grateful heart (I Corinthians. 9:7). The biblical principle of giving should include at least ten percent. However, each believer should willingly purpose to give to the work of the Lord.

5. Baptism by Immersion - This church baptizes by complete immersion in water. This means the new believer is fully submersed to portray the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Those who have been truly born again by faith in Jesus Christ



should follow the Lord's command to be baptized, which is the first act of obedience for every believer.

6. Spirit-led living - This church teaches that each member should seek to practice daily dependence on the Holy Spirit. He is the comforter, guide and source of power for daily living. The Bible commands the believer to be filled with the Spirit, which simply means he should seek to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. A believer knows the Holy Spirit is controlling him when he displays the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

7. Telling others about Christ - This is personal evangelism. Evangelism is simply a word that means to share the story of Jesus with other people. The ultimate goal of every believer should be to glorify God and lead others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ His Son.

### *Three Things This Church Is Not*

Previous lessons taught some of the beliefs and distinctives of this church. This part of the class will explain some things this church does not believe or practice.

1. This church is not charismatic - The greater works Jesus referred to in John 14:12 are works of evangelism and reconciling lost sinners to a holy God. This church does not practice the sign gift of speaking in tongues nor does it endorse holy laughter or other extremes of the modern Charismatic movement.

2. This church is not hyper-Calvinistic - The term "Calvinistic" is derived from the name of the man, "John Calvin" who taught that the destiny of man is pre-determined by God. He taught that humans do not have a free will and have no choice whether they spend eternity in heaven or hell. This church strongly believes in the sovereignty of God

in salvation careful to avoid the fatalistic extremes of the hyper-Calvinist. The acrostic "DAISY" helps to remember the biblical stand on pre-destination<sup>27</sup>.

Depravity of mankind (Romans 3:10-23)

Atonement sufficient for all (John 3:16; 1 John 2:1-2)

Invitation to whosoever (Romans 10:13; John 1:12)

Salvation by grace through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Yielded to God's Sovereignty (Philippians 1:6; Ephesians 1:3).

3. This church is not cultic - Other denominations and churches holding to essential doctrines of the Christian faith are going to heaven also. There are no new revelations. This means that God's word, "the Bible" is complete and sufficient for the guide for living the Christian life. God is the first priority, family is second and the church is third. Pastors are not above accountability, but must also submit to others.

#### *Three Things This Church Is*

These are characteristics that identify this church.

1. This church is conservative - Being conservative implies balance between two extremes: legalism and liberalism. Legalism is thinking a person must live by a list of strict rules in order to find acceptance and favor with God. Salvation comes as a result of what Jesus has already done, not man. Liberalism is living as if there are no rules and a person can do whatever he desires to do without boundaries. This balance puts a priority on:

- Obeying what God has commanded
- Refraining from what God has prohibited
- \*Enjoying what God has permitted (Galatians 5:13-15)

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<sup>27</sup>This acrostic is not original. It was taken from a personal file but the author is unknown.

2. This church attempts to be culturally relevant - The message of salvation will never change but methods of packaging the Gospel for presentation to the world will need to be adapted to the culture. In the history of the church, change has most often occurred in the areas of music, order, and style of worship as well as the way people dress. Change should happen on purpose and that purpose should be to glorify God with the most effective and fruitful means possible. All believers have been saved and then called to be a missionary to the people they live around and work with; therefore the church must be relevant to the culture.

3. This church is cooperative - Although First Baptist Ministries of Davenport is a self-governing, autonomous local church, there is great benefit in working with agencies, churches and organizations, which have the same mission and doctrine. This church has chosen to be affiliated with three groups that define this church as a Southern Baptist Church.

The Ridge Baptist Association - Approximately 40 churches work together to reach Polk County with the message of Christ.

The Florida Baptist Convention - Comprised of 50 associations throughout the state of Florida working together to reach Florida with the message of Christ. The Southern Baptist Convention over 40,000 churches co-operate together in a worldwide effort of missions to reach our nation and the world with the message of Christ.

#### Some Facts about the Southern Baptist Convention

There are over 16 million members who worship in more than 42,000 churches across America. There are over 10,000 domestic and international missionaries serving in over 153 countries.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 2005, Southern Baptist Convention <www.sbc.net>.

### Organizational Structure of the Church

This church uses a representative form of government. This simply means that the church calls pastors and annually elects "elders" to serve the church to make the day-to-day decisions concerning the operation of the church. The word elder is a term that means "overseer" (Titus 1:5). This term elder applies to the pastors as well as men chosen to be the spiritual counselors. The church body approves the calling of pastors, selection of elders, the annual budget, land or property purchases, or any non-budgeted amount over \$5000.00. This type of government takes trust because each person must trust the pastors to lead him in his spiritual journey.

The style of organizational structure we use for ministry is a simple model, which begins with Jesus and places the responsibility to oversee ministries under each pastor (See Appendix E). The style of leadership used is plurality of leadership, which means everyone works together as a team to create and carry out the vision of the church. There are presently three full time pastors, four volunteer elders, one fulltime office secretary, one part time financial secretary, one part time person for lawn care and one full time person for janitorial duties. It is important to understand the role of each of these people. The organizational chart will show the responsibilities of each pastor.

1. Senior Pastor, Doug Tanner is responsible for overseeing all operations of the church. The senior pastor is the leader of a gifted team of pastors who identifies the vision God has for the church and then joins the other pastors to equip the people to do the work of the ministry. The Senior Pastor usually preaches at all Sunday Morning services unless he is away. In this case the other pastors preach in his place.

2. Worship Pastor, Kennon Wiley, is also an integral part of this ministry team who plans and oversees all our worship services, our audio-visual ministry, our praise team, instrumentalists and any special music used in any service. He is also responsible for overseeing the outreach ministries and evangelism efforts. His duties also include responsibility for the family ministries, which involves supervising the volunteer workers in our students and children ministries.
3. Education Pastor, Robert White, is the most experienced of the pastoral team and brings a great wealth of experience and wisdom to this church. Dr. White is responsible for all education ministries and writes all of the adult Sunday school material as well as overseeing all teacher training and recruitment. His duties also include overseeing the stewardship ministries of the church as well as the senior adult ministry.

There are many ministry opportunities in which to become involved. These ministries will be covered in detail in the fourth floor of this assimilation program- Discovering Mission- 401.

#### What to do now?

Once Discovering Membership 101 has been completed, as the final requirement for membership, each perspective new member will receive a letter confirming membership and a date to attend a new members luncheon following a Sunday Morning Service. At the conclusion of this class and once all other requirements for membership are complete all participants are members of this church and are invited to become a part of what God is doing here. Here are the recommendations of the pastoral team for the next steps to be taken.

1. Enroll in a Sunday Morning Bible Fellowship class. The assigned lay shepherd will be helpful in finding the class that is the perfect fit.
2. Ask the assigned lay shepherd to make arrangements for taking Discovering Maturity 201. This is a home study course to be completed at the pace of the new member.
3. Once 201 is completed each new member should continue with Discovering Ministry 301 and then move on to Discovering Mission 401. Both of these will really help the new member to understand more about how God made him and where he will best fit in. Both of these classes are also designed as home Bible studies.
4. Remember that it is the policy of this church for each new member to complete all four classes in order to become a ministry leader. This is to help insure that everything is done with excellence and to eliminate frustration as people begin to lead in the ministries of this church.

## Discovering Membership 101 • Workbook

### Introduction

Welcome to the family of First Baptist Ministries of Davenport. This is an exciting time to be a part of this exciting ministry. Try to view this assimilation process as being in a building with four floors. Each floor represents a higher level of participation and reward. Once Discovering Membership 101 is completed, a person can remain on the first floor or can choose to go higher in his walk with God and in his service to Him. (See diagram for "steps to Ministry" in Appendix A of this workbook.).

Following track one there are three more tracks and each are designed to help each person reach a higher level of service and participation. Opportunity will be given to take track two- Discovering Maturity 201, track three - Discovering ministry 301, and track Four- Discovering Mission 401.

### Important words to Remember

There are "church words" that are important to understand.

1. Salvation - This is simply the gift of eternal life. It is the word that means \_\_\_\_\_
2. Wrath - God's intense anger. 1 Thessalonians 1:10
3. Saved - A word used to indicate forgiveness. We are saved from the w\_\_\_\_\_ of God. John 3:36
4. Born Again - Jesus said, "Ye *must* be born again" (John 3:3). Being born again means sins have been f\_\_\_\_\_ and you are made a new person in Jesus Christ. II Corinthians 5:17
5. Sin/Sinner - Sin is a church word used to describe human actions that o\_\_\_\_\_ God. The Bible tells us we are all sinners. Romans 3:10
6. Repent - Repentance takes place when a person stops doing what is he doing wrong and begins doing what is r\_\_\_\_\_. Acts 17:30
7. Lost - This identifies people who have never trusted Christ as their savior.

8. Minister - In this church and in the Bible, the word simply means a s\_\_\_\_ Galatians 5:13
9. Missionary - In this church this refers to someone who has learned to understand the culture he is living in and shares his faith in that culture. II Corinthians 5:20

### Assurance of Salvation

Once a person has been saved it is important for him to be b\_\_\_\_ not necessary for salvation, but it is the first command Jesus gives to us to obey after we accept Him by faith. To be a follower of Christ we must be willing to p\_\_\_\_ identify with Him by Baptism. Romans 6:3-4

There will be times in the Christian life when a person will doubt his salvation. This is one of the most effective tool of Satan- to get a believer to doubt God. The Bible tells us in 1 John 5:13 that a believer can k\_\_\_\_, that he have eternal life.

1. 1 John 5:1 - If each person will b\_\_\_\_ that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is his Savior he is a child of God.
2. 1 John 5:4 --- If a believer o\_\_\_\_ the world then he is saved. This does not mean he kicks every habit and lives a sinless life. The word means "keep on conquering". 1 Peter 1:3-5
3. 1 John 5:12 - If a person has the Son he has l\_\_\_\_. Life is the calm assurance that everything is under God's control and the believer belongs to Him.

The writer of First John, the Apostle John, makes it clear that these things were written to you who believe that you may know that you have eternal life.

### An Opportunity to make sure

1. Salvation is a gift offered to everyone, from God, through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.
2. If a person will c\_\_\_\_ Jesus with our mouth and believe Christ was raised from the dead, he shall be saved. Romans 10:9

### Our Mission

This church has adopted a m\_\_\_\_ statement that helps maintain the proper focus. Our mission statement is this, *"To be a c\_\_\_\_ relevant, innovative, kingdom minded church i\_\_\_\_ our community and world for Christ in such a way that we would be missed if we ceased to exist."*

1. We have a two-fold mission.



- a. To lead people to f \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ. Matthew 28:19-20
- b. To help those who believe to m \_\_\_\_\_ in their faith. II Timothy 2:2

### Our Purposes

We use the acrostic "WWFES" to help us remember the five purposes of the church. This part of the track will explain each purpose.

1. Worship - Our purpose for being on earth is to bring g \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
2. Instruction Instruction is discipleship. The word "disciple" means a 1 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fellowship -- We are made to have fellowship with God and each other.
  - a. The ability to have fellowship with God is r \_\_\_\_\_ when Jesus Christ is accepted by faith. 1 Corinthians 1:9
  - b. Restoration of fellowship comes when sins are c \_\_\_\_\_ I John 1:7-9.
4. **Evangelism** - This is the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Evangelism is simply s \_\_\_\_\_ with other people what Jesus has done for you.
  - a. We are all called, by God to be missionaries and ministers. Romans 10:14
5. Service -It is serving Jesus and o \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 20:26-28 shows the importance Jesus placed on serving other

### The History of This Church

1. \_\_\_\_\_ at the word "church", in the New Testament, means, "the called out ones".  
The church is the people of God, not the buildings.
  - a. The church is a 1 \_\_\_\_\_ organism,
  - b. A group of b \_\_\_\_\_ joined together.
2. The Church was begun in 1925 and chartered in 1926 with eight members.
  - a. 1967 - Pastor A.V. Aldridge carne and served for 25 years.
  - b. Since that time there have been two others pastors.
  - c. Our present pastor came in 1998 and during his tenure as pastor the Lord has added a great team of pastors to lead this church to become a p \_\_\_\_\_ driven church.

### at This Church Believes - The Essentials

1. **Scripture** .. We believe the Bible is God's word to mankind, written by h \_\_\_\_\_ authors under the supernatural inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is

without error and our only source for belief and our guide for holy living. II Timothy 3:15-17.

2. **God** - God is creator, r \_\_\_\_\_, and the one who sustains the universe. He exists eternally in three persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. Genesis 1:1-2, 26

3. **Jesus Christ** - Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. This church believes in his vbirth, sinless *life*, miracles, and teachings. He gave himself as the perfect s \_\_\_\_\_ for the sins of the world. He died on the cross, was buried and on the t \_\_\_\_\_ day was resurrected from the grave, by God. He ascended to heaven's glory and lives forever as our High Priest, a \_\_\_\_\_ and intercessor before God. I John 1:1-18

4. **The Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of their n \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus Christ. He lives in every believer (I Corinthians 6:19-20), from the moment of salvation, providing power for I \_\_\_\_\_ the Christian life and understanding spiritual t \_\_\_\_\_

- a. The fullness of the Spirit is manifested by the presence of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23
- b. We do not embrace the modern charismatic movement. John 16:7-15

5. **Salvation** - Before salvation, all people are h \_\_\_\_\_ sinners facing eternal punishment for their sins (Revelation 20:14-15). All who fully trust in Christ alone are saved forever. Romans 6:23; John 14:1-3; Ephesians 2:8-9

6. **The Ordinances** - The Lord Jesus gave two ordinances to the church.

- a. Baptism - The i \_ of the believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- b. The Lord's Supper - This was instituted by Christ to help believers to r \_\_\_\_\_ His death (I Corinthians 11:23-26). We do not practice this ordinance weekly, but periodically as led by the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 11:26

7. **The Church** -- Jesus Christ is the h \_\_\_\_\_ of His body, the church. The church is made up of a company of b \_\_\_\_\_ believers associating together for w \_\_\_\_\_, i \_\_\_\_\_, f \_\_\_\_\_, e \_\_\_\_\_, and s \_\_\_\_\_

8. **The end times** -- This church believes in the pre-millennial return of Jesus, first for His b \_\_\_\_\_ and then His return to earth after s \_\_\_\_\_ years for the establishment of his literal one thousand year kingdom on earth.

#### at This Church Practices

There are seven distinctives of a B \_\_\_\_\_ church. These describe the basic

and practices of this church. The use of the acrostic BAPTIST helps to

remember these distinctives.

1. The B \_\_\_\_\_ - The Bible is our final a \_\_\_\_\_ for living.
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ - This means our church is self g \_\_\_\_\_. We are not subject to any denominational a \_\_\_\_\_
3. P \_\_\_\_\_ of believers - Each believer has the privilege of d \_\_\_\_\_ access to God.
4. T \_\_\_\_\_ - God o \_\_\_\_\_ everything and we are s \_\_\_\_ of His resources.
5. B \_\_\_\_\_ by immersion - This church baptizes by total i \_\_\_\_\_ in water. This portrays the d \_\_\_\_\_, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
6. S \_\_\_\_\_ led living - Seek to practice d \_\_\_\_\_ dependence on the Holy S \_\_\_\_\_. A believer knows he is being led by the Spirit when he displays the f \_\_\_\_\_ of the spirit found in Galatians 5:22.
7. Telling other about Christ - E \_\_\_\_\_ is a word that means to s the *story* of

### Three Things This Church Is Not

1. This church is not c \_\_\_\_\_ - This church does not practice the sign gift of speaking in t \_\_\_\_\_ nor do we endorse holy laughter or other extremes.
2. We are not hyper-calvinistic - Calvin taught that the d \_\_\_\_\_ of man is pre-determined by God. The acrostic D \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. D \_\_\_\_\_ of mankind.
  - b. A \_\_\_\_\_ sufficient for all.
  - c. I \_\_\_\_\_ to whosoever
  - d. S \_\_\_\_\_ by faith through grace alone.
  - e. Y \_\_\_\_\_ to God's sovereignty.
3. This church is not C \_\_\_\_\_ - Other denominations and churches holding to the essential d \_\_\_\_\_ of the Christian faith are also going to heaven.

### Three things This Church Is

1. This church is c\_ \_\_\_\_\_. Being conservative implies balance between two extremes: 1 \_\_\_\_\_ and 1 \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Legalism is thinking a person must live by a list of strict rules I order to find a \_\_\_\_\_ and favor with God.
  - b. Liberalism is living as if there are no r \_\_\_\_\_ and a person can do whatever he desires without boundaries.
2. This church attempts to be culturally r \_\_\_\_\_
3. This church is c \_\_\_\_\_. Although First Baptist Ministries is a self governing, autonomous local church, there is great benefit in working with agencies, churches and organizations, which have the same mission and doctrine.

### Organizational Structure of this Church

The church is a r \_\_\_\_\_ form of government. The church calls p \_\_\_\_\_ and annually elects e \_\_\_\_\_ to make the day-to-day decisions concerning the operation of the church.

1. The word elder means o \_\_\_\_\_
2. This type of government takes t \_\_\_\_\_
3. Our leadership style is p \_\_\_\_\_ of leadership.

After completing this workbook keep it somewhere to serve as a reference later. The purpose for this workbook is to give a new member the chance to demonstrate that he received the material. The assessment on the following page will help the pastors determine how well the class was taught and what material might be needed in the future to improve this class. After the questions on the assessment sheet are answered, please be sure it is given to either the lay shepherd or one of the pastors.

## APPENDIX B

### DISCOVERING MATURITY 201- THE SECOND FLOOR

#### Introduction to the Facilitator

The command Jesus gave to the church, in Matthew 19:20-21, was to make disciples by teaching everything He commanded. This class is about teaching some important disciplines of the Christian faith. The joy of the new life in Christ is sufficient to carry a person for a short period of time, but it will not take long for the daily grind of life to begin testing his new faith and when he gets discouraged the cycle of training is in jeopardy. This training has a two-fold purpose; establish the new believer in the faith to prepare him for the challenges ahead and prepare him to train others (II Timothy 2:2).

It is evident that the church is failing in her responsibility of training people. In the Southern Baptist Convention there are over 16 million members. In spite of this large membership Southern Baptist churches are seeing a decrease in baptisms, attendance, and mission giving. This could easily be attributed to the lack of proper training. According to one writer:

"The church needs to reevaluate what is being done and seek to find a philosophy of disciple building that agrees with sound logic, that is applicable to our modern world, that people can be trained to do, so that it can be multiplied, and, most of all, that is biblical" <sup>9</sup>

This portion of the assimilation program will serve to provide a basic outline for teaching about some basic, yet important disciplines of the Christian faith which will

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<sup>29</sup> Carl Wilson, *With Christ in the School of Disciple Building* (Fayetteville: Christian Growth Books, 1976). 57

provide what is needed to accomplish the philosophy that if a believer is trained in the basics he will obtain the tools he needs in order to grow even more in his faith.

### Introduction

It is a false belief that the Christian life is easy. There are several reasons why it is a difficult life. One reason is because every believer is in a struggle between two natures. One nature desires to please the flesh and the other wants to please God. Even the great Christian, the Apostle Paul, struggled with this battle (Romans 7:15-25). But careful examination of verse 25 gives the assurance of victory in this battle. A second reason is the tendency to attempt to live this life in the power of the individual and not the power of Christ. Jesus taught that the believer should connect himself to Christ and follow His lead (Matthew 11:29). The yoke is simply the connection to Christ. The word "yoke" refers to a farming instrument used to join two animals together so they can work together. This supposes the difficulty of living the Christian life is not really difficult when Jesus lives His life through the individual believer. Jesus also taught this in John 15 when He commanded the believer to abide in Him and allow His word to abide in the believer. It is a connection of the believer to Jesus and Jesus to the believer for a common purpose.

These disciplines are simply the actions the believer displays through his body. As one author puts it, "if salvation is to affect our lives, it can do so only by affecting our bodies. If we participate in the reign of God, it can only be by our actions. And our actions are physical---we live in the processes of our bodies."<sup>30</sup> Even in Romans 12:1 a believer is instructed to present his body a living sacrifice. To do this requires character

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<sup>30</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishing, 1990).

and the practice of spiritual disciplines. As the believer goes through this series of disciplines he might find times when he thinks the whole process is impossible. An important thing to remember is that he will never master every discipline and he will fail from time to time making him think he is a failure. However, practicing these disciplines does not earn him favor with God or make him a failure of success because his acceptance by God is based on what Jesus has done for him. The practicing of these disciplines are simply tools to help him grow in his faith and in the knowledge of God. It is a way for him to get to know God better and by knowing Him better he will learn to trust Him more.

#### Discipline One - Worship and Celebration

Worship is often viewed as something reserved for church services. People attend "worship services" on Sunday morning and for most believers that is about the extent of worship. However, worship goes much deeper than that. Worship is actually a very personal spiritual activity often ignored by an individual when he is away from church. A good definition of worship is, "engaging ourselves with, dwelling upon, and expressing the greatness, beauty, and goodness of God through thought and the use of words, rituals, and symbols." <sup>29</sup> Basically, worship is focusing on God and giving him all He deserves. Worship is not limited to the use of rituals or symbols or even a special location; these are not necessary to be a true worshiper. In fact Jesus taught that whoever worships must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To worship in spirit and truth simply means worship begins in the soul of the individual and everything involved is according to the truth of God's word. Jesus even narrows worship down even further when He teaches that a believer is to worship the Lord his God and Him alone (Matthew 4:10). The

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context of this passage is the account of Jesus confronting Satan in the wilderness. In this confrontation He seems to make worship and service synonymous. If the believer is serving Him then he is worshipping Him and if he is worshipping Him then he is serving Him.

### Discipline Two - Study

The study of God's word is vital to the spiritual growth of a Christian. It is impossible to grow without the word of God being an everyday part of the believer's life. One writer states, "in the spiritual discipline of study we engage ourselves, above all, with the written and spoken Word of God."<sup>31</sup> A daily time spent reading and meditating on God's word is a very powerful tool in helping new believers grow. This makes it clear that we must not only own a Bible, but we must let it become a part of our daily lives.

The importance of Bible study cannot be diminished. One writer makes this point clear when he says, " Bible study is the most essential ingredient in the believer's spiritual life, because it is only in study of the Bible as that is blessed by the Holy Spirit that Christians hear Christ and discover what it means to follow Him".<sup>32</sup> If the believer is to know anything about God it will be revealed in His word through the Holy Spirit. If he desires to hear from God then the following practices will help.<sup>33</sup>

1. Study the Bible daily (Acts 17:11). Even a little study of the Bible is better than none at all. However, do not get in the practice of studying the bible just to be able to argue. Approach Bible study with the purpose of knowing God more.

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<sup>31</sup> Willard. 177

<sup>32</sup> James M. Boice, *Christ's Call the Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986). 52.

<sup>33</sup> Boice. 52-57.



2. Study the Bible systematically (Joshua 1:7-8). This simply means that when the Bible is studied it is done in a systematic way. This eliminates someone just picking up the Bible and reading something out of its context. It should be the practice of every believer to understand why God said something and apply the truth the way God intended it to be applied. For example: Matthew 18:20 is in the context of church discipline, not just a promise that he is there regardless of the number of believers that have gathered.
3. Study the Bible comprehensively (II Timothy 3:16-17). This simply means getting acquainted with the Bible as a whole. Learn to fit it together like a puzzle.
4. Study the Bible devotionally (Psalms 119:11) - It is important to remember that the Bible is not only the believer's text book, it is also the book for instruction in living the Christian life. Studying can become mechanical and can make the Bible become the same as any other secular text. This book is full of life; this book is life and it has the supernatural ability to drastically affect the life of any who reads it.
5. Study the Bible prayerfully (Deuteronomy 9:1-3). This is really simple. As the believer reads the Bible he should do it in the spirit of prayer asking God to reveal the truths to him and how he can apply it to his life.

#### Discipline Three - Prayer

Prayer is a basic ingredient in the Christian life. It will also be impossible to grow if prayer is not a part of the believer's daily life. There are so many thoughts on prayer that it could become confusing, so this study will help clarify prayer. Some will say prayer must be done a certain way (standing, sitting, kneeling, eyes closed, looking up into

heaven). However, prayer is much more than a place or a style. Prayer is the means God has established to enable man to respond and communicate with Him. God speaks to man through His word and man speaks to God through prayer. The Bible reveals five purposes of prayer:

1. Prayer satisfies the deepest needs of the human h e . God made man in such a way that he needs fellowship with Him. Prayer alone meets this deep need.
  - a. Psalms 42:1-2 - The illustration is of a deer being chased through the woods and becomes tired, so it stops at the brook to refresh itself and gain its strength back. Believers are, too often, in a hurry and need to stop and be refreshed by the presence of God. A daily time of refreshing through God's word is that drink of cool water.
  - b. Psalms 63:1 - Imagine a man in the desert with a terrible thirst. He has walked for days without water and his throat is parched. He finally comes to an oasis and there finds refreshment. The word of God is that refreshment to the believer.
2. Prayer is a means of discovering God's guidance. God has determined that prayer is one of the tools for discovering His will. The peace and direction God gives will come through prayer.
  - a. Matthew 7:7 - God made a promise that if the believer will ask, seek and knock he will find, it will be opened and he will receive. This verse speaks of faithfulness in prayer. It speaks of the persistence of a person who will keep seeking to find the will of God.

- b. James 1:5 - The word wisdom, in this verse, means "skill." If the believer needs understanding about how to handle a situation in his life then he has the privilege to go directly to God in prayer and ask for skill to complete the task. God will affirm His direction through His word and His peace.
- c. Colossians 1:9-12 - Prayer is one of the tools for finding God's will. The believer asks God for wisdom and others ask God to give him wisdom and understanding, so that he can find and fulfill God's purposes in his life. However, this prayer must be accompanied by the study of God's word. Prayer and study of God's word go hand in hand.

3. Prayer is how God desires for a believer to deal with worry. Worry and anxiety are common in society and each believer has been given the greatest stress reliever available-prayer.

- a. Philippians 4:6-7 - Believers are bombarded everyday with events and decisions that can easily produce fear and worry. Prayer is God's response to worry. It is the peaceful presence of God, which comes through prayer, that gives everything needed to face the daily challenges of life.
- b. I Peter 5:7 - One of the greatest benefits of prayer is the ability to take burdens and unload them on God. Sometimes just telling someone about a problem really helps. But with God, it not only helps to tell him, He actually does something about them. It is realized through prayer how much God really does care.
- c. Psalms 55:22 - at a comforting thought to know that heavy loads carried by a believer can be put on the shoulders of Jesus; this is an act

the will. He chooses to trust God to carry his heavy burden by going to Him in prayer.

4. Prayer is the means of communicating needs and concerns to God. Having direct access to God means the believer can ask for His help, guidance and grace to handle any problem or provide for any need.

- a. John 16:23-27 - It is important to see this verse as a personal message. The idea is to find the heart of God and ask according to what He wills; that is what it means to ask in his name. If this is done there is assurance of obtaining what we request. It is more about adjusting the believers heart to God than God's will to his wants.
- b. Hebrews 4:16 - at a great privilege God has given to be able to come into His presence with *prayer*. Believers are taught not to be timid, but to be bold. This does not mean he can be arrogant, but it does mean he can come into His presence with confidence.
- c. I John 5:14 - When a believer asks according to the plan and desire of God he is promised to receive an answer to his prayers. For God to hear his prayer means that the creator of the universe has given him special attention because his heart is in tune with God's h e .

4. Prayer helps in the fight against sin and temptation. Spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons. In addition to the or of God (Ephesians 6:10-17), the believer also has the weapon of prayer (Ephesians 6:18). Victory in the spiritual life of the believer can only be entered and experienced through prayer.

- a. Matthew 6:13 - In this "model prayer" Jesus instructs the believer to pray for deliverance from temptations and evil influence. This implies that He cares about the difficulties he goes through and the only way to overcome them is to pray.
- b. II Thessalonians 3:1-3 - Too often the people of God underestimate the power of prayer. This is another verse that promises deliverance from the power of evil. It does not promise the believer will not be exposed to evil, but it does promise that he will overcome evil.
- c. II Corinthians 10:4-5 - The believer is in a spiritual battle that is designed to destroy him. However, God has provided what he needs to stand against attacks and defeat Satan.

There are really four aspects of prayer that can be remembered using the acrostic "ACTS".

Adoration - Praising God for who He is. He is almighty, merciful, faithful, forgiving, holy, loving, gracious and caring. (Psalms 100:4)

Confession - This is agreeing with God about specific sin. Confession is telling God what He already knows. (I John 1:9)

Thanksgiving - Being grateful to God for what He has done. The Bible teaches the believer is to give thanks in everything for this is the perfect will of God. (I Thessalonians 5:18).

Supplication - Bringing needs and the needs of others to God. (Philippians 4:6)

This acrostic is a good way to remember the important aspects of prayer as well as a great order in which to pray. God does not command a certain way, but He does give us a model prayer in Luke 11:1-4. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray so He gave them this "model" prayer. In this prayer you can see the acrostic "ACTS" used.

- 1 Adoration - Luke 11: 2 - Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
2. Confession - Luke 11: 4 Forgive us our sins.
3. Thanksgiving - The entire prayer is recognizing God as the supplier of everything.
4. Supplication - Give us day by day our daily bread; lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

There are times when prayers are hindered and it is important to be aware of these hindrances.

1. If a believer does not pray in faith his prayers are hindered (James 1:5-8)
2. If he is asking for the wrong things with the wrong motives (James 4:3).
3. If he has un-confessed sin (I John 1:9)
4. If he has unresolved conflict with his spouse (I Peter 3:7).
5. If he is living outside of God's will (I John 5:14-15).

#### Discipline Four - Fellowship

Fellowship is vitally important to the life and health of the church and individual. Without unity of fellowship, the Holy Spirit is limited. Gene Mims says, " If unity is absent from a local church, the Holy Spirit is not in charge." <sup>34</sup> Since the Holy Spirit is the one who gives the power and ability to do God's will then it is obvious that fellowship is

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<sup>34</sup> Gene Mims, *Kingdom Principles of Church Growth* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1994).55

important. In fellowship the believer engages in common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service with other disciples.<sup>35</sup> Personalities united can contain more of God and sustain the force of His greater presence much better than scattered individuals.<sup>36</sup>

The Bible commands not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). Without coming together to share hopes, fears, dreams and life, the church will never see the power of God poured out like it will if it united together. Some people question why church attendance is so important. A person can still go to heaven if he does not go to church, but it is impossible to be a Christian without being a part of and regularly attending a local church where Christ is preached. Why? Because a Christian is being Christ-like and Jesus, in His example, spent time among believers. This simply means a believer cannot grow on his own, nor can he handle all the difficulties life will throw at him if he is alone. The church is the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-27) and needs each other. In these verses are some very important points concerning fellowship.

1. Vs. 12-13- All are placed into the body of Christ.
2. V. 18 - God has placed each member in the body as it pleased Him. This means each individual believer is an important part of the fellowship of the church and if he does not participate then he miss something important in his life, as do others who are depending on him.
3. V. 22 - Everyone is important and even those thought to be less important are necessary.

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<sup>35</sup>Willard. 186

<sup>36</sup>Ibid. , 186.

4. V. 26 - Christians need each other to share the ups and downs of everyday life.
5. V. 27 - Christians are individuals, together.

#### Discipline Five - Evangelism

How can people say they believe that salvation can be received only through Jesus Christ in an act of supernatural grace and not share that news with others?<sup>37</sup> If it is really believed that Jesus is the way the truth and the life then why do so many believers never share this truth? *Some* will tell you it is the most difficult part *of* the Christian **life---telling people about Jesus. Why** is this true? Why is it that many believers have never personally led anyone to faith in Christ? It may be because of an incorrect view. Here are some incorrect views about evangelism.

1. It is the pastor's job.
2. I am not gifted in evangelism.
3. People will reject me.
4. God has to call them so there is no need for me to preach to people.

Evangelism is more than just sharing what the Bible says about Jesus. Evangelism is sharin<sup>g</sup> with others what Jesus has done for the individual believer. Take, for example, the woman at the well (John 4:1-42). This woman had an encounter with Jesus and at the conclusion of the story all she did was tell what Jesus had done for her and, as a result, others believed. If the believer will just look for ways to live a godly life in front of other people either at work, at play, or in everyday life, then share what they know about Jesus, God can use his life to lead people to saving faith. He should be open for any opportunity that presents itself to share the story about Jesus.

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<sup>37</sup> Mims. 34



### Discipline Six- Supporting the Ministry of the Church

So many people use the excuse, " I don't go to church because all they care about is money." This may be true of some churches and ministries, but it is not true here. Giving is a privilege God gives to the individual to be a part of what He is doing.

One of the teachings of the church is tithing. The word "tithe" simply means a tenth. However, the teaching about giving in the New Testament concerns the attitude of the h e . If H Corinthians 9:7 is examined, three principles about giving can be found.

1.       at to give is a choice made by the individual believer. He is to purpose in his heart that he is going to support the work of the Lord. It is important that he spend time in prayer and find out what God wants him to give and then be obedient. A great place to start is with ten percent of his income. But please keep in mind that God is not legalistic. This means that God does not have a set amount that must be given before He will bless. It is not, "this amount or else". He should give what he can, according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, but he should keep in mind that real giving involves his very best and even some sacrifices. There is a principle of blessing that applies to sacrificial giving found in II Corinthians 9:6; he who gives sparingly, will receive sparingly. Basically, what you put into it is what you will get out of it.
2.       God wants the believer to give willingly. This means he does not give because he have to, but because he want to be a part of what God is doing and demonstrate his love for God through giving. It is a thanksgiving offering to God for His goodness to us.

3. God loves a cheerful giver. The word cheerful is the word used for "hilarious." God loves a person who gives with unbound joy and happiness. Joy comes from the Christian being obedient to the word of God and knowing he is a part of what God is doing.

God's word teaches that your giving should be accomplished through your local church. (Malachi 3:10). The storehouse is the local church. God has given *each* believer the privilege to be a part of what He is doing in the world and that includes giving not only of his financial resources, but also of his time and talents.

#### Conclusion

These are six very important disciplines of the Christian faith. They are called disciplines because they are something the believer chooses to do even when he might not feel like it. He disciplines himself to get out of bed to be at work at a certain time, so he already knows how to use disciplines. If he will make time to consistently practice these disciplines he will find that he will grow in his faith and his relationship with Jesus Christ.

## Discovering Maturity 201 -- Workbook

It is a false belief that the Christian life is e\_\_\_\_\_. There are two reasons why it is not easy:

1. One reason is every believer is in a s \_\_\_\_\_ between two natures. One nature desires to please the flesh and the other wants to \_\_\_\_\_ God.
2. A second reason is the tendency to try to attempt to live this life in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the believer.

These disciplines are simply the a \_\_\_\_\_ the believer displays through his body. A believer is instructed in Romans 12 to present his body a l \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice. This class will look at six disciplines essential for living a Christian life.

### Discipline One - W\_\_\_\_\_ and Celebration

Worship is often viewed as something reserved for only church services. However, worship goes much deeper than that. Worship is actually a very p \_\_\_\_\_ spiritual activity. A good definition of worship is, "engaging ourselves with, dwelling upon, and e\_\_\_\_\_ the greatness, beauty and goodness of God."

1. Jesus taught that they that worship must worship in spirit and t \_\_\_\_\_. John 4:24
2. Jesus even narrows worship down even further when He teaches that a believer is to worship the Lord his God and Him a \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 4:10

### Discipline Two - S \_\_\_\_\_

1. The study of God's word is vital to the spiritual growth of a C \_\_\_\_\_
2. Bible study is the most essential ingredient in the believer's s \_\_\_\_\_ life.
3. If he desires to hear from God then the following practices should help:

- a. Study the Bible d\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Study the Bible s\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Study the Bible c\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Study the Bible d\_\_\_\_\_
- e. Study the Bible p\_\_\_\_\_ Discipline Three - Prayer

Prayer is a b \_\_\_\_\_ ingredient of the Christian life. It will be impossible to grow if prayer is not part of the believers daily life. Prayer is much more than a p \_\_\_\_\_ or

1. The Bible reveals five purposes of prayer.

- a. Prayers \_\_\_\_\_ the deepest needs of the human heart.
- b. Prayer is a means of d \_\_\_\_\_ God's guidance.
- c. Prayer is how God desires for a believer to deal with w \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Prayer is the means of communicating n \_\_\_\_\_ and c \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
- e. Prayer helps the fight against sin and t \_\_\_\_\_

2. There are really four aspects of prayer that can be remembered using the acrostic "ACTS".

- a. A \_\_\_\_\_ - Praising God for who He is.
- b. C \_\_\_\_\_ - This is agreeing with God about specific s \_\_\_\_\_
- c. T \_\_\_\_\_ - Being grateful to God for what he has done.
- d. S \_\_\_\_\_ - Bringing our n \_\_\_\_\_ and the needs of others to

God.

3. There are times your prayers are hindered and it is important for you to be aware of these hindrances.

- a. If the believer does not pray in f \_\_\_\_\_
- b. If he is asking for the w \_\_\_\_\_ things.
- c. If he has un-confessed s \_\_\_\_\_
- d. If he has unresolved c \_\_\_\_\_ with his spouse.
- e. If he is living outside of God's w \_\_\_\_\_

#### Discipline Four - Fellowship

Fellowship is vitally important to the life and h \_\_\_\_\_ of the church and individual. In fellowship the believer engages in common activities of w \_\_\_\_\_, study, and service with other disciples.

The Bible commands us not to forsake the a \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25).

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, are some very important points concerning fellowship.

1. Vs.12-13 - All are p \_\_\_\_\_ into the body of Christ.
2. V.18 \_\_. God has placed each member in the body as it has p \_\_\_\_\_ Him.
3. V.22 - Everyone is important and even those thought to be less important are  
n \_\_\_\_\_
4. V.26 - Christians need each other to s \_\_\_\_\_ the ups and downs.
5. V.27 - Christians are individuals, t \_\_\_\_\_

#### Discipline Five - Evangelism

How can a person say they b \_\_\_\_\_ that salvation can be received only through Jesus Christ in an act of supernatural g \_\_\_\_\_ and not share that news with others?

Why is it that many believers have never personally led anyone to faith in Christ? It may be because of some incorrect views of Christ. Here are a few;

1. It is the p \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am not g \_\_\_\_\_ in evangelism.
3. People will r \_\_\_\_\_ me.
4. God has to call them so there is no need to me to p \_\_\_\_\_ to people.

Evangelism is s \_\_\_\_\_ with others what Jesus has done for the individual believer.

#### Discipline Six - Supporting the Ministry of the Church

Giving is a privilege God gives to the individual to be a part of what He is doing.

One of the teachings of the church is t \_\_\_\_\_. This word simply means a t \_\_\_\_\_

However the teaching about giving in the New Testament concerns the attitude of the

h \_\_\_\_\_. If II Corinthians 9:7 is examined, three principles of giving can be found.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ at to give is a c \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ God wants the believer to give w \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ God loves a c \_\_\_\_\_ giver.

These are six very important d \_\_\_\_\_ of the Christian faith. They are called disciplines because they are something the believer chooses to do even when he might not feel like it.

## APPENDIX C

### DISCOVERING MINISTRY 301 - THE THIRD FLOOR

#### Introduction to Facilitator

This class is a very important class for the new member. Very few people really have the understanding that God made them a certain way for a certain task. They do not realize that they have a specific gift and place to use that gift. As this series is taught, it is important to take the time to help answer any questions the new member might have.

#### **Introduction to understanding spiritual gifts**

The biblical teaching about spiritual gifts has created some confusion in the modern church. Much of the time the use and teaching of spiritual gifts are considered to be reserved for the Charismatics. However, the Bible teaches that every person has a spiritual gift(s). It is important to learn what the Bible teaches concerning spiritual gifts so the believer will be able to begin using his gifts in his own life. This lesson will examine some false beliefs and then correct them with biblical truths.

#### False teachings about Spiritual Gifts

##### 1 Spiritual gifts are given only to the super spiritual

- a. 1 Corinthians 12:11- The Holy Spirit sovereignly gives gifts to men; people do not pick or choose the gifts they will receive. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit gives these spiritual gifts in order to edify the entire body (1 Corinthians 12:12ff). Some of the gifts were more popular than others because they had a more public display so they were desired over

other gifts. This seemed to illustrate man's sinful pride. The context of 1 Corinthians 12 is Paul's address to the carnal church of Corinth addressing incorrect beliefs about spiritual gifts. The attitudes found in 1 Corinthians are carnal attitudes and must be constantly dealt with in the believer's life.

2. Spiritual gifts are not active today - This is a partially true statement. There are some gifts that are not active today and some that are still in operation. A list of the active and in-active gifts will be given in a latter lesson.
3. Spiritual gifts are only given to those who have had a special experience- Some denominations teach that a special experience with God will usher in spiritual gifts. The only special experience a person must have is to be born again. When a person is born again he is baptized, immersed, by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The manifestation of the gifts(s) given is a choice the new believer makes to allow the Holy Spirit to use him. The only way a spiritual gift can be used is by the power of the Holy Spirit through a surrendered life. A second work of grace is not taught in the Bible. By a second work of grace it is implied, by some denominations, that a person will reach a level in which they become supernaturally endowed to do special things even going as far as not ever sinning again. This is contrary to the teaching of the scripture (Romans 3:23). Gifts are given by God to profit the entire church and not the individual (1 Corinthians 12:7). If an individual is exalted then the use of the gift is not a scriptural use,
4. Spiritual gifts are just natural personalities - Personalities and gifts are two different subjects. According to Tim Lahaye, "A personality is the outward



expression of ourselves, which may or may not be the same as our character..."<sup>38</sup>

We all have a personality, but this personality can be altered by education or discipline. The personality is the face we show to others. However, God gives spiritual gifts for a specific purpose in the life of each born again believer in order to edify and build up the church.

#### Biblical support for teachings about Spiritual Gifts

#### 1. Every believer is given spiritual gifts verses the false teaching that only the super spiritual receive gifts.

##### a. 1 Corinthians 12:11- the Holy Spirit gives the spiritual gifts.

- i. It is not left up to the individual to decide what spiritual gift he will possess; it is at the discretion of the Holy Spirit to give to every believer the gift(s) He desires for him to have.
- ii. This makes it possible for all the gifts to be used in the church because all gifts are necessary for the church to operate as a complete unified body.

##### b. 1 Peter 4:10- No single person has all the gifts, but all believers will have at least one gift. Once the gift(s) are given it is *up* to each believer to be obedient and use his gift(s) to build up the church.

#### 2. Only a select few gifts are in use today.

- a. While there is not a specific verse that clearly points out that some gifts were for a certain period of time, biblical principles attest to the fact that there were temporary gifts and there are gifts that exist in every age.

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<sup>38</sup> Tim Lahaye, *Spirit Controlled Temperaments* (Wheaton: Living Studies, Tyndal House, 1996), 6.

Hebrews 2:3-4 does seem to strongly suggest that there are gifts that differ in historical use. Charles Ryrie wrote, " Those who were contemporary with Christ experienced certain miraculous gifts of the Spirit which were not experienced by the generation which followed Him."<sup>39</sup> An example would be the Apostleship of Paul (previously Saul of Tarsus). Paul was called to be an apostle and one of the criteria for being an Apostle was that a person had to have seen Christ alive (Acts 1:21-22). Yet, the church today still has the profit of Paul's apostleship although there are no modern apostles. A list of these temporary gifts will follow in a latter lesson.

- b. The purpose for the "sign" gifts was to validate the divine origin of the message of the Messiah to the non-believing Jews. Beyond the book of Acts and the letter to the carnal church of Corinth, little reference is made to the special gifts such as, tongues, miracles or healing as well as other signs and wonders performed by the Apostles.

### 3. Spiritual gifts are not active unless they are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

- a. To do anything spiritual, a person must be in Christ (John 15:5). It is true that people are born with natural talents, but natural talents can only take a person so far. To act in ones own strength is to live carnally-without the control of God This carnality places us at enmity with God (Romans 8:6-7).

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<sup>39</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 84.

4. Personalities and spiritual gifts are two different subjects - God gives each

individual a personality and this personality is shared just as gifts of the Spirit are shared. However, a personality is not the same as a spiritual gift. While both are God given, the Holy Spirit specifically gives spiritual gifts at the new birth. When people are born physically they receive a personality that can be altered by environment or education, but spiritual gifts are given to each person specifically to edify the body of Christ.

The Bible clearly lists the spiritual gifts and explains the uses. It is imperative that the definitions of spiritual gifts come from God's word and not from the thoughts or traditional teachings of individuals. This lesson will list seven spiritual gifts, where they are located in the Bible, and a brief explanation of each gift.

A list of spiritual Gifts - 1 Corinthians 12

1. The gift of wisdom (v. 8) -Paul explains it to be divinely imparted revelation that he could communicate to the believers. One with this gift had the capacity to receive the revealed truth from God and present it to the people of God.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 2:6ff - The wisdom Paul speaks of comes from only one source---God. Wisdom is knowledge of how to regulate one's relationship with God.
  - b. It is clear from this text as well as the text that follows that this wisdom is given to the saved. However, the gift of wisdom is a characteristic gift of the Apostles. In modern time people have the gift of teaching and pastor/teacher to teach the complete and perfect word of God. The Apostles had only the Scriptures (Old Testament) so they were gifted to

teach the revelation of God to be contained in the soon to be written New Testament.

2. The gift of knowledge (v. 8) - This is closely related to the gift of wisdom and refers to the ability to properly understand the truths revealed to the apostles and prophets. This gift relates to the foundational gifts of prophesying and teaching. This gift ceased with the completion of the scriptures (1 Corinthians 13:8) and the completion of scripture ceased the need for continued divine revelation.
3. The gift of faith (v. 9)- The gift of faith is not the faith needed for salvation. Every person who accepts Christ has that faith given to him by Christ (Romans 3:22). The gift of faith is a special gift, which supplies power to believe God to do a specific ministry or fulfill a specific calling.
  - a. An example of this would be George Mueller (1805-1898) who ran an orphanage in Bristol England and carried on this work through the power of prayer. He displayed faith that God would provide for every need of the children and history proves this is true. This man had every need provided for by God without asking any man for help.
4. The gift of healing (v. 9) -- The ability to supernaturally be an agent of God for miraculous healings. It is true that God can heal today directly or as a result of prayer (James 5:14-15), but this gift was given to special people to validate the authenticity of the message of Christ.
  - a. An example of this would be the Apostle Paul in Acts 19:11-12. Paul was given *special* ability and, from the context of the text, it can be deduced

that the use of the gift of healing was to display Christ in Paul's life as well as his apostleship.

- b. It is true that God still heals, but if the gift of healing were still in place, as it was in the New Testament, then there would be no need for faith in the completed word of God.
- c. It is important to remember that the gift remains exceptional and it could be withdrawn. In Acts 19:11-12, healing even took place with handkerchiefs and aprons carried from Paul's body. However there were times later in Paul's ministry that he was unable to heal someone. Paul even sent good advice to Timothy instead of a handkerchief (II Timothy 4:20; I Timothy 5:23). The question remains---why didn't Paul just heal Timothy of his infirmities? Because God was validating the messenger and the message.

5. The gift of the working of miracles (v. 10) - The word miracle means "a work of power". It was accomplishing something supernatural. An example would be Peter's judgment of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:9-11).

- a. In this story Peter confronts this couple about a lie they had told and supernatural judgment fell on the couple. This supernatural power brought fear to the rest of the church and was also used to confirm the apostleship of Peter.
- b. Miracles were given to authenticate a message--- the message of Jesus Christ--- as well as the messenger.

6. The gift of prophecy (v. 10) - This gift is not conveying just the ability to tell the future, but also that of edifying, exhorting and comforting (1 Corinthians 14:3-4). There are only a few examples of the gift of foretelling the future used in the New Testament.
- a. One example is Agabus (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11). This prophet foretold of a famine and also of the way Paul would be taken prisoner. Both prophecies came true, which is an indication if a prophet is a genuine prophet (Deut.18: 22).
  - b. Prior to the completion of the New Testament the prophet received direct revelation from God and taught the people for their edification, exhortation, and consolation (1 Corinthians 14:3). Once the canon of Scripture was completed this gift was no longer needed.
  - c. This gift will be referred to later in a different application and will be identified as a characteristic of a person who has the tendency to "forth tell" the truth---one who tells you like it is without watering down the truth.
7. The gift of the discerning of spirits (v. 10) - This is the gift of being able to tell if a person is genuine or not. We are instructed in 1 John 4:1,3, not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits to see whether they are of God. In an age where religion is popular and tolerance is taught it is easy for a person to look like the real thing and not be the real thing. Satan is even a master of disguise who can look like an angel of light and his servants as messengers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14,15). For this reason the Holy Spirit has given people the gift of

discernment to identify these false teachers and fakes which attempt to infiltrate the church.

- a. An example could be a person in the church who comes to the pastor or church leaders with a meek spirit and shares a concern about someone or their motives. If this person has the gift of discernment he will be able to see things the average person cannot see and his purpose will be to protect the truth from error. This is an application for the use of this gift in modern times.
- b. This gift was originally given so that false teachers could not deceive believers with a lie. Some believe this gift is no longer in use because we have the scriptures to test the spirits. However, the Holy Spirit still gives discernment to believers and that discernment is supported by God's word.

8. The gift of tongues (v. 10) - According to Rene' Pache, there are two different kinds of gifts of tongues.<sup>40</sup>

- a. First, the ability to speak one or more foreign languages without ever having learned them. The use of tongues in Acts 2 was the ability to speak a language unknown to the speaker. Actually the miracle of tongues in Acts 2 was in the hearing, not just in the speaking (Acts 2:6-11). The Bible teaches that every man *heard* them speak in their own language. The speaker used his own learned language but the people heard the message in their own language. It is called the gift of tongues because the speaker

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Rene' Pache, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954). 191

used his own tongue (language) to speak the tongue (language) of others.

This was also a validation of the message and messenger.

- b. Second, the gift of talking to God in the form of a trance in a language that is incomprehensible to others and even to our own intelligence (1 Corinthians 14:2, 14). A simple study of this would explain that the speaker should speak to himself or pray that he may interpret.

- 9. The gift of the interpretation of tongues (v. 10)- This is the God given ability to interpret what is spoken so that the church might be edified. Since tongues is not for personal edification but edification of the church, the Bible gives specific instructions for the use of the gift of tongues in the church (1 Corinthians 14:12, 27-28). Both this gift and the gift of tongues are sign gifts no longer in use today.

- 10. The gift of apostleship (v. 28)- The word *apostle* means, "One sent forth." This word commonly refers to the twelve disciples chosen by the Lord for special training (Luke 6:13: 9:10)

- a. One of the criteria for being an Apostle was that a person had to have seen the living Christ and been a witness of his life, death, burial and resurrection.

- b. Another criteria was that the person must have received a commission directly from the Lord. Paul received his from the Lord in Acts 9.

- 11. The gift of teaching (v. 28) -- A pastor should also be a teacher, but a teacher is not necessarily always a pastor. The person with this gift will have a desire to study and share God's word and it's application to the lives of the people.



12. The gift of helps (v. 28) - The gift of helps is just that. It is the gift of being of assistance to others and most of the time it is behind the scenes work. An example would be that of Tabitha in Acts 9:36,39.
- a. These acts are a good example of someone who might have the gift of helps. This person is willing, without recognition, to help others.
  - b. According to Rene Pache, "the gift of mercy and helps would seem to fall to woman and the maternal h e , which is given to woman, would fulfill much good when she is filled with the Holy Spirit".<sup>41</sup>
13. The gift of governing (v. 28) ---- This refers to the bishops (overseers). This gift is used to rule the church (Romans 12:8; Hebrews 13:17).
- a. There are people who have natural leadership abilities, but might not necessarily have this gift. This gift is the God given ability to make spiritual decisions for the body of Christ. This gift is also referred to as the gift of administration. Although it is not always the case, those put in leadership positions should display the characteristics of leadership and the gift of administration.
  - b. This leadership is to be by example (Hebrews 13:17) and not as a dictator. A believer is instructed to follow God's chosen leader as close as that leader follows Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:7,9).
14. The gift of being an evangelist (Ephesians 4:11) - One who proclaims the good news.
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- a. This gift involves a burden for the lost, a desire to proclaim the good news, make a clear presentation of the gospel, initiate a response to the gospel and have a delight in seeing people come to Christ.
  - b. Although all people are called to share the gospel, the person with this gift has an unusual ability and burden to share the gospel and usually sees more it than the average believer.
15. The gift of being a pastor-teacher (Ephesians 4:11)- This is one gift not two. The word pastor literally means shepherd- to watch over and care for.
- a. An example can be found in Acts 20:28 where Paul instructs the elders to *shepherd* the flock.
  - b. As the shepherd the pastor is to instruct the people (sheep) of God in the word of God. This instruction is meant to guide the people in a growing relationship with the Lord.
16. The gift of liberality (Romans 12:8) - The gift of giving is the unusual ability and willingness to share one's material goods with others.
- a. Philippians 4:10-16 -- The Philippians exercised this gift in giving to Paul.
  - b. Since man is naturally bent toward selfishness, only the power of the Holy Spirit can cause him to be willing to give. When this gift is in use, under the power of the Holy Spirit, specific needs are met in a supernatural way.

## An explanation of the categories of Spiritual Gifts

### 1. Diversities of Gifts

- a. The word "*gift*" defined- Greek word *charismata* is the capacity for service, which is given to every believer without exception and without merit.
- b. *Charismata* is the word for grace, which is the enablement of humans, by God, to do God's will.

### 2. Diversities of Administrations (ministries)

- a. The word "*administrations*" defined - Greek word *diakonian*.
- b. Acts 6:24- it is translated ministry and implies waiting on tables.

### 3. Diversities of Operations (Manifestations)

- a. The word "*operations*" defined - Greek word *energmaton*.
- b. 1 Corinthians 12:6- the effect of a thing fashioned. This is the thing seen as a result of the action.

- 4. There were temporary sign gifts - The sign gifts were temporary gifts given to a certain period of time to verify the oral message of the Messiah. These gifts were foundational gifts to the apostolic age (Ephesians 2:20). It is interesting to note there is little reference to these gifts after the book of Acts. It would seem that if these gifts were perpetual the writers of the New Testament books would have mentioned them more and instructed the church more carefully in their use. However, the instruction is limited to the carnal church of Corinth and some accounts in the other books of the New Testament. The latest

recorded miracles in the New Testament occurred around A.D. 58, with the healings in the island of Malta (Acts 28:7-10).

5. The temporary gifts

- a. Tongues- The ability to speak a language unknown to the speaker.
- b. Miracles - The power to do something supernatural.
- c. Apostles- The twelve disciples who walked with Christ.
- d, Healing- Although God does still heal today, not everyone is healed.

This was the supernatural power to heal in order to authenticate the message of the Apostles.

- e. Prophet - The ability to receive divine revelation from God.
- f. Wisdom -Divinely imparted revelation imparted in order to teach believers.
- g. Knowledge - The ability to properly understand the truths revealed.

6. There are active gifts - These are given by the Holy Spirit to new believers at the time of the new birth in order to build up the body of Christ and enable the body to do the work of the Kingdom of God.

- a. The gift of faith - The ability to believe God for supernatural power to do what He has called the individual to do.
- b. The gift of discerning spirits - The ability to recognize deceit and false teachers. It is proposed by some that this gift was a temporary gift and they base this belief on the fact that the church has the completed scriptures to discern for her. However, it is still used today to protect the church from heresy and false doctrine.

- c. The gift of teaching-The desire to study God's word and effectively share that knowledge with others.
- d. The gift of helps - The desire to assist others with simple tasks of service.
- e. The gift of administration -The ability to organize and govern. f  
The gift of evangelism-The desire and ability to clearly share the gospel of Christ in such a way that people respond.
- g. The gift of pastor/teacher -The gift given to the person who is the shepherd of the church.
- h. The gift of giving -The desire and ability to share material resources *with* others in need.
- i. The gift of exhortation-The gift to encourage people. Closely tied to the gift of mercy.

#### How God has shaped Man

According to Psalms 139 man is fearfully and wonderfully made. Each person is unique and special. Each person is created in the image of God and once he is born again he is given gift(s) to work with his personality to fulfill God's purpose through his life.

The lesson today will to understand God's design.

#### 1. Scriptures to help understand why and how man is made.

##### a. Job 10:8

- i. God made each individual to His own specifications.
- ii. Each individual is like he is for a purpose and it is by divine design.

b. Psalms 139:14-16

- i. People are shaped for a purpose.
- ii. Each individual is unique.
- in. Each individual is wonderfully made.

c. Romans 9:24-21

- i. An individual does not have the right to question God about his makeup.
- ii. God has the right and the power to make him like he is for His purposes.

2. Several factors help determine how a believer can use his makeup. The use of the acrostic S.H.A.P.E. will help him determine his ministry<sup>41</sup>.

a. Spiritual gifts — **1 Corinthians 7:7**

- i) at is the individual gifted by God to do?
- ii) God gives gifts so he can serve and be effective within the use of the gift(s) given.

d. **Heart - Philippians 2:13**

- i. at does the individual love to do?
- ii. If the individual finds joy and fulfillment in something, without feeding his pride, then he is probably where he needs to be.

e. Abilities **1 Corinthians 12:6** What natural talents and gifts

does the individual have?

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<sup>41</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*. 369.

- ii. Natural talents or gifts are not the same as spiritual gifts, but they do usually compliment the spiritual gifts.

**Personality - 1 Corinthians 2:11**

- i. Where does the individual's personality best suit him to serve?
- ii. Keep in mind that personality is different than gifts, but when God made the individual He made him in such a way that he could use his gifts with his God given personality.

g. **Experiences**

- i. What are the Spiritual experiences of the individual? **Hebrews 5:12-13**
- ii. What are the painful experiences? **Proverbs 20:30; II Corinthians 1:4**
- iii. at are the educational experiences? **Proverbs 4:13**
- iv. What are the ministry experiences? **II Corinthians 9:13 2.**

How Paul's ministry was SHAPED -using Paul as an example one can more easily understand how ministry might be shaped.

- a. Paul's spiritual gifts - **2 Timothy 1:11**
- b. Paul's heart - **Romans 15:20 ; Galatians 2:8 ; Acts 20:24**
- c. Paul's ability - **Acts 18:2-4**
- d. Paul's personality - **Galatians 1:13-14**

5. Paul's experiences

- a. His spiritual experiences - **Acts 8:1 ; Acts 9:1-20 ; Galatians 1:18**

- b. His painful experiences - II Corinthians 11:23-27**
- c. Paul's educational experiences - Acts 22:3**
- d. Paul's ministry experiences -- read the Book of Acts and his letters to the churches.

#### Discovering spiritual gift(s)

God gave each individual believer a spiritual gift(s) the moment he was born again. He must distinguish between natural talents and gifts of the Spirit. This lesson will help him to discover his spiritual gift(s) by giving him tools and guidelines. These resources are not fool proof methods, only a guide to help each believer identify his gift(s).

#### Using a Spiritual Gifts inventory

1. The spiritual gifts inventory by Dr. Larry Gilbert, from Church Growth Institute, will be used to help determine the individual's spiritual gift(s). He should have received one in his packet, if not he should see his lay shepherd or one of the pastors.
2. Taking the inventory
  - a. This is not a test with right or wrong answers
  - b. Each individual must be as honest as he can in answering the questions. He should not mark because it sounds more spiritual. For example- if it asks, "do you enjoy seeing a soul come to Christ more than anything else," if it does not consume him with joy he should not feel less committed. He should be honest.



### Understanding your score

1. Follow the directions after the answer section.
2. One particular gift is not more or less important than others. This inventory is simply a guide to help the individual to understand how God has equipped him for Christian service.

### Using the score to find a place to serve.

1. There are 7 gifts that can be used to serve in the church. The gift of discernment is not mentioned in this inventory because the author chose not to include it in the active gifts of the church.
  - a. Serving
  - b. Administration
  - c. Giving
  - d. Pastor/Shepherd
  - e. Mercy
  - f. Faith
  - g. Prophet
  - h. Evangelist
  - i. Exhorter
2. There are 13 ministries presently offered at this church and several others being planned. Remember that each individual is gifted by God to participate in one or more of these ministry opportunities.
  - a. Teaching in the Bible fellowship

- b. Kidz Place children's ministry- grades 1-5
- c. Pre-school and nursery - from newborn through kindergarten
- d. Senior adults
- e. Student ministries - grades 6-12
- f. Deacon Ministry
- g. Elder
- h. Ushers & Greeters
- i. Hospital visitation
- j. Event evangelism
- k. Community service
- l. Visitation and outreach

Another method to help the individual discover his gift(s) is to use the acrostic

**S.T.A.R.T.**

1. Study- Study the scriptures and other materials from conservative authors to see where he believes he might align with others who have served.
2. Trial and Error- Try a ministry to see if he fits in that ministry. If one does not seem to fit then try another.
3. Analyze- Analyze his effectiveness and his feelings of fulfillment to see if this is a place God wants him to serve. Keep in mind that feelings are deceitful so a ministry should not be decided on because of emotions.
4. Request feedback - He should ask others what gifts they see in him.
5. Take training - Take advantage of training offered through the educational ministries of the church.

### Reasons to discover spiritual gifts

There are 10 Reasons why each individual needs to discover his spiritual gift(s). This is not an exhaustive list, but it is a good guideline for helping him to see the importance of finding his gift(s).

1. To find his place in the church.
2. To find his place in the world.
3. So that the body of Christ may be built up.
4. To maximize his service for God.
5. To become a better minister of the grace of God.
6. To realize the level of joy that Christ promised.
7. So that unity and maturity may increase.
8. So that he will find fulfillment and meaning for his life.
9. To gain a new appreciation of his unique design.
10. So that God may be glorified.

### Matching Gifts to the Five Purposes

1. The ministry opportunities in the purpose of Worship
  - a. Musician - This requires competency and skill in playing a particular instrument. All instruments are not used in the worship services, therefore the instrument the individual is skilled in playing might best be used in ministries other than the worship services.
  - b. Vocalist - The worship pastor has established policies for being used during the scheduled worship services. This church has several different venues for the individual to become involved using his vocal talents.

- c. Audio/Visual \_ This is a field that requires technical training. This requires a person to be dependable and faithful to this particular ministry. Since this church has chosen to do everything with quality and excellence then it is important that those involved in this ministry understand the equipment and the heart of the supervising pastor.

## 2. The ministry opportunities in the purpose of Instruction

### a. Bible Fellowship teacher

- i. Children - This is one of the most powerful tools available to change the world. The chance to influence young minds and hearts for Christ is a privilege and awesome responsibility. There are strict guidelines to follow for the safety of the children.
- ii. Students - Student ministry changes everyday. The youth culture of yesterday is much different than it will be in one year. Being parent of a student does not qualify a person to be involved in youth ministry. It takes a calling by God and special gifts to be able to communicate and minister to students. This ministry involves teaching and mentoring as well as participating in activities and events that are not for everyone.
- iii. Adults - Just as everyone cannot minister to children or students, so not everyone is able to minister to adults in every setting.

- b. Home Bible Studies - This ministry is our home small groups ministry. This is a ministry that begins relevant Bible studies in homes in order to evangelize our neighborhoods.

- e. Park Ministry Bible Studies - The area has *many* retirement parks, which provide opportunities to minister to retiree's. This ministry has many aspects *in* which an individual can become involved
- d. Jail and nursing home ministries - Too often these two areas of our society are overlooked. It takes a special and dedicated individual to minister to this group of people. Participation in one of these ministries is limited by time and availability.
- e. The Children's ministry - each Sunday morning there is a fantastic opportunity to minister to children through the Kidz Place. This Sunday Morning ministry is a perpetual vacation Bible School format, which uses multi-media, crafts, games and instruction by dedicated teachers. Those involved in this ministry work on a rotation basis so as to give the teachers and the students a fresh approach each week.
- f. Our "ROC" (Reaching out for Christ) Student ministries - This is the Wednesday evening student meeting time. It is a time filled with *games*, activities and instruction intended to help make young champions for Christ and help the students reach their friends.
  - i. Friday night live- a monthly Friday night 5-hour outreach for students in middle and high school. This is a evangelistic event providing a safe place for the students to come and bring their friends to be in a safe, Christ centered environment.

### 3. The ministry opportunities in the purpose of Fellowship

- a. Food preparation and serving for special events - It is obvious, to anyone involved in a Baptist church, that food is an important part of fellowship. This is an opportunity to fellowship with other workers while serving others.
- b. Seniors bi-monthly luncheon - A bi-monthly lunch and Bible study time dedicated to encourage fellowship among the seniors and to help them reach unsaved and unchurched friends for Christ.
- c. Ushers and Greeters - This is an opportunity to be involved in the Sunday morning worship services. This is part of the First Impressions Ministry and serves as the introduction to the church for first time guests.
- d. Small group Home Bible Studies - This is an opportunity for people to meet in a home in order to reach friends and neighbors for Christ.

4. The ministry opportunities in the purpose of Evangelism

- a. Hospital visitation - this is the opportunity for members to visit people in the hospital who needs prayer or a word of encouragement.
- b. Special event evangelism- special event evangelism are events promoted and sponsored by the church to impact the community presently there are two annual out reach events;
  - i. Safe House is a Halloween alternative that has become a community wide event with over 2000 people attending this one night event.
  - ii. Live nativity is an annual event held at Christmas time over a four-day period. It is a drive through live nativity with over 50 live

characters and 30 live animals. It is a drive through event with well over 2500 people attending over the four nights of the performance.

**5. The ministry opportunities in the purpose of Service**

- a. Local changers- Local changers is a church wide opportunity to help people in our community who are less fortunate. It is modeled after the North American Mission Board's summer mission program, "World Changers". This ministry joins adults and students together to perform work on the homes of people who cannot afford to have the work done any other way. It is not Habitat for Humanity, but is similar in nature.
- b. After school care and day care - These are ministries designed to reach the unchurched people in the community. This ministry is cooperation with the local elementary school providing a service to the parents of that school and the surrounding community.

Ways God wants each believer to his gifts

1. Through on-going Ministry opportunities of the Church- these opportunities were mentioned previously in the purpose statement.
2. Through Short-term projects- such as world changers, local changers or short term mission trips.
3. Through everyday spontaneous situations- being a believer is a 24/7 call. Each believer is to represent Christ wherever he goes, keeping in mind that God's main purpose for spiritual gifts is to edify the church.

*It is easier for the individual to discover his gift through ministry than to discover his ministry through his gift.*

As the individual *grows* in his faith and begins to use his gifts to serve the Lord he will find there is joy and fulfillment in ministry. He should not try to limit God by participating only *in* certain ministries, which he believes best fits his gift(s). He should *allow God to* use his gift any way He desires so that the church will be edified.



### Discovering Mission 301 Workbook

The biblical teaching about spiritual gifts has created some c \_\_\_\_\_ in the modern church. The Bible teaches that every person has a spiritual g \_\_\_\_\_. It is important to learn what the Bible teaches concerning spiritual gifts so the believer will be able to begin using his gifts in his own life.

#### False Teachings about Spiritual Gifts

##### 1 Spiritual gifts are only given to the super spiritual.

- a. The H \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_ sovereignly gives gifts to men.
2. Spiritual gifts are n \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ today
3. Spiritual gifts are only give to those who have has a special e \_\_\_\_\_
4. Spiritual gifts are just natural p \_\_\_\_\_

#### Biblical support for teachings about spiritual gifts

1. Everyr b \_\_\_\_\_ is given spiritual gifts verse the false teaching that only the super spiritual receive gifts.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 12:11 - The H \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_ gives the spiritual gifts.
  - b. 1 Peter 4:10 - no single person has all the g \_\_\_\_\_
2. Only a select few gifts are in use today.
  - a. Biblical principles attest to the fact that there were t \_\_\_\_\_ gifts and there are gifts that exist in every age.
  - b. The purpose for the "s \_\_\_\_\_" gifts was to validate the olivine origin of the message.
3. Spiritual gifts are not active unless they are under the c \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.

- a. To do anything spiritual a person must be in C \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. To act in our own strength is to live c \_\_\_\_\_
4. Personalities and spiritual gifts are two different s \_\_\_\_\_
- a. God gives everyone p \_\_\_\_\_ and these personalities are shared just as gifts of the Spirit are shared. However, a personality is not the same as a spiritual gift.
  - b. Spiritual gifts are given to e \_\_\_\_\_ the body of Christ.

#### A List of Spiritual gifts

1. The gift of w \_\_\_\_\_. One with this gift had the capacity to receive the revealed t \_\_\_\_\_ from God and present it to the people of God.

The gift of k . Closely related to the gift of wisdom and it refers to properly

u \_\_\_\_\_ the truths revealed to the apostles and

The gift of t \_\_\_\_\_ supplies power to believe God to do a specific ministry or fulfill a specific calling.

0. The gift of h. The ability to s \_\_\_\_ to be an agent of God for miraculous healings.

- 1. The gift of w \_\_\_\_\_ of m \_\_\_\_\_. This is accomplishing something s \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. The gift of p. It is not conveying the ability to tell the f \_\_\_\_\_, but also that of edifying, exhorting and c \_\_\_\_\_

7. The gift of d \_\_\_\_\_ spirits. This is the gift of being able tell if a person is g \_\_\_\_\_ or not. For this reason the Holy Spirit has given people the gift of discernment to identify these f \_\_\_\_\_ teachers.
8. The gift of \_\_\_\_\_ . There are two kinds of gifts of tongues.
  - a. The ability to speak one or more foreign languages without ever having l \_\_\_\_\_ them.
  - b. The gift of talking to God in the form of a t \_\_\_\_\_
9. The gift of the i \_\_\_\_\_ of tongues. This is the God given ability to interpret what is spoken so that the church might be e \_\_\_\_\_
10. The gift of a \_\_\_\_\_ . One of the criteria for being an apostle was that a person had to have seen the living Christ and been a w \_\_\_\_\_ of His life, death, burial and resurrection.
11. The gift of \_\_\_\_\_ . This person has the desire to study and share God's word and it \_\_\_\_\_
12. The gift of h \_\_\_\_\_ . It is the gift of being of a \_\_\_\_\_ to others.
14. The gift of \_\_\_\_\_ the church.
15. The gift of being an e \_\_\_\_\_ . One who p \_\_\_\_\_ good news.
17. The gift of p \_\_\_\_\_ -t. The word pastor literally . The pastor is to instruct the people of God in the means s \_\_\_\_\_ word of God.
18. The gift of l \_\_\_\_\_ . The gift of g \_\_\_\_\_ is s the unusual ability and willingness to share one's in \_\_\_\_\_ goods with others.

An explanation of the categories of spiritual gifts

1. Diversities of g \_\_\_\_\_
2. Diversities of a \_\_\_\_\_. It is translated m and implies waiting on tables.
3. Diversities of o \_\_\_\_\_. Manifestations.
4. Temporary s \_\_\_\_\_ gifts. The sign gifts were temporary gifts given to a certain period of time to v \_\_\_\_\_ the oral message of the Messiah.
5. The temporary gifts
  - a. T \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. M \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. A \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. H \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. P \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. W \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. K \_\_\_\_\_
6. There are a \_\_\_\_\_ gifts. These are given by the Holy Spirit to new b \_\_\_\_\_ at the time of the new birth.
  - a. The gift of f \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. The gift of discerning s \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. The gift of t \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. The gift of h \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. The gift of a \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. The gift of e \_\_\_\_\_

g. The gift of p\_\_\_\_\_ -t \_\_\_\_\_

h. The gift of g \_\_\_\_\_

i. The gift of e \_\_\_\_\_

### How God has shaped man

Man is fearfully and wonderfully m \_\_\_\_\_. You are unique and special. Each person is unique and special created in the image of God and once he is born again he is given gift(s) to work with his p \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfill God's purpose through his life. The use of the acrostic S.H.A.P.E. will help him determine his ministry.

S \_\_\_\_\_ gifts. 1 Corinthians 7:7

2. H \_\_\_\_\_ . Philippians 2:13

3. A \_\_\_\_\_ . 1 Corinthians 12:6

4. P. 1 Corinthians 2:11

5. E \_\_\_\_\_

The remainder of Discovering Ministry 301 covers the spiritual gifts inventory and the ministries of the church so each individual can begin to discover where he might fit in. If he has further questions about spiritual gifts he should make an appointment with one of the pastors to assist him in answering his questions.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **DISCOVERING MISSION 401- THE FOURTH FLOOR**

#### **Introduction to Facilitator**

By now everyone in this class should have completed the first three classes-101, 201, and 301. It is important to make sure everyone taking this class has completed the first three classes. This class introduces and briefly explains each ministry of this church and the opportunities for service in each ministry. This is so each new member can make an informed decision about where God wants him to serve and where he is best equipped to serve. Some might be taking this class to become a ministry leader while others may be taking it just to learn more about the ministries of this church. For an individual to become a ministry leader the following criteria must be met.

1. He must have successfully completed the first three classes; 101, 201, and 301.
2. He must have filled out the appropriate ministry forms and background checks as required by our policy and procedures manual.
3. He must successfully complete 401.
4. He must be assigned a mentor to carry him through the training process.

As the new member is guided through this class it is important to make sure he is given accurate and updated information about each ministry. If an answer to a question is not known the new member should be informed and an answer will be obtained and he will be informed at the next class or before he begins the mentoring process.

#### **Introduction**

The new member should be congratulated on the completion of the first three classes- Discovering Membership 101, Discovering Maturity 201, and Discovering Ministry 30L. If he is taking this class to have a better understanding of the ministries of this church then he should be commended on this decision. If he is taking this class to become a ministry leader the leadership should thank him for making the decision to become a minister leader. The leadership will do everything possible to make sure he has the information and resources he needs in order to fulfill his role in the kingdom of God.

By now the individual should have a good idea of his spiritual gift(s). If he is still unsure then he should make an appointment with one of the pastors to further discuss his gift(s). The purpose for this class, Discovering Mission 401, is to expose him to the mission, vision and ministries of this church. By the end of this class it is the prayer of the pastors that he will have a clearer understanding of where he will best be able to use his gift(s), to serve the Lord. This class will not come with a workbook because it is information for the individual to be able to make an informed decision about which ministry God desires for him to participate in. The individual should be in prayer as he goes through this final class.

### The Mission, Vision, and Goals

It is vital for the believer to understand the mission and the vision God has for the church as well as the goals to fulfill the mission and vision. If he does not know why this church is here, what God wants him to become, and how he is going to get there, then he will never be able to fulfill God's purpose in his life through the church.

1. The mission statement explains why God has placed First Baptist Ministries of Davenport in east Polk County. The mission is, "To be a culturally relevant,

innovative, kingdom minded church impacting our community and world for Christ in such a way that we would be missed if we ceased to exist." With this mission statement several terms must be defined:

- a. Culturally relevant - This means the church knows the culture it is ministering in and ministers according to that knowledge. For example; if the church is in a country setting the church would be more effective if it's programs were designed with country people in mind.
- b. Innovative - This means thinking outside of the box. This simply means that the church will look for different ways to be more effective in reaching its community. The methods used in the past are not embraced unless they are effective. If they become ineffective then the church looks for "new" ways to become effective.
- c. Kingdom minded- This means the church is not concerned only about its little corner of the world. This philosophy teaches that the church is concerned about the entire kingdom of God and not just about itself and its own growth. If a person is led to Christ, the priority is to get them into a good bible preaching and teaching church.

2. The vision statement identifies what God wants the **church to look like** as it is accomplishing its mission. The vision statement has 6 parts and each part corresponds to one of the five purposes previously mentioned in Discovering Membership 101. Each part begins with, "God wants us to be..."



- a. A church that provides a high quality, spiritually uplifting, relevant worship experience that encourages the believer and impacts the un-churched. This fulfills the purpose of worship.
- b. A church that is more concerned about the others than about itself. This fulfills the purpose of service.
- c. A church that attempts to meet the needs of the un-churched in order to have an opportunity to share Christ with them. This fulfills the purpose of evangelism.
- d. A church that has earned the respect of the community in such a way that the community looks to us for leadership and would miss us if we ceased to exist. This fulfills the purposes of evangelism, fellowship and service.
- e. A church that reaches the un-churched for Christ then teaches them all Jesus has commanded. This fulfills the purposes of instruction and evangelism.
- f. A church where families and marriages are strengthened and healed, relationships are built and strengthened, and people obtain what they need in order to become and remain fully devoted followers of Christ. This fulfills the purposes of Instruction and fellowship.

### 3. The goals to fulfill the mission and vision

- a. Create and maintain an atmosphere of high quality worship and celebration in every aspect of church life. We will celebrate every salvation, need met, and life changed.

- b. Seek out and implement relative, practical and innovative methodologies for reaching the un-churched.
- c. Create a center for family and marriage enrichment that includes, but is not limited to, marriage conferences, parenting seminars and family activities that are all designed to reach the un-church for Christ.
- d. Create and expand a small group ministry to facilitate the establishment and nurturing of strong, healthy relationships between believers and the un-churched in order to train believers and reach the un-churched for Christ.
  - i. A small group ministry is simply a home Bible study in the homes of believers held at various times and locations each week.
- e. Establish an affordable, quality daycare and/or after school program for our community in order to reach the un-churched for Christ.
- f. Build a multi-purpose worship center to be used for corporate worship, community events and family activities in order to reach the un-churched for Christ.

This should give a basic understanding of why the church is here, what it will look like as it accomplishes its mission and how it plans to accomplish it. If there are any further questions the individual should make an appointment with one of the pastors to gain a clearer understanding.

#### The Organizational Structure

The leadership of this church is structured in the typical horizontal structure (See Appendix E). However, the day-to-day operations are carried out through a team

structure. This means there is *built in* accountability at all levels where everyone answers to someone. The pastors work together as a team and each pastor has certain responsibilities for which he is responsible. As will be seen in this class, each pastor is responsible for overseeing certain ministries and is guided by the mission and vision of the church. At this church the vision, as given by Jesus through His word, is the boss. This simply means that no one at this church makes individual decisions; the vision does. This section of Discovering Mission 401 will briefly explain the roles and responsibilities of each pastor overseeing the ministries. As the responsibilities of each person in leadership is covered reference should be made to the organizational chart (Appendix F), to help follow along.

1. Jesus - There is no doubt that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23). He is the one who gives the church direction through His word. He gives the vision and the vision is the boss.
2. The Senior Pastor - Pastor Tanner could be considered the leader of the pastoral team. He is the spiritual leader of the church, under the authority of Christ, and the one who must give an account to God (Hebrews 13:7). His duties include:
  - a. Preaching on Sunday Mornings- other preaching times are shared among pastoral team members.
  - b. Leading the Pastoral team
  - c. Obtaining the vision
  - d. Casting the vision
  - e. Communicating the vision
  - f. Conducting special services; i.e., funerals, weddings.

g. Visiting

3. Pastor of Worship and Outreach - Pastor Kennon is responsible for planning and overseeing each worship service and our outreach ministries. His duties include:

- a. Planning each worship service.
- b. Overseeing all instrumentalists and vocalists used in our ministries.
- c. Overseeing all audio and visual equipment and personnel.
- d. Overseeing all outreach events.
- e. Supervision of all building maintenance staff.
- f. Preaching in the pastoral team rotation.
- g. Visitation
- h. Kidz Place Ministries

4. Pastor of Education and Senior Adult Ministries - Pastor Robert, affectionately known as "Doc", is responsible for the education ministries as well as our Senior Adult Ministries. His duties include:

- a. Overseeing all educational ministries of our church including Sunday Morning Adult Bible Fellowship, children's Bible fellowship, students Bible fellowship, and Moody Bible classes.
- b. Writing all Adult Bible Fellowship curriculum and arranging for all other curriculum.
- c. Planning and overseeing the senior adult ministries.
- d. Preaching in pastoral team rotation.
- e. Teaching adult Bible study on Wednesday evenings.
- f. Teaching College level classes on Monday evenings for credit or audit.

- g. Conducting special services
- h. Visitation

It is important to know that while these are the main responsibilities of the pastors they are not limited to just the tasks on the organizational chart. While they are responsible for them, the tasks are shared among team members.

#### The Ministries serving the Five Purposes

This section of discovering Mission 401 will identify the opportunities for ministry and a very brief description of what is involved.

#### The Purpose of Worship

1. All instrumentalists are interviewed and auditioned. If an individual is a gifted musician and would like to be a part of the praise band or used in other music ministries of the church he should make an appointment to meet with pastor Kennon to begin the process.
2. Vocalists are also interviewed and auditioned. The vision is to maintain a high quality worship experience and any participant in the music ministries is placed where he can best serve the Lord with his gifts.
3. Audiovisual technicians are interviewed and trained. The opportunities include our tape ministry, operation of the sound equipment during the worship services and even maintenance of all equipment.

#### The Purpose of Instruction

- 1 Adult Bible Fellowship Teachers for Sunday mornings. All teachers are interviewed by the pastor of education and is placed in a class as the need arises. New classes are formed on the basis on need.

2. Small group leaders. Small group leaders are individuals who have been through the process of assimilation and have been trained in the small group ministry. This takes a weekly commitment for the individual to use his home and to lead his group to participate and reach out.
3. Park ministry Bible studies. This ministry is a seasonal ministry and is staffed by someone with a special calling on his life. It is mainly to winter guests and takes a consistent involvement. This ministry is an "on demand" ministry, meaning that as opportunities are presented the church takes advantage of the opportunity.
4. Jail and nursing home ministries. There are several nursing homes and assisted living homes in the community and services are held by dedicated individuals who sense a special calling to meet the need of this in these homes. Jail ministry is available to any individual wishing to minister to the inmates and who meet the criteria of the responsible government agency.
5. Children and student teachers. There are strict guidelines for becoming involved in the student ministries. Each individual must pass a criminal history check and fill out all appropriate forms. This is a very important part of ministry and this church has dedicated itself to protect the children while maintaining a high quality training program. This ministry is not for everyone, but it is a rewarding ministry to be involved in. It is important that the individual be dedicated and consistent in order to set a positive example.
6. Pre-school and nursery. This is a vital ministry to the membership and guests who attend the worship services. This ministry is a sacrificial ministry that is very

rewarding although very demanding. All workers are on a rotation so no one is overloaded in responsibilities.

7. English as a second language (ESL). This is a part of the Spanish ministry outreach and is open to anyone wishing to participate. A professional instructor, at no cost to the individual, provides the necessary training. It is not necessary to speak another language to be involved in this ministry

#### The Purpose of Fellowship

1. Food preparation and serving for special events.
2. Seniors bi-weekly luncheon food preparation, set up and clean up.
3. First impressions ministries- ushers and greeters.

#### The Purpose of Evangelism

1. Event Evangelism
  - a. Friend Day - This a special Sunday set aside annually for the members to specifically invite friends with the purpose of reaching them for Christ. It involves a special emphasis and a dinner on the grounds following the services.
  - b. Safe House- Safe house is an annual event held each Halloween as an alternative for families to be able to give their children as safe place to be on Halloween night. The church offers a walk though trick or treat as well as games and food, all at no cost to the individual. It is a community wide event meant to reach unchurched people for Christ. This is a one-night event involved over fifty volunteers. This is a great place to be apart of evangelism and service.

- c. Live Nativity- The live nativity has been a part of this ministry for over twenty years and has grown every year. It is made up of eight scenes depicting the life of Christ from His birth to His resurrection and people can walk the entire city block or drive through. We have over 50 characters and over 20 live animals participating for four nights, three hours a night. This is a great opportunity to share in evangelism, fellowship and service.
- 2. Life Style Evangelism - This is a term used to identify the responsibility of all believers to be an example to the people they work with and live around. Their lifestyle is their witness.
- 3. Personal Evangelism - This is the believer's personal responsibility to share the story of Jesus with the people he comes into contact with. It is a personal, one on one, time for the believer to tell others about Christ.

#### The Purpose of Service

- 1. Deacon Ministry - A deacon is one of the two ordained offices in the church. The requirements for being a part of the deacon ministry is found in 1 Timothy 3:8. And covered in our bylaws. Anyone wishing to be a part of this ministry should inform one of the pastors. Deacons are added to the deacon fellowship as the need arises. Please refer to the church constitution, article VI.C. for further explanation.
- 2. Trustee - The trustees are the legal representatives of the church carrying out the wishes of the congregation. The elders, on a yearly basis, appoint the trustees. Please refer to church constitution, article VI.D., for further explanation.



3. Usher/Greeter - This is part of our "First Impressions" ministry. Ushers and greeters are an important part of the worship services. They not only collect the offering, but they also welcome guests and assist them with needs.
4. Lay Shepherd - The lay shepherds work closely with the deacons and elders to care for the congregation. Each lay shepherd has three to five families he is responsible for. He is the liaison between his families and his deacon. All lay shepherds are appointed by the pastoral team when the need arises and a qualified person is available. Any individual wishing to become a lay shepherd can obtain a copy of the job description from one of the pastors.
5. Local Changers - Local Changers is a ministry that helps people in need with providing help with various aspect of daily life, such as repairing or maintaining homes. This ministry is performed on an "as needed" basis. Participation is not limited.
6. Day Care - This ministry is an outreach ministry designed to minister to the needs of the community. It involves volunteer and paid positions. This ministry allows the church to build relationships with children and their parents with the goal of leading them to Christ.

#### How to get involved in a ministry

It is God's design for people to be involved in His work. He has chosen to accomplish His purposes through the local church and the local church is made up of individual believers. The choice to join a local church is a very important decision and everyone who does join should know that God has a specific purpose in mind for him. The Bible teaches that God places each person in the church as it pleases Him

(1 Corinthians 12:18) and each person is important and vital to the mission of the church. Therefore it is important and necessary for each person to find a place to serve. In this section, guidance will be given to assist each individual in getting started.

Each new member has been assigned a lay shepherd. This is a valuable resource for him to have some basic questions answered. The lay shepherd will be able to direct him to his assigned deacon and to introduce him to the ministry leaders. There are three levels of involvement in this church; an attender, minister/missionary and ministry leader. An attender is someone who simply attends the worship services without getting involved. The minister/missionary is one who serves in a ministry of the church, while the leader is one who supervises the minister/missionary. So how does a person become involved in each level?

1. An attender-To be an attender a person simply comes to church. This will meet a basic need in the Christian life, however a genuine believer will not be satisfied with this level. As a person learns more about Jesus the desire to do more will intensify.
2. A minister/missionary - To be a minister/missionary the individual is asked to make a commitment beyond just attending church. Each person wishing to participate in a ministry must be faithful to attend church and then complete the following steps:

Complete the first three floors. This means 101, 201 and 301 must be completed. The purpose behind this philosophy is so he will clearly understand how he is made and where he will best fit in. This will lessen the

frustration brought about by working in a ministry God has not equipped him to serve in.

- Fill out all appropriate paper work. This means everyone wanting to work with children and youth must go through a criminal history check, which includes finger printing. This is to protect the new member as well as our children. If a person desires to operate church equipment they must also meet certain requirements. All requirements can be found in the church policy and procedure manual.

- Meet with the ministry leader. This is an important part of becoming involved.

This meeting can take place over the phone or during one of the services.

Once this meeting has taken place and the new members has spent some time participating in a ministry he will go through a short evaluation process (see appendix E). This will give him the opportunity to share his concerns and will give him the chance to try another ministry before making a commitment.

3. A ministry leader - Being a ministry leader is an even greater responsibility. It is more than just attending and more than just helping-it is taking responsibility for a ministry. This does not mean the individual is responsible for the success or failure of a ministry, it simply means he is a partner with the pastors in helping to fulfill the mission and vision of the church. In order to be a ministry leader the above criteria must be met. In addition to the above criteria a person wishing to become a ministry leader must also fulfill the following requirements.

- Work under the direction of a mentor. A mentor is a person who has completed the assimilation program and has participated in the desired ministry. This could be the ministry leader or someone the ministry leader appoints.
- Go through an evaluation by the mentor and ministry leader to determine if he best fits this particular ministry or if he can best be used in another area. Once this evaluation process is complete and the ministry leader makes a positive recommendation, he will be given the opportunity to serve when a position is open.

Participation at any level is vital to the mission and vision of the church. It is understood that every ministry is not for everyone. However, as a person grows in his faith and his walk with the Lord, he will find satisfaction and joy as he uses his gifts and abilities in God's service.

## **Appendix E**

### Assimilation Program Forms, Job Descriptions and Charts

## **LAY SHEPHERDING JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Biblical Mandate**

- **Galatians 6:2**
- **Hebrews 6:10**

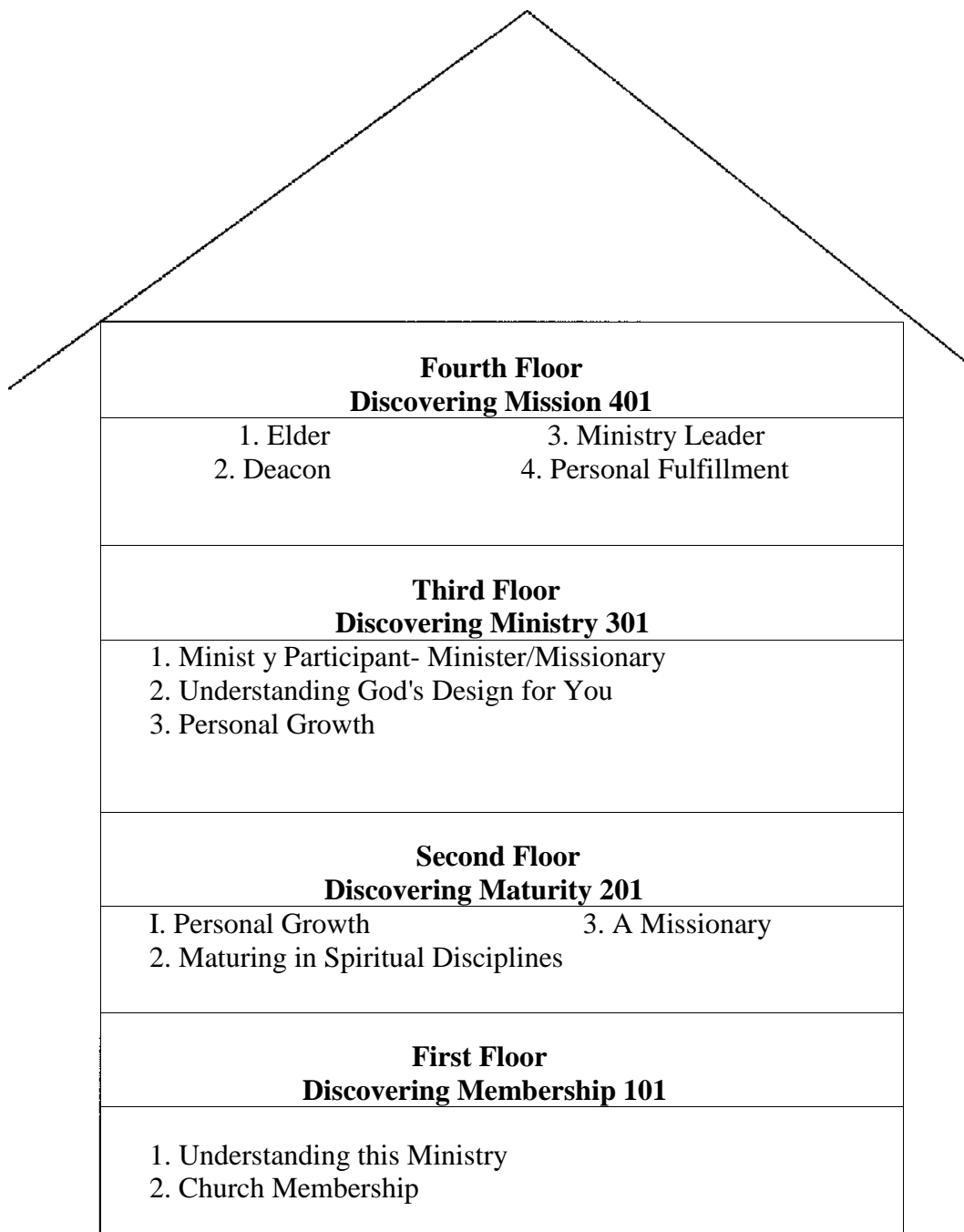
### **Purpose**

The purpose for lay shepherds is to assist the Deacons and Elders to care for those in the body of Christ so that no person in the body is overlooked or neglected in ministry. This is simply a ministry designed to assist us in taking care of each other. It will only require each lay shepherd to pay close attention to the needs of the assigned families.

### **Job Description**

- Each lay shepherd will be asked to serve a minimum of one year. This commitment will require the signing of a workers covenant
- Each lay shepherd will be trained in how to care for their families and what is expected of him/her as a lay shepherd.
- Each lay Shepherd will be assigned up to four families to assist the church leadership in being aware of his/her families needs.
  - o It will be the lay shepherds ministry to make sure the leadership is informed if one of his/her families are absent from church for more than two weeks and try to provide a reason why.
  - o The lay shepherd will notify their Deacon and/or the church office if a member of one of his/her families is in the hospital.
- Each lay shepherd will be teamed with a Deacon and will keep in close contact with that Deacon concerning his/her families.
- It is expected that the lay shepherds will pray for their families on a regular basis.
- The lay shepherds are not expected to solve all problems or make any decisions concerning finances or conflicts. They are in place to minister to their families and pass on the necessary information so the church leadership, beginning with the Deacon, can be informed and assist in ministering to that family.
  - o Periodic evaluations of this ministry will be conducted by those involved.

### Four Story Model for Assimilation



**New Members Information Form**  
**Member Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐ Widowed ☐ Disabled

Maiden Name \_ \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Anniversary \_\_\_\_\_

If divorced or separated, could you please explain why so we might know how we can better minister to you and your family. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Names and birth dates of children living at home or away from home:


4. Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure Please write a brief testimony of how you came to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? (Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you been baptized by immersion since your profession of faith in Christ?

☐ yes ☐ no

When and where? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, will you agree to be obedient to the Lord in this ordinance? ☐ yes ☐ no 5.

Name and address of church where you are presently a member and how long:

Name of church: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of church: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you leave your former church? \_\_\_\_\_

6. In what areas of ministry at First Baptist do you desire to serve in?

(1) (2)

7. Which services do you presently attend?

☐ Sunday School

☐ Sunday Morning Worship

☐ Sunday Evening Worship

☐ Wednesday Evening

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deacon or Elder Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Mission and Vision Statement

### FIRST BAPTIST MINISTRIES OF DAVENPORT

Mission - Why does God have us in North East Polk County?

#### Our Mission

To be a culturally relevant, innovative, kingdom minded church impacting our community and world for Christ in such a way that we would be missed if we ceased to exist.

Vision - The picture of what we will be as we fulfill our mission.

#### Our Vision

To be a church that provides a high quality, spiritually uplifting, relevant worship experience that encourages the believer and impacts the un-churched

- To be a church that is more concerned about the un-churched than about ourselves.
- To be a church that attempts to meet the needs of the un-churched in order to have an opportunity to share Christ with them.
- To be a church that has earned the respect of the community in such a way that the community looks to us for leadership and would miss us if we ceased to exist. To be a church that reaches the un-churched for Christ and then teaches them all Jesus has commanded
- To be a church where marriages are strengthened and healed, relationships are built are strengthened, and people obtain what they need in order to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

## Ministry Leader Evaluation

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry**

**Leader** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor/Evaluator** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Was the member faithful to the responsibilities? [ ]Yes [ ]No If no please explain**

---



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**2. Did the member understand the responsibilities? [ ]Yes [ ]No If no please**

**explain**

---



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**4. Did the member seem to be acting within his gifts? [ ]Yes [ ]No If no please**

**explain** \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is the spiritual gift(s) of the member?

---

5. **Would you** recommend this member for this ministry [ ]Yes [ ]No If not please explain

---



---

7. **Do you recommend this person for another ministry?** [ ]Yes [ ]No **I f yes**, then what ministry?

8. Were **there any areas of concern you might have?**

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Signature of Mentor/Evaluator

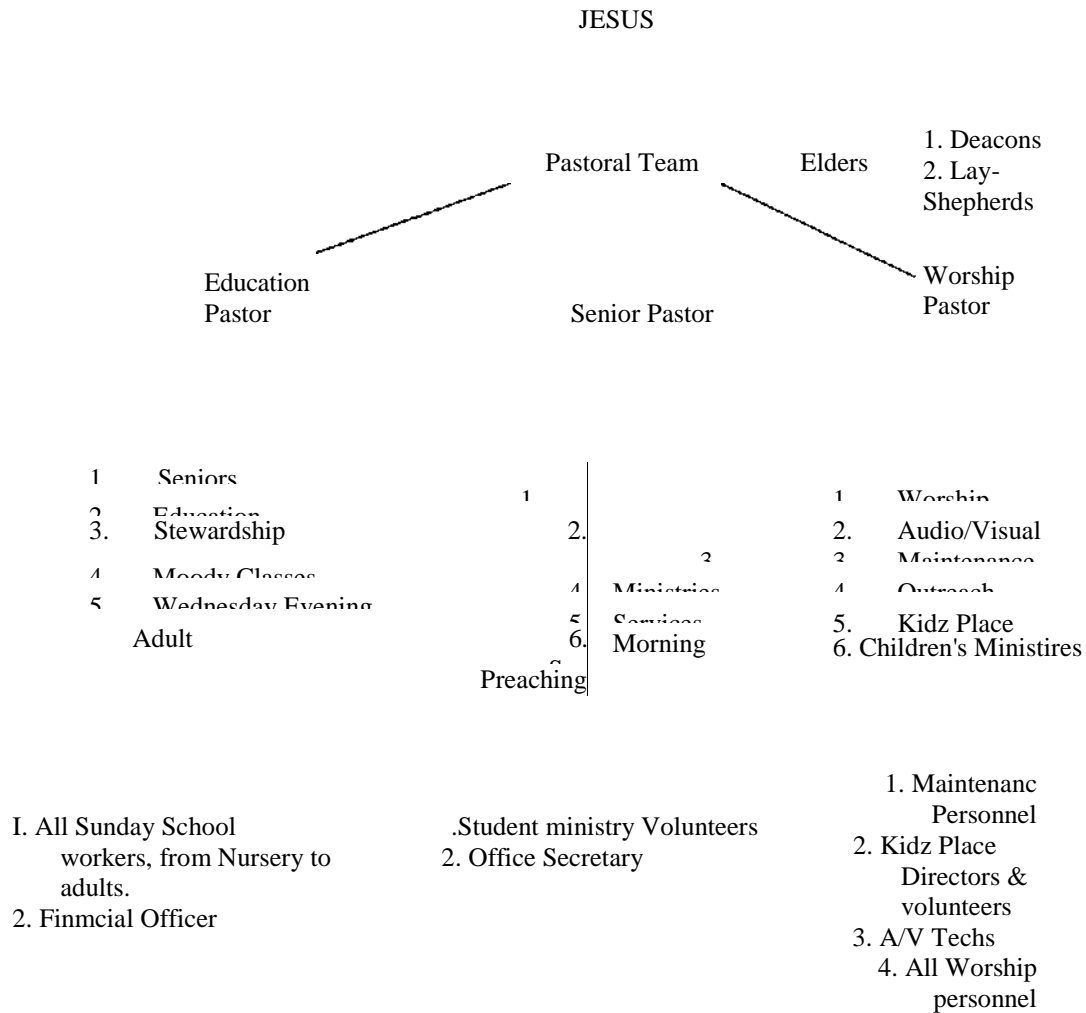
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Date of evaluation

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Printed name of Mentor/Evaluator

## First Baptist Ministries Leadership Organizational Chart



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