



LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

STAFFING FOR HEALTHY SMALL GROUPS: A MODEL FOR ENLISTING, TRAINING,  
AND MOTIVATING LAY LEADERS.

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT

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By

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## ABSTRACT

### STAFFING FOR HEALTHY SMALL GROUPS: A MODEL FOR ENLISTING, TRAINING, AND MOTIVATING LAY LEADERS.

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The purpose of this project is to assist small to medium sized churches in their efforts to enlist, train, and motivate lay leadership within their church. This project is designed to help these churches achieve four specific goals; One, come to a biblical understanding of lay leadership. Two, learn how to identify and enlist the right people into spiritual leadership. Three, train those leaders for specific leadership roles within the church. Four, to keep these lay leaders motivated to achieve their set goals within their specific ministry. One of the primary responsibilities of a pastoral staff is the spiritual health and development of their church through an effective discipleship system such as small groups and Sunday School classes. Therefore, personal interviews will be conducted with multiple pastors that have found both success and failure within the context of enlisting, training, and motivating lay leaders.

Abstract Length: Words 144

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*To my loving and faithful wife, Abigail Weems!*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

N.T. New Testament

O.T. Old Testament

SBC Southern Baptist Convention

TX Texas

FBC First Baptist Church

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

As many pastors will tell you, one of their greatest responsibilities is the growth and development of Sunday School classes and small group Bible studies. As prayer and examination goes into what elements make up a successful Sunday School class and small group Bible study the common denominator for almost every successful class is quality leadership. It is not necessarily men and women that are great Bible teachers, or have great people skills; because often the leaders that are just good teachers do not have the ability to connect with people on an individual level. In contrast, those leaders that only concerned themselves with personal relationships often find their class lacking in basic biblical understanding. However, there is success with men and women who invest their lives into helping their specific class grow in their faith in Christ, knowledge of His word, and grow closer as a church family. Therefore, the classes with strong leadership tend to grow and develop with little influence from the staff, but classes that lacked strong and steady leadership, very frequently, need outside help and would most often disband within a few months.

In researching this thesis, the overarching goal is to come to a clear and concise understanding of what it takes to enlist, train, and motivate small group and Sunday School leaders to produce healthy church growth. Just as Dr. John Piper stresses, corporate worship and preaching are not enough to produce health spiritual growth, both individually and corporately.<sup>1</sup> If a church is going to develop in their spiritual walk corporately, they must develop in their spiritual walk individually. The most conducive place for spiritual growth and development to occur is in a small group with strong, consistent, biblical leadership.

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<sup>1</sup>*Why Corporate Worship and Preaching Are Not Enough: The Importance of Small Groups and Sunday School.* John Piper, Bethlehem Baptist Church. CD-ROM. (Minneapolis, 2009)

## Statement of Problem

In understanding the importance of small group leaders within the context of healthy church growth, one must have a clear understanding of the title and the concept of a small group leader. In his book *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*, Carl F. George defines a small group leader as someone that “is a window influencing someone’s eternity.”<sup>2</sup> The difference between an effective small group leader within the Baptist church context and the mayor of a community or the leader of the local Kiwanis Club, is that an effective small group Bible study leader is primarily focused on the spiritual goals of the individuals of the class, and not necessarily the achievements of the collective whole, regardless of how wholesome and moral those goals may seem. Just as George states, the overall purpose of the small group Bible study leader is to have an eternal, Gospel orientated effect on those within the small group. Not just to be a good teacher, or to be a good organizer of activities, but to make a premeditated imprint of the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the people and families of that leader’s small group. Within the context of a Southern Baptist Church, a small group leader is someone that influences the individuals in their class to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,”<sup>3</sup> and to live a life worthy of the calling of the Gospel.

If a small group leader is someone that leads others to become more like Christ, the question needs to be asked, What specific functions does a small group leader have within the local Southern Baptist Church? Due to the autonomy of each individual SBC (Southern Baptist Convention) church, the specific functionality of a small group leader will differ from church to church. Therefore, this thesis will be speak in more generalities then specifics. The first function

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<sup>2</sup>George F. Carl. *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership* (Mansfield, MA. Kingdom Pub. 1997), 6.

<sup>3</sup> All biblical passages are *New American Standard Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan Publishing. 2009)

of a small group leader within a SBC church is the most traditional and public role as teacher.<sup>4</sup> These leaders can be known as the teaching leaders of the small group. Their primary role is to teach and preach the Word of God. This is the role that most people come to understand as leadership within the Sunday School and small group Bible study context. The teacher is the one that is out front every Sunday, and the teacher is the one that positions him or herself to lead and facilitate any discussions that may come from the Bible study. For many people the teacher is seen as the primary leader of the class, and James 3:1 tells the church that the teachers are going to be held to a high standard for what they teach to the people of the church, thus, giving the teaching leader a great responsibility for the growth and development of the class.

However, in a healthy and effective Sunday School class there will be at least two more leadership roles, the care leader (in-reach leader) and the Missions leader (out-reach leader).<sup>5</sup> Parr states that those two simple, but very specific roles are designed to do two things; one, to take pressure off of the teaching leader, and two, to help the class grow in their personal relationships as well as their knowledge of Scripture. This growth in personal relationships is possible because the Care Leader has the basic responsibility of helping the members of the class stay connected on a personal level. When one member of the class needs prayer or assistance, it is the responsibility of the care leader to make sure that the need is communicated to the rest of the class in a timely and respectable manner, helping the members of the class serve and connect with one another outside of the classroom setting. In addition to the care leader, the Missions Leader has the responsibility of helping the class keep a consistent outward and evangelistic

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<sup>4</sup>Elmer Towns, *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School* (Ventura: CA. Gospel Light Publishing, 2001), 32.

<sup>5</sup>Steve Parr *Sunday School's That Really Work: A Strategy for Connecting Congregations and Communities*. (Grand Rapids: K&A Professional. 2010), 113.

view on the surrounding community. This person aids the teaching and care leaders by taking on the responsibility of keeping track of all visitors to the class and helping to organize specific outreach events for their specific class; thus, helping their class become an effective out-reach arm for the congregation as a whole. As one can see, when these three leadership roles work hand-in-hand, they can create an environment where the class can grow in their biblical knowledge, effectively minister to one another through strong personal relationships, and reach out to the greater community with the Gospel.

Now that the three leadership roles have been broadly defined, the main question of this thesis needs to be asked, what is the importance of enlisting, training, and motivating in regards to healthy church growth? The predominate goal of the church is clearly laid out in the words of Jesus in the Great Commission, in this verse Jesus states, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>6</sup> Concerning this passage, Dr. Ed Glasscock states, “The Great Commission is often misrepresented by the emotive call to ‘GO.’ In reality, the commission is not to ‘go’ but to ‘make disciples.’ Matthew places His emphasis on what is to be done when one has gone.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, according to Jesus, the ultimate goal of the church is simple, make disciples! Thus, the predominate goal of every small group, Sunday School class, Bible study, prayer meeting, worship service, etc., is simple; to make disciples of all the nations, starting with the individuals in their specific class, moving out to the greater community, and then to the entire world. Therefore, if working properly, small groups (which for the sake of this thesis will include Sunday School) should function as the disciple-making mechanism of both the local and universal church. If the goal of the small group is to make disciples, and the leadership of each

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 28:19, *NASB*

<sup>7</sup> Ed Glasscock, *Moody Gospel Commentary: Matthew* (Chicago: Moody Press. 1997), 553-554.

small group is the primary key to making those disciples, then it is vitally important to discover how the staff and pastoral leadership of the church can enlist the right people, train those people to lead their class, and help keep those people motivated during the dark times they will face in ministry.

The term enlisting will refer to the process of observing those within the church that have already shown some leadership ability and passion for ministry, then helping these people find the best place to serve in the church. The term enlisting is not to be confused with the term recruiting. In the Southern part of the United States, college football is a full-time religion and a big part of that religion is the recruitment of talented high school football players. College teams are enticing young players to come play for their specific school. It is not the job of a church staff member to entice the members of their church into leadership. It is their job to observe where God is already working in an individual's life and then help that individual get plugged into the proper position. They are not recruiters; they are enlistsers of God's people into His ministry!

Next, it is vitally important for leaders in their specific position to be continually trained. A teaching leader may have the spiritual gift of teaching, but it is the responsibility of the church staff, specifically the Minister of Education, to help that teacher continually improve their communication skills. Every leader has the responsibility to continue to grow and develop in their specific skill set. A believer's spiritual gift(s) may be set, but their personal skills can always be improved and developed. The final job of the church staff is to help that leader become motivated and committed to their specific ministry. Concerning motivation and commitment, Rick Warren states, "People do not resent being asked for a great commitment if

there is a great purpose behind it. People will respond to passionate vision, not need.”<sup>8</sup> The church staff must first install a passionate vision and commitment into the leaders of the church. Then motivation will come.

### The Statement of Limitations

Due to a lack of space within the thesis and to lack credible information, there are three specific issues that will not be addressed in this thesis. The first is the vast amount and varieties of leadership roles that can exist within a Small Group class. For the sake of time and simplistic organization, this thesis is only going to concentrate on three specific leadership roles; Teaching Leader, Care Leader, and Missions Leader. However, there are many variations and levels to these specific roles that could be addressed if given more time. For example, the First Baptist Church of Trussville, Alabama has many other leadership roles within their small group organization, such as assistant teacher, secretary, fellowship coordinator, prayer coordinator, reaching coordinator, ministry coordinator, group activities coordinator, and class treasurer.<sup>9</sup> The number of leadership roles for an individual class can vary depending on the size of the class and the spiritual maturity of the class members. Each class must judge for itself when it is ready to expand its leadership roles. Therefore, it would be irresponsible for a Sunday School or small groups director to demand every class fill every single role that has been mentioned. However, to be most effective small groups should have the primary goal of filling the three essential leadership roles of teaching leader, care leader, and missions leader. Therefore, this thesis will concentrate on these three primary roles of leadership within a small group setting.

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<sup>8</sup>Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1995), 345.

<sup>9</sup>First Baptist Church Trussville, Alabama Education Department. *A Small Group and Sunday School Strategy*. FBC Trussville Small Group and Sunday School Organization Manual. 2011.



A second area that will not be addressed in full detail is the historical philosophy of enlisting qualified small groups leaders. While gathering research for this thesis, it was somewhat shocking to find out the specific topic of evaluating and enlisting qualified small group leaders was not heavily discussed prior to the past 20 years. The vast majority of material available today was written within the past 20 years and is within the contemporary church setting. However, there were a few books written prior to 1990 on Sunday School leadership that are beneficial, such as Dr. Elmer Towns book, *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School*, written in 1979. Concerning finding the right teacher to lead a Sunday School class he states, “A teacher of the Bible needs two sources of ability. He must be given the gift of teaching by God and he must develop his ability to teach; for teaching like every other gift from God must be encouraged. If God has given you ability, He wants you to perfect that ability and become better at your calling.”<sup>10</sup> However, outside of men like Dr. Towns, the vast majority of materials that will be used within this thesis has been written recently, meaning that much of this material has not had the opportunity to stand the test of time. There just is not enough historical data to know if their specific concepts will endure over the years and changing cultures.

In relation to enlisting small group workers, there are very few books and articles written about Christian motivation. There are hundreds of thousands of books, articles, and seminars concerning self-motivation, corporate motivations, and even volunteer motivation, but very little have been written on the specific topic of motivating volunteer workers within the church setting. Motivating those within the corporate setting and within the church setting are two totally different contexts. One is being paid an earthly paycheck to do a job, the other is not. If the secular shucks off his or her responsibility they will lose their job and damage their way of

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<sup>10</sup>Elmer Towns, *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School* (Ventura: CA. Gospel Light Publishing. 2001), 32.

life. If the sacred shucks off his or her responsibility, they are simply replaced by another volunteer. For this reason, applying secular philosophies of motivation to the divine calling of ministry is often not effective and can be considered unwise. It takes a special type of motivation, from a special type of person, with a special type of attitude for small group leaders to be properly motivate, thus making the pool of research smaller than in the secular realm.

### The Theoretical Basis

The call for leadership in the New Testament church is clear. Peter states clearly “Shepherd the flock of God among you, excusing oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness.”<sup>11</sup> In this passage, not only is Peter telling the Shepherds, i.e. leaders of the church, to exercise careful and wise leadership, but he tells them what attitude they should have in regards to that leadership. Peter also said, “Likewise, husbands live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”<sup>12</sup> The biblical call for leadership is not limited to the church setting only; it extends to the home and out into the open marketplace. Thus, the call for biblical leadership is a lifestyle, not simply a job description. For example, when it comes to a clear understanding of what a Christian leader is, Mark Driscoll states, “Human leadership in the church is little more than qualified Christians who are following Jesus and are encouraging others to follow them as they follow Jesus.”<sup>13</sup> This goes hand-in-hand with the words of Paul when he states in I Corinthians, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”<sup>14</sup> Paul

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<sup>11</sup> I Peter 5:2, NASB

<sup>12</sup> I Peter 5:3, NASB

<sup>13</sup> Mark Driscoll, *A Book You'll Actually Read: On Church Leadership*, (Wheaton: ILL. Crossway Books. 2008), 12.

understood that his ability to lead the church in Corinth is only going to be as healthy as his personal relationship with Christ. He is willing to take up the challenge of being a role model, an example for his people to follow, because he himself is striving to be more like Christ. Paul's leadership ability is only going to be as effective as his ability to follow Christ in his personal walk. Thus, both Peter and Paul tell the New Testament church that pure and honest leadership is needed in every church if it is going to grow and influence its community for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the question needs to be asked, "How does this call for b Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ biblical leadership within the New Testament church effect what we do as a church staff on a daily basis?" It is the contention of this thesis that the answer to that question is a resounding "everything!" The church will rise and fall on divinely-inspired leadership. In his book, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*, Malphurs lays out the argument that great leadership does not necessarily come from great Bible teaching, or by having the most up to date ministry programs. It comes from having a heart and compassion for people, and living a life of integrity in full view of those people. He states, "People won't follow a program, but they will follow someone that truly loves them."<sup>15</sup> A church staff can have the best programs, Sunday School class structure, and small group curriculum, and still have empty pews on Sunday morning. If they have a group of people in leadership that truly care about the people in their class and in their community, and live a lifestyle of honesty and integrity in full view of their community, then they will see their church explode with visitors and new converts. As can be observed in many conservative Southern Baptist Churches, many quality programs fall flat on their face due to a lack of quality leadership. For example, a church in North Alabama held an

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<sup>14</sup> I Cor. 11:1, *NASB*

<sup>15</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books. 2000), 46.

evangelistic event called “Friend Day,” a program designed to encourage church members to invite a friend to Sunday School. They had posters, bulletin inserts, handout cards, an email blast, and sent out thousands of post cards to the local community. However, due to lack of leadership within the individual Sunday School classes, they had very few visitors. The leadership or lack thereof, failed to grasp the vision, thus the church as a whole failed to grasp the vision.

### The Statement of Methodology

The overall purpose of this thesis is to give a basic strategy for enlisting, training, and motivating small group and Sunday School teachers to produce healthy church growth. To do this it must first make the distinction between unhealthy church and healthy church growth. Just because a church is growing in attendees and budget does not necessarily mean that they are growing in a healthy manner. The first concept that must be defined is healthy church growth. Then, after the groundwork has been laid for what healthy church growth looks like within the church context, the thesis will show that healthy church growth is predicated upon quality leadership. If leadership does not directly affect the development of healthy growth, then enlisting, training, and motivating those leaders is not relevant to the growth and future of the church. Therefore, once the principle of healthy church growth being predicated upon quality leadership is presented, then further detail can be given on how to enlist the right workers, at the right time, and in the right place of ministry. This Thesis will discuss how to train workers to get the most out of their spiritual gifts and natural talents and how to keep those workers motivated during times of apathy and distress, thus giving a coherent strategy for enlisting, training, and motivating small group and Sunday School leaders to produce healthy church growth.

As stated before, the first principle that must be present is that there is a distinct difference between unhealthy and healthy church growth. Concerning this, John MacArthur states, “I think when church growth is accomplished by the Word and the Spirit of God on a sound spiritual level, it is wonderful. The Lord will grow His church. It is a travesty when growth is engineered by unbiblical means of human technique involving manipulations, psychology, or gimmickry and become humanly engineered, not emphasizing the Scripture or following the priority of the theology God has given in Scripture.”<sup>16</sup> As MacArthur has stated, those within church leadership must be willing and able to differentiate church growth that is fueled by human means of manipulation (unhealthy church growth) and church growth that is fueled by the Spirit of God (healthy church growth). Just as Paul states in I Corinthians chapter 5 about the human body, so it is the same with the church; what is built by human hands will fail, but that which is built in eternity by God will last forever “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with human hands, eternal in the heavens”<sup>17</sup>! Chapter one of the thesis will layout the principle that healthy church growth is Spirit lead and God designed, and that unhealthy church is human lead and human designed.

Chapter two will concentrate on the importance of leadership to healthy church growth and what a leader of that church will look like on an average day. Concerning the importance of proper leadership in a healthy church, Ed Stetzer states, “Simply, a church will rise because of its leadership and it will fall because of its leadership.”<sup>18</sup> In his book *Comeback Churches*, Dr. Ed

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<sup>16</sup>MacArthur, John. Jr. *Rediscovering Pastoral Leadership*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1995), 373-374.

<sup>17</sup> I Cor. 5:1, *NASB*

<sup>18</sup>Ed Stetzer, *Comeback Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing. 2007), 35.

Stetzer and Dr. Mike Dodson research over three-hundred churches that dramatically improved both their physical growth and their spiritual growth. In their opinion, one of the main reasons that these churches made a comeback was because they had the right leadership, in the right place, at the right time. These churches began to fail because the leadership failed the church and the Gospel, and these churches rose again because of the renewed dedication to the church and the Gospel. Therefore, the principle will be established that healthy church growth is dependent upon Godly men and women who are wholly dedicated to Christ and to the people of their community.

Chapter three will concentrate upon the importance of enlisting the right person, to serve in the right position, at the right time. As stated before, the job of the church staff is not to recruit the most talented person for the position. They are not building a college football team; sometimes the most naturally talented person is not necessarily the best person for the position. The job of the church staff is to enlist the person that God has called and gifted for that specific job. For example, just because a man is good with his money and has a track record of successful personal businesses, does not mean that he is the right man to lead the finance committee of the church. Yes, he may have great education and personal experience in the matter of finances, but that does not mean that he has the spiritual understanding and motivation to do ministry within the church. On the temporal surface, he is the right man for the job, but within the spiritual nature of the church he is not ready for the responsibility. James D. Berkley states that, “Conviction in God’s Word is just as important, if not more than, competency in earthly skills when it comes to church leadership.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, when enlisting new church leaders, as important as physical and mental skills may be, the spiritual always trumps the physical.

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<sup>19</sup>James Berkley, *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration* (Carol Streams: ILL, Christianity Today, Inc. 1994), 16-17.

Chapter three will also look at current methods that can be used by the church staff to help train these teachers to become better leaders for their church. Scripture tells the church to “Grow in the grace and knowledge of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, one of the main responsibilities of the church is to provide an organizational model for their leaders to grow in the faith and knowledge of God’s Word consistently. Howard Hendricks states, “The Bible is the divine means of development and growth in spiritual maturity. There is no other way.”<sup>21</sup> A church staff has the responsibility to make sure that they are giving their leaders every opportunity to grow and develop in their knowledge of God’s Word, helping them to understand the spiritual and practical meaning of what they are teaching, and to communicate that truth to their class effectively. Just knowing God’s Word is not enough to be a good teacher; the teacher must be able to communicate that truth in a clear and effective way to the class. One can have an absolutely brilliant mathematical mind, but if that person cannot clearly explain what it means to add or subtract they will be virtually useless as a math teacher. Therefore, it is the job of the church staff to help their leaders grow in the grace and knowledge of God’s Word while simultaneously training that teacher to present the truth of God’s Word in a clear and understandable manner to their class. Also, in chapter three the thesis will cover the importance of motivating these leaders to achieve the purpose of the Gospel and how, when all these elements are pooled together, a church can lay a solid foundation for a healthy church. Just having an intelligent, well-spoken leader is not enough to grow a healthy church. You must have an intelligent, well-spoken leader that wholeheartedly believes in the purpose and message of the church. It is the responsibility of the church staff to help their leaders catch the vision of the church. Piper states, “From time to time in the life of the church, it becomes crucial that pastors

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<sup>20</sup> II Peter 3:18, *NASB*

<sup>21</sup> Howard Hendricks, *Living By The Book* (Chicago: Moody Press.1991), 18-22.

rehearse the essential truths about missions that feed a passion for God's supremacy among the nations."<sup>22</sup> Finally, chapter four will cover how a church staff is to view their lay leaders, by coming to a clear understanding of how healthy lay leaders are biblical; can be diverse in race, and how they are needed for healthy church growth.

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<sup>22</sup>John Piper, *Brothers We Are Not Professionals* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 2002), 188.



## Literary Review

### *Books*

Benkley, John – *Leadership Handbook*. This book is a leader's guide to church administration and policy. This book is beneficial for church leaders (both staff and layman) because it helps to reinforce the principle that quality church leadership begins with the heart of the individual. One cannot truly lead a church if he or she is not personally in good standing with God.

Blackaby, Henry and Richard. – *Spiritual Leadership* In this book, this father and son help the reader to come to a full and holistic understanding of Spiritual leadership. In order to help train the reader in the biblical understanding of leadership and how those biblical principles can be beneficial in both the spiritual and secular world.

Blanchard, Ken. Hodges, Phil – *Lead Like Jesus*. Arguably, the most effective leader that has ever existed is Jesus Christ. His teaching and influence began the largest organized belief system in the history of the world. In this book, Blanchard and Hodges show how Jesus used “servant leadership” principles to lead his followers. Then they show how the reader can use those same principles to help lead their homes, churches, businesses, etc.

Cole, Neil. – *Organic Leadership*. In *Organic Leadership*, Cole sets out to help the reader approach the issue of Christian leadership from a non-conventional and non-traditional view. He attempts to expose the weaknesses of the more established view of Christian leaders and replace them with principles he considers more biblical in nature. He focuses on the character of the individual and not necessarily the professional skills of the person. His goal is to help the church view the internal, and not so much the external, of the person.

Driscoll, Mark – *A Book You'll Actually Read: On Church Leadership*. Driscoll sets out to help the reader come to a clear understanding of what a quality church leader looks like and how that leader can grow. His goal for this book is to be biblically based and founded in Christian doctrine; therefore it would be a good book for anyone that wishes to be in church leadership.

Earley, Dave. – *Turning Members Into Leaders*. This book is a step-by-step strategy of doing exactly what the title suggests, turning the members of the church into leaders within the church. Dr. Earley's book is designed to guide and help the church to form small groups that give each member an opportunity to get involved in church ministry. Taking them from sitting in the pews to getting involved in the growth and development of their specific small group, and ultimately the growth and development of the Kingdom of God.

Hendricks, Howard – *Living by The Book*. In this book, Dr. Hendricks helps the reader to come to a better understanding of how they can read and study the Bible. A trainer of Sunday School teachers could use this book because it gives great practical advice on how to train your teachers to study the Bible, and then in turn, they train their class how to study the Bible.

Hendricks, Howard – *The 7 Laws of the Teacher*. In this book Hendricks has designed seven specific laws that teachers can use to help them become better teachers and leaders for their specific class. It is designed to help every leader come to a better understanding of God's Word and how to relate His Word to his or her class.

Hirsch, Alan. Ford, Lance – *Right Here Right Now*. Right Here Right Now is designed to help the reader understand that they can become an active and important member in the Lord's ministry. Every believer is gifted, and every believer is called to be a "missionary" to his or her community. God has called all His children to become active members in the Mission of the Gospel, at this very time, and in their own community.

Kolenda, Christopher. Major. – *Leadership: The Warrior's Art* In his collection of essays, Kolenda sets out to trace the history of effective leadership and team building within the context of both war and peacetime. This book is designed to help the reader learn from both the successes and the failures of leaders within the military. These lessons can then be used in many different areas of life and business, not just the military.

Lencioni, Patrick. – *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. In *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* Lencioni discusses the five most destructive traits found within a team. He then looks at how those five dysfunctions can be diagnosed with the team and overcome for group success. He gives practical steps for the team to use to help overcome those dysfunctions and achieve their overall team goals.

MacArthur, John. – *The Book on Leadership*. In this book, Dr. MacArthur traces the life of the Apostle Paul and gives specific examples of how he demonstrated specific biblical leadership principles. These biblical principles found within the life and ministry of Paul can be used by the reader within his or her own ministry.

MacArthur, John – *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry*. In this book MacArthur helps the pastor and church to understand what healthy church growth practically looks like. It is not something that is conjured up by the wisdom of men; it is lead and powered by the Holy Spirit. Only church growth that is founded by the Holy Spirit will make a positive eternal impact for the kingdom of God.

Malphurs, Aubrey – *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*. In this book, Malphurs lays out the principle of healthy church growth being dependent upon quality leadership. He shows how churches can grow under poor leadership, but it will soon fail. It takes men and women that are dedicated to the Gospel and personal integrity to grow a healthy church.

Malphurs, Aubrey. Mancini, Will – *Building Leaders*. In *Building Leaders*, Malphurs and Mancini give the church a blueprint for finding and building leaders within the church. It is designed to equip the church in finding the right person for the right position, equipping that person for their specific calling, thus helping the church develop leaders within the church that are willing to take personal ownership of the ministry.

George, Carl F. – *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*. In this book George lays out nine practical keys that a church can follow to have a healthy small group ministry within their church. He reiterates the fact that leadership is most important when it comes to healthy church growth. Without quality leadership, the small group ministry will not grow.

Glasscock, Ed. – *Moody Gospel Commentary: Matthew* This commentary was used to help with understanding the main emphasis of the Great Commission passage. In this passage, Jesus is already assuming that the church is going; however, Jesus is giving His church their final instruction as they are going, to make disciples of all the nations.

Parr, Steven R. – *Sunday School's That Really Work*. In Parr's book, he gives many practical steps to help the reader develop a Sunday School that is effective in making disciples. In connection with church leadership, he clearly states that a trained and motivated leader(s) is a priority. If the leaders are not trained and motivated, then how can they expect the called to become trained and motivated?

Piper, John – *Brothers We Are Not Professionals*. In this book Dr. Piper concentrates on the mental and spiritual development of the leader, specifically of the pastor(s). It is important for the entire church to see the passion and vision in the church staff on a consistent basis. The motivation for developing as a small group leader will come from what is observed and exemplified in the church staff.

Searcy, Nelson. – *Fusion*. The idea of Fusion is to equip and motivate the church to take the first time guest to an active and participating church leader. Searcy helps to lay out a plan that will aid the church in taking someone that has visited the church for the first time and walk them through the growth process. His idea is for the church to take people from a visitor to a leader, from a simple spectator to a willing and equipped participant in church ministry.

Stetzer, Ed. – *Comeback Churches*. In his study of over 300 churches that came back from devastating circumstances, Stetzer shows how important it was for the leadership of the church to be strong in their spiritual discipline. The leaders (including church staff) that were willing to grow in the knowledge of God's Word and were pursuing the same Godly vision, were able to become a Comeback Church.

Towns, Elmer – *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School*. In this book, Dr. Towns explores the importance of having teachers that have the spiritual gift of teaching, combined with a natural talent for communication. If the person has the natural ability to teach and the Godly call to teach, then it is up to the church staff to make sure that person gets the proper training to develop as a teacher.

Towns, Elmer – *What Every Sunday School Teachers Should Know*. In this book, Dr. Towns helps the individual Sunday School leaders understand the importance of having defined roles and responsibilities. The larger the class, the more the responsibilities of that class needs to be delegated to other people. Thus, the size of the class will help determine that amount of leaders needed and what their specific responsibilities will be.

Warren, Rick – *Purpose Driven Church* As it pertains to motivating church leaders to produce healthy church growth, Warren teaches that the vision must come from the top. Small group

leaders cannot be given a vision, they must catch it. That starts with the leaders at the top living and teaching that vision as a way of life for that church.

### *Articles*

Anderson, Leith – Christianity Today, November 2004 – *Church Health*. In this article Anderson examines what some churches are doing to help their church grow in an effective and healthy way. She explores how churches are investing in their small group leaders and the “under-pastor” for their class, and how these small groups are collectively working as a unified church body.

Neisha, Fuson – The Alabama Baptist, May 19, 2011 Vol. 176, No. 20 – *A Great Commission People*. In this article, Fuson examines the current trends in evangelism and how those trends are being implemented in the local church. She explores how different small group Bible studies with a vision of reaching their community are helping the church as a whole become a more “Great Commission” minded people.

Smith, Fred – Christianity Today, March 2010 - *Finding and Encouraging Young Leadership*. In this article Smith looks at the difficulty of finding and encouraging young (20’s to 40’s) leadership within the church. He discusses how many young men and women from this generation did not grow up in church so finding them and developing them into strong church leaders can be a difficult task.

Thomas, Ava – The Alabama Baptist, Sept. 1, 2011, Vol 176, No. 34 – *Called to a “coffee culture.”* Much like the article from Fred Smith, this article focuses on reaching and training the coffee culture (those in their 20’s-40’s) to become responsible church leaders. They have

different preconceptions concerning church than previous generations, so a new method must be used to reach and train this new generation of church leaders.

Welch, Bobby – SBC Life, April/May 2011 – *What’s the Big Deal About Evangelism*. In this article, Welch explores the lack of enthusiasm in many local churches concerning evangelism and the Great Commission. He shows how many people today are comfortable with just being a church attendee. This goes towards a lack of motivation among the church body; a vision that must be stated and fulfilled by the church leaders.

### *Journals*

*Leading From the Second Chair* – First Baptist Church Gardendale, Alabama In this journal from the leadership team of the First Baptist Church of Gardendale, Alabama, the principle and motivation is given for being the “second in command.” As a church leader, it is his or her responsibility to exemplify to their small group leaders the importance to being a follower. Part of being a good leader, is to be a submissive follower to those in authority over me.

*Small Group Strategy* - First Baptist Church Trussville, Alabama In this journal by the First Baptist Church of Trussville, Alabama, a strategy is laid out for the training of current teachers, the development of future teachers, and the Sunday Schools class’s focus on both in-reach and out-reaches. This strategy serves as a job description for those within Sunday School leadership of this church.

*Sunday School Bible Study Strategy* – CrossPoint Baptist Church, Argo, Alabama. In this journal by CrossPoint Baptist in Argo, Alabama, the strategy is given for the continued training of

current Sunday School leaders. It lays out the responsibility of a teacher and the importance for future training.

Bible Verses – All Bible verse are in the New American Standard Version.

Genesis 12:1-3 – “Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” The LORD functions with a vision and a plan for His people. As a good leader should, God has a plan and a purpose for His people to prosper and achieve a specific goal. God formed His plan before the foundation of the world and then equipped His leaders (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) to achieve those plans.

Joshua 1:8 – “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” For a Christian (spiritual) leader to prosper and to lead his or her people they must be founded in God’s Word. Just as the Lord told Joshua, He tells His leaders today that they must be firmly planted in His Word. It (God’s Word) must be something that is a part of the Leaders everyday life, on his or her mind and heart from morning until night. The wisdom of the Lord can only be found in a growing and active personal relationship with God.

2 Chronicles 19:9 – “Then he charged them saying, Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and wholeheartedly.” God is love, God is Kind, God is merciful, and God is gracious,



but God is also to be feared. Not necessarily a fear of divine punishment, although that is a legitimate fear, but a fear of disappointing and letting down such a gracious and loving Heavenly Father. It is a fear of respect and admiration. A leader's greatest pride should come from their pleasure in our relationship with God. A healthy fear of disappointing our Heavenly Father is a good thing for Christian leaders.

Ecc. 3:1- "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven." This passage was given within the context of using new methods to reach and train a new generation of church leaders. Just because something worked once does not mean that will work again. There is a time and a place for everything under a sovereign God.

Proverbs 2:7 – "He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity," The character and integrity of a leader is just as important, if not more, than his or her physical skills. The Christian leader that is found to be upright before God is the one that has the wisdom of God available to him or her, thus, available to his or her people. The Christian leader that lives a life of integrity before God and before his or her people is the one that will be protected by God in times of testing and trials.

Proverbs 29:18 – "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law." The greatest visionary in the universe is God. He has a plan and a vision for every person that has ever lived. If he did not then this world would be even more chaotic and violent than it currently is. The vision of God for a leader, and then that leader's vision for His ministry will keep the people moving in God's direction. When His leaders live by the His Word they are then equipped to give his or her people the vision that God desires for the group.

Isaiah 55: 8-9 – "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways

And My thoughts than your thoughts.” If a man or woman is going to lead his or her people in the path that God has laid out for them, he must be dependent on the wisdom and guidance of God. Even if the path seems wrong and the objectives seem impossible to reach, God sees and knows more than any leaders can possibly imagine. Humans only see in the here and now, but God sees eternity past, present, and future. His knowledge of where a leader should go and what he must do is infinitely greater than any human leader can possibly imagine.

Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” The future of every ministry and every small group is in the hands of God. He knows what His will is for every ministry and nothing happens outside of His knowledge and will. The will that God has for each ministry and for every leader is for their benefit and direction, to give them hope in the will of God for their future.

Matt 6:33 – “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” In this verse Jesus is giving all Christians, especially leaders, a proper arrangement of their priorities. The first thing a Christian leader must focus on is not his or her goals for the group but what brings the most honor and glory to Christ’s kingdom. When leaders put the glory of Christ as the greatest priority in their lives and ministry, they will then be able to focus on the secondary issues, like team goals.

Matt 19:29-30 – “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.” In this passage Jesus is stating the principle of servant leadership and total commitment to the vision. The leaders of healthy church growth will be dedicated to the vision of the church and will be willing to make the needed

sacrifices to help their church grow. They will understand their responsibility to put the needs of those within their class above their own.

Matt. 28:19-20 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” These are the standard verses for evangelism. This is the very last command from the Lord Jesus Christ to His church. As a local congregation, it is not an option for them if they are going to take the Gospel into the world. He commands it, so they do it. It is the job as a church staff to make sure the church is prepared to do so.

Luke 2:52 – “And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” If the Son of God sent to redeem the world of all sin had to grow in wisdom and stature before the Father, what does that say about Christian leaders? All leaders, regardless of how long they have been believers, have growth and development left to do in their spiritual life.

Luke 6:12-13 – “It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:” Even though He was the image of the invisible God, the God-Man, Jesus still bathed His decisions in prayer. His greatest desire was to do the will of the Father and the only way He could do that was to be in continual communication with the Father. Only after a time of prayer and communication did Jesus choose those who would be His disciples. A true leader will make his or her decisions through prayer and in the wisdom of God.

Luke 22:24-26 – “And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and

those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.” If a man or a woman is going to truly lead their small group, they must first become the servant of their small group. Jesus was the greatest leader that ever walked the earth because He was the greatest servant that ever walked the earth.

Acts 5:40-41 – “They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.” In spite of great physical pain and persecution the apostles considered it a great joy to be worthy to suffer for the fame and glory of Jesus Christ. If a small group is properly doing their job they will come across some hardships for their faith. But they should consider themselves blessed to worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29-30 – “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” Regardless of one’s personal views on predestination and unconditional election, these verses clearly teach that God knew His children before the beginning of time. That His children have been called to conform their lives to that of Jesus Christ, to be justified before the Father, and to glorify His name before all men. To be a Christian leader is to answer an eternal calling that was laid before the beginning of time.

I Cor. 11:1- “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” Paul understands that as a leader he is constantly under the view of other people. Therefore, he is willing to lead by example. He will have those that he leads learn from him as he learns from God. As leaders of the church it is

vitaly important that they grow in our faith and knowledge of God so they can then lead others to grow in their faith and knowledge of God.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33 – “If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.” In spite of his many victories for the kingdom of God and his great influence over the churches of Asia-Minor Paul will only find his pride in the Lord. He will only brag in his weaknesses and how through the power of the cross he can still be useful for the kingdom. This passage and the character of Paul serve as a great example for all small group leaders.

Eph. 2:19-22 –“ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” Christ must be the only foundation of a healthy church. If a church is growing numerically outside of the presence of Jesus Christ, then it is man’s church not God’s. Healthy church growth only comes when Christ is the foundation. Therefore, if our church is going to grow it is because Christ is the center and the cornerstone.

Philippians 2:9-10 – “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” The greatest example of leadership that this would have ever

known is the person of Jesus Christ. No one person deserved more honor and more glory for who they are and what they could accomplish but yet showed more humility and love than Him. Jesus is the greatest small group that ever lived and will always stand as the greatest example of how a small group should view himself and others!

I Peter 3:7 – “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.” A Christian leader is not someone that only leads in the church. Having the role of a Christian leader is a continuous position. Whether you are at home, in the public arena, or in the church you are always a church leader. The best leaders are those that exemplify Godly character at home among those that know them best.

I Peter 5:1-2 – “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;” Here Peter is telling the pastors and leaders of the church that it is important for them to lead the church. They are “shepherds” of their people. They are to guide and to protect. They are to do this with a servant’s heart, not expecting something in return for simply doing what they have been called by God to do.

II Peter 3:17-18 – “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” If there is one verse to summarize the education department of the church it would be these two verses. Here Peter is telling the church why it is so important for all of us to continue to grow in our faith in Jesus Christ and our knowledge of

God's Word. It is so that in times of testing the church will be able to stand firm in the truth of His Word and not fall to temptation. The Church can live the obedient and abundant life that God desires for all of us.

## CHAPTER 2 – WHY HEALTHY SMALL GROUPS

### Introduction

Go to any pastor's conference and one of the main questions you will hear asked among the preachers is, how many people do you run in your service? You may never hear the questions, how many disciples are you making? Yet that is what Christ has commanded of the church in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus states, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."<sup>1</sup> The main focus of this passage is not the Go but the Make. Dr. Ed Glasscock states, "The Great Commission is often misrepresented by the emotive call to 'GO.' In reality, the commission is not to 'go' but to 'make disciples.' Matthew places His emphasis on what is to be done when one has gone."<sup>2</sup> So often churches and Sunday School classes place such an emphasis on going into the community, with these verse as their marching orders, they often miss the main didactic point of what Jesus is saying. Jesus is telling the church that as you are going, make disciples (a follower of the teachings of Jesus Christ)<sup>3</sup> of all peoples, of all nations, all around<sup>3</sup> the world. It can be a very noble and God honoring effort to have your church filled with both believers and nonbelievers every Sunday, but only if that reason is for the glory of Christ and Christ alone. The going aspect of the Great Commission is only the first step in the overall making objective of the Great Commission. By fulfilling the last command of Christ for His church the church will be doing exactly what Christ has demanded of the church and equips the church to do by the power of Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> *New American Standard Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2009)

<sup>2</sup> Ed Glasscock. *Moody Gospel Commentary: Matthew* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 553-554.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Ryrie. *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press 1997), 47.



## What Is Healthy Church Growth?

In defining what a healthy church is, it is first important to define the term church? To define this term is both simple and complicated at the same time. The definition you get is also according to who you ask. If you ask the Roman Catholic Dioceses in your local community, you will get a different answer from your local evangelical protestant church. However, since the purpose of this thesis is to give a model for enlisting, training, and motivating small group leaders for the evangelical protestant church, the description used to define the term church will be viewed within the context of the evangelical protestant church. In Unger's Bible Dictionary, the term church is defined as, "In the N.T. the church fundamentally comprehends the whole number of regenerated persons specifically from Pentecost to the first resurrection united organically to one another and to Christ by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup> According to Unger the church is comprised of those individuals that have been saved by the grace of Christ, specifically those individuals that have come to a saving faith in Christ from Acts chapter two to Revelation chapter twenty-two, united together in the image of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit spoken of in Romans chapter six. Dr. Charles Ryrie explains the three specific categories of the church; "(1) There is the universal church-all believers in heaven and on earth. (2) There is the visible church-local churches in various areas, especially those I am acquainted with. (3) There is the local church-the particular assembly with which I have my primary and sustained relation."<sup>5</sup> Again, the purpose of this thesis is to develop a model of enlisting, training, and motivating lay leaders for the local church. Within the context of this thesis the church will be understood as the local church in which regenerated believers are associated with on a daily or

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<sup>4</sup> Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press. 1996), 204.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Ryrie. *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press. 2000), 458.

weekly basis. Within the more specific context of defining healthy church growth this is the understanding of church that will be used.

With that understanding of what a church is, the logical question can be asked, is there a difference between healthy and unhealthy church growth? Concerning this John MacArthur states, “I think when church growth is accomplished by the Word and the Spirit of God on a sound spiritual level, it is wonderful. The Lord will grow His church. It is a travesty when growth is engineered by unbiblical means of human technique involving manipulations, psychology, or gimmickry and become humanly engineered, not emphasizing the Scripture or following the priority of the theology God has given in Scripture.”<sup>6</sup> According to Dr. MacArthur, the answer to the previous question is yes. There is a distinct difference between healthy church growth and unhealthy church growth. Remember that the church is simply a collection of people, a group of people that have been regenerated by the power of God and are empowered to live a separate and sanctified life, but they are still a people that are drawn to sin and selfishness. Sin and selfishness can cause the most well intentioned pastor, church staff, and congregations into helping God grow the size of their church, as though God would need their help in growing HIS church. Godly, biblically-based, and healthy church growth comes by the power and sovereignty of God. God decides when, where, and how His church will grow, not humanity, even those with the most noble of intentions. However, that does not mean that the people of the church do not have a role to play in that growth, but the power by which the church grows is only by God. The glory that comes from that growth only belongs to God. The church has the awesome responsibility and privilege to be a part of what God is doing in a local community. The most beautiful aspect of this is that even though God does not need the church to spread His Word, He

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<sup>6</sup>MacArthur, John. Jr. *Rediscovering Pastoral Leadership*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1995.), 373-374.

sacrificed all that He had so the church could play an important part in God spreading His Word. There is a huge difference between having to and getting to. The church gets to be a part of what God is doing, they do not have to!

What elements go into healthy church growth? First is a clear and honest view of God and humanity. Before a church can have healthy church growth they must have a healthy view of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. The staff, leadership, and church body must have clear priorities when it comes to the glory of God and the sinfulness of man. In understanding the distinction between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man Willard states, “Without an understanding of our nature and purpose, we cannot have a proper understanding of redemption, and our need for it. We do in fact live in a world in ruins. We do not exist now in the element for which we were designed. You may wonder what all this really has to do with our salvation. So how much does one really need to know about humanities nature and the nature of God before understanding how that nature can change through salvation?”<sup>7</sup> For a church to have healthy growth it must understand that it is full of people that need to be saved, people that, on their own, have nothing of substance to bring to God! Outside of the presence and power of God the church can bring no eternal blessing to God. It does have the power to destroy and manipulate the truth for its own selfish gain, but it has no power of itself to make an eternal impact for the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, the first thing that a church (i.e. the pastor, staff, and lay leadership) must understand is that healthy church growth cannot happen outside of the power and the presence of God. Man by his very nature is corrupt, manipulating, and evil, the bible states “The Heart is

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<sup>7</sup>Dallas Willard. *The Spirit of Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper Publishing. 2001), 45.

more deceitful than all else. And is desperately sick. Who can understand it?”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, any growth that would come about solely by man’s own power would be the same.

The second element to healthy church growth is an absolute dependence on the Word of God. The church was established by Christ, it exists to bring fame and glory to Christ by the spreading of the Gospel, and it is empowered by the Holy Spirit which was sent by Christ to aid the church in the Great Commission. None of this can be accomplished without the Word of God as the foundational resource for a healthy church. Hendricks says, “God uses the Bible to show you how to live. Having corrected you on the negatives, He gives you positive guidelines to follow in life. What is the overall purpose? That you might be equipped for every good work. Have you ever said, “I wish my life were more effective for Jesus Christ?” If so, what have you done to prepare yourself? Bible study is a primary means to becoming an effective servant of Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup> Not only does the church body have the responsibility to follow and grow in the Word of God, but so do the individual member. As was stated in the definition of church, the church is nothing more than a collection of individuals. Each one of those individuals has the duty to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And the Word of God is their primary source for growing and development. If a church wishes to have healthy church growth within its community, it is vital that it is filled with people of His Word. As the individuals of the church go, so will the church. Once the core leadership of the church is dedicated to studying and maturing in their knowledge of God’s Word, then the infrastructure of the church will be ready to train the people of the church in God’s Word. Sunday School classes, in-home small group Bible studies, Vacation Bible School, Sunday morning sermons, the Youth Ministry, Children’s and Pre-school Ministry; they are all dependent upon the Word of God for healthy church

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<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah 17:9, *NASB*

<sup>9</sup> Howard Hendricks, *Living By The Book* (Chicago: Moody Press.1991), 22.

growth. More specifically they are all dependent upon the leadership of that ministries growth in the faith and knowledge of God's Word. A church may have growth outside of the power of God's Word, but it will not be healthy, it will not be biblical, and it will not be eternal. (This will be covered in more detail under the section entitled "What is Unhealthy Church Growth.")

The final element for healthy church growth is the leadership of the Holy Spirit. A clear and applicable understanding of the first two elements (a true understanding of God and Man's nature and a dependence upon the Word of God), should inevitably lead to a yielding of the Holy Spirit's leadership within the church. A humble church staff and leadership will know that nothing can be accomplished of an eternal significance without the leading of the Holy Spirit. The only way an individual or a church can know the leading of the Holy Spirit is by having a passion for the Word of God. When the church staff and leadership come to this understanding they are then ready for the Holy Spirit to lead. They are ready to give the Holy Spirit the freedom to move and work within the church as He sees fit. Without this understanding, the church would not be a spiritual place where God had the freedom to use His Word most effectively. R.A. Torrey states, "The Bible contains truths that men had never seen before the Bible stated it. It contains truths that men never could have discovered if left to themselves. Our heavenly Father, in great grace, has revealed this truth to us His children through His servants, the apostles, and the prophets. The Holy Spirit is the agent of this revelation."<sup>10</sup> The primary agent for the church staff and leaders to understand the Word of God is the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit the church is without power and guidance. Without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit a gathering of people is not a church, it is no more than a social gathering of people with similar views and opinions. The church must function within the power and presence of the Holy Spirit or it ceases to be the church.

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<sup>10</sup> R.A. Torrey. *Holy Spirit* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1996), 273.

### What Is Unhealthy Church Growth?

As described in the previous section, there is a realistic description of healthy church growth. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that there must be a realistic description of unhealthy church growth. Just as MacArthur previously stated, unhealthy church growth can be seen, “when growth is engineered by unbiblical means of human technique involving manipulations, psychology, or gimmickry and become humanly engineered, not emphasizing the Scripture or following the priority of the theology God has given in Scripture.”<sup>11</sup> Just because a church is growing in attendance, budget, and influence it does not mean that God is necessarily behind it. As stated before, if the growth does not come by the Spirit of God, in the power of God, only for the glory of God, then it is not healthy church growth.

Take the Sanhedrin of first century Palestine (New Testament) for example. The Sanhedrin was a large and powerful religious organization made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees during the time of Christ that wielded great influence among the people and within their particular section of the Roman Empire. Gonzalez states that, by and large, the people loved the Pharisees because, “They sought to make the faith of Israel relevant to everyday situations, and to new circumstances under Roman rule and Hellenizing threats.”<sup>12</sup> For the most part, the Pharisees held a very lofty and honored position among the people of Israel because of their Jewish education, the zeal for Jewish tradition, and their passion for keeping Judaism pure from outside influence. This passion for Jewish culture helped the Pharisees gain popularity among the average Jewish resident of Jerusalem. The Sadducees were much the same. Concerning them Gonzalez says, “In the matters of religion, their interest centered on the Temple, which they held

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<sup>11</sup>MacArthur, John. Jr. *Rediscovering Pastoral Leadership*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1995.), 373-374.

<sup>12</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez. *The Story of Christianity*. (New York: Harper Publishing. 1984.), 10.

with the support of the Romans, who in turn found their political conservatism much to their liking.”<sup>13</sup> The Sadducees held great popularity among both the Jewish population and the ruling Roman government. The Jewish people held them in high regard because they made sure the Temple practices were being done in a correct manner. Many Jews felt with great passion that the Temple was the one place where they could go to get away from the ruling Roman empire, a place that was distinctly Jewish and nothing else. Therefore, because of their connection to the Temple, the Sadducees were held in high regard among the Jewish people. Also, the Sadducees found favor with the Romans because much of the practical doctrine they taught among the people was obedience to the Roman Emperor. Consequently, the Sanhedrin found their congregations, monetary wealth, and social and political influence increasing every day. However, by the very words of Christ, He would not categorize their growth as Godly or healthy. In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus states, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”<sup>14</sup> These men only appeared to be holy and upright before God. But the truth was on the inside; they were dead to God. When it came to their true motivations and character, they were no more alive to God than the dead men inside the freshly painted white tombs. Jesus also stated in the book of Luke, 11:46-52,

“Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from

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<sup>13</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez. *The Story of Christianity*. (New York: Harper Publishing. 1984.), 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 23:27-28, *NASB*

the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.’ Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering.”<sup>15</sup>

Many of the Sadducees were lawyers, experts in the Law of Moses and of the customs and practices of the Temple. However, their expertise did not impress Jesus (the true author and giver of the Divine Law). Jesus publicly accuses their ancestors of murdering the messengers of God and willfully burdening down the Jewish people with useless religious practices (what the Sadducees called the Oral Tradition), while all the while knowingly withholding the true knowledge of the Kingdom of God from the people. Wiersbe states, “Jesus used three vivid illustrations in answering them: burdens, tombs, and keys. The scribes were good at adding to the burdens of the people, but they had no heart for helping them carry those burdens. What a tragedy when ‘ministers’ of God’s Word create more problems for people who already have problems enough!”<sup>16</sup> These men were not leading their people in healthy spiritual, emotional, and physical growth. They were simply taking advantage of their powerful position and the people’s political situation. Despite their many years of study and learning, these men did not lean on the Word of God for wisdom and understanding. They used the Word of God to manipulate the hearts and minds of their people. Wiersbe all so states, “The scribes were guilty of robbing the common people of the knowledge of the Word of God. It was bad enough that they would not enter the kingdom themselves, but they were hindering others from going in.”<sup>17</sup> They took the very Law that was given by God to show the people a shadow of the One coming

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<sup>15</sup> Luke 11:46-52, *NASB*

<sup>16</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe. *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*. (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishing, 2007), 175.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.



to free them of their sins, and used it to their own advantage to keep the people under the yoke of sin and dependent upon them for redemption.

What does unhealthy church growth look like within today's culture of Christianity? Or is this even something that is going on in today's high-tech, higher education, progressive western society? Surly people today are smart enough to know when they are being taken advantage of by a con-man. A simple answer to those questions is another question, do false spiritual leaders in the United States use the Bible and biblical vocabulary to grow their church attendance, budget, and influence? The clear and resounding answer is yes! From the suicidal cult of Heaven's Gate, to the disgraced leadership of men like Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Baker, men and women have used and abused the Word of God for power, money, and fame. They passed themselves off as the mouth piece of God and use their charisma to manipulate the minds of the weak, the needy, and the uneducated. They offer the public a quick and easy to path towards health, wealth, and prosperity. They promise the public a new Word from God that will bring them a peace they have never before experienced in their lives. It is quite understandable that someone that is hurting emotionally, struggling financially, or simply just tired of going through this life feeling alone would hear such a message and buy into the lies and manipulation. They would allow themselves to be used and taken advantage of, because someone they trust is promising them something they cannot find themselves. The person bringing the message is often very charismatic, well spoken, seemingly very highly educated, and trustworthy. This is exactly how a man like Jim Jones can convince 909 people to follow him to Jonestown, Guyana and commit mass suicide. In their minds, they had no reason to distrust him, even when he asked them to take their own lives and the lives of their families. Many people are hurting so badly that they are prone to trust and follow anyone that promises them a practical way out of their trouble.

Whether that trouble is drugs, an abusive spouse, or a bankrupt company, pain, stress, and desperation can cause the most rational human being to suspend all logic and reason and believe that their heart wants them to believe. It is an appealing message, straight from the mouth of a trustworthy teacher, directly into the hearts and minds of the hurting and needy, thus unhealthy church growth is just as alive and well today as it was two-thousand years ago in first century Palestine.

Can we say this is happening in today's Evangelical Christian Church context? Every Sunday thousands, if not millions, of Americans are going to "churches" that teach a watered down version of the Gospel because it is easy to understand and is more appealing to nonbelievers. There's a reason that it is more appealing to nonbelievers, because it is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ! It is just like the Holy Spirit said in 2 Timothy, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."<sup>18</sup> In order to make the Gospel more appealing to nonbelievers many churches have done exactly what Paul is speaking of here in 2 Timothy. They change and manipulate the wording, and thus the meaning, of the Gospel in order to be more seeker friendly. When in reality what they are doing is preaching a false Gospel. To this they better be aware of what the Holy Spirit says concerning preaching a false Gospel in the book of Galatians "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!"<sup>19</sup> Accursed is the Greek word *anathema*, meaning to be cursed by God.<sup>20</sup> In the end, God will have His justice!

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Timothy 4:3-4, *NASB*

<sup>19</sup> Galatians 1:8, *NASB*

## What a Healthy Church Looks Like

What does a healthy church look like? Jesus gives the church that answer in the Great Commission. He clearly states that the overarching purpose of His church is to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”<sup>21</sup> The number one goal of every church that seeks to make Christ known in their community and around the world is to make Disciples of Jesus Christ. In this passage Jesus is telling the church that they are to intently go out into their surrounding community and around the world and make disciples (*mathateuo*<sup>22</sup>) of all people groups. The church is to literally go out and cause others to become pupils of the teaching and person of Jesus Christ. Every program it runs, every dollar it spends, every bit of effort it exerts should be for one purpose and one purpose only; to make the world a pupil of Jesus Christ! Weber states, “The central command is make disciples. At the heart of our mission is the reproduction in others of what Jesus has produced in us: faith, obedience, growth, authority, compassion, love, and a bold truthful message as his witness. They were learners commanded to produce more learners.”<sup>23</sup> The people of the church are learners of Christ that are commanded to make more learners of Christ, who then makes more learners of Christ, and so on and so forth. So the number one sign of a church that is healthy both emotionally and spiritually is they are making disciples!

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<sup>20</sup> Wesley J. Perschbacher. *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 21.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew 28:19, *NASB*

<sup>22</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 609.

<sup>23</sup> Stuart K. Weber. *Holman New Testament Commentary*. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 484.

How does a church do that? How do they go about making disciples of their community and of the entire world? Christ gives the church that answer within those same verses of the Great Commission. First, to make disciples the church must make converts. Before someone can be baptized they must come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, meaning that one of the primary functions of the church should be sharing the Gospel with a lost and dying world. Lovett states, “If you understand the kind of love that Christ demonstrated for you, you have to tell someone. We are the ones who are alive because He died in our place. How can we help but tell others? We owe him our lives because He gave us life when we were dead. We can’t just live for ourselves. The love that Jesus has shown us controls us.”<sup>24</sup> The church is comprised of individuals that have been saved by the grace of God, individuals that have been forgiven of their sins, redeemed from a deserved eternity in hell, and have been given the very presence of God to live a life of abundance and of peace. The very fact of what God has done for the church should compel the people of the church to go out and tell the world about Him. In church vernacular this is called evangelizing, from the Greek εὐαγγελιον meaning the Good News. The good news is that God took on sinful flesh, died on the cross as the punishment for man’s sins, and has offered forgiveness and eternal life for anyone that would confess with their mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead. Regardless of race, creed, color, or social background the forgiveness of God is available to all mankind. This is the good news that the church is, and should be, sharing with the community and around the world. This is the message that the church is to share with the world so the world can then be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; because in the New Testament there is no such thing as an unbaptized obedient disciple of Christ. Lovett also states, “One of the first responsibilities of a

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<sup>24</sup> Danny Lovett. *Jesus Is Awesome* (Springville: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Press. 2003), 218-219.

Christian is to confess Jesus publically and be baptized. There is no reason to be ashamed of your faith in Christ, and Jesus asked us to tell others about becoming a Christian.”<sup>25</sup> The first sign that a church is growing in a healthy manner is they are seeing people come to Christ and being publically baptized as a testimony of what Christ has done in their life.

The second indication that a church is experiencing healthy church growth is that they are teaching their people to observe all that Christ has commanded of the church. The second aspect of disciple making is the teaching of biblical doctrine to both new believers and old believers. Just as it is important to the growth and development of a newborn baby to eat and nap consistently, it is vitally important in the discipleship process for new believers to have a steady and consistent stream of biblical teaching. One of the gravest mistakes that a church can make is to lead an individual to Christ then offer them nothing from a Bible study standpoint for their spiritual development. For the pastor, the responsibility of making disciples and teaching His Word is their primary calling. MacArthur states, “Following the example from the New Testament, pastors should keep endeavoring to build themselves into others. This is not just a worthwhile option; it is a mandate from the Word of God. Jesus Christ Himself commanded that His disciples (and in turn all who follow in their lineage) make disciples of others.”<sup>26</sup> Whether it is the pastor, the church staff, or a Sunday School teacher, it is the responsibility of the church leadership to build an infrastructure of Bible teaching and Bible learning. MacArthur also states, “The God-ordained means to save, sanctify, and strengthen His church is preaching. The proclamation of the gospel is what elicits saving faith in those whom God has chosen. Through the preaching of the Word comes the knowledge of truth that results in godliness. Preaching also encourages believers to live in the hope of eternal life, enabling them to endure suffering. The

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<sup>25</sup> Danny Lovett. *Jesus Is Awesome* (Springville: NC, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Press. 2003), 112-113

<sup>26</sup> John MacArthur Jr. *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1995), 324.

faithful preaching of the Word is the most important element of pastoral ministry.”<sup>27</sup> Paul says in Romans “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?”<sup>28</sup> Without the preaching of God’s Word, who is going to be converted? If people are not being converted then who is going to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? The fact is the entire system of church leadership is responsible for preaching the Gospel, because preaching is nothing more the proclaiming the truth of God’s Word. Every church leader and every church member is responsible for learning the Word of God and then proclaiming that Word to a lost community. It is not and cannot be the sole responsibility of the Sr. Pastor to be the only one teaching and preaching the Word of God. All members are ministers. All members have the responsibility to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”<sup>29</sup> and to become equipped and ready to preach the Word of God wherever and whenever Christ commands. They are to teach is the Word of God and the Word of God only. How can someone call themselves a disciple of Jesus Christ if the doctrines they are teaching and believing are not that of Jesus Christ? If someone claims or desires to be a disciple of Jesus Christ then they must only be filled with His Word and no other. It is the responsibility of the church leadership to determine false doctrine from true doctrine, to correct biblical interpretation from incorrect interpretation, and to make sure that what the church is teaching is biblically correct and it can be practically applied in their daily lives. As Zuck states, “The goal of Bible study is not simply to determine what it says and what it means, but rather to apply it to one’s life. If we fail to apply the Scriptures, we cut short the entire process and have not finished what

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<sup>27</sup> John MacArthur Jr. *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1995), 250.

<sup>28</sup> Romans 10:14, *NASB*

<sup>29</sup> 2 Peter 3:18, *NASB*

God wants us to do.”<sup>30</sup> A vital indication that a church is experiencing healthy growth is that the people of the church are being trained correctly in the Word of God, which is conforming their image into that of Jesus Christ, and they are preaching and teaching the Word of God.

The final indication that a church is experiencing healthy growth is the eternal presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in Acts “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”<sup>31</sup> Satan has power. The kingdom of darkness has the power to fool and manipulate people into believing a lie. But their power is nothing compared to the power that is available to the church through the Holy Spirit. Spurgeon says, “Satan thought that this world would be the arena of his victory over God and good. Instead, it is already the grandest theater of divine wisdom, love, grace, and power. Heaven itself is not so resplendent with mercy as the earth is, for it is her that the Savior poured out His blood.”<sup>32</sup> Through the power of the Cross, a healthy church can see the sick healed, the hurting comforted, and the broken renewed. A Holy Spirit lead church has the power to take that which the world and the kingdom of darkness have left for dead and see it flourish with new life. The Magi of Pharaoh only had the power to imitate the miracles of God, they did not have the power to generate them. A vital indication that God is moving in a church and that it is accomplishing the mission it has been sent on by Christ, is that miracles are happening and the Holy Spirit is moving. This does not mean that the lame have to be walking and the blind are seeing. It can be perceived simply by seeing someone coming to faith in Christ. Is there any greater miracle than a dead man coming to

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<sup>30</sup> Roy B. Zuck. *Basic Biblical Interpretation* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1991), 13.

<sup>31</sup> Acts 1:8, *NASB*

<sup>32</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon. *Spurgeon on Prayer and Spiritual Warfare* (New Kensington: PA, Whitaker House, 1998), 550.

life? A man once declared to be an enemy of God being adopted as a child of God? Whether it is spiritual or physical, dead is dead, and a dead man brought to life is a miracle. So if a church is not seeing miracles happen on a regular basis, the leadership of that church needs to take a hard look at itself to examine whether or not they are functioning in the power of the Holy Spirit.



## CHAPTER 3 – THE PORTRAIT OF HEALTHY LEADERSHIP

### Introduction

The United States Secret Service Agency is the federal agency that has the duty of recognizing and reporting the issue of counterfeit currency within the United States. They have specific agents that have the duty of identifying and destroying counterfeit money. The method in which they use to train these agents is not focused on the specifics of the counterfeit bill, but on the specifics of official US currency. These agents spend countless hours in a classroom studying the minute details of each US bill. They learn the specifics of every single line, shading on the president's portraits, how large the margins are between the words, the specific color tone of the paper and the ink, even down to the shape of the president's eyes on the front of the bill. These agents are experts in spotting the genuine article, so when they come across a counterfeit bill they have the ability to spot the smallest imperfection in the counterfeit bill. No matter the type of bill, no matter how slight the alteration, these agents have the ability to recognize the genuine from the counterfeit.<sup>1</sup>

The same goes with identifying a genuinely good small leader from a bad small group leader. The idea is not to necessarily focus on what a bad small group leaders looks like, those possibilities can be endless, but to identify, comprehend, and apply what a healthy small group leader looks like. Find the definition or portrait of a healthy small group leader through Scripture, culture, and experience, and hold that image up for examination. Allow your agents (church staff and leadership) to spend their time and energy studying the subtle nuances of a healthy small group. Train them to spot the genuine article and then they will be able to recognize and correct any unhealthy habits that may accrue within a small group leader.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Secret Service. [http://www.secretservice.gov/know\\_your\\_money.shtml](http://www.secretservice.gov/know_your_money.shtml)

## What A Healthy Leader Looks Like

What does a healthy church leader look like? The short and simple answer is Jesus. A small group leader should look, lead, and love like Jesus. As a Christian, the Greek *χριστιανος* meaning one who is associated or patterns his life after Christ<sup>2</sup>, it is the responsibility of that leader to pattern themselves after the person of Jesus Christ. While there are many great leaders in the Bible that have given a great example of healthy small group leadership, none is superior to Christ. The example that Christ has set for His church and its leaders is paramount above all. As David Jeremiah states, “Who is Jesus? He is the Son of God and the Son of man. He is the God-man and the man-God. He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. He is God walking around in a body. He is God forever enthroned in heaven at the right hand of the Father. Jesus is God in the flesh.”<sup>3</sup> Jesus is the ultimate leader. He loves greater than all others, He serves greater than all others, He motivates greater than all others, and He equips His followers greater than all others. On one hand, the answer to what a Christian leader looks like is simple; he or she looks like Jesus. But on the other hand, looking like Jesus in a sinful body among a fallen world is not quite so simple. Therefore, one must look at how Jesus lead and equipped His followers to lead so that they may bear His image among His people.

The first promise that Christian leaders have, and most hold on to especially in hard times, is that Christ will equip them to achieve their calling and that He will never leave them powerless to achieve that calling. Hebrews 13:21 states, “Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord, *equip* you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is

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<sup>2</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1342.

<sup>3</sup> David Jeremiah. *Jesus Final Warning* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999),12-13.

pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.”<sup>4</sup> As the old saying goes, God does not call the equipped, He equips the called. Small group leaders that have been called by God (which will be covered under the study of Moses) can have confidence that God will equip them to do the job that He has called them to do. The writer of Hebrews states God is the one that has raised the leader from spiritual death, joined that leader into an eternal covenant with the Father, and will equip that leader to do His will. If that leader is walking in the will of the Father, then that leader never has to wonder if God will equip him or her to do what He has called that leader to do. Their main concern must only be that they are doing what Christ has command of all believers in John, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” It is vitally important that all small group leaders abide (the Greek μένω meaning to continue to exist in something<sup>5</sup>) in Christ Jesus for the equipping. If they allow themselves to get cut off from Christ, they will lose their source of power and equipping and will then be left to their own strength to accomplish an eternal goal. When humanity is left to its own strength and wisdom only destruction will follow. Apart from the power and presence of Christ a small group leader can do nothing. Within Christ, a small group leader can accomplish anything that Christ can accomplish, because ultimately it is not the leader directing their small group, it is Christ Himself. Therefore, the first portrait of healthy small group leadership in a church is a group of people that live and function within the power and presence of Christ and depend only on Him for their equipping and empowering. It is a group of people that humble themselves before God knowing that without Him they can do nothing of any eternal consequence for the glory of God.

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<sup>4</sup> John 15:5, *NASB*

<sup>5</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 631.

Another aspect of Christ's leadership that must be emulated by small group leaders is His willingness to love and serve His people. Jesus never forced anyone to follow Him. Every person that loved Jesus and served His church, many to their death, did so because Christ first loved and served them. Jesus loved them individually, served them individually, and devoted all He had for each of them individually. Jesus was not an ivory tower leader. He loved, served, and ministered to His followers one-on-one, investing Himself into their lives and their lives into Him.

Blanchard and Hodges state, "We can turn to Jesus again as our example of servant-hearted one-on-one leadership. At the beginning of His ministry, after spending time in the wilderness, where His life purpose and perspective were affirmed by trials and temptations, Jesus began the process of calling His disciples. Once they agreed to follow Him, Jesus spent three years building a culture of trust with those men."<sup>6</sup> Before Jesus could lead His disciples in the path that the Father desire for them to take, He first had to gain their trust. All the miraculous things they saw Jesus perform helped them to logically understand His power, but it was His love and service to them individually that helped them to personally understand His heart. These men who gave their lives for the Gospel did so not only because they knew in their mind that Jesus was the Messiah, but because of how Christ loved them and served during their time together. Thus, a healthy small group leader should be the type of person that leads others not because of their title or position, but because of how they love and serve their class. They are willing to get involved in the daily lives of their people and allow their people to get involved in theirs. True Christ-like love and service of a small group leader has little to do with how much Bible that person knows, it has far more to do with how much Bible that person shows in the way they live their life. Therefore the first and most important portrait of a healthy small group leader is that of a person that loves and serves their people just as Christ loves and serves His church.

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<sup>6</sup> Ken Blanchard. Phil Hodges. *Lead Like Jesus*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2005), 25.

Another aspect of the leadership of Christ that needs to be seen within the life of a small group leader is his or her ability to lead a larger group for one specific purpose. Jesus did not just stay within the relationship bounds of Peter, James, and John. He invested himself into the twelve and later into the seventy that He sent out into harvest. In this passage you can see that Jesus sent out these seventy individuals to achieve one specific goal, to tell the world that “the kingdom of God has come near.”<sup>7</sup> One can see the reaction of His followers in verse 17 after they followed His instructions and did what He lead them to do, “The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’”<sup>8</sup> Jesus led these individuals collectively for the one specific and clear purpose, He then equipped those individuals to achieve the purpose in which they were called, and He celebrated with them when they returned from achieving their goals. Jesus built the trust of the individuals so that He could mobilize the many to share the good news of the coming Kingdom of Heaven. Blanchard and Hodges also state, “Once again we look to Jesus as a model for team leadership. After Jesus spent time personally teaching and modeling the type of leadership He wanted them to adopt, He sent out His disciples to minister in teams of two (Mark 6). Jesus empowered them to act on His behalf to support one another in accomplishing the work they had been trained to do.”<sup>9</sup> Jesus had all the right in the world to be a micromanager. There is no one wiser or more equipped to do the job than Jesus Himself, but that is not the type of leader that Jesus is and that is not the type of leadership model that He has left for the church. Jesus invested Himself into His people, training, modeling, and equipping them to live up to their highest potential. He suffered through their lack of knowledge, their petty personal agendas, and often times, their unwillingness to see past their own personal

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<sup>7</sup> Luke 10:1, *NASB*

<sup>8</sup> Luke 10:17, *NASB*

<sup>9</sup> Ken Blanchard. Phil Hodges. *Lead Like Jesus*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2005), 27.

situations. He loved and served them as individuals so that they as a group could change the world. Jesus set the pattern for what it means to lead a small group of ordinary people to do extraordinary things, a model that can and should be used by small group leaders today. A healthy small group leader is someone that connects with the individual for the spiritual and emotional growth of that individual, while at the same time mobilizing those individuals to achieve the overall purpose of the group. Within the church that purpose is the fame and glory of Jesus Christ through the regenerating power of His Gospel. Thus, a healthy small group leader is someone that should be seen as investing into the lives of his or her people while mobilizing them to achieve the ultimate purpose of the group.

The final example that Christ sets for a healthy small group leader is sacrifice. Paul states,

“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any [a]ffection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”<sup>10</sup>

In this passage Paul tells the church that even though Jesus Christ was and is God, He willingly gave it all way and willfully allowed Himself to be humiliated and demoralized on the cross. Jesus refused the rights and privileges that belonged to Him so that His church may be lifted up to the Father. Concerning this MacArthur states, “The most dramatic and poignant time of Jesus’ self-abasement was during His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. He was mocked, falsely accused,

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<sup>10</sup> Philippians 2:1-11, *NASB*

spat upon, beaten with fists, scourged, and had part of His beard painfully plucked out, yet He was never defensive, never bitter, never demanding, never accusing. He refused to assert His rights as God or even as a human being.”<sup>11</sup> Jesus allowed Himself to be humiliated so that the Father’s will would be accomplished and the saints could be saved. He gave no regard for Himself over those that are guilty of the very crimes that Christ was accused of committing. Small group leaders must understand that their role as leaders do not give them more rights, privileges, or honors among the church. It actually calls for them to sacrifice all the rights, privileges, and honor for the greater glory of their people. The image of Christ’s leadership among His disciples is that of sacrifice and selflessness, the image of healthy small group leaders should also be that of sacrifice and selflessness. The portrait of a healthy small group leader should resemble that of Christ in His love, service, and sacrifice.

Another great example of what a healthy small group leader looks like is the person of Moses. Moses had his growing pains in leadership (covered more in the section “What an Unhealthy Leader Looks Like”) but in the end Moses was one of the greatest leaders in Israelite history. Considering Moses birth, his upbringing, his self-exile, and his shortcomings; he is a great example of the fact that God can and will raise leaders from whomever He wants, whenever He wants. Take Moses’ birth, according to Exodus 1:16, by the order of the King of Egypt, all Hebrew males were to be killed at birth. By all rights, Moses should never have been allowed to live. If the Hebrew midwives had done what Pharaoh had commanded of them, Moses would have never lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. There would be no Mosaic Law and he would not be spoken of today. The fact remains that Moses was born, he did lead the Hebrews out of Egypt, and he did receive the Law from Yahweh on Mt. Sinai. The plan of the king was to stop the deliverer before he could ever be born. The plan of God was to bring Moses into this

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<sup>11</sup> John MacArthur. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*. (Chicago: Moody Publishers. 2001), 132.

world and use him for God's greater glory. It is not up to man who will be a leader in the church or who will not. Man does not call Godly leaders, God does! Man does not equip Godly leaders, God does! And man is not the one to decide who will be the instrument of God for His greater glory, God does! A healthy small group will be called by God, equipped by God, and motivated by God. This should be evident in the way he or she lives their life for the glory of God, a portrait of the hand of God moving in that leader's life.

However, just because Moses birth was that of divine intervention, it does not mean that Moses himself would grow to be the man that would lead the Hebrew people out of bondage. His environment had a lot to do with his ability to complete his God given task. Swindoll states, "After Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses, she immediately began to prepare him for a proper life in Pharaoh's court. The historian Josephus tells us that because the Pharaoh had no son and heir, Moses was being nurtured for the throne. That seems like a sound assumption; no doubt, historians bear this out."<sup>12</sup> Moses was a man of great resources and high education. As the adopted grandson of Pharaoh his future was seemingly unlimited. However, there was something inside of Moses that called him back to his people. Acts states, "But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel."<sup>13</sup> Although he was adopted by an Egyptian, raised by an Egyptian, and educated as an Egyptian, Moses knew in his heart that the Egyptians were not his brothers. His brothers were the slaves, the people of Israel. His background and his formal education were all Egyptian but his heart was with his people, the Hebrew slaves. That is why he took the actions he did, "So he (Moses) looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the

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<sup>12</sup> Charles R. Swindoll. *The Man of Selfless Dedication Moses* (Nashville: Word Publishing. 1999), 33.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 7:23, *NASB*



sand.”<sup>14</sup> Moses knew that killing the Egyptian guard in defense of a slave was against Egyptian law, even for the adopted grandson of Pharaoh, but his heart ached for his brother. He could not just stand by and watch his brother be mistreated and abused. Therefore, with his upbringing as an Egyptian Royal combined with his passion for his people, the Hebrew slaves, Moses made the best advocate for the release of the Hebrew slaves.

God used the tragic circumstance of Moses’ birth to give him the position and influence he would need to approach Pharaoh with such an insulting statement, release all the Hebrew slaves or suffer the wrath of God. Did Moses not know that Pharaoh was a man-god, and that to even suggest a thing in the presence of the Egyptian King was punishable by death? Yes, Moses knew this, but Moses also knew that his past relationship with the Royal family and his growing influence among the slaves gave him the power to make such a request. God’s sovereign plan for Moses’ life was to lead His people out of bondage and to the gates of the promise land. Therefore God used Moses’ past to shape his future. There is no wasted pain and experience with God. Everything that an individual small group leader goes through can be used for the greater good if that person is willing to listen and follow the will of God. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush, today He speaks through His Word, through prayer, through fellow believers, and even through worldly circumstance? The question is not, is God speaking? The real question is, are you listening? Just like God used the environment around Moses to develop him into the leader God wanted him to be and the Israelites need him to be, God can and will use the environment around a small group leader to shape them into the leader that God wants them to be and their class needs them to be. Thus, the portrait of a small group leader should be that of a person that is willing to let God use their environment, their past hurts and pains, to shape them into the type of leader that God desires for them.

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<sup>14</sup> Exodus 2:12, *NASB*

A final aspect of Moses' leadership that can be understood and emulated by today's small group leader is his ability to overcome and adapt to his perceived shortcomings. During his interaction with Yahweh at the burning bush Moses admitted that he felt positionally, intellectually and physically inadequate to do the task God set before him. First, positionally, Moses states, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh? What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say?"<sup>15</sup> Second, intellectually, he said, "Now what if they say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"<sup>16</sup> Third, physically, he states, "Please Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."<sup>17</sup> Moses thought of every excuse in the book for him not to be the man for the job. He did not think he was important enough to do the job. His mind was plagued with doubtful questions such as "Who am I?" and "Why would they listen to me?" He felt that he had to have the worldly position (even though he did have more influence than he imagined, as covered above) before he could answer the calling, but that's not how God always works. Many times in Scripture, God first calls the man (Gideon, David, Peter, etc.) and then equips him for the calling. When God calls a leader to a task He will make a way for that task to be completed. It is not the job of the leader to pave the road before he walks it; it is simply just to walk it by faith knowing that God has already made the way clear. Moses also felt that he was not intellectually ready for the task God set before him. Again, it's not the job of the leader to have a canned answer for every possible question that may arise. Yes, they should prepare diligently and always be ready to give a defense for the hope that lies within them, but they also must have faith that the Holy Spirit will bring to mind the right answers when they are needed.

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<sup>15</sup> Exodus 4:8, *NASB*

<sup>16</sup> Exodus 4:9, *NASB*

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 4:10, *NASB*

Finally, Moses felt that he was physically unable to do what God had called him to do, but God is an expert in overcoming human limitations. Some of the greatest preachers of all time felt as though they were not good public speakers, yet when they began to preach, people were getting saved, the Gospel was spreading, and revival was breaking out across the country. A leader's physical limitations are an opportunity for God to truly show Himself. Moses felt that when the time came for him to stand face-to-face with Pharaoh he would not be able to physically get the words out of his mouth, a legitimate fear, but not a legitimate excuse for not performing the task that God called him to do. A healthy small group will acknowledge their shortcomings and pray that God will remove those shortcomings (as Paul did three times), but they must never let that shortcoming stop them from doing the Lord's will for their life. As Paul said, "And he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.'"<sup>18</sup> The portrait of a healthy small group leader is someone that has hurts, issues, and hang-ups, but in the grace of God they press on towards the goal that Christ has set before them. They hold strong to their faith and in the midst of their weakness the glory of God shows through. They inspire their people to keep moving forward no matter what is in front of them because the grace of Christ is sufficient to conquer the battles that lay ahead. They do not let their position in society, the level of education, or any physical weakness they have stop them from accomplishing God's will for their lives. A healthy small group leader is not perfect, but they consistently rely on the One that is perfect to accomplish His mission for their lives.

A third biblical example of a healthy small group leader is the Apostle Paul. In the early onset of the church The Apostle Paul was an extremely unlikely candidate to be the Gentiles Apostle. By his own admission in Acts Paul states, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers,

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9, *NASB*

being zealous for God just as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.”<sup>19</sup> For his entire young adult life, Paul was groomed to be devoted to the Law. When the new sect of Judaism arose, which he called The Way, Paul’s zeal and passion for the Law drove him to do all that he could to stomp it out. However, the passion and energy Paul was using to persecute the church, God would use to create one of its greatest missionaries. For Paul there was no ninety percent effort, he did everything with all his passion and energy or he did not do it at all, this lead Paul to have a great emotional, spiritual, and even physical devotion for his people. MacArthur states, “He was a faithful and compassionate leader, and his love for the Corinthians is therefore evident in every verse of the epistle. Such loyalty and empathy are essentials for good leadership.”<sup>20</sup> Paul did not separate himself out from his people. He felt invested in Timothy, which is why Scriptures contains two books written directly to Timothy and his ministry. For Paul, whatever happened to Timothy happened to him. Timothy’s pain was his pain, Timothy’s rejection was his rejection, and Timothy’s failures and successes were his failures and successes. This close emotional and spiritual connection with his people did open him up for pain, rejection, and disloyalty, but Paul could not lead any other way. That should be portrait of a healthy small group leader, someone that actually goes through life with his or her people. They actually get involved in the muck and mire of their people’s lives. They never say it’s not my problem. If they are one of the leaders people, then to a certain extent it is the leaders problem. Galatians state, “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a

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<sup>19</sup> Acts 22:3-5, *NASB*

<sup>20</sup> John MacArthur. *The Book on Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2010), 73.

one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."<sup>21</sup> Just as Paul's people did, a small group leader's people will make mistakes. They will sin and do things that they know they should not do. It is the job a healthy small group leader to do the best they can to help restore that brother or sister to the Gospel. With a sense of love and gentleness, the small group leader is to bear that burden with that brother or sister until they have done all they can do in good (Godly) conscience to restore that person to Christ. This means having to make oneself open and exposed to the sins of others. True leadership cannot be done from the sideline! A healthy small group leader will get involved in his or her people's lives in order to help them (and himself) conformed to the image of Christ.

Another aspect of Paul's leadership that should be seen in the portrait of a healthy small group leader was his leadership ability under duress. Paul often came under attacked for multiple reasons from multiple groups. Specifically, many of the attacks came against his role and authority as leader. MacArthur also states, "False teachers in Corinth had seized on the apostle Paul's change of travel plans (he canceled half of a planned double visit to Corinth), and they evidently exploiting that incident in order to portray Paul as vacillating, unreliable, two-faced, cunning, and insincere (cf. 1 Cor. 4:18-19). Paul's first order of business in 2 Corinthians (after assuring the Corinthians of his personal devotion to them) was to answer that charge."<sup>22</sup> As mentioned before, Paul was groomed to be a great leader among the Sanhedrin ruling class, so his conversion to faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah ignited a firestorm of hatred and hospitality from the ruling Jewish leaders. In addition to the fact many of the Judaizers, men that converted to faith in Christ but still held the Mosaic Law, fought against Paul's authority as an apostle

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<sup>21</sup> Galatians 6:1-2, *NASB*

<sup>22</sup> John MacArthur. *The Book on Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2010), 75.

because Paul taught that the gentile converts did not have to hold to the Mosaic Law. Paul's soteriological doctrine was that these gentiles were saved by grace through Jesus Christ, not through the Law of Moses. This teaching caused a lot of controversy among the early church, see Acts 15:1-29 The Council at Jerusalem, in which Paul was called before the Apostles to give a defense of himself and his doctrines. However, Paul would not be intimidated or persuaded into changing what he believed to be his mission for God, for the Gentiles. He states,

“But in whatever respect anyone else is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.”<sup>23</sup>

Paul was called by God for a specific ministry at a specific time; so are healthy small group leaders. These men and women have been called by God for a specific group of people, in a specific community, at a specific time, to accomplish a specific goal. They are not perfect, and are to be held accountable for their actions by the pastoral leadership of their church. Their authority in a class is not given to them by man; it is given to them by God. God is the one who calls, God is the one who equips, and God is the one who ordains; man's job is only to recognize that authority.

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<sup>23</sup> 2 Cor. 11:21-33, *NASB*

### What An Unhealthy Leader Looks Like

Now that the picture of what a healthy small group leader looks like has been presented, it is also necessary to examine what an unhealthy small group leader looks like. One cannot just simply say that an unhealthy small group leader is the opposite of a healthy small group leader. The subject can be a bit more complicated than that. For example, you may have a small group leader that loves Jesus with all of his or her heart, but for some reason they have a hard time communicating to their class what they have learned that week in their preparation for the Bible study. This is a person with a good heart and great intentions, but for some reason they simply do not have the communication skills that are necessary to lead a small group. Close examination needs to be made as to what qualities and characteristics help to make a small group leader unfit or unready to lead a group of individuals in their spiritual development.

One of the most obvious aspects of a small group leader that facilitates towards unhealthiness is a simple lack of communication and people skills. A leader of a class can be the Godliest person in the room, but if they do not have the ability to personally relate to their classmates and to communicate the truth of God's Word in an understandable and applicable way, then their effectiveness can be severely limited and sometime dangerous. Hendricks states, "Language is the apparel in which your thoughts parade before others."<sup>24</sup> How a leader communicates (the verb communicate comes from a Latin word meaning to make common and thus to impart, share, pass along, transmit)<sup>25</sup> is extremely important to their ability to lead a class. The way a leader communicates, the language he or she uses, and the manner of speech in which they choose to practice with their class will speak volumes to their ability to lead and motivate that class towards spiritual maturity and growth in their relationship with Christ. They do not

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<sup>24</sup> Howard Hendricks. *7 Laws of the Teacher* (Atlanta: Walk Thru The Bible Ministries, 1988), 38.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 29

have to be the next John Piper but there must be a minimal level of competency in their ability to teach and communicate to the class. However, the most important aspect of a small group leader is that they have a heart for God and a desire to lead others in a greater understanding of His word. Hendricks also states, “If you know something thoroughly (concept), and if you feel something deeply (feeling), and if you are doing something constantly (action), then you have great potential for being an excellent communicator.”<sup>26</sup> The heart of the person is what is most important. I Samuel states, “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”<sup>27</sup> When the Lord judges a man for what he has done and how he has lived his life, it will not be his or her communication skills that grant him eternity with the Father. It will be the condition of his or her heart and what they have done with Jesus. However, just because someone has an upright and justified heart before God does not mean that they are qualified to teach and lead a small group. There is a minimal set of communication and personal relation skill that need to be present within a person before they are given the responsibility to lead a group of believers. This is in addition to the fact that this person must have some ability to relate to their people on a personal and more intimate level. One of the defining characteristics of a small group Bible study is its more intimate nature. Compared to a larger gathering of people, such as a common Sunday morning worship service with hundreds of people, in which where the audience does more listening then participating, a small group is much more participatory in nature. The individuals are encouraged to speak and interact with one another as opposed to just sitting and listen to a speaker. Therefore, for someone to lead such a group they need to have at least a minimal skill set when it relates to

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<sup>26</sup> Howard Hendricks. *7 Laws of the Teacher* (Atlanta: Walk Thru The Bible Ministries, 1988), 49.

<sup>27</sup> I Samuel 16:7, *NASB*



dealing with people. Quality people skills are a real must for a healthy small group leader. If leaders find themselves not feeling empathetic towards the hurts and pains of their people, not being able to understand why someone in their class cannot seem to get past a loss, or just not able to communicate on the same level as their people, they may find that their people skills need vast improvement. If a small group leader views the quantity of time more important than the quality of time they have a serious lack of personal skills within their leadership style. Hendricks explains, “Teaching that impacts is not from head to head. It’s from heart to heart. It’s a total personality, transformed by the supernatural grace of God, reaching out to transform total personalities by the same grace. What a privilege!”<sup>28</sup> An unhealthy small group leader is more concerned with what is going into the heads of his or her class, as opposed to what is changing their hearts. Head knowledge is great as long as it leads to a heart transformation towards the Gospel. A healthy small group leader will use his or her communication and people skills to help their class understand the logic of the lesson to make a heart transformation. An unhealthy small group leader feels that their class has been a success as long as they have been able to finish their designated lesson, regardless of whether or not the lesson has led anyone towards a heart transformation by the Gospel. Therefore, one aspect of an unhealthy small group leader is someone whose lack of communication and people skills hinders them from being able to lead their people into a position where their heart can be transformed by the Gospel.

Another aspect of an unhealthy small group leader is someone that is not spiritually, emotionally, or biblically ready for leadership. “Leaders exert an influence on people. Leaders are doers, and what they do is influence.”<sup>29</sup> Many times a church takes someone that is a go getter and places them in some type of leadership role assuming that just because they have

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<sup>28</sup> Howard Hendricks. *7 Laws of the Teacher* (Atlanta: Walk Thru The Bible Ministries, 1988), 57.

<sup>29</sup> Aubrey Malphurs. Will Mancini. *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 22.

exerted some type of leadership role in the past they are ready to take up a leadership role in the church, however that is not always the case. Just because someone is financially successful in their personal business does not mean they are qualified or even able to lead within the finances of the church. Church leadership contains a spiritual, eternal aspect that does not exist within the secular world. Therefore, if a man or a woman is going to be able to lead in a church setting they are going to have to understand and accept the spiritual responsibility that comes with church leadership. Blackaby states, “Christian leaders who know God and who know how to lead in a Christian manner will be phenomenally more effective in their world than even the most skilled and qualified leaders who lead without God.”<sup>30</sup> There is no such thing as a spiritual (within the Christian context) leader that leads without God! For a man or woman to spiritually lead in the church, in their home, and in their community, they must have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. This does not mean they have to be the next Billy Graham or they have to have the leadership skill of John Maxwell. It does mean that wherever they are in their spiritual development they must be growing and maturing in their walk with Christ. This will in turn give them the emotional maturity they need to lead their class and will put them in a position to grow in the knowledge of God’s Word. Peter says, “Grow in the Grace (Spiritual and emotional) and Knowledge (Mental) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>31</sup> The word grow in this verse is a verb, meaning it is an action to be taken by the reader, in the present tense meaning that growth is something that believers are to do today and continue on for eternity. A healthy small group will always understand that spiritual and emotional growth is something that will not be completed until they step foot into eternity. God’s Word is so deep and meaningful; it can take a lifetime of study just to understand the tip of the iceberg. Therefore, spiritual development,

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<sup>30</sup> Henry Blackaby. Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011), 15.

<sup>31</sup> 2 Peter 3:18, *NASB*

emotional maturity, and biblical knowledge are a must among Christian leaders! If they are not growing then they are dying and that by definition makes them an unhealthy small group leader.

A final aspect of an unhealthy small group leader is someone that has a hard time falling under authority. There is a vast difference between someone who is organized, opinionated, and head strong and someone that is rebellious to authority. Many great leaders throughout history have been men and women that were hard to work with because they felt strongly about a certain position. The main difference between those people and an unhealthy small group leader is those leaders had the ability to submit to authority. Biblically, the vast majority of time the term rebellion is defined as “not subject to rule of law.”<sup>32</sup> I Samuel states, “For rebellion is as the sin of divination (meaning witchcraft), And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king.”<sup>33</sup> The logical question when reading this verse is how this applies to small group leaders that are not submitting themselves to the authority of the pastoral staff? According to Paul in Romans, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.”<sup>34</sup> According to Romans 13:1-2 those in which the church bylaws and constitution state have authority over the small group leaders, have been placed there by God Almighty. Thus, it is the duty of those individuals that volunteer within that church system to submit themselves to ruling authorities of the church as long as those authorities are not asking those individuals to knowingly or unknowingly violate the doctrines of Scripture. Therefore, to rebel

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<sup>32</sup> Merrill Unger *Unger Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 913.

<sup>33</sup> I Samuel 15:23, *NASB*

<sup>34</sup> Romans, 13:1-2 *NASB*

against those individuals is also to rebel against God, because God is the one that placed those into power at that particular time and that particular place. Looking back at the principle teaching of I Samuel 15:23, if a small group leader knowingly and unrepentantly defies their authority, causes distrust and disunity among the body, and fails to recognize their role with the authoritative structure of the church, then the sin they are committing is akin to witchcraft and idolatry. What they have done is placing their own wisdom and demands ahead of God's. They have come to the conclusion, consciously or subconsciously, that their way is better than God's way, that their wisdom is wiser than God's wisdom; not only placing themselves equal to God, but at a position above God. If a small group leader is placed in a position where they are asked to violate anything that is expressly mentioned in Scripture, which by definition is not rebellion. That is holding fast to the Word of Truth. Each small group leader should be very careful to determine as to whether or not they are judging their decision to disobey their authorities on principles of Scripture or on the emotions of the personal preferences. It must be said that a healthy pastoral staff will always be willing to listen to the thoughts and feelings of their small group leaders (covered in more detail in the "Training Your Leadership" section), but they are not to abdicate their leadership role to those under their authority. God has placed them in authority and God is going to hold them accountable for the progress and successes of the overall ministry. Therefore, the ultimate authority of the ministry belongs to the pastoral staff, not the small group leaders themselves. If they cannot understand this, then they have to be seen as an unhealthy small group leader and must, for the sake of the class, be taken out of a leadership position.

### The Right Person, Right Place, Right Time

In December 2008 Auburn University hired Gene Chizik as their twenty-fifth head coach in school history. In Chizik's first year at Auburn he led the Tigers to an 8-5 regular season record and an Outback Bowl win over Northwestern University. Going into the 2010 football season, the team motto was Good to Great. They felt they had a good first year under new head coach Gene Chizik, but their desires was to be more than a good football team; they wanted to be great. For them to do that, they needed to find a quality quarterback and defensive lineman that could help lead this team to their desired destination, a National Championship. One of the first things that the new coaching staff did was go out and recruit a young and but very talented quarterback named Cameron Newton. Cam, as he is called, is a six foot six, two hundred and forty pound quarterback that was timed as one of the fastest players on his junior college football team in Brenham, TX. He had the arm strength of a professional quarterback, the size of a typical defensive end, and the speed of an all-conference running back. The coaching staff at Auburn realized that this young man was just the right person to run their quarterback centered offense. They also found a young man playing defensive tackle at a junior college outside of Atlanta, GA named Nick Fairly. Fairly was six foot four inches tall and weighted over three hundred pounds. What made this young man so special was the fact that he timed out just as fast as the starting wide receivers in the feet quickness drills. At three hundred pounds he could move as quickly off the ball as a one hundred and ninety pound wide receiver. These were the two men that the Auburn coaching staff needed to go from Good to Great. That is exactly what the team did. They went from a 9-5 win/loss record to an undefeated 14-0 win/loss record and an SEC and National Championship. They put the right players, in the right positions, at the right time to help the team achieve their goal of becoming the best college football team in 2010. A church staff and small

group system is not much different. If they want to get the most out their leaders, their small group system, and the entire church body, the pastoral staff of the church must put the right leaders, in the right place, at the right time. If they have the desire to go from Good to Great for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, each church must take a hard look at how they are using their leaders, where they are using their leaders, and if they are getting the most effectiveness out of that leader as possible.

First, a church must look at how they are using their leaders. They must ask themselves the question, are we using our available leadership as effectively as possible? Just like the Auburn coaching staff had to look at the skill set of Cam Newton and decide how to best use him for the greater good of the team, each church must be willing to look at each worker and decide if they are using that person for the greater good of the church. Say for example that a church had a single male in his late twenties, lives in an apartment with roommates, plays video games, and stays up late, but most importantly loved Jesus with all his heart and wants to serve the church as best he can. For most churches, their first inclination and maybe the most understandable, is to think that this young man would be perfect for the youth ministry. He's single so he has time to spend with the students, he can relate to them because he likes to play video games, and he can stay up late at night with them at lock-ins and other youth events. On the surface it seems that this young man would be a great fit to serve in the youth department, but the church has made a common mistake. They just assumed that they know what department would fit him the best without really getting to know the details of his past, the passions of his present, and the goals of his future. The details of a person's past can, and often do, play a big part in where that person fits best into the body of Christ and also can help to indicate where they can best serve in the church. There may be things in this young man's past that would cause him to reject serving the

church if the only option he is given is to serve in the youth ministry. He may have had a bad experience with a youth minister as a teenager or just a bad experience with church youth ministry. On the other hand, his childhood could have gone in such a way that he has a natural passion towards children's ministry. Therefore, one of the most important things that church leadership can do when presented with a new worker is to get to know that person on a more personal level. They need to find out the necessary specifics of that person's past and how their past has and will affect the future growth and development of that person as a leader. Cloud and Townsend state, "Most spiritual, emotional, and relational issues have a history. Your people do not generally have struggles out of the blue. Someone's parenting problems, guilt issues, and faith doubts all have roots in the past. For empathy and perspective, know about your people's history."<sup>35</sup> Getting involved in a leader's personal history can be messy, uncomfortable, and even unwanted, but it is something that has to be done. It is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to make sure that this person the church is putting into leadership is going to edify the group's spiritual growth, not hinder it. Leaders that have personal issues from the past that have not been dealt with in a healthy and productive way cannot hide the effect of those issues forever. The consequences of not dealing with personal past issues may be small and they may be great, but sooner or later those consequences will show themselves. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to do the best they can to help their leaders through their past, not just for the future growth and development of the ministry, but just as importantly for the future growth and development of that person. Cloud and Townsend also state, "It is especially important to have this information, as you will see patterns emerge in people's lives. These patterns can be very helpful in helping a person grow in areas of weakness. Often, understanding a pattern will help a

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<sup>35</sup> John Townsend. Henry Cloud. *How People Grow* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 355.

person turn major corners in growth.”<sup>36</sup> The spiritual, emotional, and mental growth of the individual is just as important as the growth of the ministry. Therefore, the past has to be dealt with if a leader is going to be positioned in the right place at the right time.

Along with learning the person’s past, pastoral leadership must also learn the individual’s passions in the present. What do they like to do? What are their hobbies? What do they do in their free time? Where would they find the most joy and fulfillment serving in the church? Not everything in church leadership is driven by emotion and passion, but emotion and passion cannot be divorced from the equation. When trying to prayerfully figure out where the best place is for a person to serve, the pastoral leadership of the church cannot separate where a person would like to serve in the church from where they are best gifted to serve in the church. Many times, spiritual giftedness and personal passions can complement one another, not diametrically oppose one another. A person’s personality type can be one of the great assets to their spiritual giftedness. Concerning this Carbonell states, “The truth is that every child is gifted – naturally. And every child of God is also gifted – supernaturally. God gives every person a good gift – his or her personality at conception. Additionally, God gives everyone who trust Him as Savior the exact gifts he or she needs at new birth.”<sup>37</sup> Every person that is born on this earth is born with a personality type. Some may be more pleasant, more humorous, and more “people friendly” than others, but every person alive has some type of personality. In addition, every person that is Born-Again through the blood of Jesus Christ has been gifted by the Holy Spirit. Scripture says in I Corinthians, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common

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<sup>36</sup> John Townsend. Henry Cloud. *How People Grow* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 355

<sup>37</sup> Mels Carbonell. *Discover Your Giftedness* (Blue Ridge: NC, Uniquely You Resources, 2003), 15.



good.”<sup>38</sup> Every single person that has come to faith in Jesus Christ has been gifted by the Holy Spirit for the glory of Christ, specifically, for good work in His church for the glory of Christ. Ryrie states, “A spiritual gift is not a place of service. The gift is the ability, not where that ability is used. Teaching can be done in or out of a formal classroom situation and in any country of the world. Helping can be done in the church or in the neighborhood. However, a spiritual gift is a God-given ability to serve the body of Christ wherever and however He may direct.”<sup>39</sup> Most often people believe that spiritual gifts must be used inside the building of the church in order to promote the Gospel. That is not necessarily true. As stated before, a spiritual gift is a God-given ability that can and should be used anywhere and everywhere to serve the body of Christ, both in and outside of the traditional church setting. It is the job of the pastoral staff to make sure that each new leader has a clear understanding of what their God-given abilities are (spiritual gifts), and what their natural abilities are (personality type), so that they can be placed in the best possible position to help the church. It would be a grave mistake to take a person with the God-given ability to teach and the personality capable of speaking in public, and place them behind a computer running PowerPoint every Sunday morning just because they know how to do it and nobody else would volunteer for the position. This type of person (assuming they have the spiritual, emotional, and mental maturity to do it) should be teaching or leading a small group Bible study. It is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to understand the present passions of their workers, combined with their spiritual giftedness and place them in a position of leadership that is best for both the individual and the church.

Finally, it is vitally important that the pastoral leadership of a church know the future goals of each of their leaders. For many leaders, they may find that they are perfectly content

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<sup>38</sup>I Cor. 12:4-7, *NASB*

<sup>39</sup> Charles Ryrie *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 423-424.

with the position they currently hold. Their current position allows their spiritual gift(s) to be used to its fullest ability, their personality is given freedom to flourish, and they are accomplishing exactly what God desires for them to do at this particular point and time. These are the type of leaders that you simply provide what they need and get out of their way. They know their mission, they have accepted their mission, and they are working diligently to accomplish that mission for the glory of Christ. However, there are some leaders that just do not feel like they are doing all that they are supposed to be doing for Christ. It is not that they do not enjoy their current position and that they do not truly love and appreciate the people they are working with, it is just that they feel they are meant to do something more with their gifts and abilities. Many times they simply feel in their hearts they are not doing what God has called and equipped them to do. They just feel that there is something more than what they are doing now. This is the point when someone in pastoral leadership needs to sit down with this person and ask them where they would like to see themselves in ministry in 5-10 years. If there were no restrictions, no limits to where they could go and what they could do, what would they see themselves doing for the Gospel over the next 5-10 years? The answer to those questions can be very helpful to both the church and the individual as to where they should be serving in the church. A church may find they have someone in the sound booth that has been gifted and called to the mission field. For whatever reason this person believed that they were not ready to be a foreign missionary and that the sound booth was the only place for them to serve. It is the churches responsibility to help each and every person that is involved in leadership to understand their spiritual giftedness, their natural abilities, and to see where God would have them use those gifts for His greater glory. One of the greatest mistakes a church can make is to take the next Jonathan Edwards and hide him in the parking ministry. As great and as needed as the parking

ministry may be, it is not the place for that young leader to spend their ministry. God has great plans for them and the church staff should be their greatest advocate and cheerleader. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the pastoral staff and church leadership to make sure they know the future goals of each of their leaders in some cases help them develop those goals, and to position them in the right place at that right time for the growth and development of both the church and the individual.

In 2010 the Auburn tigers won their first National Championship in 57 years. Cameron Newton won the Heisman Trophy, Maxwell Award, Walter Camp Award, Davey O'Brian Award, Manning Award, AP College Football Player of the Year, Consensus First-Team All-Conference, Consensus First-Team All-American, and was the first overall pick in the 2011 NFL draft. Nick Fairly was Consensus First-Team All-Conference, Consensus First-Team All-American, won the Lombardi Award for the best Lineman in College Football, and was 13<sup>th</sup> pick in the 2011 NFL draft. Both of these men experienced great success because those in authority over them recognized their talent and placed them in the right position to succeed. All of their speed, strength, and superior talent would have done them very little for the overall health of the team if they were not put in the right position to succeed. The coaches gained from their success, the University gained from their successes, and the young men themselves gained from their success. It is extremely important for those serving in pastoral leadership of a church to be able to recognize the spiritual giftedness and natural talents of those in their care. It is their responsibility to make sure they are doing everything they can do to put the right people in the right place, at the right time. When they do that, it will be amazing how much both the church and the individual will grow and develop in their walk with Christ.

## CHAPTER 4 – HOW TO DEVELOP QUALITY LAY LEADERS

### Introduction

The age old question, are leaders born or are they made? Concerning this, Dr. Ronald E. Riggio states, “To cut to the chase, the answer is: ‘mostly made.’ The best estimates offered by research is that leadership is about one-third born and two-thirds made. The job of leading an organization, a military unit, or a nation, and doing so effectively, is fantastically complex. To expect that a person would be born with all of the tools needed to lead just doesn’t make sense based on what we know about the complexity of social groups and processes.”<sup>1</sup> To believe that certain people are simply born with the ability to teach, influence, and lead others is somewhat unrealistic. Yes, there are some people that have the ability to take charge and lead a group when no one else would step up to steer the ship, but there has to be some type of training, some type of directing for that person to know where the ship needs to go. If not it would be the blind leading the blind. Just because someone is willing to step out in front does not always mean that they know where they are going. For an organization to prosper and for the group to set and reach their objectives, there must be some direction and training to go along with a leaders go getter attitude. The following chapter is designed to give a church pastoral staff four specific steps they can take to create a small group leader training model in their church. First, it will give three easy to understand leadership roles that must be filled within each small group. Second, it will show the church how to enlist the right people for these roles. Third, it will teach the church how to train these people to reach the greatest potential as leaders. Fourth, it will direct the church in how to keep the leaders motivated in the Gospel and in their ministry for the glory of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>Psychology Today <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/200903/leaders-born-or-made>

## The Three Types of Leaders You Need

How many specific roles of leadership a small group has is dependent upon the church and the number of quality leaders they have available. All of the previous information given about what it means to be a healthy small group should not be disregarded just because a church is in need of warm bodies to fill a leadership space. Each church must decide for itself what type and how many small group leaders they have for each class. For example, CrossPoint Baptist Church in Argo Alabama has several different types for leaders for the several different types of small groups they offer. In their main two types of small groups (Sunday morning Sunday School and weekly in-home Bible studies), they have several different roles. They have a leader that has the responsibility to manage the entire group, a teaching leader that is responsible for teaching the Bible lesson each week, a class secretary that is responsible for keeping all records of attendance, a class treasurer that is responsible for taking up and recording any offering, tithe, or special giving, and in-reach and out-reach directors that are responsible for all the evangelistic aspects of the class.<sup>2</sup> It really depends on the context of the church as to how many and what type of small leaders they will use within their system. No matter how small the church and limited the leadership pool might be, it is vitally important that every small group have three essential leaders for the overall spiritual health and growth of the class; the teaching leader, the missions leaders, and the care leader.

As stated in the introductory chapter, the teaching leader is one of the most visual and well known of all the small group leaders. The teaching leader is the person that has the responsibility of preparing and teaching that week's Bible study lesson. They tend to be the one that is out in front the most so most people assume that the teaching leader is the main leader for

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<sup>2</sup> "Connect." Adult Bible Study and Fellowship Groups Handbook for CrossPoint Baptist Argo, AL. 11. 2010 Edition.

the class. Unfortunately, many times individuals that have the desire to be in charge will take this leadership role not completely understanding the magnitude of the responsibility they are taking upon themselves. James 3:1-5 states,

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses’ mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.”<sup>3</sup>

Just like a small piece of wood can change the course of direction of a huge ship and how a small piece of metal can change the direction of a powerful horse, the human tongue can get a teacher in a lot of trouble with both God and man. First, the teaching leader is going to be held accountable before God for every word that comes out of his or her mouth. The word judgment (κριμα) that James uses here means to render a legal decision or a judicial verdict.<sup>4</sup> The judge of every word and intent of a teacher is the Sovereign God Almighty. No word is hidden from God; He is going to hold that teacher accountable for what they teach their class. However, this does not have to hold only negative connotations. If a teacher has been found faithful to the Word and has spoken life into the people of his or her class, then that teacher will be greatly rewarded as a good and faithful servant in both here and here-after. However, if that teacher is found to have been teaching false doctrines and lies to God’s children, then it would be better for that person if they had never been born. In the Gospel of Luke Jesus states, “He said to His disciples, ‘It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that

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<sup>3</sup> James 3:1-5, *NASB*

<sup>4</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 567.

he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.”<sup>5</sup> When many people read the statement by Jesus these little ones, they assume that Jesus is talking about children. While children may have been included, the context of these verses show that Jesus is speaking of all the people that have gathered to hear Him speak and the warning is specifically for the Pharisee’s that were teaching false doctrine to the people. The principle of the warning that Jesus gives here is that man will be held accountable by God for what he teaches to God’s children as His Truth. Thus, a teaching leader must take it very seriously if this is the role that God has called him or her to fill in the church. In connection, teachers will also be held accountable by his class. A joke or statement may seem funny or innocent to the speaker, while in reality it can be extremely offensive to a member of the class. Teachers will be held accountable by man for what they teach to a class. When the class is filled with Godly men and women that know the Word and understand Christian doctrine this can be a great resource for the teacher. When the class is filled with men and women that are new to the faith or just immature in their faith relying on the judgment of men can be a hindrance. Iron sharpens iron, so the advice and mentoring of Godly men and women can make a good teacher a great teacher. However, if a teacher relies too much on the advice and leading of those not yet mature in their faith it could dilute the teaching to be more appealing to the ears of men. Being a teaching leader of a small group is a great responsibility. When done right it comes with the greatest of rewards. A leader can see lives changed, families renewed, and the Kingdom of God advanced in their own community. When done incorrectly, it can be devastating to the teacher, the hearer, and the church. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to sit down with each person that has expressed an interest in becoming a teaching leader and evaluate whether it is a role that person is truly ready to tackle.

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<sup>5</sup> Luke 17:1-2, *NASB*

The second small group leadership role that is vital to healthy church growth is the Missions Leader. The Missions Leader or as many churches call it, the out-reach leader, is the person in the group that has the main responsibility of making sure that the group is doing all that it can to reach out into the community and share the Gospel. Unfortunately, many small groups become very comfortable and content with the people they currently have in their group and do not have a real desire to reach out to others or to add other people to their group. They are not exactly against the idea of reaching new people and seeing others come to Christ, but they are not specifically doing anything proactive to reach the lost. If new people find their way into their class and they do not mess up the current social dynamics of the group then so be it, but they are not going to actively go out into the community during their free time and seek to add new people to their group. Therefore, it is the main responsibility of the Missions Leader to keep the Great Commission front and center in the class and to help the class stay motivated in the idea of local and foreign missions.

There are several ways in which a Missions Leader can help to motivate a small group for evangelism. First and foremost, the class as a whole must understand that sharing the Gospel is a Christian duty not a Christian suggestion. In the great commission passage, Jesus tells the church that He is commanding them to take the Good News of Christ around the world, starting in their local community and ending all around the world. Christ states, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”<sup>6</sup> In this passage there are four specific commands, not suggestions, that Christ gives the church. The primary focus is not to Go as many people think, but it is to Make. The foremost job of the church, and by extension the church’s small groups, is to make disciples

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 28:19-20, *NASB*



of Jesus Christ. What Jesus is commanding here is not that theologically complicated to understand. He is commanding the church to Make Disciples (μαθητευατε), one word that means to cause someone to become a pupil of another.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Christ is commanding the church, again by extension the small group, to go out into the world and help other people become learners of Jesus Christ. If a small group is going to do that they first must Go (πορευθεντες) meaning while you are already traveling.<sup>8</sup> The assumption that Jesus makes is that the church is already traveling. Not that one day when they feel properly motivated they will decide to go on visitation night once a month, but that as a learner or pupil of Christ they are already going and taking the Gospel around the world. This combined with the fact that as they are going, they are teaching the world to learn and live by the teachings of Jesus Christ and baptizing the new converts in the name of the Holy Trinity. Simple conversion to Christianity is not the sole goal of the church; it is to take those converts and help them become more like Christ in their daily walk. That is why they must be taught the word and trained in the ways of Christ. Thus, they are becoming a disciple of Christ and the church is fulfilling the Great Commission. This is why it is so important that the Missions Leader help his or her class understand that they have a Christ-given mandate, not an option, to share the Gospel, i.e. be involved in local and global missions. Christ has called the church to actively make disciples and Christ expects the church to make disciples. The small group system is a great way for a church to meet new people in the community, share the Gospel with those people, and help those people become functioning and growing disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is vitally important that

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<sup>7</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 609.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 853.

the Missions Leader help his or her small group understand the importance of the biblical mandate that the church has to share the Gospel with the world.

Another way that a Missions Leader can help to keep their class motivated for evangelism and missions is to keep the class continually updated on current mission projects in the community and around the world. An involved class is a motivated class and a disconnected class is an apathetic class. Apathy within the church setting can arise for many different reasons. First is simply from a lack of information about the need. Many times people in churches are willing to help if that need is presented to them in a way that is clear and is easy to apply. It is the job of the Missions Leader to find local projects that are practical for their class. If it is a class with a majority of senior adults, then helping to build a local home for Habitat For Humanity may not be the most practical missions project. This leader might find that making dinner for people within the church that have recently lost a loved one or had a baby might be something more appropriate for their physical abilities and natural skills. However, the Habitat For Humanity project might be perfect for a young couples class or a men's ministry small group. Thus, it is the responsibility of the Missions Leader to find the appropriate missions project for their specific class and then to make that class aware of the need. Again, if the class is not aware of the problem, then what can be the realistic expectation that they will step-up and get involved? In addition, the Missions Leader can and should keep the results of that class missions work front and center in the class. With many of the classes' missions activities, there may not be an opportunity see the direct result, like giving an Easter or Christmas offering to a missions boards. When the opportunity does arrive for the result of a missions opportunity to be made known to the class, the Missions Leader should keep those results front and center. The purpose of this is to help the class see real and tangible evidence that their service to Christ and the church is

making a real difference in real people lives. This helps to personalize the missions project and thus helps to motivate the class to stay active and involved in their community.

The final role that must be filled within a small group to produce healthy church growth is the Care Leader. The Care Leader is essentially the in-reach leader of the group. Just as the focus of the Missions Leader is outward into the community, the focus of the Care Leader is inward into the people of the group. They have two specific goals; to create fellowship and family within the people of the group. Jesus never promised the church that if they chose to follow Him their lives would be without problems and pain. As a matter of fact He promised just the opposite. Jesus states, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."<sup>9</sup> In this passage Jesus is telling all those that follow Him that in this life there will be the pain and hardship. It is not a matter of if, but a matter of when. In this specific verse the word tribulation (θλιψιν) means to be the receiver of persecution.<sup>10</sup> Persecution or suffering is coming to every believer whether they like it or not. Jesus also said previously that, "A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."<sup>11</sup> If a Christian is truly living a lifestyle that is reflective of Jesus to this world and to the enemy, then they will experience trials and tribulation in this life. This is where a strong and healthy church comes into play. It is the job of the church and of the small group to come to that person's aid in their times of tribulation. They have been required to go through this time of suffering, but they are not required to go through it alone. First, as Jesus stated in the Gospel of John, Jesus will be with them through the entire ordeal. He

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<sup>9</sup> John 16:33, *NASB*

<sup>10</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 547.

<sup>11</sup> John 15:13, *NASB*

will never leave them or forsake them. Jesus will never call his disciples to a difficult task and leave them to their own devices to achieve that task. He is always there, ready and willing to carry them through. In addition, that believer's local church family should be right there with them in their times of trial. Hebrews 10:24-25 states, "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."<sup>12</sup>

Believers of the church are to stimulate (παροξυαμον), meaning to rouse or stir another into action,<sup>13</sup> into pressing forward and moving on. Followers of Christ were never meant to go through this life alone. Each member of the body of Christ is designed to lean on and trust the other members of the body. This is why the job of Care Leader within the small group setting is so important. Their job is to make sure that no one in the group is being neglected or left out in anyway, that all possible needs of the group members are being met to the best of that group's ability. If the Missions Leader is the hands and feet of the group, the Care Leader is the heart and soul.

There are several ways in which a Care Leader can help the group become more loving and accepting of its members. First, with the help of the Teaching Leader and the Missions Leader they help their class have a healthy theological perspective of the love of Christ and His church. Many people do not really understand the role of church in their lives. In the south, it is simply a cultural activity that many people participate in without any real life change. The three leaders working together need to help the class understand that church is more than just a weekly activity, it is building a family; a family that is founded and rooted in the love, grace, and mercy

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<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 10:24-25, *NASB*

<sup>13</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 780.

of Jesus Christ. It is a family that is brought together not by the blood of relatives, but by the blood of God Himself; making it a family that can and should be stronger than any homogeneous unit that humanity can ever create. Therefore, one of the first duties of the Care Leader is to help his or her class understand the theological principles behind being a part of a church family, and how they can be an active part of that church family.

Another practical tool a Care Leader can use for helping their class stay connected as a family is an old fashion time of sharing prayer request. The Care Leader must be careful not to let this time become a time of gossip and slander or to allow one or two individuals in the class to monopolize the classes time with all of their personal issues. There certainly needs to be some time in the class where the individuals are allowed to share their struggles and how the class can be a part of their situation. At first, many people may not be comfortable sharing what is going on in their personal lives but over time, and as the individual members of the class gain trust in one another, they may actually find it helpful and therapeutic to share. What the Care Leader should find is that when individuals become more comfortable sharing their personal prayer requests out loud in class it is usually because that class is starting to trust one another more and starting to become a church family. Class members genuinely care about what is going on in each other's lives and wish to do all that they can to help. It is at this point where they begin to develop from a simple small group Bible class into a local church family. The class goes from an academic activity to a highly anticipated meeting with friends and family. With organizational help from the Care Leader, the class begins to share birthday parties together, celebrate anniversaries together, support and love each other during times of loss, and simply be there for each other in times of need. The Care Leader has the awesome responsibility of making sure that each person in the class is being loved to the classes' greatest ability.

### Step 1 – Enlisting Your Lay Leaders

Now that the pastoral leadership of the church has a clear understanding of the three essential roles of small group, extensive concentration must be given to the three-stage leadership model that the church has adopted to equip these individuals as best as possible. The first step in this three-step leadership model is enlisting the right person for the right job. It is not the job of the church leadership to recruit someone for an open position in the church. They are not a college basketball coach looking for a new shooting point guard. They are looking for a man or woman that has been called by God for a specific task at a specific time. Just because someone in the church body or in the local community has natural skills and abilities that may seem beneficial to the open position, it does not mean they have the spiritual maturity and Gospel calling to fill that position. McIntosh states, “When a person has excellent skills but weak integrity, you may have a strong urge to hire him, thinking you can use his skills and develop his integrity as you go. On-the-job-discipleship of this nature rarely, if ever, works out. While it is possible to develop a person’s skills on the job, it is notoriously difficult to develop a person’s integrity on the job.”<sup>14</sup> Every believer has room to grow in their faith. Outside of Jesus Christ, no one that has walked on this earth is without sin; therefore all are in need of becoming more sanctified. At some level, there is on-the-job training in character and integrity, but for a leader there is minimum level of spiritual maturity that must be gained before the person is given a role in leadership. That is why it is not the role of the church staff to be involved in leadership recruiting the best skilled people for the job. It is the job of the church staff to look for and recognize those that has already been called by God for a specific role. Vocational ministers are not the only people that have been called by God for ministry. Every believer has been gifted by

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<sup>14</sup> Gray L. Macintosh. *Staff Your Church For Growth*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 55.

the Holy Spirit and called for a specific ministry. Paul says “For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.”<sup>15</sup> Nowhere in this passage is one body part called to full-time ministry and another called to part-time. Every believer is called to full-time ministry within their specific context. The idea that non-vocational ministers are not called into ministry is not biblical and not practical. Hirsch says, “The reality is that all Christians are not only called to be missionaries but have already been sent to the people they are called to reach. Christians who earn a living as teachers, accountants, store clerks, mechanics, plumbers, doctors, whatever – you are a missionary!”<sup>16</sup> All of the members of the body of Christ have been called by God for ministry, equipped by Holy Spirit for ministry, and have been commissioned by Christ to reach the lost with the Gospel. Therefore, all believers have the calling of God on their lives. However, that does not mean that all believers are mature in their faith and ready for a leadership role in the church. It is primary that when church leadership or a pastoral staff is looking to fill a needed leadership role in the church that they look at the spiritual condition of the person they are considering, not just his or her physical skill set. As stated before, the church is not trying to recruit the best person for the job! They are trying to recognize and enlist the person that God has already called and equipped for that specific ministry. Jesus is the head of the church and no one knows better than Him who should hold leadership roles within the church. That is why the first step in the leadership model is not

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<sup>15</sup> I Cor. 12:14-18, *NASB*

<sup>16</sup> Alan Hirsch. Lance Ford. *Right Here Right Now*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 66.

recruiting the most talented person, but enlisting the person that God has already called to fill the position.

That leads to the next logical question, how is a church staff to recognize the calling of God on an individual's life? In their definitive work, *Experiencing God*, Blackaby and King give several ways in which a person can know God's will for their life and also how they can know God's calling on their life. Within this context church leadership can also use some of these tools to examine a person's life as to where God has called them into service. For example, they state,

“The disciples were in a boat in a storm. Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat. If you had gone to those disciples and said to them, “What is the truth of this situation?” what would they have said? “We perish!” Was that the truth? No, Truth was asleep at the back of the boat. In just a moment Truth Himself would stand up, and He would stop the storm. Then they knew the Truth of their circumstance. Truth is a person who is always present in your life. You cannot know the truth of your circumstances, until you have heard from, God. He is the Truth! And the Truth is present and active in your life!”<sup>17</sup>

The circumstances of a person's life, specifically how they conduct themselves within those circumstances, can be a great indicator as to what the will of God is for a person's life. First the circumstances themselves can be a great indicator as to where God would have that individual to serve. Say a church has a middle-aged man that came to Christ a few years back and God has delivered him from drugs, alcohol, and many other harmful activities. Without making an assumption, the very circumstances of his life and his past may help both the individual and the church determine where he would best serve the church. There may be a need in the church and the community to begin or to rejuvenate a motorcycle ministry. The circumstances of this man's past can help everyone involved to understand God's call on his life. As stated before, it is vitally important for the pastoral leadership to get involved in their leaders lives and come to the best understanding possible for that person's past and how it can affect their future. God can and often does use a person's past to help them understand their current calling in life. With God

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<sup>17</sup> Claude King. Henry Blackaby. *Experiencing God*. (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2004), 95.



there is no wasted pain and no un-teachable successes. The circumstances that help to shape people's lives, God can use to help shape their calling. The goal of the pastoral leadership of the church is to come to the best understanding possible of that person's past so they can observe what the potential call of God might be on that particular believer's life.

Second, how that person behaved within the midst of both painful and joyful circumstances can help the church to understand God's call on a leader's life. Many times it is the extremes of life that help to reveal the spiritual and emotional maturity of the person. It can also help to reveal how that person can and will lead in the midst of a crisis. For example, if a man is going through financial hardship within his personal life yet he still conducts himself with character, integrity, and patience, it can help to show the church that this man is spiritually mature and might be able to handle leadership. On the flipside of that, if that same man is having financial success within his personal life and still conducts himself with humility it can indicate to the church that he is a man that is spiritually mature enough to handle leadership. How a person conducts themselves in the midst of a crisis, and more importantly how they treat other people in the midst of a crisis, can truly reveal the content of their character. Once a church has seen the character of the individual they can then move forward in finding God's calling on that person's life. Understanding the person's past circumstances and how they conduct themselves in the midst of their circumstance can be a very helpful indication to the church as to what the call of God is on that person's life.

Another aspect of a potential small group leader that must be identified before enlisting that person into leadership is their spiritual gift(s). As stated before, all believers are given a spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit when they come to faith in Christ. This gift is given specifically for them to serve the Gospel and the church. Towns defines a spiritual gift as, "An ability given

to a Christian by the Holy Spirit to serve God. A person receives spiritual gifts at salvation which he must develop for better service of the church.”<sup>18</sup> Thus the purpose of a spiritual gift is for the glory of Christ to be made known through the working out and development of that gift in the individuals serving the local church and community. Towns also states, “A gift may be exercised to an age group such as adults or youth; it may be through media such as radio, television or Bible College; or it may be at home or on the foreign mission field.”<sup>19</sup> The point is that the Holy Spirit gave this person a specific gift for a specific purpose. It is the responsibility of the pastoral leadership to help this person understand, develop, and use their specific gift(s) so that they (the pastoral staff) can enlist them into the proper place of ministry. As stated before, the pastoral staff is not recruiting the most valuable person for the job, they are enlisting the right person that God has already called and gifted for that specific ministry. For example, say this same man that was discussed earlier, through much prayer and soul searching, believes he has a calling for the motorcycle ministry. However, just because someone has a calling for a specific ministry that does not exactly identify for them the best possible leadership role for them within that ministry. It is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to help that individual to come to a biblical understanding of the gifts and to test that person to find their specific spiritual gift(s). (Lifeway Christian Resources provides a free Spiritual Gifts Test for anyone interested in testing themselves or others within their leadership, Appendix C.) Once the person has been tested and both the individual and the church have a comfortable idea as to what that persons spiritual gift(s) is then together with that individual the pastoral staff can make a decision as to what leadership role that person should take. Going back to the previous example, once tested the gentleman working with the motorcycle ministry found that he scored very high in the spiritual

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<sup>18</sup> Elmer Towns. *Theology For Today*. (Belmont: CA, Wadsworth/Thomas Learning, 2002), 306.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

gifts of exhortation and hospitality but low in the areas of teaching and prophecy. With this information in mind, the pastoral staff and the individual can look at all the available leadership roles within the motorcycle ministry and place him in the right spot to exercise his gifts. For this individual, he would serve as a great Care Leader. The person in this role has the responsibility of making sure everyone in the group feels as comfortable as possible, and that the group is doing the best job that they can to minister to everyone within the group. He can be in charge of writing encouragement and thank you letters to members of the class, greeting everyone as they come into the room, basically just loving on the people in the group and helping them to feel welcome and at home within the group. However, what he may not be good at is serving as the Teaching Leader or as teaching assistant. The way that God has gifted him leans more towards the personal interaction with people and not so much the in-depth study and teaching of Scripture. This does not mean that he does not have a firm grasp of Christian doctrine or has a low opinion of Scripture, it simply means that his giftedness leans towards another area of ministry. The role of the pastoral leadership is to help individuals come to a clear understanding of their spiritual giftedness, combined with their physical abilities, and enlist them into the right position at the right time. Again, it is not about recruiting the most attractive person to the open position, it is about enlisting the person that God has called and equipped for that specific ministry at that specific time.

However, there does need to be a word of caution when it comes to using spiritual gifts to place an individual into ministry. A pastoral staff cannot become so focused on the spiritual gift of the individual that they ignore weaknesses in that person's character and integrity. Cole warns,

“We are too enamored with spiritual gifts and not serious enough about the fruit of the Spirit. In the New Testament wherever there are lists of spiritual gifts, you will find that love is accentuated as the most important thing. It is ‘a still more excellent way’ (1 Cor. 12:31). We should look for fruit more than for ministry gifts in our leaders’ lives. Recently a leader of a fast-

growing church in my area decided to leave his wife for another woman, believing that with this new woman's support he could do even greater things for the Lord. This is deluded thinking. He has skills and knows his doctrines well but he is not fit to lead a church."<sup>20</sup>

A man that is willing to leave his wife for another woman is a man that is not qualified to lead any group in the church. The content of character trumps quality of giftedness every single time! A man or woman can have the physical abilities and spiritual gifts to lead thousands, but if they do not have the personal character and integrity of a Christ-like leader, than they are disqualified from leadership. The LORD said to Solomon, "As for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, 'You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'"<sup>21</sup> Keeping the statutes and ordinances of God Almighty is a must among small group leaders. If a pastoral staff does not see this type of character and integrity in a perspective leader then it does not matter what their spiritual gifts are, as numerous and as glamorous as they may be, this person is not ready for leadership within the church.

Another great tool a pastoral staff can use in enlisting quality small groups leaders is simply making the need known to the church body. One of the many mistakes a church can make is to just assume that the people of the church know what leadership roles are available and what they entail. A church never knows who it has just sitting in the pews waiting to get involved and serve. One way that the church can almost guarantee that new people will not get involved in church leadership is to never make the need known to the church body. If the church does not properly publicize the role, what the role entails, and how they can begin the process of becoming involved in leadership, then the church cannot expect new people to get involved as

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<sup>20</sup> Neil Cole. *Organic Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 214.

<sup>21</sup> I Kings 9:4-5, *NASB*

quickly as they would like. Communication is the key! Concerning the importance of proper communication, Vines and Shaddix states, “The average congregation will be attentive for only four minutes at a time. The minister, therefore, must use many different devices to revive attention.”<sup>22</sup> It is the job of the pastoral staff to make sure that they are communicating the leadership needs of the church as effectively as possible. Placing a small announcement in the bulletin may have worked thirty years ago, but today many churches do not even use a printed Sunday morning bulletin because many of the church members are not reading them. It is a costly assumption by the church to believe that simply because a blurb was placed on the inside cover of the bulletin the church body will respond. An effective church will use every available means, to reach every available person, at every available time. The use of the church bulletin is great, but not by itself. A simple half-page insert within the bulletin can be an effective tool for communication. It is a small page that contains information only about the open leadership opportunities and the church leadership can encourage the people of the church to place it on their refrigerator or in another visible place in their home. The church can make a funny video or perform a skit about the open opportunities to make it memorable to the congregation. Each church needs to take inventory of its available means of communications to make sure they are doing all they can to publicize the needs as effectively as possible. Now it must be stated clearly and effectively that these are only opportunities to serve, not to be in charge of something. Making leadership roles open to public call can attract some strange and even dangerous people for the ministry. It is vitally important that the pastoral staff look at each and every person that submits their name and make sure they meet the previously stated qualification for leadership. If a church chooses not to make these opportunities known to their people out of fear of attracting the wrong people, they can be sure they will not, or cannot, attract the right people as well.

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<sup>22</sup> Jerry Vines. Jim Shaddix. *Power In The Pulpit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 309.

A final tool that a church can have for enlisting the right person into the right leadership position is by looking in the right place. As stated above, there are probably potential leaders sitting in the congregation waiting to be put into leadership and all they need is the right information to get involved. However, there are specific places that pastoral leadership can look to find potential leaders for their small Groups. Dr. Dave Earley gives seven specific places that a church can look to find new small group leaders: 1. Look in your current groups, 2. Look in your past groups, 3. Look around your church, 4. Look in your family, 5. Look at your friends, 6. Look at new converts, 7. Look where you might not think to look.<sup>23</sup> First, a great place to look for new leaders is within the small groups themselves. Ideally, a healthy small group will be training apprentice leaders as they function throughout the year (covered in more detail in the next section “Training Your Small Group Leaders”). These apprentice leaders are men and women that have volunteered to learn what their specific leadership role does within the small groups and prepare them to lead within that same role in that particular small group or another. Second, there may be individuals that have shown or even exercised leadership in the past but for some reason or another have decided to take a break from leadership. This is a great person to contact and see if they have given any consideration to returning to leadership. If so, a leader could bring them in and call them to apprentice for a specific amount of time before moving back into a leadership role. A third place a church can search for potential leaders is around the church. Earley states, “There are probably people who attend worship services faithfully but, for whatever reason, have failed to get in a group or are no longer in a group. Look around on Sundays for such people. Invite them to your group and see where it goes from there.”<sup>24</sup> If all else fails, you have helped to get that person back involved in a small group. It may work out

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<sup>23</sup> Dave Earley *Turning Members Into Leaders* (Houston: Cell Group Resources, 2001), 37-38.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 37

that this person would love to train and learn what it means to be a small group leader. Another great place to look for leaders is in your own family. James and Jude were the half-brothers of Jesus and both became strong leaders in the Jerusalem church (after a time of growth and development). Never rule out the family members of current leadership simply to avoid the perception of nepotism. In close connection to family, friends, and friends-friends, can be a great place to look for quality church leaders. Many times, friends of those currently involved in leadership are going through some of the same issues and experiences as those already involved in leadership. With time, training, and spiritual development these people could be great leaders within a churches small group system. Another place to find new leaders is with new converts. Earley states that, “New Christians can make great apprentices for several reasons. They have more contacts with non-Christians and are often evangelistic. They’re enthusiastic. They’re teachable. And they can be highly contagious spiritually.”<sup>25</sup> New Christians often have an energy and excitement that many older believers have lost over their years of ministry. This energy and excitement can serve as a great advantage to helping small groups grow. However, a church must be careful not to place an immature believer into leadership too fast. The pastoral leadership has the great responsibility of helping that young believer match their energy with maturity in the Gospel. Churches must always be willing to receive potential leaders from anywhere God’s wishes to provide. Again, it is not the churches job to “recruit” the right people into leadership, they are simply to enlist the individuals that God has called into His ministry, and that calling can come from anywhere God pleases.

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<sup>25</sup> Dave Earley *Turning Members Into Leaders* (Houston: Cell Group Resources, 2001), 38

## Step 2 – Training Your Lay Leaders

The second step in building a healthy small group leader model is proper training. It is not enough to just have the right person in the position at the right time, that person must continually be trained in their field so they can continue to develop in their calling. A staple Bible verses for many church education departments is “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>26</sup> Paul was very specific in what he was teaching these believers. They are to grow (αυξανω) a verb meaning to continually increase.<sup>27</sup> This action that Peter is telling these believers to take is an action that should never stop. In this case, they are to never stop increasing. As long as they are alive they are to never stop increasing. In this specific case, they are to never stop increasing in their grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Christ’s grace (χαρις) is his favor, or his benefactor.<sup>28</sup> Each believer is to never stop growing in the favor of Christ as the benefactor of His forgiveness and mercy. Also, each believer is to never stop growing in their knowledge (γνωσις), meaning their comprehension or intellectual grasp of who Jesus is and what He did for them (grace).<sup>29</sup> Small group leaders should never stop developing as an individual, as a follower of Christ, and as a leader of their particular small group. Development comes through hard work and training, so when it comes to properly training small group leaders there are several questions that need to be asked. 1. Why is training actually important? 2. What are they going to be trained in? 3. Who does the training? 4. How

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<sup>26</sup> 2 Peter 3:18, NASB

<sup>27</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 151.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1079.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.



often does this training take place? 5. How will the training be administered? 6. How will the training be evaluated?

One of the first questions that need to be answered when exploring the idea of training small group leaders is, Why the need? If God calls will God not equip? Jesus says in Luke, “So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.”<sup>30</sup> The main problem with that interpretation is that the context has nothing to do with Bible study, spiritual growth and development, and training of leaders. Concerning this passage Broadman states, “The verb to meditate means to prepare a speech. In experiences of persecution disciples will not be shut up to their resources. Jesus promises to give them a mouth, i.e., words, and wisdom, i.e., God’s wisdom.”<sup>31</sup> This verse is specifically speaking of those that will be persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. Christ is encouraging those that will go through persecution that He will be with them and He will help in their time of need. He is not telling the church that He will always give believers the right answers when they are needed, and that Bible study is actually discouraged. This would contradict much of what the Bible teaches about the importance of knowing and studying God’s Word (Psalms 119, Mark 13:31, 2 Timothy 1:15, I Peter 2:2, etc.). The Bible is very clear that believers are to study, learn, and grow in their knowledge of God’s Word, “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”<sup>32</sup> The Word of God is the believers light in a dark world, “Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,”<sup>33</sup> The Word of God is the wholesome food that every believers

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<sup>30</sup> Luke 21:14-15, *NASB*

<sup>31</sup> Clifton J. Allen. *The Broadman Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970), 160.

<sup>32</sup> Psalms 119:105, *NASB*

<sup>33</sup> I Peter 2:2, *NASB*

needs to grow and develop in their faith, and is the perfect guide for life in an imperfect world. Psalms states, “Your Word I have treasured in my heart that I may not sin against You.”<sup>34</sup> There is no growth and development in the Christian life outside of the Word of God, and there is no success in a small group leader outside of growth and development in the Christian life. Therefore, it is vitally important, for both the church and the individual leader, that each church have an effective system for training and growing their small group leaders to produce healthy church growth.

Once the need for small group training has been established the next logical questions is, What are these leaders to be trained in? Are there specific books, techniques, or methods that should be taught to these teachers? The first answer to these questions is answered above. Each and every teachers should be taught and trained in the Word of God. It does not matter if they are a Care Leader, a Missions Leader, a Teaching Leader, a class treasure, or the guy that takes out the trash each Sunday morning, every person in Christian leaderships first priority is to grow in the knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. There is no greater book, no greater teaching tool, no greater aid to a leader than the Word of God. For the church, the Bible is the very mind of God. Paul teaches, “For who has known the mind of the LORD, that we will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.”<sup>35</sup> The church has the most valuable teaching tool that the world has ever seen; the very mind of the one that conceived of and created the universe. The very one the hung the stars in the sky, wrote the laws of physics, and breathed the first breath of life into man, has made His thoughts and feelings known to His people. There is nothing that a church leader will face in this life and in their ministry that is not covered within

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<sup>34</sup> Psalms 119:11, *NASB*

<sup>35</sup> I Cor. 2:16, *NASB*

the pages of Scripture. If a small group leader will dedicate themselves to study and preparation of God's Word, then they will be equipped to handle their role as leader. The first and most important tool that must be used by a church staff in training their small group leaders is the Word of God.

Secondary sources for training small group leaders are items that are more specific for their particular role within the ministry. For example, a Teaching Leader would benefit greatly from such tools as *The 7 Laws of the Teacher* and *Living by the Book* by Howard Hendricks and *Basic Biblical Interpretation* by Roy Zuck. Books and workbooks such as these would be a great help for Teaching Leaders in understanding how to read the Bible, how to develop a Bible study lesson for a biblical passage, and how to properly communicate that lesson to the class.

Therefore, the goal for secondary sources for Teaching Leaders is to help them be able to read and understand the Scriptures and then take what they have learned and teach it to their class in a clear and practical manner. A Care leader can use such tools as the *How People Grow* handbook and guide by Cloud and Townsend, *Connecting* by Larry Crab, and *Margin* by Dr. Richard Swenson. These books and workbooks are designed to help the average small group leader to better understand what the people of their class are going through. These tools will help that leader become more equipped in listening to people and helping them find the right resource for help. These tools are not designed to turn the Care Leader into a certified Christian Counselor, although if that person desires to do so there are resources that can help with that they are designed to help the average believer become more discerning in the lives of those in their class; to help that Care Leader become a better listener and a better friend. In addition, there are many tools that can help the Missions Leader become more equipped to lead their group in evangelism and service. Books like *Jesus Is Awesome* by Danny Lovett and *The Master's Way of Personal*

*Evangelism* by Robert Colman are great books for teaching Missions Leaders how to share their faith most effectively and how to train others to do the same. Local denominational associations can also help to provide great secondary materials for a church to use in training their individual leaders in their specific ministries. Again with the idea being the Word of God is the primary source for leader training, with specific resources for leadership roles being used as secondary sources.

Another logical question when it comes to leadership training is, who is going to lead this training? Who is going to be the leader that trains the leaders? First and foremost, it needs to be someone that the leaders respect. For one adult to train another adult, the person doing the training needs to be someone that carries the authority of someone that actually knows what they are talking about. The person that is leading this class needs to have authority over those they are training. They need to be someone that is trusted by the small group leaders for training them in the Word and Will of God. Nee states, “Many young brothers and sisters are as yet unlearned, not knowing God’s will; hence God has put them under authority. Those in authority are responsible to instruct these younger ones in the knowledge of God’s will.”<sup>36</sup> Small group training goes well beyond biblical knowledge and communication skills. It goes to the will of God for the lives of the individuals in the small group and the church. The person that is leading this training has been placed in authority by God Himself (Romans Chapter 13). That person has the responsibility of leading and training those leaders, by both action and word, in the will of God for their class and the church. The leader of the leaders has an awesome responsibility to God and to the people of the church. They will be held accountable to God and to the church for how they helped to properly train the small group leaders in their particular role. This person must be someone within the church that has a reputation above reproach. Not by their knowledge

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<sup>36</sup> Watchman Nee. *Spiritual Authority*. (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers. Inc., 1972), 116-117.

of Bible or teaching, but by the content of their character they have earned the respect of the leaders to train them in the Word and Will of God.

Now that the church has a working idea of why they should train their leaders, what tools they can use to train their leaders, and who is going to be leading this leader training, the next logical question is, how often does this training take place? The frequency of leadership training is as diverse as the church itself. There are many SBC churches that do not offer any type of leadership training. So their leadership development will most likely be little to none. However, for most of the churches with the SBC that have some type of leadership training, it usually falls on a bi-yearly basis, once a quarter, or once a month. There are several factors that go into the frequency of the leadership training. One factor is the type of training that is involved. The First Baptist Church of Gardendale, Alabama has over 200 leaders in their Sunday School and in-home Bible study system. They have found it to be extremely difficult for them to assemble all their leaders for more than two meetings per year. Twice a year this church caters a dinner for all their Sunday School and in-home Bible study leaders and holds a Purpose Statement seminar. In this seminar they have different speakers that speak to their leaders about the overall purpose or goal of the small group system. This meeting is less designed for specific training in particular leadership roles, and designed more for motivating and energizing their leaders for the ministry. It serves a great purpose in training their leaders in the overall purpose and mission of the church and the small group system, thus keeping all the leaders unified in their purpose and motivated towards their specific goals. However, when it comes to training in specific leadership roles FBC Gardendale has found that more frequent, small in number, meetings are necessary for the most effective training. They separate their training teams into teaching teams, out-reach teams, administrative teams, and in-reach teams. Each of these teams has a specific FBC Gardendale

staff member that heads up training for each team. These teams meet on their own schedules but each one meets quarterly. They have also found that meeting on Sunday afternoons directly after the morning (in which the staff member provides lunch for his team) or directly before the Sunday evening events serve as the best meeting time during the week. For them, Sunday afternoon seem to be the best day of the week for getting all their leaders together in the same place at the same time. They have found that meeting with all of the leaders twice a year and then meeting in their individual teams once every quarter gives them the best opportunity for effective leader training.<sup>37</sup>

FBC Gardendale is just one example of how leadership training can be done effectively within both a large and small group of individuals. Many smaller SBC churches have found that meeting monthly and even weekly can be a great benefit for the church. If the Senior Pastor is on board, a church can have a Small Group Leader Meeting each Wednesday night covering the next weeks Sunday School or small group lesson with an Associate or Education Pastor as the trainer. This would allow the leaders to have training on a weekly basis and would also help their lesson preparation. The church would have to be willing to allow all these leaders to not participate in the normal midweek actives and would have to have enough free staff members to conduct the training. If weekly is not a viable option for the church then maybe a monthly meeting would be more feasible. The staff member in charge of this training can communicate with his or her leaders, find the best day and time of the week for this training, and schedule one day per month for training. That way each leader knows and is consistently reminded by the church staff of the monthly time of training and can adjust their schedules accordingly. When a

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<sup>37</sup> Gardendale First Baptist Church. *Leading From the Second Chair* Training DVD. Gardendale, Al 940 Main St.

church meets for training is ultimately up to their specific people, but the most important thing for staffing a healthy small group system is that the leadership training is being done.

The next questions concerning training small group leaders are closely related to the previous. Hand-in-hand with the frequency of the meetings is, how will the meeting be administered? How is the meeting going to be managed? The first answer to this question is who will be leading the meeting. It is extremely important that the right person be chosen to lead the meeting because this is the person that has the responsibility of keeping the meeting on track. This does not necessarily have to be the person that is leading the training aspect of the meeting, although for many churches with limited budgets and resources it is the same person. The main objective of this individual is to secure a location for the meeting, make sure proper notice has been sent out to all the participants ahead of time, make sure the person leading the teaching aspect of the meeting has all the materials they need, make sure any food or snack is being supplied for the meeting if desired, and help with any follow up information that might be needed after the meeting is completed. With all this in mind, if at all possible, it is ideal that the administrator of these meetings would be someone different than the person that is teaching the meeting.

There are other aspects of a small group training meeting that need to be considered by the administrator. If the meeting is being held during a typical meal-time, then it is proper protocol for the leaders of the meeting to provide some type of meal for the participants. If a church is asking someone to come to a meeting during dinner time, it is only proper that they provide that person dinner either before or after the meeting. This person is also responsible for making sure the participants have all the needed materials for training. If at all possible, the church should supply the participants with everything they will need for the training. If a book is

required for training, then it is the responsibility of the administrator to provide that book for the participants. It is also proper for the church administrator to provide note taking materials and pens for all the participants as well. Therefore, any of the basic needs that the participants will need to take part in the meeting is the responsibility of the meeting administrator to provide.

The final question related to training small group leaders is, how will the training be evaluated? It is vitally important to long-term growth that the leaders, the staff, and the leadership training model consistently be examined and judged to make sure it is accomplishing healthy church growth for the church. The first step in evaluation is having a set purpose or goal for the ministry. In addition to keeping all the church leaders on the same page, it helps to serve as a litmus test for each leader and their specific ministry. The stated purpose of the ministry is the goal, or bar, that needs to be reached by each leader and their ministry. For example, The FBC of Trussville, Alabama stated purpose for their small groups is, “The small group ministry is the primary area for involving every person in the Know His Way part of the church vision. To grow in Christ, each Christian should participate in a small group. Each small group will carry out the 3-fold purpose of the Small Group Ministry of First Baptist Trussville: 1. Teaching God’s Word, 2. Caring for people, 3. Reaching people for Christ.”<sup>38</sup> For FBC Trussville the Small Group Strategy Purpose gives them a measuring stick for their small groups. They can use the 3-fold purposes to properly evaluate each ministry, each class, each staff leader, and each small group leader. For each leader that is effectively reaching these goals, they need to be celebrated and publically congratulated for their faithfulness and effort for the Gospel. Praise from the church staff towards their volunteer staff needs to be as public as possible. Let the church body know how great of a job the leader is doing while at the same time letting the leader see the church staff acknowledging their efforts. In addition, those volunteer leaders that are working

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<sup>38</sup> First Baptist Church Trussville, Alabama. *Small Group Strategy of FBC Trussville*. 10/9/2010



hard for the Gospel but just are not getting the desired results must also receive public acknowledgment for their efforts. Any corrections that need to be made can be done in private behind closed doors, because the last thing a church wants to do is discourage a loyal worker with public criticism. However, it is vitally important that all leaders be held accountable for their leadership, and must consistently (two to three times per year) be evaluated for their performance.

As stated above, churches cannot be afraid of examining the product coming from each leader and then holding them up against the stated purpose. Unless a church is extremely abnormal, they will have a few leaders that are not reaching their greatest potential. For whatever reason, they are not producing what the church would consider “healthy” growth. A church is not doing a leader any favors if they let him or her continually under-perform in their ministry. Paul states, “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for man.”<sup>39</sup> The word heartily is actually two words (ψυχηνσ εργαζεσθε)<sup>40</sup> meaning to work energetically with all of one’s soul for a specific purpose. Every leader is called to work hard, to work diligently, and to do it all as though they are doing it for Jesus Himself, because that is actually what they are doing; working for the glory and fame of Christ. A church is not doing itself or the individual any good if they are willing to allow that person to underperform. Confrontation is not always easy and telling someone, especially someone with a really good heart, that they are not performing up to their best ability can be extremely hard. Hurting someone’s feelings is always a possibility, but if the church truly loves that person they must be willing to help that person conform to the image of Christ. It is the job of the pastoral staff to help that person improve and

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<sup>39</sup> Colossians 3:23, *NASB*

<sup>40</sup> Paul McReynolds. *Word Study Greek-English New Testament*. (Wheaton: ILL, Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 728.

become the best leader possible, for both themselves and their small group. Christ died to help that person become spiritually mature in all phases of life. Therefore, the church must always evaluate itself and all its leaders to make sure it is doing all that it can to train the best leaders possible.

### Step 3 – Motivating Your Lay Leaders

The final step in building a model of leadership that produces healthy church growth is properly and consistently motivating the small group leaders. It is extremely important that a church enlist the right person into leadership and the right position within their church. It is also extremely important that this person continually be trained in their skills and abilities so they can continue to become the best leader for the Gospel that is possible. All the effort that is put into finding and training the right people will be for naught if that person resigns after only a few months of service. Being a small group leader can be very stressful on both the individual and their family. A church can do the best they can to prepare someone for leadership but there is no teacher like experience. Most people do not really know what type of leaders they truly are until it is time to lead. That is why it is so important for church leadership and a pastoral staff to consistently find ways to keep their leaders motivated; to keep them energized for their mission from within, not necessarily from the outside. Gangel states, “Perhaps the most crucial concept of motivation we abuse with regularity, is that motivation springs from the inside, and is not created externally. We always talk about ‘motivating people’ when what we really do is facilitate their own motivation and interest.”<sup>41</sup> The most effective and motivated small group leader is the one that finds their motivation and interest from within themselves and their relationship with Christ. A pastoral staff can give all the rah-rah speeches they desire to their small group leaders,

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<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Gangel. *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 223-224.

but if those leaders are not motivated from within their motivation will most likely be short lived. An adult leader should have the maturity, integrity, and desire to serve Christ without having to constantly be cheered-up. However, there are several tools that a pastoral staff can use to help their small group leaders stay motivated for their mission from within themselves and from their relationship with Christ.

There are three very practical ways in which a church can work at keeping their small group leaders motivated: 1. Reminding them of the price that God was willing to pay to allow those leaders to be a part of God redemption plan on the earth, 2. Never letting them forget the call of God on their lives to serve the church and the Gospel, 3. Never letting them forget the mission and purpose of the church and the ministry they have been gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve. These three motivational tools help these leaders to cognitively understand and practically feel the love of God. Love is the greatest of motivations. Love is what motivated God to sacrifice Himself on the cross for all humanity and love should serve as the greatest of motivators for small group leaders. These three tools are designed to help small group leaders know and feel the love of God in their lives and their love for Him. This all begins with understanding the magnitude of the cross. Understanding, in both heart and mind, what God gave up for humanity and in reality how little He asks from His leaders. The second motivation for enduring the rough times of leadership is the call of God in their lives. Their lives are not their own and they have been bought with a price. Having a Gospel centered perspective can help the most discouraged leader keep going through the hard times. In addition, the Gospel centered perspective will also help the leader understand the purpose and mission of their current ministry. It is the job of those in pastoral leadership of the church to consistently remind their leaders of the great calling on

their lives and the price that God was willing pay to allow those leaders to be a part of His church.

The first tool that church can use to help keep their leaders motivated for small group ministry is making sure they have, and keep, a real understanding of what God sacrificed so they could be a part of humanities redemption. Practical theology can be a great motivator for a small group leader. It helps them to answer the questions of, who am I working for? Why am I working? What is my reward for this work? Whether it is a small group leader that has twenty years of experience or it someone that has only been in leadership two weeks, every leader, every pastor, and every believer needs to have a proper understanding of what exactly God gave up for the church. In theological terms, it is called the incarnation. Erickson states, “Incarnation may be understood in a narrow and a broad sense. In the narrow sense, it is the belief that at one point in time and space God entered the world, in the person of Jesus Christ, as he had never done before and has never done since. In the broad sense, incarnation signifies God’s immanence in the world.”<sup>42</sup> The incarnation can serve as a great motivational tool because it gives humanity great insight into the love of God for humanity. First the church can see all that Christ gave up because of His love for us. Philippians states, “Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.”<sup>43</sup> The word *form* here (μορφήν) means to have the appearance and shape of something of the same substance,<sup>44</sup> and the word grasped (αρπαγμον) is better translated as the word exploited. In this passage, the Holy Spirit through

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<sup>42</sup> Millard Erickson. *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 696.

<sup>43</sup> Philippians 2:6-7, *NASB*

<sup>44</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 659.

Paul is clearly stating that Jesus existed in eternity past as the substance of God but did not regard His deity as a position to utilize for His benefit. He willingly emptied or deprived Himself of all the privileges of His deity and took on the form or substance of humanity. Jesus was not obligated to, forced to, or even has to be convinced to shed Himself of His eternal glory and take on a physical human body. He did it because He loves His people! What was His reward for this love? Verse 8 says, “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”<sup>45</sup> Jesus love for humanity compelled Him to take off the glory of His rightful place in eternity, take on the physical flesh of a human, and willingly give Himself over to the humiliating death of crucifixion. MacArthur describes it this way,

“In the final feature of His decent and degradation, Jesus submitted even to death on a cross. There were many ways by which He could have been killed. He could have been beheaded, such as John the Baptist was, or stoned or hanged. But He was destined not for just any kind of death but for death on a cross. Crucifixion is perhaps the most cruel, excruciatingly painful, and shameful form of execution even considered. It was originally devised by the ancient Persians or Phoenicians and later perfected by the Romans. It was reserved for slaves, the lowest of criminals and enemies of the state. No Roman citizen could be crucified, no matter how egregious his crime.”<sup>46</sup>

The death that Jesus died was the most humiliating death a man could suffer. The fact that Jesus was God-man made His death on the cross all the more humiliating. Because of His love for His people Jesus willingly gave His life for their future glory. No one made Jesus give His life, not the Romans, the Temple guards or Pilot. Jesus gave His life willingly on the cross for those that he loved. Jesus says, speaking of His life, “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

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<sup>45</sup> Philippians 2:8, *NASB*

<sup>46</sup> John MacArthur. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers. 2001), 134.

This commandment I received from My Father.”<sup>47</sup> Jesus had all authority on Heaven and on earth as to whether or not He would lay down His life for humanity. But because it was the will of the Father and because of His great love for the church, Jesus willingly gave His life.

The purpose for the cross must never be missed, glossed over, or simply ignored by the church or its small group leaders. The purpose of the cross was a loving God giving all that He had for a group of the people that will, in majority, reject His love and defy His authority. In spite of that foreknowledge, Jesus still gave up His glory and life for those that would one day choose to love Him in return. Love was the great motivator. Love motivated God to become a man. Love motivated that man to serve those who should have worshipped Him. Love motivated that man to give His life as the penal substitutionary atonement for all of mankind. Love motivated this man’s followers to take the message of His death, burial, and resurrection around the world. Guilt will only motivate a person enough to get those in authority over them off their back, but love will motive a man to give his life! That is exactly what God did for His leaders. He gave His life so that they could be a part of the Great Commission; therefore, one of the greatest motivational tools that a church can use for their leaders is a proper theological understanding of the cross and His love.

A second tool that church leadership can use to keep their small group motivated is a consistent reminder of the spiritual calling on that person’s life. This tool goes hand-in-hand with the first. If a leader does not cognitively and emotionally understand the meaning of God’s love through the cross with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, then the calling of God on their life will most likely be of little to no consequence. It all starts with the cross! Once a leader truly knows and appreciates the cross, they are in a position to understand and appreciate the calling of

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<sup>47</sup> John 10:18, *NASB*

God on their life. As stated before, every believer has a calling on their life for the Gospel. Every member is a not just a minister but a missionary; a missionary for their family, a missionary to their street, a missionary to their neighborhood, and a missionary for their community. As Hirsch states it, “Every Christian needs to view his or her immediate world with the same perspective as a missionary in a foreign land. The best hope for the spread of kingdom outposts is for our churches to consist of individuals who view themselves as missionaries.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore they have the enormous privilege of serving the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a missionary in their own community. They do not have to serve Christ, they get to serve Christ! One of the most powerful things a church can do for its leaders is to help them understand the privilege they have in serving Christ through the church. So often people believe that they have to volunteer in the church or in the community to earn or justify God’s love for them. What they must come to understand is that believers are to volunteer in their church and community because God already loves them, not so that He will love them. The cross proves to the church that God loved the church long before it could ever love Him. Serving in the church is a not a ploy to earn God’s love. It is a joy believers have because God first loved them. The narrative in Acts is a great example,

“But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time. And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered. So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.” They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they went

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<sup>48</sup> Alan Hirsch. Lance Ford. *Right Here Right Now*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 64.

on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.”<sup>49</sup>

In this passage, the Apostles were imprisoned, flogged (meaning they were whipped or beaten), and ordered by the authorities not to speak the name of Jesus. How did they respond to this persecution? Verse 41 specifically states that they left celebrating the fact that they were counted worth by God to be beaten and made to suffer for the name of Christ. What motivated these men to react in such a way? Was it a pep-talk by Peter to all the boys? Did they bring in a motivational speak to get everyone excited before Pentecost? No! They considered it an honor that they were simply allowed by God to share the name of Jesus. Their love for Jesus and their whole-hearted belief in the Gospel served as all the motivation they needed to face the obstacles in front of them. These men understood the cross, understood what Christ had given up for them, and understood the privilege it was to serve to His name. This heart-felt knowledge was all the motivation these men needed to put their lives on the line for the Gospel. It certainly should serve as all the motivation a small group leader needs to serve his or her community for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A final tool that can be used to help motivate small group leaders is a purpose or missions statement. For dedicated and committed small group leaders that truly love Christ and wish to serve Him with their life, the cross is all the motivation they will need. It is not a bad idea though for a church to have a set list of goals they wish to accomplish as a ministry. A Purpose Statement or Mission Statement is not meant to take priority over the Gospel or the Great Commission. It is in fact meant to help the people understand how they can be a part of and accomplish the Great Commission in a real and practical way. It is a road map for them to follow in their efforts to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Fields says, “When you reveal

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<sup>49</sup> Acts 5:34-41, NASB



a purpose statement, you will take away the mystery of your ministry. A clear purpose statement will help you make sense of your programs, utilize your volunteers more effectively, and provide direction for your people's spiritual maturity."<sup>50</sup> Spiritual maturity is just another way of saying disciple making. As stated in Chapter 2, making disciples is the number one priority of a small group. That is what Christ commands of the church and that is what should be accomplished by a healthy small group. A clear and applicable purpose statement can help to give direction and organization to that process. Just having motivated and willing workers is not enough, they must have direction and administration in where they are going as a small group and as a ministry. A Gospel-centered purpose statement helps to give both them and the church confidence they are accomplishing the missions at hand. Organization and order are a must for healthy small group system, and a clear and applicable purpose statement can help to bring that into reality.

Concerning Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall in Jerusalem, Swindoll states, "Do you know that God honors order and organization? Can you imagine what had previously transpired in Nehemiah's mind in order for him to provide an immediate, on-the-spot answer? Nehemiah had a plan. He had been planning. That in itself was an exercise in faith. He was so sure God would let him go that he even drew up an agenda in case the king asked him how much leave of absence he would need!"<sup>51</sup> Having a plan and purpose for a small group is not a lack of faith. It is faith in action! Simply sitting around and waiting for the Holy Spirit to tell the church and small group what is next simply by osmosis is not practical and is also not biblical. Look at what Paul said about the need for order and organization in worship, "For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to

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<sup>50</sup> Doug Fields. *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1998), 56.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Swindoll. *Hand Me Another Brick* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998), 37.

prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”<sup>52</sup> It is not a lack of faith to have order and reason behind ones ministry. Just as the Holy Spirit said in I Corinthians concerning worship, the same principle stands for small group ministry. A small group ministry should be organized and administrated to accomplish specific goals and objectives. Proverbs states, “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law.”<sup>53</sup> Concerning this verse Ross states, “If there is no revelation (vision) from God, people can expect spiritual and political anarchy. A nation’s well-being depends on obedience to divine revelation.”<sup>54</sup> A Gospel-centered purpose statement must be well designed, prayed over, discussed, researched, and examined to make sure that it is biblically sound and theologically accurate. A church must have a vision or revelation as to how it is to function on a practical real-world basis. That vision or revelation can only come from God Himself. It takes tremendous faith and dependence on God for a church to function on His vision and His timing. A Gospel-centered, God-given, purpose statement is not a superseding of God’s wisdom with man’s (by definition a lack of faith); it is actually the exact opposite. When done correctly, it is the very vision of God alone for that church and community. It is a goal that God has set for that church, it is the purpose that God has set for that ministry, and it is the road that God has designed for that church to take for the purpose of the Great Commission. Therefore, when done correctly, a purpose statement is a type of road map designed by God for a church to have an organized and applicable ministry designed to bring glory and honor to Christ through the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Therefore a well-designed purpose statement can layout those stated goals and objectives for all the small group leaders to read and understand. In the

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<sup>52</sup> I Cor. 14:31-33, *NASB*

<sup>53</sup> Proverbs 29:18, *NASB*

<sup>54</sup> Allan Ross. *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1991), 1116.

example given before, the FBC Trussville Small Group Strategy Purpose has three specific means (teaching, caring, and reaching) to reach three specific goals (each person learning the overall church vision, each person participating in a small group, and each person growing in Christ). All of their means and goals are biblically founded, all can be practically achieved within each class, and every leader can be actively involved in reaching these goals. Their purpose statement can function as a road map for all of the leaders to use to achieve their goals, and by inference, the goals of the Great Commission. This can and should serve as a motivational tool because it helps the individual leaders have a clear and understandable vision of what their specific job is (teaching, caring, or reaching) and what they can practically accomplish within their ministry. Success in ministry is a great motivator. Seeing others come to Christ or seeing someone practically grow in their faith because of a positive influence of that leader into their lives can be a tremendous motivator for that leader. A well designed and administered purpose statement can help a church better communicate those goals to their leaders. As a consequence, by better communicating the goals of the church to their leaders through a well-designed purpose statement, the church is putting their leaders into a better position for success. The more success a leader has the better motivated they will be for ministry, and the better motivated they are for ministry the more likely they are to weather the hard times that are sure to come.

## CHAPTER 5 – HOW THE RESEARCH SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF LAY LEADERS

### Introduction

The importance of healthy church growth has been established. If the church is not making disciples that make disciples, which make disciples, and so-on and so-fourth, then the church (both local and universal) is failing Christ and the Great Commission. In addition, the portrait of a healthy small group leader has been described. It is someone (both men and women, young and old) that lives their life for the glory and honor of Christ alone and exists to help others do the same. A practical model has been laid out for how a church can enlist, train, and motivate those leaders to produce healthy church growth. However, more detail needs to be given to three specific areas of small group leaders, specifically their lay leaders (leaders within the church, such as Sunday School teachers, deacons, committee members, etc., that are not paid by the church for their duties), because churches are finding it harder and harder to find quality lay leaders today. McIntosh states the problem,

“One might contend that all the necessary gifts to build a church are present in the people. God has gifted each person and, to the extent each person is empowered to use his gifts, the church will grow. Unfortunately the lifestyles of most people today reduce their time for volunteer ministry. The emergence of the two-income family, the growing number of women pursuing careers, and a commuter constituency, among other lifestyle changes, has diminished the number of hours the typical church member can devote to volunteer service.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, in order to enlist, train, and motivate the right people for lay leadership, church staffs and leaders need to understand that healthy lay leadership within the church is biblical, that lay leadership within the church is diverse, healthy lay leaders help to open new doors of ministry for the entire church, and healthy lay leadership fuels healthy disciple making within the church. Church staff cannot do it all by themselves. In order for a church to grow, and grow in a healthy, quality lay leadership is a must!

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<sup>1</sup> Gary McIntosh. *Staff Your Church For Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 13.

### Healthy Lay Leaders Are Biblical

A pastoral staff must ask itself two simple questions. 1. What is our main goal as a church pastoral staff? 2. Is it possible to reach that goal without the help of the lay people within the church? The answer to the first question has been stated very plainly; the main goal and responsibility of the church pastoral staff is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The answer to the second question can be found in the book of Ephesians, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;”<sup>2</sup> In verse eleven Paul states gifts are given to certain men and women so that they may lead the church in sharing the Gospel and making disciples. The men and women with these gifts are given the primary responsibility of leading and directing the church. MacArthur explains the meaning of their leadership roles,

“From its inception at Pentecost the church has been indebted to the apostles, through who Christ established the fullness of New Testament doctrine. Those uniquely called and empowered men recorded God’s final revelation as He revealed it to them. The prophets, through they did not usually receive direct revelation from God, nevertheless were greatly instrumental in building up and strengthening the early church. Evangelist and pastors and teachers are now in place in God’s plan for the advancement of the kingdom. Evangelist are men how proclaim good news. Pastors translate poimen, who normal meaning is shepherd. It emphasized the care. Protection and leadership of the man of God for the flock. A teacher has to do with the primary function of pastors. Though teaching can be identified as a ministry of its own, pastors and teachers are best understood as one office of leadership in the church.”<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, those with these particular gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors, and teachers) have been gifted in order to lead the church in making Disciples of Christ. However, they have not been given these gifts to lead the church all by themselves. Verse twelve explains why they have been given these gifts (for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 4:11-12, *NASB*

<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 142-143.

building up of the body of Christ). These positions exist primarily to equip or train the lay people of the church to make disciples. The word equipping used in this verse (καταρτισις) means the process of perfecting or maturing something.<sup>4</sup> In this case that something that needs to be perfected or matured is the individual believer of the church, and the people with the primary responsibility of helping those individuals become perfected or matured are the church leaders (with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit). MacArthur also states, “Equipping basically refers to that which is fit, is restored to its original condition, or is made complete. The word was often used as a medical term for the setting of bones.”<sup>5</sup> When every believer comes to Christ they come to Him broken and out of order. The process of sanctification (becoming less like one’s natural self and more like Christ) takes a lifetime to achieve. It is the responsibility of those in pastoral leadership to help the people of their church become mature and complete followers of Jesus Christ. It is not their job to do all the work for the people. It is not their job to entertain them and motivate to just try a little a harder this week to be a good Christian. They have come into the church like a man with a broken bone. A bone so badly broken that he cannot walk or function in this life on his own. A pastor can give all the motivational speeches he desires, and can entertain that man with all the best music and all the best videos, but in the end the man will still be crippled. What he needs to be is restored, to be fixed, put back together, equipped, by the Great Physician so that he can live again. He needs to do this so that he can go from a man with a debilitating injury, to a man that is equipped and ready to help others around him that are broken and need restoration. That is the job of the pastoral staff, to train the saints (all the believers in their local congregation) to do the work of building the church. It was never meant for the

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<sup>4</sup> Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 526

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

pastoral staff to do all the work. However, the church in America has become an expert in entertaining the masses while doing all the work themselves. Whether it is from a sense of entitlement, concern for job security, or just an ignorance of discipleship training, many pastors in America have taken the this is what you pay me for or I'm the expert mentality and have totally disregarded their calling to equip and train their people for daily ministry. These verses are quite clear. Those gifted with the ability to teach and to lead the church are to do so with the purpose of training and equipping the people of the church to do the daily ministry. Ideally they are to work themselves out of a job. However, with the quick turnover rate of volunteer leaders a pastor equipping the saints of the church so well that he works himself out of a job is highly unlikely. The fact that it is highly unlikely does not mean that it still cannot and should not be the goal of every ministry, to reach, teach, and equip his or her leaders so well that their services to the local church will no longer be needed. So, first and foremost, it is the responsibility of the church pastoral staff to make disciples by training and equipping the saints to take up the mantle of building Christ's church.

However, why is this necessary? If God has equipped the pastors and leaders of the church to do the job of making disciples, then why is it necessary for lay members to get involved? Isn't the only thing they really need to do is to bring people to church so they can hear the sermon? After all the preacher is the one that went to seminary. He is the one that spent all week working and praying over (which is a huge assumption by the way) the sermon so he can lead others to Christ. Why should the lay people of the church get involved in the disciple making process of the church? The first answer to those questions is that it is biblical. As the previous verses state, it is the job of the pastoral staff of the church to equip their members for ministry. Why would God give them responsibility of equipping the saints for ministry if He did

not expect the saints to be involved! A second answer to that question can be found in Acts chapter 6. In this chapter the church was growing and the needs of the people were increasing. The Apostles were faced with a choice; they could take time out for Bible teaching and prayer and help meet the needs of the people, or they could find suitable men to take up the important task of serving the people, "So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.'"<sup>6</sup> The Apostles understood that someone, specifically the twelve, had the important task of teaching and preaching the Word of God, especially during the early growth and development stage of the church. However, that did not mean that serving the widows and meeting the needs of the people were not just as important. Basically they understood that there was too much work to be done by just the Apostles. They needed help from good men to be able to accomplish all that God had planned for the early church. The situation has not changed in today's modern church, if anything the work load is even more. In today's modern American churches there are more ministry activities, small groups, Sunday School classes, and associational meetings than the first 50 years of the early church. Therefore, the organizational aspects of these churches are tremendous. If a church truly desires to grow and be as effective as possible in their local community, there is no way that a single pastor or a full pastoral staff can do the work alone. They need a strong group of individuals working alongside of them to help them accomplish this great task. Below is a chart of the healthy church growth rate of those churches and church staffs that place a high priority on strong lay leadership and those that do not.

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 6:2-4, *NASB*



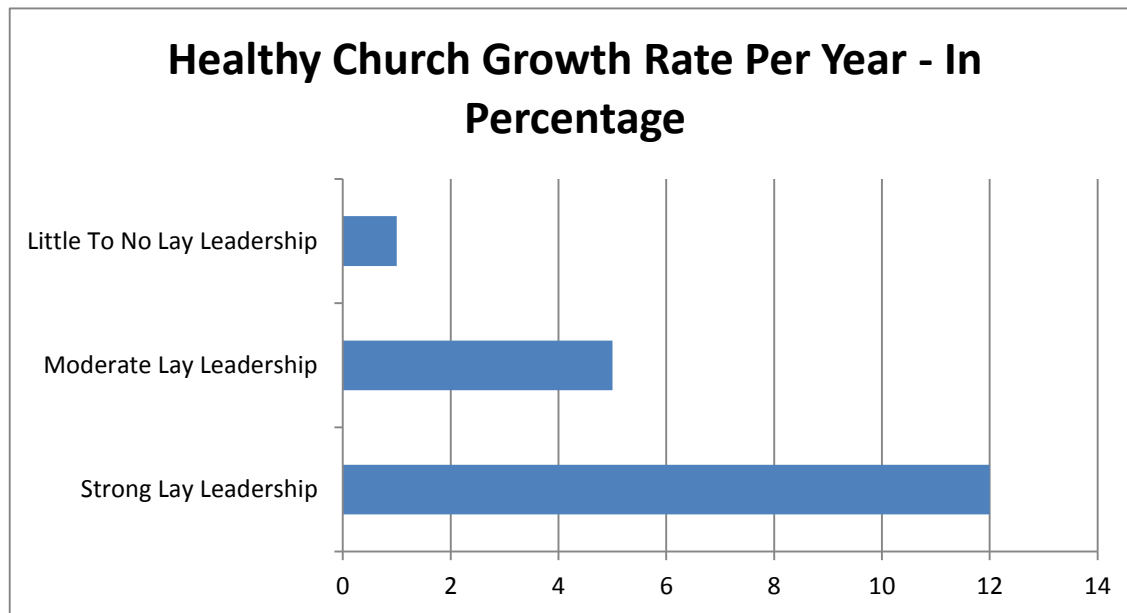


Figure F1

As can be seen in the chart above, among the churches that were researched for this thesis, the churches that had strong lay leadership involvement in their day-to-day ministries had a healthy church growth rate of 12% of their average church attendance, for those with moderate lay leadership involvement the healthy church growth rate was 5% of their average church attendance, and for those churches with little to no lay leadership the healthy church growth rate was 1% of their average church attendance. The starting size of the church seemed to be of little or no consequence to the growth rate. The main factor for the growth was the daily involvement of healthy lay leaders. Therefore, the main factor for a church to make disciples, serve and reach the needs of their people, and to reach their community with the Good News of Jesus Christ was the day-to-day involvement of healthy lay leaders. Foster states, “The desperate need today is not a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”<sup>7</sup> As stated before, healthy church growth has less to do with the number of people that are attending a service but more to do with the number of disciples that are being created each year; thus, one of the most

<sup>7</sup> Richard Foster. *Celebration of Discipline* (Harper Pub. San Francisco, 1998), 1.

important jobs of lay leadership is to help their people become deeper in their faith. By deeper Foster means to have a real understanding of Spiritual Disciplines in one's life. He states, "The purpose of Discipline is liberation from stifling slavery to self-interest and fear."<sup>8</sup> The pastor preaching on Sunday morning can only reach so many people at one time. If the church truly decides that it wants to develop healthy disciples of Jesus Christ the people of the church (lay leaders) must get involved. They must take responsibility for the spiritual discipline of their specific class and their specific people for the overall health of the church. The pastor cannot do it alone and the church is not designed for him to do it alone. Again, as the research indicates, those church that have strong lay leadership have more than twice the percentage of healthy church growth as compared to even the churches that have a moderate amount of lay leaders.

The fact cannot be missed that healthy lay leadership within the context of the local church is biblical in nature and vital for accomplishing the Great Commission. The preaching pastor can only reach, teach, and guide a limited number of people at one specific time. The healthy spiritual growth and development of a church must be a church-wide goal, not just the goal of the pastoral staff. Foster also states, "Perhaps the preoccupation with private guidance in Western cultures is the product of their emphasis on individualism."<sup>9</sup> American people are private by nature, but if the church is going to make a real difference in people lives they must be willing to go from private to public. The church staff must be willing to let the lay leaders of the church have more responsibility in reaching their own community. Thus, a church pastoral staff and leadership must know and understand that without the help of its lay leadership, making disciples, cultivating a healthy church, and accomplishing the Great Commission is an extremely uphill battle.

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Foster. *Celebration of Discipline* (Harper Pub. San Francisco, 1998), 2

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 176

### Healthy Lay Leaders Are Diverse

In addition to being biblical, healthy lay leaders are also diverse. Being a diverse leader does not mean that he or she is the Lone-Ranger of small group leaders or that they are hostile towards authority. Many times, leaders that are given room to be themselves can be some of the happiest and most effective lay leaders of the church. The truth is, lay leaders come in all different shapes and sizes. They are diverse in the race, sex, size, and in biblical, physical, and emotional maturity. Healthy lay leaders are not meant to be carbon copies of their leaders. Each person has their own giftedness, physical talents, and personal skills. Each person must have the freedom to function in the manner in which they have been designed by God to function. Thus, a healthy church will have leaders of all shapes and sizes. The charts below will show that when churches allow their lay leaders to function within their own giftedness, they achieved two different goals. First, their rate of healthy growth was higher. Those with diverse leadership grow at 11% of their average church attendance, the church with somewhat diverse lay leadership grow at 6% of their average church attendance, and those with little to know diversity within their lay leadership grow at 2% of their average church attendance. Second, the length of that leader's service at that particular church was longer. Those churches with diverse lay leadership serve 15% longer of their average church questioned, those with somewhat diversity within their lay leadership served 7% longer of their average church questioned, and those with little to no diversity served 0 to 1% longer of their average church questioned. The conclusion from the two charts below is that churches with more diversity within their leadership experienced a higher rate of healthy church growth and more longevity with their lay leadership, which in turn brings more stability and growth to the church.

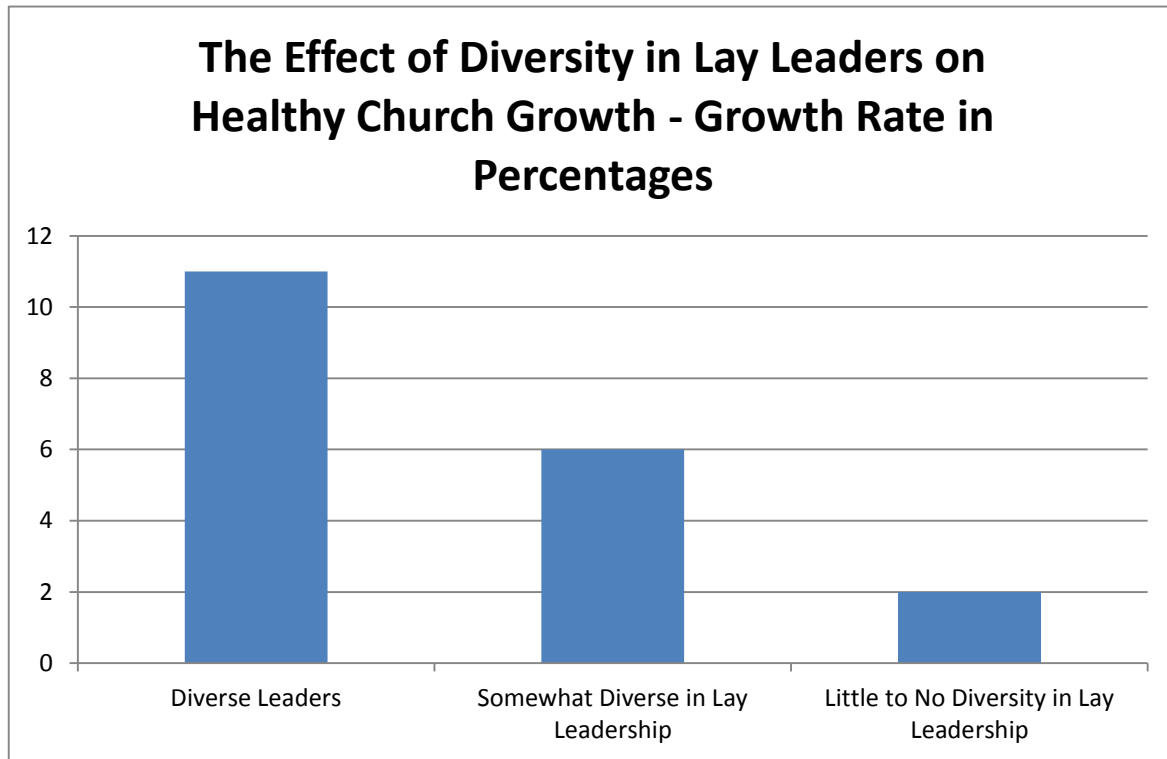


Figure F2

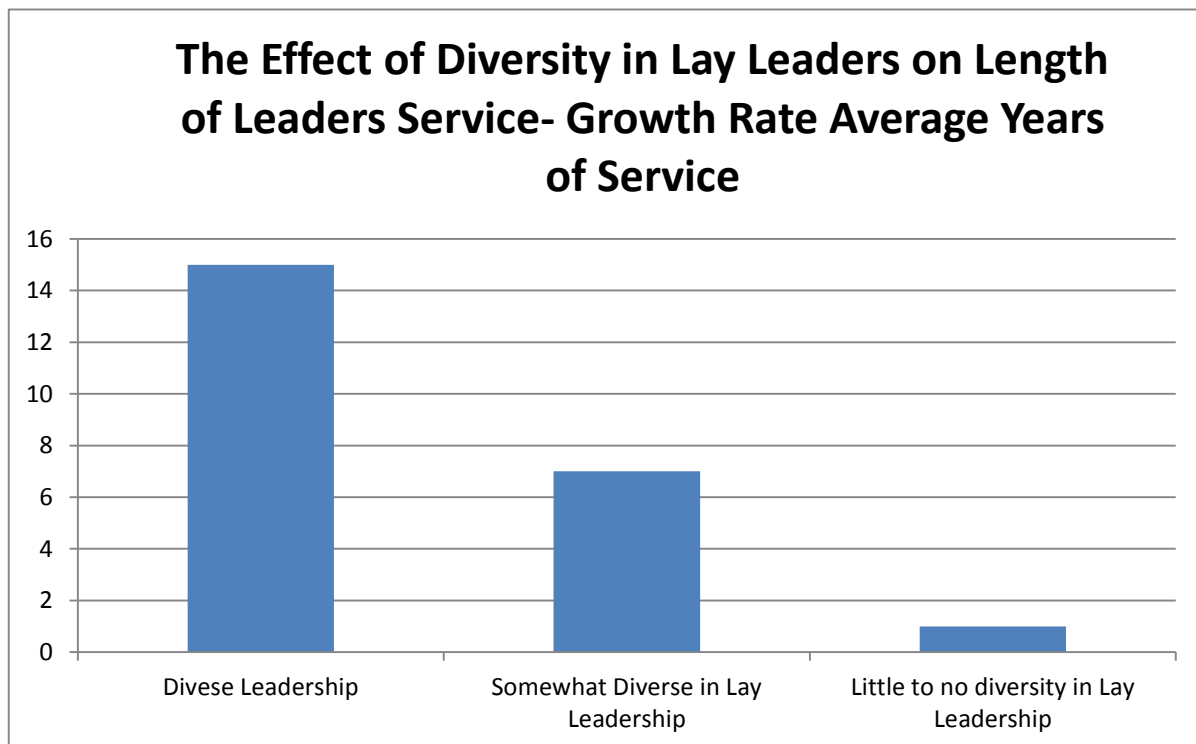


Figure F3

As stated above, when churches have a diverse set of lay leadership their rate of healthy church growth and longevity of their workers is almost twice that of the churches with moderately

diverse leadership. The churches with little to no diversity in their lay leadership have a relatively low healthy growth rate and short span of service in the lay leaders. These numbers remained true regardless of the size of the church. The mega-churches with thousands of members, as well as the small country churches found that their healthy growth rate would decrease when the pastoral staff took on more of the work load and relied less on their lay leaders. Whether it is dozens of pastors trying to reach and teach thousands of people or it is one Godly man trying to reach and teach one hundred people, the work load of making disciples of Jesus Christ cannot be done without the help of quality lay leaders. A pastor cannot do it alone; regardless of how Godly he may be in the eyes of his people. Concerning the pastor's need for help from the lay leadership Criswell's states, "Whatever their leadership is called within the church, this group represents the motivating and driving force behind the success of the organization."<sup>10</sup> He also states, "A church grows like a tree trunk, always in the circle on the outside in the annual ring. At the center of the church are the pastor, his staff, and the lay leadership."<sup>11</sup> The center of healthy church growth is never the pastor alone. If he wants his church to make disciple of Jesus Christ in a healthy and consistent manner, a pastor must have a good team of lay leaders at his side.

What does a diverse lay leadership ministry look? That actually depends on several factors. First is the theological leaning of the church and its denomination, specifically how they view women in leadership in the church. Within the Methodist, Presbyterian, and non-denominational churches there were more female lay leaders in their adult ministries than within the traditional SBC setting.

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<sup>10</sup> W.A. Criswell *Criswell's Guidebook For Pastors* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 2000), 81.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

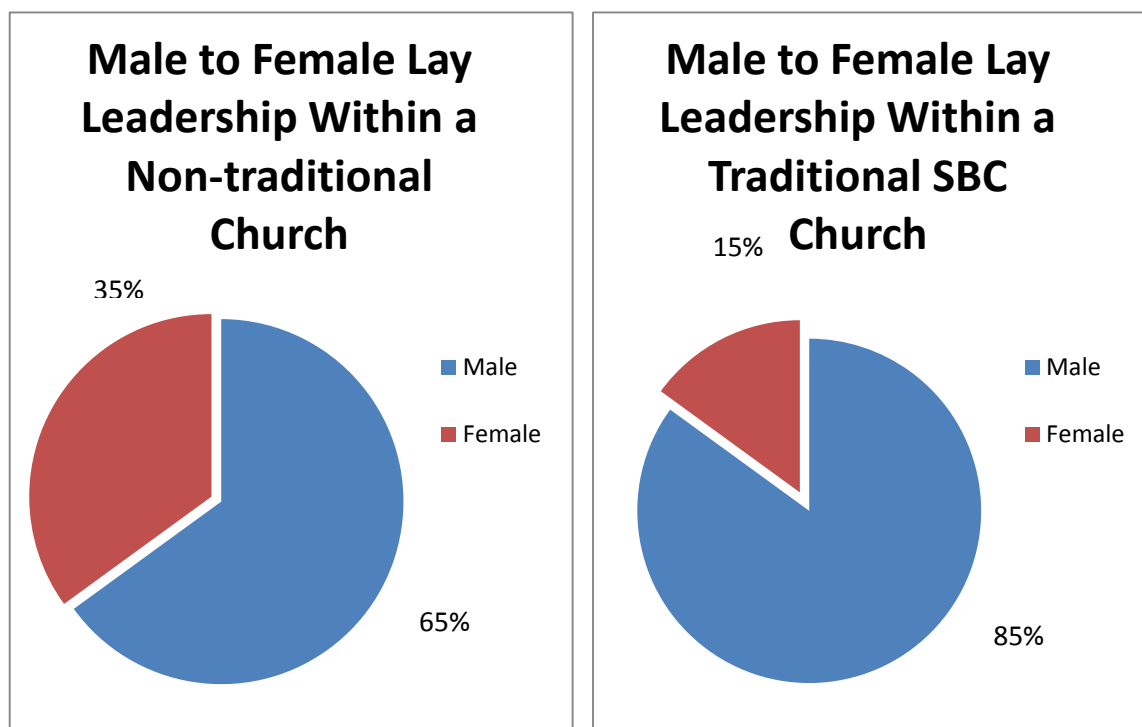


Figure F4

As the charts above shows, the non-traditional (as compared to a traditional SBC church) still has male dominated lay leadership (65% male leadership and 35% female leadership) within their adult department but the gap is much closer when compared to the traditional SBC church, which is extremely heavy in their male lay leadership (85% male leadership and 15% female leadership). One thing that was noticed was the increase in number of non-traditional small group Bible studies with the non-traditional churches that allowed for more leadership opportunities for females. The more traditional churches tended to stick very closely to the standard SBC Sunday School model which gives very little room for female leadership within their adult ministries. The non-traditional church had more Bible studies such as home-groups, Sunday night small groups, and even traditional Sunday School classes that were more thematic than quarterly in their Bible study method. This type of diversity in their Bible classes gave more room for more female leadership. As pointed out in the chart on page 123, the more active the lay leaders can be in their ministry the more likely they are to have a healthy longevity to their

ministry. Concerning this Susan Foh states, “What the Sunday School teacher does differs from what the minister does in his sermon in the authority behind it. The fact that Sunday School takes place on Sunday should not cloud the difference.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, having a female lead Sunday School class, within the proper dynamics, can only help the church reach and disciple more people with the Gospel. Therefore, the non-traditional church tended to have longer and more effective lay leadership among both males and females within their church because the burden of leadership is spread among more people.

In addition to diversity among the sexes within these churches, diversity among the races was also examined. The chart below shows the diversity among the fifty plus churches that were interviews in and around the Birmingham, AL area.

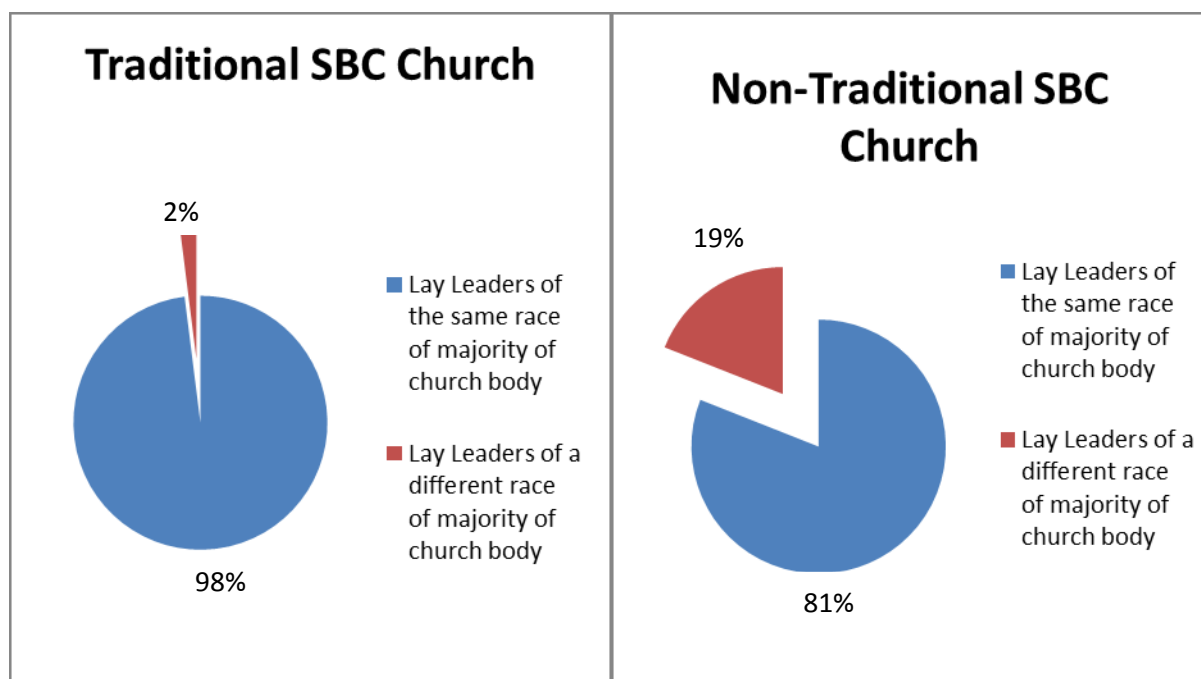


Figure F5

As the chart shows, the racial diversity among the lay leadership within the traditional church setting is almost nonexistent. The race of the lay leadership to the church body among the traditional SBC churches was a 98% match, compared to an 81% match among non-traditional

<sup>12</sup> Susan Foh *Women In Ministry* (Downers Grove: ILL, InterVarsity Press. 1989), 97.

churches. Overall, among the fifty plus churches that were interviewed and examined for this project there was an 89% racial match of lay leader to the church body. The racial majority of the church did not make much of a difference in the percentage of racial diversity within that church. The majority African-American churches, Korean speaking churches, and White-Caucasian churches had close to a 100% racial match in lay leadership to the church body. There is very little diversity within the church body so there is very little diversity within their lay leadership. In contrast, the mega-church, non-traditional, and more contemporary in worship style churches tended to have more diversity within their church body so they had more diversity within their lay leaders. How these particular numbers effects healthy church members is unclear. Racial diversity among the lay leadership of the church is not something that can or should be forced upon a church body. Racial diversity is something that needs to, and should, occur organically within a church body. One of the most harmful things a pastor or church leader can do to the overall health of a church is force racial diversity onto a church body that is not open or willing for that change. He or she could find themselves on the back end of some angry phone calls and office visits, and maybe even without a job. It is no coincidence that those churches that are open to racial diversity within their church body and church lay leadership are more conditioned for healthy church growth. They have removed the social and cultural barriers that are often associated with racial diversity in the southern United States, and are more evangelistic and proactive within all the different types of people in their community. As stated before, a church must get to this point slowly and carefully. However, as seen in the previous charts, the more opportunities a church has for female leadership within the church and the more racially diverse the lay leadership becomes, the more likely the church is moving forward in healthy church growth and developing disciples of Jesus Christ.



However, as important as diversity in lay leadership is to a churches healthy growth, it must be understood that diversity in lay leadership does not mean compromise in theological convictions. Concerning proper biblical interpretation MacArthur states, “The expositor needs to observe every clue regarding what a context says explicitly and also what it does not say. He should seek proof in the biblical context as the TV detective Colombo probes for clues in his context. From properly handled clues the preacher will get his points, not from jumping to conclusions originating with his own imagination about what is necessary.”<sup>13</sup> Different churches will interpret different passages and theological concepts in different ways. A traditional SBC church will have a different understating of a females role in ministry than compared to a Methodist church. Both churches can love Christ, serve their communities, and believe they are absolutely correct in their biblical interpretation. However, churches have to be very careful not to do two specific things: 1. Compromise their theological views in order to reach a more diverse audience, 2. Compromise their theological views in order to have more diverse lay leadership. The warning for those churches is that they do not compromise their theological convictions because they see another church down the road having success in their ministry. MacArthur also states, “There is a discernible trend in contemporary evangelicalism away from biblical preaching and a drift toward an experience-centered, pragmatic, topical approach in the pulpit.”<sup>14</sup> This shift from basic expository preaching and teaching a more emotional drive, seeker friendly, style of preaching and teaching often comes at the compromise of basic theological principles. If they, as a church body, feel that they have been in the wrong in their theological interpretation and wish to make the needed changes then so be it. What they cannot do is compromise what they believe to be right and true before God simply for results. Within the

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<sup>13</sup> John MacArthur *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 123.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

context of healthy church growth and developing disciples, the ends never justify the means. Because within the context of making disciples, the means is how disciples are made. The methods and systems that a church uses to make disciples must remain consistent, because the only outcome of results based methodology is unhealthy church growth (see chapter 1). If a church is compromising what they teach and what they believe in order to “tickle the ears”<sup>15</sup> of those within the community in order to have a more diverse crowd they are not truly serving Christ or the Gospel. They are simply pandering to the wants and desires of the people and not truly making disciples of Jesus Christ. The same goes for compromising the standards they hold for their lay leaders. Being a small group or lay leaders within the church is a great responsibility. Churches must be very careful never to compromise their convictions so they can proudly brag about the diversity of their leadership.

### Healthy Lay Leaders Open Ministry Doors

Research also indicated that having, and consistently developing, new lay leadership also helped churches open new ministry doors within the community. The chart below shows how churches that develop lay leadership were more than three times as likely to start new ministries within a given year compared to churches with no lay leadership, and twice as likely to start new ministries within a given year compared to churches with moderate lay leadership.

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<sup>15</sup> 2 Timothy 4:3, *NASB*

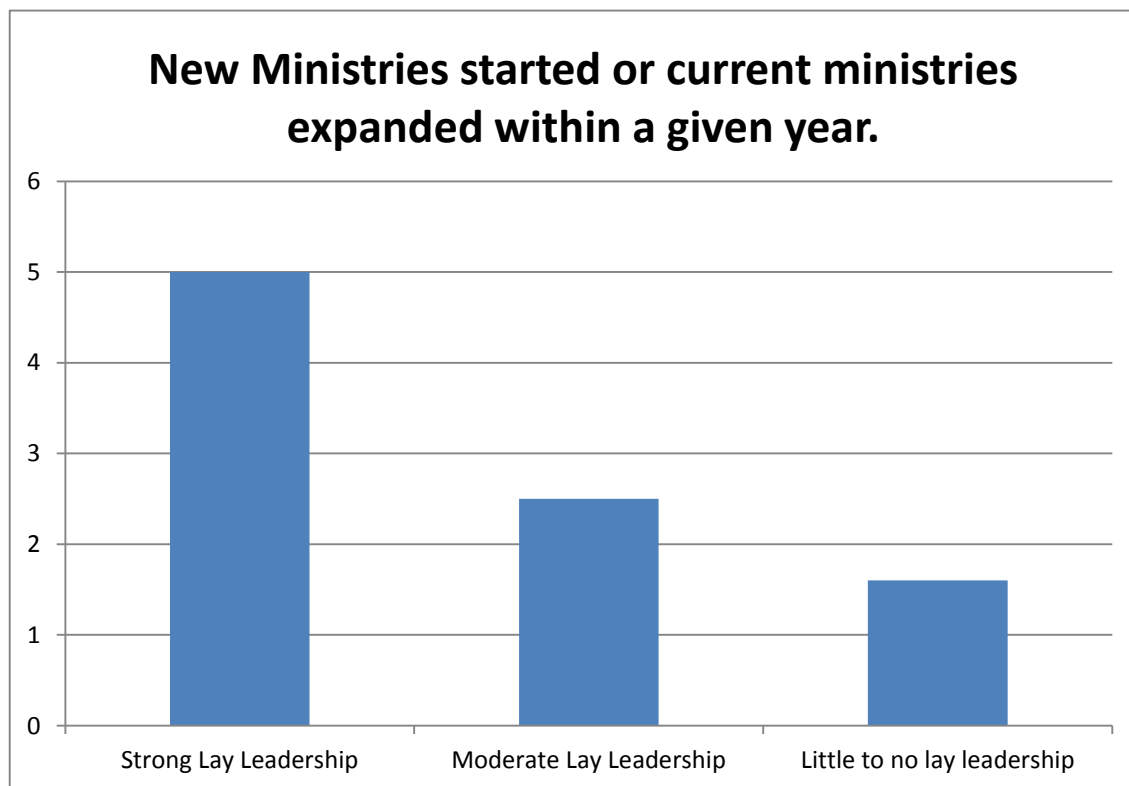


Figure F6

The churches with strong lay leadership started or expanded on average 5 new or current ministries per year, while churches with moderate lay leadership started or expanded on average 2.5 new or current ministries within a given year. Churches with little to no lay leadership started or expanded on average 1.6 new or current ministries per year. The fact is clear; churches that have strong lay leadership grow at a much healthier and effective rate than those churches that are predominantly staff or pastoral lead.

The research indicates that this is true for two specific reasons. Number one, churches with healthy lay leadership will give the overall church organization the opportunity to reach its “hand” into different parts of the community. Churches that have a very homogeneous church body and group of lay leaders tend to spend their time and energies in the same places, thus not giving them the opportunity to reach out into different parts of the community and reach different types of people. However, churches that have more diversity within their church body

and lay leadership have the ability to reach different parts of the community and begin new ministries or expand existing ones. For example, a traditional SBC church may not have church members or lay leaders that live within the lower income section of their community. This does not mean that they cannot be involved within local community projects within that section of the community, but they are removed from that community on a daily basis. This church is removed from the daily needs and missions opportunities that come with having members of that community as an active part of that church body. Therefore, this church does not have as many opportunities to reach the people of that particular community that would be available to them if they had members of that community active in their church. The pastoral leaderships of these churches also observed that because their lay leaders and church members did not reach out into their community on a regular basis, they did not show many evangelistic tendencies towards their community. On the other hand, a church with more diversity within the church body and within the lay leadership have the opportunity to reach more sections of the community because they have more viable contacts and sources of information than a traditional SBC church. They have the opportunity to do what Larry Crabb calls “Soul Talk.”<sup>16</sup> He defines Soul Talk as “speaking whatever is truly alive in us into another and accepting whatever is truly alive in another when it is spoken to us.”<sup>17</sup> The research showed that because these churches had the ability and the means to reach into another part of the community, their church leaders tended to observe more evangelistic tendencies among their people than those within a traditional SBC church. These leaders were more likely to invest their lives into others and have their lives become more affected by those around them. Just as Crabb explains, they become emotionally invested in their surrounding community. He states, “People will not move as far as they could

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<sup>16</sup> Larry Crabb *Soul Talk* (Nashville: Integrity Publishers, 2003), 8-9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

on their journey into God’s presence or experience the power of the Spirit as fully as they could without telling their story to another person.”<sup>18</sup> People desire relationship. When a church allows their lay leaders to being new ministries within their own context, they are empowering those leaders to begin new relationships with the community and open new doors for the Gospel. The chart below shows the difference in the percentage of lay leaders and church members that showed evangelistic traits in their community outside of regular church activities.

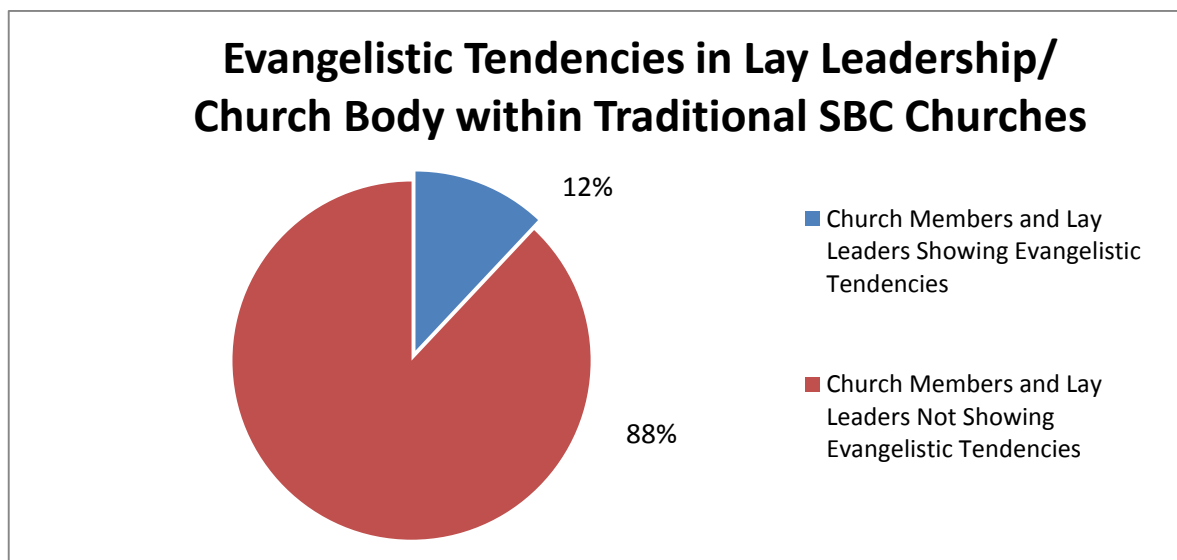
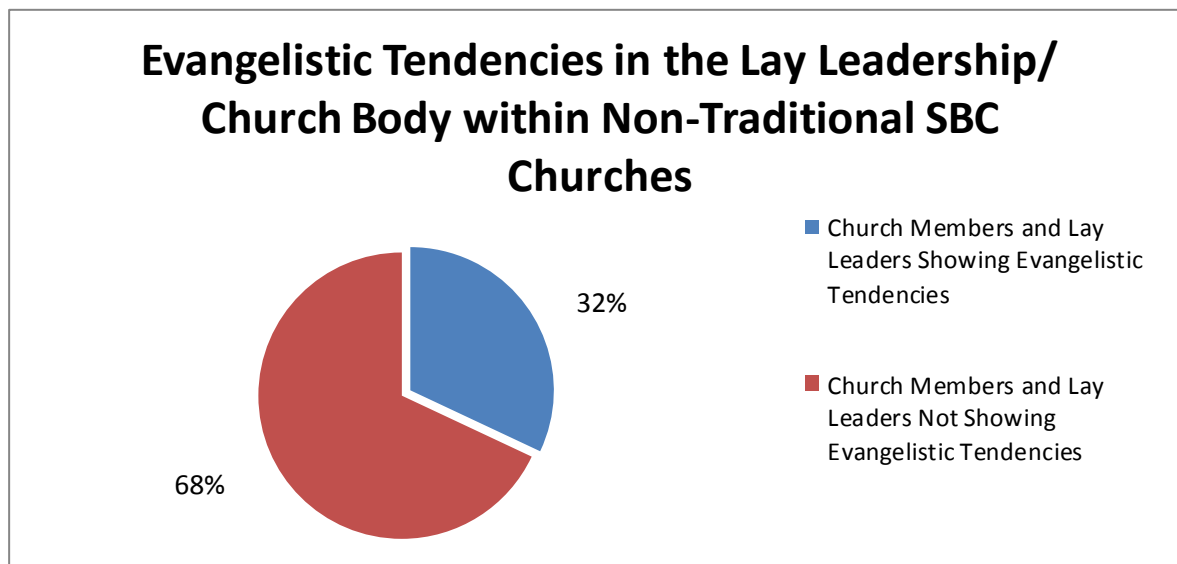


Figure F7



<sup>18</sup> Larry Crabb *Soul Talk* (Nashville: Integrity Publishers, 2003), 138.

As can be observed, the majority of church members and lay leaders within both types of churches were not considered evangelistic by their church leaders. However, those churches that had more diversity among their church body and lay leadership had more than double the percentage of individuals within the church that were considered to be more evangelistic, 12% in the traditional SBC compared to 32% in the non-traditional SBC churches. These leaders understood the importance of sharing the Good News of Christ with a lost and dying world. Just as Comfort states, “The sinner is dead in his sins. We can say, ‘Pray this prayer,’ but he needs to hear the voice of the Son of God, or there is no life in him; and the thing that primes the sinner’s ear to hear the voice of the Son of God is the Law through his peoples testimony.”<sup>19</sup> Lay leaders that are invested in their community, specifically in the people of the community, are more likely to share their testimony with those around them by both their words and their deeds. Therefore, one of the major reasons for this is the fact that churches with strong lay leadership have the ability to begin more ministries and expand existing ministries within their local community.

A second reason that quality lay leadership helps to open more doors of ministry is because these leaders begin to take upon themselves the responsibility of reaching their own community with the Gospel. Concerning humility and the individual’s attitude towards serving others Ortburg states, “The Lord said that He had come ‘not to be served but to serve. Many people think of this as a temporary interruption of Jesus’ normal experience, which would be to receive service. In fact, service is God’s business and Jesus came to serve!”<sup>20</sup> When the individual church members become more invested in their own community they begin to develop a Christ-like attitude of service, because, as stated before, in a more traditional SBC church

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<sup>19</sup> Ray Comfort *God Has a Wonderful Plan For Your Life.* (Bellflower: CA, Living Waters Publications, 2010), 82.

<sup>20</sup> John Ortburg *The Life You’ve Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 2002), 113.

setting many of the church members view evangelism as the pastor's job. That is what they are paying him to do. It's his job to reach the lost, to feed the hungry, to reach out into the community for Jesus. The church members pay their tithe, which pays his salary, to do the work of the church. However, as stated repeatedly, that is not the New Testament model for doing ministry, and as shown by the research, that methodology is also extremely ineffective. The New Testament teaches, and the research shows, that when the people of the church take up the mantle of reaching their community for Christ and the job of the pastoral staff is to train them in that task, the church is far more effective in their ability to reach the lost with the Gospel. In addition, when the lay leadership of the church starts to become equipped to share their faith in Christ (the actual responsibility of the pastoral staff) and become confident in themselves they will no longer wait for their pastor to do the work of the church. They will see where God is moving around them and join Him in His ministry. On a typical day, a lay leader will most likely come across more lost individuals than a pastor who has to spend the day in his office doing administrative church work. It makes logical sense for a pastoral staff to have the goal of training their people to do the work of the Great Commission while they are already engaged in the community, instead of waiting for the lost to show up to a Sunday morning worship service. Referring to the chart of page 122, the church that grew at a 12% rate each year were those churches that make a concerted effort to train their people to share their faith and get involved in lay leadership. Sometimes just having lay leaders is not enough. A church that wishes to have healthy church growth will have lay leaders that are trained to accomplish the Great Commission on their own without being dependent on the help of his or her pastor, freeing up the pastor to be able to spend his time teaching and preaching the Word and not waiting tables. In the churches that were researched, the longevity of the pastor was significantly higher (19 years down to 2.5

years) than those that depended heavily upon their pastor for beginning new ministries and expanding new ministries. As can be seen in the chart below, the pastoral longevity of churches with strong lay leadership is on average 19 years, the pastoral longevity of churches with moderate lay leadership is on average 7 years, and the pastoral longevity of churches with little to no lay leadership is on average 2.5 years.

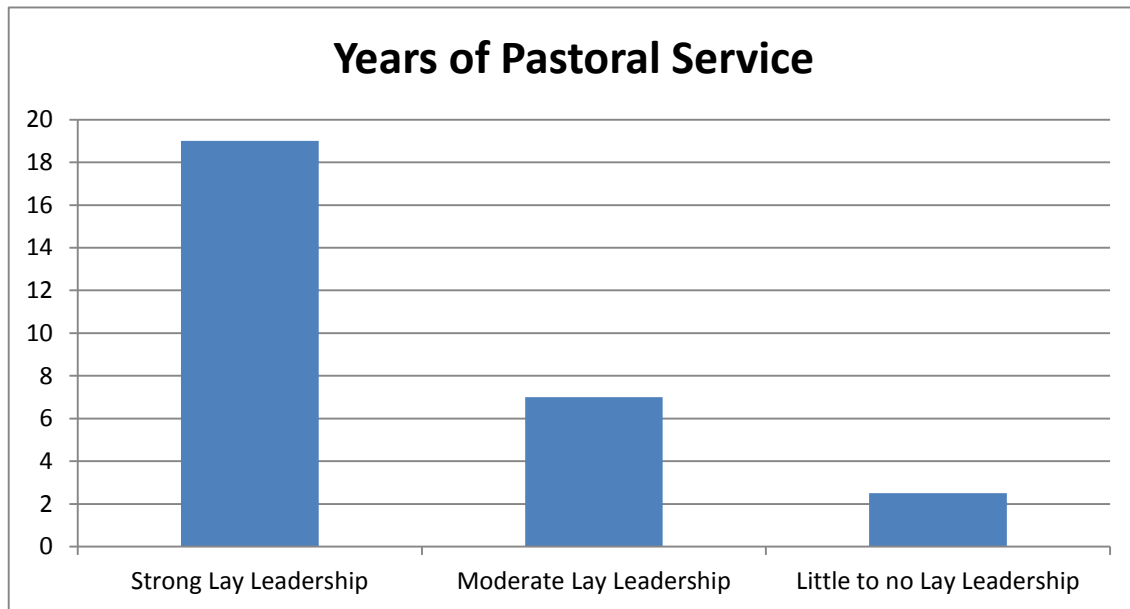


Figure F9

The conclusion is simple, the churches that have strong lay leaders are the churches that experience healthy church growth, begin new ministries and expand existing ministries, and have happy healthier pastors.

#### Healthy Lay Leaders Make Disciples

Another fact that was discovered in the research is the large contrast in disciple making among churches that have strong lay leadership and those that do not. Below is a chart that shows the difference in the number of viable disciples (men and women that have grown in their faith under the leadership of a church lay leader and has now become involved in lay leadership)



that are made in churches with strong lay leadership, moderate lay leadership, and little to no lay leadership.

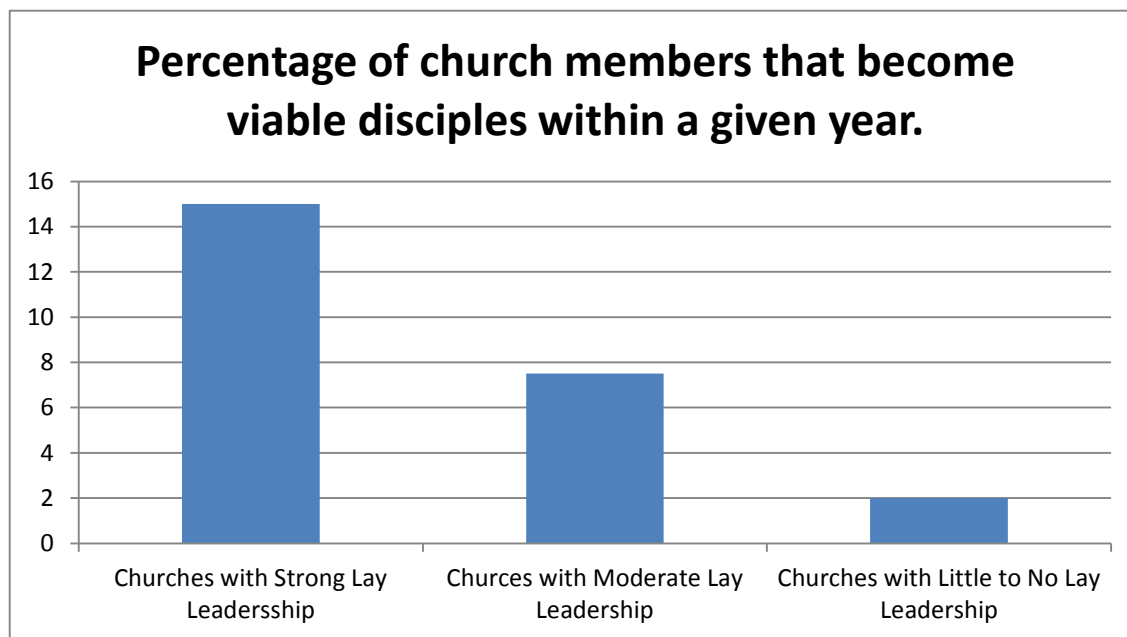


Figure F10

As one can see, the churches with strong lay leadership help to develop around 15% of their church body into viable lay leaders through discipleship, the churches with moderate lay leadership help to develop around 7% of their church body into viable lay leaders through discipleship, and churches with little to no lay leadership help to develop around 2% of their church body into viable lay leaders through discipleship. This does not mean that these individuals are Sunday School class teachers or are now heading up the all the children's activities. It may be something as simple as setting up the snacks for that night's small group Bible study, or it may be something has needed as becoming a class counselor. They would not be someone who is going to give professional counseling advice but someone who is there to listen and be a sympathetic shoulder to cry on. Concerning the average person's ability to listen and responded with a compassionate Godly heart, Benner states,

“The foundation of Christian soul care (pastoral counseling) is its least specialized form – the friendship offered by one Christian to another. Friends do not think of themselves as offering

soul care when they call on another to offer support or encouragement or simply to maintain contact. They are simply caring for those they love. But friends who understand the high ideals of Christian companionship offer one of the most important forms of Christian soul care. And if we could most regularly be in relationship in which friends and family cared for us in our totality with particular attention to the inner self, the need for more formal and specialized expressions of soul care (professional counseling) would be greatly reduced.”<sup>21</sup>

Thus soul care can be done by any person in the group that feels called and lead by God to do so, under the right supervision. However, the important thing is not the task they have taken up within their small group; it is the fact they are now involved in serving and loving others and the church and are growing in their personal relationship with Christ. This person is no longer just sitting in the pews each Sunday listening to the sermon and the leaving the church campus with little to no change in their heart. They have been taken under the wing of a spiritually more mature believer and have been discipled in the meaning and purpose of Christianity. They are no longer just a spectator within the church congregation, but have become an active part of the church body. Paul states in I Corinthians, “For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,’ it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,’ it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.”<sup>22</sup> The specific job they do within the ministry is irrelevant to the fact that they are growing and developing in their walk with Christ. It does not matter if they are called to lead a Bible study of hundreds of people or clean up the tables and chairs after the midweek dinner on Wednesday nights. Each person has been given a specific gift for a specific ministry within the body of Christ. Churches that have a

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<sup>21</sup> David Benner *Strategic Pastoral Counseling* (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2003), 17.

<sup>22</sup> I Cor. 12:14-18, *NASB*

healthy system of developing lay leadership among the church staff and within the church body have double the rate of healthy church growth and disciple development than the closest type of church. These churches do a better job of seeking out people within the church congregation for discipleship, training that person in the Word of God, and then placing that person in a ministry that is best suited for them. This is why they grow on average at 12% per year in church membership and on average at 15% in developing new disciples. These churches are not solely dependent on the pastoral staff to do the work of the church; the people have taken it upon themselves to grow in the kingdom of God in their own homes and community. However, those churches with moderate to no lay leadership are not experiencing the same type of discipleship growth as those churches with strong lay leadership. One of the main reasons for this is their misnomer that it is the pastors “job” to grow the kingdom. He is the one that gets paid; therefore it is his responsibility to be the disciple maker of the church. While from a hierarchical standpoint the pastor is the lead earthly shepherd of the local church, he is not solely responsible for developing all the disciples. One man, as Godly as he might be, can only do so much. His job is to equip the saints of the church to do the ministry, not to do the entire ministry himself. This is one reason why some of the more traditional SBC churches with little to no lay leadership have a more difficult time consistently developing disciples and training new lay leaders.

So the question remains, how do those churches that consistently develop new disciples find and train new people? The long answer for that question is given in chapter 3, but the short answer is one-on-one. Below is a chart that shows the lay leadership development of a church that has one-on-one lay leader training compared to those that have moderate to no lay leader training within their small groups.

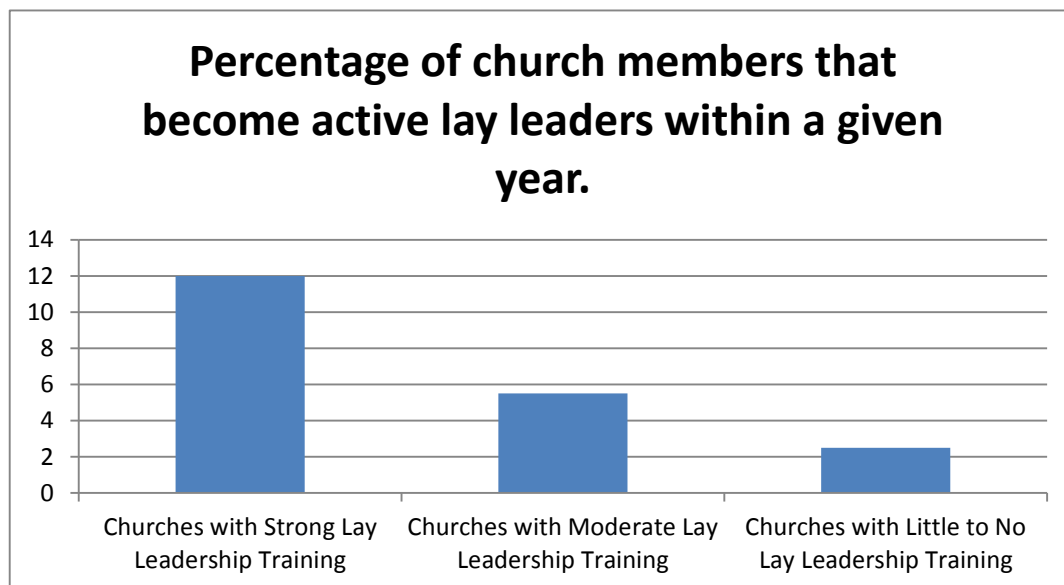


Figure F11

The math is relatively simple. The churches that have small groups (including Sunday School classes) that are designed to train new lay leaders from within have the higher healthy growth rate, about 12%, the churches with moderate lay leadership training trained about 5% of their church members in new lay leaders, while those churches with little to no lay leadership only trained about 3% of their church members in new lay leaders. As one can tell the numbers are almost exactly the same as the previous chart on page 135. There is an undeniable connection between making disciples and developing new lay leaders. The primary function of the church is to make disciples; however, the connection between making disciples and developing new lay leaders cannot be missed. Those churches that actively seek out new people for one-on-one lay leadership training are twice as likely to develop healthy disciples and train new lay leaders. The one-on-one aspect of discipleship and lay leaders training goes all the way back to the ministry of Jesus. Jesus had twelve disciples (Apostles) that traveled with Him and learned straight from Him about the coming Kingdom. Among the twelve, three, Peter, James, and John had a special relationship with Christ that the other nine did not share. Among those three, Peter had a special one-on-one relationship with Christ that helped to develop Peter into one of the founding fathers

of the Christian Church. Peter was not perfect when he first came to Christ. His brother, Andrew, became a believer before Peter did. Peter was arrogant, ignorant to the ways of the kingdom, and even denied that he personally knew Jesus three times. Through patient, one-on-one, discipleship training from Jesus to Peter, Peter became one of the boldest and most respected fathers of the early church. Disciples are rarely made from the pulpit to the pew. Great teaching and instruction can and should come from the pulpit but discipleship comes from doing daily life together. Therefore, those churches that rely on the pastor to make disciples and develop lay leaders only from pulpit teaching are going to have very low results. No matter how great the leader, if he is not pouring himself into his people, disaster can accrue. For example, in the story of King David and Absalom, Gene Edwards tells of a fictional conversation between David and Absalom where David observes his lack of leadership and mentoring of Absalom. When observing the character of Absalom, David states, “And I know you will do the unthinkable. You will divide the Kingdom of God.”<sup>23</sup> The development of new leaders and disciples, as well as Hebrew Kings, must come from one-on-one training under the authority of the Holy Spirit. In the end, the result can be observed in the low number of disciples that are produced, the low number of lay leaders that are being trained, and the low percentage of healthy church growth that accrues each year in those churches with moderate to no lay leadership within their daily activities. The clear conclusion is that if churches desire to reach their community for Christ and experience healthy church growth, they must enlist, train, and motivate their small group leaders to do the work of the Great Commission themselves.

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<sup>23</sup> Gene Edwards *A Tale of Three Kings* (Carol House; Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), 69.

## APPENDIX A

### Research Interview Questions

Starting Question - On a scale of 1-10 how important are small group/Sunday School leaders to healthy church growth? Why?

#### Enlisting:

How do you discern when a new small group needs to be formed? Need first (then find a leader) or leader first (then form the class)?

What qualities do you look for in a small group/Sunday School leader?

What qualities will disqualify someone from being a small group or Sunday School leader?

Are there any specific spiritual gifts or natural talents you look for in a small group or Sunday School leader?

How do you publicize or communicate the need for a new leader?

#### Training:

What type of training do you provide for your leaders?

What type of training have you found not to be helpful?

How often do you go through this training?

Do you separate training by age groups? Why or Why not?

How do you deal with teachers that are not responding or are not attending your training?

How many new disciples do you feel you train each year?

What percent of church members become involved in lay leadership training?

#### Motivating:

How do you help motivate new leaders (those that are new to a leadership role)?

How do you help motivate old leaders (those that have been in leadership for many years)?

Is there a difference in motivating newer and older leaders? Why or why not?

How do you help your leaders catch the overall vision and purpose of the church?

How do you deal with leaders that just are not catching the overall vision and purpose of the church?

#### Leaders:

How diverse (race, sex, theology) is your lay leadership?

How long do your lay leaders stay in leadership?

How long do your pastors stay in leadership?

How many new ministries do you start per year?

How many ministries expand each year?

How many leaders in your church do you consider “evangelistic?”

## APPENDIX B

## Spiritual Gifts Survey

Spiritual Gifts Survey

LifeWay Christian Resources

**Discover Your Spiritual Gifts!**

By Gene Wilkes

Ken Hemphill defines a spiritual gift as “an individual manifestation of grace from the Father that enables you to serve Him and thus play a vital role in His plan for the redemption of the world.”<sup>1</sup> Peter Wagner

defines a spiritual gift as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God’s grace for use within the context of the Body.”<sup>2</sup> I like to use this definition:

*A spiritual gift is an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers which empowers them to serve the body of Christ, the church.*

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:9-11 contain representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church. A definition of these gifts follows.<sup>3</sup>

**Leadership**—Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

**Administration**—Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Teaching**—Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God’s Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

**Knowledge**—The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God’s Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Wisdom**—Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Prophecy**—The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).

**Discernment**—Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

**Exhortation**—Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).

**Shepherding**—The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).

**Faith**—Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).

**Evangelism**—God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).

**Spiritual Gifts Survey**  
LifeWay Christian Resources

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**Apostleship**—The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

**Service/Helps**—Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).

**Mercy**—Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).

**Giving**—Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).

**Hospitality**—Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

God has gifted you with an expression of His Holy Spirit to support His vision and mission of the church. It is a worldwide vision to reach all people with the gospel of Christ. As a servant leader, God desires that you know how He has gifted you. This will lead you to where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission for the church.

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Gene Wilkes is pastor of the Legacy Drive Baptist Church, Plano, Texas. This article was adapted from *Jesus on Leadership* by Gene Wilkes (LifeWay Christian Resources 1998).

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<sup>1</sup> Ken Hemphill, *Serving God: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts Workbook* (Dallas: The Sampson Company, 1995), 22. This product is distributed by and available from LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, and may be purchased by calling toll free 1-800-458-



2772.

<sup>2</sup> *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* by C. Peter Wagner, Copyright © 1979, Regal Books, Ventura, CA 93003. Used by permission, 42.

<sup>3</sup> These definitions exclude the “sign gifts” because of some confusion that accompanies these gifts and because they are difficult to fit into ministries within a typical church’s ministry base.

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## SPIRITUAL GIFTS SURVEY

### DIRECTIONS

This is not a test, so there are no wrong answers. The *Spiritual Gifts Survey* consists of 80 statements. Some items reflect concrete actions; other items are descriptive traits; and still others are statements of belief.

Select the one response you feel best characterizes yourself and place that number in the blank provided. Record your answer in the blank beside each item.

Do not spend too much time on any one item. Remember, it is not a test. Usually your immediate response is best.

Please give an answer for each item. Do not skip any items.

Do not ask others how they are answering or how they think you should answer. Work at your own pace.

Your response choices are:

- 5—Highly characteristic of me/definitely true for me
- 4—Most of the time this would describe me/be true for me
- 3—Frequently characteristic of me/true for me—about 50 percent of the time
- 2—Occasionally characteristic of me/true for me—about 25 percent of the time
- 1—Not at all characteristic of me/definitely untrue for me

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I have the ability to organize ideas, resources, time, and people effectively.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I am willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am able to relate the truths of God to specific situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I have a God-given ability to help others grow in their faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I possess a special ability to communicate the truth of salvation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I have the ability to make critical decisions when necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I am sensitive to the hurts of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I experience joy in meeting needs through sharing possessions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I enjoy studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I have delivered God's message of warning and judgment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I am able to sense the true motivation of persons and movements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I have a special ability to trust God in difficult situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I have a strong desire to contribute to the establishment of new churches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I take action to meet physical and practical needs rather than merely talking about or planning to help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I enjoy entertaining guests in my home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I can adapt my guidance to fit the maturity of those working with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I can delegate and assign meaningful work.

**Spiritual Gifts Survey**  
LifeWay Christian Resources

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I have an ability and desire to teach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I am usually able to analyze a situation correctly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I have a natural tendency to encourage others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I am willing to take the initiative in helping other Christians grow in their faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I have an acute awareness of the emotions of other people, such as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I am a cheerful giver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I spend time digging into facts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I feel that I have a message from God to deliver to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I can recognize when a person is genuine/honest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I am a person of vision (a clear mental portrait of a preferable future given by God).  
I am able to communicate vision in such a way that others commit to making the vision a reality.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I am willing to yield to God's will rather than question and waver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I would like to be more active in getting the gospel to people in other lands.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. It makes me happy to do things for people in need.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I am successful in getting a group to do its work joyfully.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I am able to make strangers feel at ease.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I have the ability to plan learning approaches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I can identify those who need encouragement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I have trained Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I am willing to do whatever it takes to see others come to Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I am attracted to people who are hurting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I am a generous giver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I am able to discover new truths.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. I have spiritual insights from Scripture concerning issues and people that compel me to speak out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. I can sense when a person is acting in accord with God's will.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. I can trust in God even when things look dark.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. I can determine where God wants a group to go and help it get there.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I have a strong desire to take the gospel to places where it has never been heard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. I enjoy reaching out to new people in my church and community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. I am sensitive to the needs of people.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I often am consulted when fellow Christians are struggling to make difficult decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. I think about how I can comfort and encourage others in my congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. I am able to give spiritual direction to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 51. I am able to present the gospel to lost persons in such a way that they accept the Lord and His salvation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 52. I possess an unusual capacity to understand the feelings of those in distress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 53. I have a strong sense of stewardship based on the recognition that God owns all things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 54. I have delivered to other persons messages that have come directly from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 55. I can sense when a person is acting under God's leadership.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 56. I try to be in God's will continually and be available for His use.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 57. I feel that I should take the gospel to people who have different beliefs from me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 58. I have an acute awareness of the physical needs of others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 59. I am skilled in setting forth positive and precise steps of action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60. I like to meet visitors at church and make them feel welcome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 61. I explain Scripture in such a way that others understand it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 62. I can usually see spiritual solutions to problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 63. I welcome opportunities to help people who need comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counseling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 64. I feel at ease in sharing Christ with nonbelievers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 65. I can influence others to perform to their highest God-given potential.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 66. I recognize the signs of stress and distress in others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 67. I desire to give generously and unpretentiously to worthwhile projects and ministries.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 68. I can organize facts into meaningful relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 69. God gives me messages to deliver to His people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 70. I am able to sense whether people are being honest when they tell of their religious experiences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 71. I enjoy presenting the gospel to persons of other cultures and backgrounds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 72. I enjoy doing little things that help people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 73. I can give a clear, uncomplicated presentation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 74. I have been able to apply biblical truth to the specific needs of my church.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 75. God has used me to encourage others to live Christ like lives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 76. I have sensed the need to help other people become more effective in their ministries.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 77. I like to talk about Jesus to those who do not know Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 78. I have the ability to make strangers feel comfortable in my home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 79. I have a wide range of study resources and know how to secure information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 80. I feel assured that a situation will change for the glory of God even when the situation seem impossible.

### SCORING YOUR SURVEY

- Place in each box your numerical response (1-5) to the item number which is indicated below the box.
- For each gift, add the numbers in the boxes and put the total in the TOTAL box.

<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 6		Item 16		Item 27		Item 43		Item 65		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 1		Item 17		Item 31		Item 47		Item 59		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>TEACHING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 2		Item 18		Item 33		Item 61		Item 73		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 9		Item 24		Item 39		Item 68		Item 79		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>WISDOM</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 3		Item 19		Item 48		Item 62		Item 74		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>PROPHECY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 10		Item 25		Item 40		Item 54		Item 69		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>DISCERNMENT</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 11		Item 26		Item 41		Item 55		Item 70		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>EXHORTATION</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 20		Item 34		Item 49		Item 63		Item 75		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SHEPHERDING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 4		Item 21		Item 35		Item 50		Item 76		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>FAITH</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 12		Item 28		Item 42		Item 56		Item 80		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>EVANGELISM</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 5		Item 36		Item 51		Item 64		Item 77		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>APOSTLESHIP</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 13		Item 29		Item 44		Item 57		Item 71		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SERVICE/HELPS</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 14		Item 30		Item 46		Item 58		Item 72		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>MERCY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 7		Item 22		Item 37		Item 52		Item 66		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>GIVING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 8		Item 23		Item 38		Item 53		Item 67		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 15		Item 32		Item 45		Item 60		Item 78		<b>TOTAL</b>

## APPENDIX C

## Childcare Reimbursement Form

**Church of the Highlands**Small Group Childcare  
Reimbursement Guidelines

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1. *Small Group Childcare Reimbursement Request* forms must be submitted within fourteen (14) days after attending the small group meeting to qualify for reimbursement.
2. Reimbursements are made at a set hourly rate for the cost of an individual childcare provider in your home while you attend a small group away from your home. See Reimbursement Chart on reverse side of this form.
3. Complete one (1) *Small Group Childcare Reimbursement Request* Form for each small group meeting attended. Please use original form – copies are not accepted.
4. Mail your *Small Group Childcare Reimbursement Request* Form to:  
  
Church of the Highlands  
Accounting Office  
4700 Highlands Way  
Birmingham, AL 35210
5. Reimbursement checks will be mailed within two (2) to four (4) weeks after receipt of the form.

## Small Group Childcare Reimbursement Request



### Reimbursement Check Payable To:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## OTHER INFORMATION NEEDED TO PROCESS YOUR REQUEST

Account Number	Date Attended Small Group	# of Children	# of Hours	Reimbursement Amount Requested
001/615/52150				\$
Name of individual you paid to provide childcare in your home:				Amount You Paid \$
Small Group Leader's Name:				

## Reimbursement Chart

Number of Children	Hours at Small Group			
	1	2	3	4
1	\$7.00	\$14.00	\$21.00	\$28.00
2	\$7.50	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$30.00
3	\$8.00	\$16.00	\$24.00	\$32.00
4	\$8.50	\$17.00	\$25.50	\$34.00
5	\$9.00	\$19.00	\$27.00	\$36.00

SEE GUIDELINES ON REVERSE SIDE

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## VITA

Steven D. Weems

## PERSONAL

Born: February 14, 1979

Married: Abigail R. Morgan, July 20, 2002

Children: Luke Weems, born September 4, 2003

Emma G. Weems, June 7, 2005

Lauren E. Weems, March 16, 2007

Troy M. Weems, December 30, 2009

Adeline R. Weems, September 22, 2011

## EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Southeastern Bible College, 2003.

M.Div., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007.

(Current Student) D. Min., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013.

## MINISTERIAL

License: April 15, 2007, Calvary Baptist Church, Odenville, Alabama.

Ordained: April 15, 2007, Calvary Baptist Church, Odenville, Alabama.

## PROFESSIONAL

Youth Minister: Brewster Road Alliance Church, Trussville Al. January 1, 2003 – April 30, 2004.

Youth Minister: Hamilton United Methodist Church, Hamilton, Al. May 1, 2004 – March 31, 2007.

Account Executive: Details Direct, Church Marketing. Birmingham Al. August 1, 2007 – October 31, 2008.

Associate Pastor: First Baptist Church, Stevenson Al. November 1, 2008 – January 31, 2011.

Associate Pastor: Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Leeds, Al. February 1, 2011 – Current  
Director of Discipleship Training, St. Clair Co. Baptist Association. March 2013 -  
Current

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July 2, 2012

Steven Douglas Weems  
IRB Approval 1366.070212: Staffing Healthy Small Groups: A Model for Enlisting,  
Training, and Motivating Lay Leadership

Dear Steven,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

**Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.**  
*Professor, IRB Chair*  
**Counseling**

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