

VOLUME 2



WHAT EVERY CHURCH PLANTER SHOULD KNOW



ABOUT THIS BOOK >

This book is a Compilation of Essays by today's top Church Leaders, Pastors and Coaches and written with the new church planter in mind.

Edited & Compiled by the Team at
Portable Church® Industries.

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS >

HELLO!

For more than two decades, we have been dedicated to helping the efforts of church planters and portable churches through our work at Portable Church® Industries. This ebook is Volume Two in our Church Planter series and is a compilation of essays, stories and words of wisdom from respected church planters, pastors and leaders.

We have so much to learn from one another, and we pray that you will be as blessed by these essays and stories as we have.

God Bless You,

- The Portable Church Crew

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EVERYONE WANTS TO BE PETER ON PENTECOST >

BY VINCE ANTONUCCI

There is no more effective strategy for reaching the lost than church planting...

..but most church plants are not effective in reaching the lost.

Church planters confess it to me all the time. Recently I spoke at a conference and a guy leading a rapidly growing church plant told me he had no idea how to reach a lost person. His church was bringing in Christians. He had worked previously at two large, famous growing churches and confided that he had never heard a single conversation about reaching lost people.

Why?

The problem is that everyone wants to be Peter on Pentecost. In Acts 2 Peter had a crowd of thousands ready to hear what he had to say about God. They all had a Bible background, so Peter didn't have to explain everything to them. In fact, the reason they were in Jerusalem was because they were spiritual seekers. They were in the crowd for religious reasons. So it's no surprise that when Peter ends his sermon the people were "cut to the heart" and yell out, "Brothers, what must we do to be saved?" Their reaction to Peter's message was, "You don't need to do an invitation, we'll invite ourselves! Forget doing an altar call, we're calling ourselves to the altar!" And thousands were baptized that day.

What pastor doesn't want that?! *Everyone* wants to be Peter on Pentecost.

Compare Peter on Pentecost to Paul in Athens. In Acts 17, Paul goes into a foreign city. He doesn't live there or know the culture, so he has to take time to study it. Finally, he gets a chance to speak to the people but he has to be careful because it's a complicated situation. Whereas Peter's sermon was 22 verses long, Paul's is 9. Whereas Peter quoted Old Testament prophets, Paul quotes Greek poets.

When Paul was finished speaking, were the people cut to the heart? Did someone call out, "Brothers, what must we do to be saved?" No, the next line says, "Some of them sneered..." Who wants that?! Now it does say, "... but others said, 'We want to hear you again on this subject,'" and we learn that ultimately a few people become believers. And that is cool, but not compared to thousands of baptisms.

"Brothers, what must we do to be saved?" Their reaction to Peter's message was, "You don't need to do an invitation, we'll invite ourselves! Forget doing an altar call, we're calling ourselves to the altar!" And thousands were baptized that day.

Everyone wants to be Peter on Pentecost.

It's easy to speak to people who grew up in church with the same language and customs and who share much of the same thinking and beliefs. When we moved to Las Vegas, wanting to reach the lost people of Sin City, we decided to live here for over a year and conduct over three hundred interviews so we could understand the people and their culture. That's not easy.

Not only is speaking to people who grew up in church easier, there's also a better chance we get the glory. I'm sure news of Peter's sermon in Jerusalem and the 3,000+ baptisms spread like wildfire. I doubt many people heard that Paul gave a sermon in Athens to which people sneered and only a few ended up converting. If you're Peter on Pentecost, people invite you to speak at conferences and write books. They read your blog and follow you on Twitter.

Everyone wants to be Peter on Pentecost, and you can choose that. You can start a church in a really difficult place, like Atlanta, or Chicago. You can start a church in a place with no churches like South Carolina, or

Alabama, and you can send out postcards promising, "Heart-Felt Worship!" and "Dynamic Teaching!" and "Fun, Age-Appropriate Classes For Your Kids!" and watch all the Christians flow in because they realize your church is better than the church they go to. Then, you will have a huge crowd of people who are like you and who understand because they have a Bible background and are ready to hear what you have to say about God. They'll probably be cut to the heart by your message and everyone will hear about all the baptisms you had.

Is that wrong? No. Peter wasn't wrong, *but maybe you could do something different. Maybe you could choose to be Paul in Athens.*

It's not easy, and you likely won't get glory, which is why choosing Paul's path isn't for the faint of heart. So why would you do that?

You might object that it's absurd to reach *less* people when you can reach *more* people. That the numbers don't add up. That's true, the math of my proposition sucks, but God sucks at math. I know that sounds blasphemous, but it's not, and it's true. All through the Bible we see God teaching and God sharing stories that would make a mathematician raise his or her eyebrows. One example is the parable of the lost sheep. A shepherd, who represents God, has one hundred sheep and leaves *ninety-nine* in the open field to go after one lost sheep, who represents a lost person. An accountant would never agree, but when you're talking about bringing one of God's lost children home to his' arms,

it changes the equation.

A second reason to follow Paul's example is because it is the mission. The mission isn't, "Therefore go and make disciples of people who are already disciples." Jesus didn't say, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all the people who already believe." He didn't say, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses to the Baptist Church down the street, and in all the little Methodist and Luthern Churches in town, and to the ends of the earth." No, the mission is to seek and save *the lost*. To make disciples of people who *aren't* disciples.

It *is* the mission, but not many church planters really engage in it, because everyone wants to be Peter on Pentecost. Maybe you could choose to follow the path of Paul in Athens. I mean, someone has to. So why not you? It won't be easy and may not make much sense and God will get the glory instead of you, but it will also be the greatest and most rewarding adventure of your life. In our church we've seen pimps and gang bangers and atheists and crack whores and tattoo artists and Mormons and leg breakers and strippers and crystal meth addicts come to Christ. We haven't had thousands of baptisms, and you haven't read about us in a list of biggest or fastest growing churches, but I wouldn't trade what we're experiencing for anything.

The truth is that not many will choose the path of Paul, but I'm praying you'll join me on the lunatic fringe.



VINCE ANTONUCCI >

Vince Antonucci started and pastors Verve, an innovative church in the heart of Sin City, for the people who work on and live around the Las Vegas Strip. He's passionate about introducing people who are far from God to Jesus, and inspiring them to live an authentic and adventurous life of radically following Him. Vince's first two books, (*I Became a Christian and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt*, 2008 and *Guerrilla Lovers*, 2010) were published by Baker Books. Vince leads mission trips around the world, speaks all over the country, does stand-up comedy in Las Vegas, but mostly loves spending time with his wife, Jennifer, and their two kids.

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DON'T GO ALONE >

BY SALLY BREEN

Having been a church planter (been there, done that, got the t shirt and the scars), the first piece of advice I have for you is, "Don't go alone!" It is way too easy to think that just you and your wife - you and your husband - or you and your best friend from college are enough to make this happen. The truth is, planting a church will take you to the very end of your capacity and resources and possibly mental health! It will require you to be physically, emotionally and spiritually strong. It will require you to be highly accountable.

It is always a good idea to go back to the Bible and see what the first plan was, rather than the 21st Century individualized plans that we manage to come up with today. The original plan for us all was to be part of an "oikos" (extended family/ household) as referenced in the Book of Acts.

This summer, having read Rodney Starks Book - The Rise of Christianity, I was particularly struck by his detailed research into the role of both women and the extended family. His belief after thorough research leads him, and others, to believe that without the protection of the early church within the household of a noble woman, the early church never would have survived persecution and change. If it worked for them, I am certain it will work for us in 21st Century America.

For Mike and I, our first church plant was in inner city

London during the 1980's in an area which had massive social deprivation and poverty. We quickly realized that we could not do it alone, and therefore took with us a team - our "oikos" of 10 other people. We still found this time to be incredibly difficult and challenging, however, and we would have not made it even through the first year without this extended family. We encouraged one another, prayed for one another and held one another accountable.

Another key biblical principle for church planters to understand is the one of "the person of peace". In Luke 10:5-6 it says, "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you." Jesus' message to his disciples was, and still is today, is that as we are walking in this world, we are to be on the look-out for a person of peace.

Who is this person of peace and how do we recognize him? A person of peace is a person who welcomes you, receives you, walks towards you, likes you and wants to serve you. It is easy to spot this person because the relationship is usually easy and not forced. By this you know that the Holy Spirit has already gone ahead of you and prepared this person for you.

Because the Holy Spirit goes ahead of us, we know that the people of peace will often be the gate keeper into

Luke 10:5-6 it says, "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you."

a whole network of relationships that you otherwise would have had no access. They will be a person who opens up their coffee shop to let you meet there or the school teacher who allows you into her classroom, the shopkeeper who spends time talking with you.

If you can learn to find and identify these people of peace, church planting can actually be a lot less tiring and you will waste a lot less time. It is amazing, if we let God do the work of building the church, rather than ourselves, how successful He can really be.

Church planting can be an amazing adventure in understanding the faithfulness of God or it can be an unbelievably frustrating experience of understanding our complete weakness. Usually these two things go hand in hand. I cannot over-emphasize the need to understand your own weaknesses in the areas of the

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spiritual, physical and emotional, so that once you have recognized them you can invite someone to hold you accountable to grow in those areas.

If Mike and I had known all of these things when we first began, I am sure the places where we planted in our early years would have had far more lasting and long-term fruit. So, it is now my privilege to look back and to hope and pray that you can learn from my mistakes.



SALLY BREEN >

Sally Breen and her husband Mike have been innovators in leading missional churches throughout Europe and the United States for more than 25 years. In their time at St Thomas Sheffield in the UK, they were one of the original pioneers of Missional Communities, mid-sized groups of 20-50 people on mission together. The result, less than 6 years later, was the largest church in England, and ultimately, one of the largest and now fastest growing churches in the whole of Europe. In 2006 Sally and Mike were approached by Leadership Network to lead an initiative into church planting. Through this partnership, more than 750 churches were planted in Europe in just three years.

Today, they live in South Carolina, leading 3DM, a movement/organization that is helping hundreds of established churches and church planters move into this discipling and missional way of being the church.

Blog is at www.sallybreen.me

CREATING MINISTRY SPACE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS >

BY DENISE BRILEY

Nothing makes my heart sing more than knowing that a family with a special needs child can get in their car, drive to church, and arrive where they can attend as a family. God has given me many opportunities to watch that happen over the past 30 years as I have cared for children. For you who are creating a space for children, I truly commend you for stepping out in faith and following Jesus! You are doing your very best each Sunday to prepare for the typical children in your community.

Now that I serve at Houston's First, which in itself is a huge church campus, I continue to tweak and refine each week what would be best for each individual, child and family. A question I often ask is, "How in the world can we do more than we are already doing?"

In a church body of believers, we should be prepared in advance to expect anything and anyone to join us to hear the word of God preached and taught. In the Bible, Jesus usually showed up where the crowd was soon to follow. There were people from all walks of life who desired to hear what Jesus had to say. In these times, Jesus specifically spent a great deal of time with people with disabilities.

You cannot get to the book of Acts unless you deliberately step over four men... Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These men often write of those with skin disease, the lame, the blind, the paralyzed bodies, paralyzed hands, those with seizures. There are even stories of parents who often felt cursed - felt as if they had done something to cause their child's disorder.

As a mom who had a child born with special needs, this sounds very familiar. It also relates to so many families especially today with the rise of Autism. When I began in special needs ministry in the church setting back in 1994, 1 in 1000 children were diagnosed with Autism. Today, autism is affecting 1 in 88 children (according to www.tacanow.org). As a church body, we have to gain knowledge and be prepared for those little ones we may have in our nursery and preschool areas. The next child who joins our ministry may be that statistic.

How are you going to serve them in a portable church with limitations of space, staff and volunteers?

I can tell you that storage isn't a problem. Special needs tools can travel well; they can pack up neatly and a Rubbermaid tub or two can be stored each week in your specific case or trailer. The greater challenge is what goes in those tubs and who will be using them?

Begin praying that if God sends you families, then he will also equip you and bring those who have a deep desire to welcome them. Just like us in Thru the Roof, we open that door each Sunday.

Here are Some Ideas for Establishing Your Own Special Needs Ministry

- Create a "Buddy System". Having buddies (a volunteer that shadows alongside the child with special needs) is a great place to begin. The Buddies can report to the Children's Minister for guidance and support.
- Recruit Buddies from your student ministry to serve on a rotation along with adults who may teach in Special Education settings.
- Equip Buddies with an information sheet on each child that they serve

I have found that some children require only one buddy. Some only require a buddy in the classroom space just in case there is a need for support. Other children require a one-on-one buddy that NEVER leaves his side (a lot of children are runners...or what we like to call elopers.. who like to explore parts of the campus). A Buddy helps keep these children safe, secure and in the right place.

In Mark 2:1-5, we learn of the buddies that brought the crippled man to Jesus through the roof. At your church, they will not have to open the roof; they will be welcomed through the front door as they should be!

Here Are Some Important Things to Have on Hand:

- Gluten -Free snacks
- Soft paper towels (viva) for wiping mouths and drool
- Musical toys
- Legos
- Puzzles with knobs
- Veggie Tales movies
- Mats to sit or lay on
- Bean bag chair
- iPad (these children are beyond gifted to show you how it works)
- Non-latex gloves, baby wipes: some of them will require diapering/pull-ups
- Train sets, play cars, trains
- Board books that are able to be wiped down
- Bible story sheets that are laminated
- Small Inflatable Pool with balls or a small ball pit for sensory issues
- Small tent with a blanket inside also for sensory and calming issues
- Noise Cancelling Headphones (reduces stress from loud noise and music)
- CD Player or iPod Dock for music
- DVD player for movies (find out their favorite and use it as a reward for good behavior)
- Bagged snacks like gummy bears, skittles, starbursts (reward for good behavior)

It will not be the items in the Rubbermaid tubs that will make the life changing difference in their lives!

It will be that life changing difference that only Jesus Christ can bring. Just like in Mark 2:5, it was when Jesus saw the friends faith, the crippled man's sin was forgiven. He was spiritually whole!

Go forth mighty warrior and peel back some roof tile! You will not believe the difference you can make in the family! They will begin serving and loving because of the way you served and loved on them!



DENISE BRILEY >

Denise Briley began working with special needs children in 1981 as a babysitter. However God had much broader plans for her life. She became the mother of Clayton in 1983 who was born with severe cerebral palsy and medical and physical needs. While raising Clayton, Lauren and Dillon joined the Briley family. As Denise and her husband Thad relocated to Tomball, Tx the need for a new church home surfaced. There were not many churches in the early 1990's offering care much less a class for children with special needs. Denise founded The JOY Ministry in 1994 and grew that special needs ministry in Tomball until a couple of years after Clayton went to Heaven. Denise and her husband Thad are now members of Houston's First Baptist Church where Denise is on the Children's Ministry staff as Special Needs Coordinator. "I love it!" Seeing families have a place to worship and where siblings can say "they like my brother there!" Denise is a gifted conference speaker and has written a book about her journey called "Feathers From Heaven". "Nothing makes my heart sing than to know a family can worship and not worry about what their child with special needs is doing or may do.... church should not be hard."

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THE IMPORTANCE OF A NAME >

BY KYLE COSTELLO

When our moving truck rolled into Salt Lake City on January 29, 2010, I had a countless amount of strategies, philosophies, and dreams for our church plant. I am sure I bored the life out of anyone who would listen as I discussed the who, what, where, and when of Missio Dei Community. I was ready to deploy my game plan on that incredible city nestled against the Wasatch mountains. Little did I know that my church planting lingo and strategies would mean close to nothing when compared to words like; Joe, Ron, Grace, Isaac, and Justine.

I didn't grow up as a Christian. I was a Utah Mormon who would have struggled to tell you who Billy Graham was. When I first encountered Christianity, the only thing that I was interested in was the short worship services. Rarely did much of it impress or intrigue me. In fact, the only idea that really captured me was the idea that in Christianity we are called into a relationship with God and, through that, into a relationship with one another.

It's difficult to describe a relationship in words, but both before and after conversion, God was working on me. He opened my eyes to a Bible that I would have said I had known my whole life, but in hindsight had no clue about. God walked me through His Scripture, sometimes delicately and sometimes with the delicacy of a nine iron to the chest. He showed me Jesus like I had never seen, taught me words like pursuit and brought to life redemption. God always seemed to be around me. He was with me in doubt, struggles, successes, accolades, failure, and tragedy. He was a long suffering God.

My relationship with God came much easier than my relationship with "church". When I became a Christian, I didn't really want anything to do with the church.

As you plant, his name must be revered above all. He must be the first that you repent to, the first that you cling to, the first that you trust in.

I didn't know what "fellowship" was and I didn't want to find out. I had no interest in worship music nor did I want my political affiliation defined for me. Once I shut my mouth, however, and started listening to His people, it began to be quite apparent that, through these broken people, God was bringing to life His Kingdom.

First, people were being incredibly patient with me. They didn't laugh when I mixed up the Book of Mormon and the Bible. They patiently talked me through what it meant to respond to God in service and obedience. They didn't excommunicate me when I made fun of Rick Warren's shirts during our Purpose Driven Life Small Group.

What God was teaching me in those moments proved so much more effective to me in church planting than the latest book or the best demographics. God will first and foremost shape you in your relationship with Him. His name reigns supreme. As you plant, his name must be revered above all. He must be the first that you repent to, the first that you cling to, the first that you trust in. You aren't the savior, and you are being shaped by this great God so much more than you will ever shape your church plant.

What God taught me 12 years ago proved to be my most valuable asset in church planting. I learned that names matter. When people like Bart and Catherine suffered my immaturity, those many years ago, as we met and prayed and talked about God, they were showing me that God's church cared about me. They cared about me for me. I wasn't a problem to fix or an asset to exploit, but rather a fellow disciple to encourage, rebuke, and train up. I found that they cared for their neighbors, whether they were Christians or not. They served them and loved them. They did not force them to come to church, but showed them a love born out of abundance rather than scarcity.

It may sound simple or pedestrian, but that is how we have gone about planting Missio Dei.

Those names in that first paragraph are all people that I met soon after moving here.

Joe is a coffee shop owner who is no closer to accepting Jesus than when we moved here. He loves profanity as well as his agnosticism. One thing Joe knows for sure is that he is loved by our community and that we love Jesus. He knows us by name, trades life stories, parenting stories, offers music suggestions with us on a daily basis and has quipped more than once how he appreciates our love for the city.

Grace is an incredibly gifted nurse who loves Jesus. I met her through some insane circumstances and she jumped in with our motley core group. She studied Eugene Peterson with my wife and talked to me often about her dream of the American Church serving locally and globally in a selfless manner rather than an imperial one. She eventually left Salt Lake City for Gonaives, Haiti where she runs a medical clinic in a slum built on a trash dump.

My wife and I didn't recruit Grace with a flyer. Rather, we learned her name and the life behind her name over Americanos, Ethiopian food and Contra Dancing. We didn't sweet talk Joe into liking us. Rather, we remembered his name, prayed for him often, and sought to bless him and his business.

Some are Jesus followers and some aren't, but they are all people who we believe God wants to woo, redeem, love, heal and bring into the great news of the Gospel.

Those other names I mentioned at the beginning all have stories attached to them. Some are Jesus followers and some aren't, but they are all people who we believe God wants to woo, redeem, love, heal and bring into the great news of the Gospel.

Names matter here.

Who really is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Who really is Joe, Grace, Isaac, Justine, and Ron? How can I be known more by God and my community? How can I know my community and God more? Those questions have seemed to go a lot further than my strategies and arguments about church planting philosophies.



KYLE COSTELLO >

Kyle Costello lives in Salt Lake City, UT with his wife Joy and his son Isaiah. He is the Lead Pastor of Missio Dei Community, a church located in the urban core of Salt Lake City, that was planted by the Orchard Group and Imago Dei Community in 2010.

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MOVIES EVERY CHURCH PLANTER SHOULD SEE >

BY DARREN CRONSHAW & KIM HAMMOND

Movies are a terrific source of inspiration for church planting. They help us engage with our culture and they give us conversational points with our neighbors. The best movies resonate with our longing to be part of a bigger story that seek to make the world a better place. The best movies resound with our search for a tribe; they join us as we persevere in struggles, overcome injustice, find the love we long for and discover cause to which to give our lives.

Here are three movies we enjoyed over the last year that (we think) every church planter should know about.

THE HELP

The Help, a 2009 novel by Kathryn Stockett and 2011 movie, narrates the story of young white journalist, Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan (played by Emma Stone) and her relationship with black maids in early 1960s America. While the country is legislating equality at a macro level, Skeeter writes the stories of what life is like at a local grassroots level for black household workers. She tells the stories from the perspective of the maids (called "the help"), revealing the racism and derogatory treatment they endure. The maids are initially hesitant to disclose, let alone make public their stories. They then realize the book allows their stories to be heard and understood. They hope their stories will help change their world buffeted by racial tension.

There is power in collecting and sharing dangerous stories. We face a world that needs ongoing

transformation by the gospel. A critical skill of church planters is to be able to share some of the dangerous stories they have been inspired by and that encapsulate their vision for community transformation.

THE WOMEN ON THE 6TH FLOOR

The Women on the 6th Floor, a 2010 French film, shows a rich conservative couple in 1960s Paris who have their lives turned upside down by getting to know Spanish maids. Monsieur Jean-Louis Joubert (Fabrice Luchini) is a share trader who lives a comfortable bourgeois lifestyle with his socialite wife Suzanne while their boys are at boarding school. When the family gets a new housemaid, Maria from Spain (Natalie Verbeke), Jean-Louis becomes fascinated with how Maria and other housemaids live. They are literally above him, on the sixth floor, in one room tenanted bedsits. Previously he hardly knew what the maids did when they weren't cooking his breakfast egg and ironing his clothes, but he comes to realize they have challenges in life greater than ensuring his comfortable existence.

Jean-Louis starts on this incarnational

There is power in collecting and sharing dangerous stories. We face a world that needs ongoing transformation by the gospel.

journey of getting to know the maids' culture, advocating for their rights and becoming friends with them. He inquires where they come from. He pays a plumber to unblock their communal toilet. Realizing they have money saved and hidden under their mattresses, he offers investment advice. Seeing one of them is battered by her husband, he arranges alternative accommodation. When they want to celebrate as a group, he joins in with their dinner party. He becomes fascinated and attracted to their simple love of life and enjoyment of friendship. The romantic fantasy of the movie is that he is also falling for Maria, sadly dissatisfied with the upper class existence of his marriage. Aside from that mixed motive, the beauty of the story is in his interest and care for this group of women as people of worth.

The challenge of the movie for us is how and where can we really get to know, care for, advocate for and learn from people who are so different from us? This is a challenge of church planting to engage authentically with our neighborhoods and especially our neighbors who live close.

LARS AND THE REAL GIRL

Lars and the Real Girl is a delightful 2007 film about socially challenged Lars and his gracious community that fosters a safe, healing place for him. Lars (Ryan Gosling) lives in a garage behind his brother Gus and pregnant sister-in-law Karin's house. He

presents as a nice, albeit quirky and isolated bloke who avoids everyone including his pretty co-worker Margo. Karin and Gus are delighted when he finally accepts an invitation to share a meal and, furthermore, wants to introduce them to his new friend he met on the internet, a missionary in a wheelchair named Bianca. To their astonishment, Bianca is a life-like sex doll that Gus relates to as his new girlfriend. He asks his family if she can stay with them.

With the advice of their family doctor/ psychologist, the family and the whole town, accept Bianca for Gus' sake. The doctor suggests Gus imagines Bianca as real, a delusion with some purpose. So Bianca stays

in Karin and Gus' guest room. The church welcomes her to their Bible studies. The school includes her as a volunteer. The beautician gives her a makeover. As they accept Bianca, Lars finds himself relating with more of the town. We learn that because Lars' mother died during his birth, he is fearful of having children. Thus, he is anxious about Karin's pregnancy and any possibility of a real relationship himself. Over time, and in the safety his family and community offers, Lars comes to a new place of healing. Lars' dependency on Bianca shifts and with a surprising twist, he gives himself permission to get to know Margo.

The movie shows us the power and grace of a church and community

functioning at its best, supporting a needy member with grace and acceptance right where they are. Whatever other shapes our churches take as we plant them, they need to be safe places for people like Lars as they grow towards wholeness.

Often movies need critique – you can't accept their values uncritically - but we reckon every church planter can learn from movies. Besides, apart from what we learn, they can be good fun and enjoyable, and Church Planters need enjoyable outlets as much as anyone.



DARREN CRONSHAW & KIM HAMMOND >

Darren Cronshaw is passionate about training and resourcing leaders and missionaries through his work as Mission Catalyst – Researcher with the Baptist Union of Victoria and as Pastor of AuburnLife in Melbourne, Australia. He teaches as Associate Professor in Missiology with Australian Colleges of Ministries (Sydney College of Divinity), Honorary Research Associate with Whitley College (MCD University of Divinity) and Director of Theological Studies with Forge Mission Training Network. Darren is also Editor-in-Chief of UNOH Publications. Other passions in Darren's life are being husband to Jenni, proud Dad to three children, and lover of good books and movies.

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Kim and Darren's forthcoming book is *Sentness: Breaking the Bonds of Consumer Christianity* (forthcoming with IVP 2014). <http://www.sentnessbook.com/>

ACCOUNTABILITY IS USELESS >

BY JUSTIN DAVIS

When my wife Tricia and I first got married and entered ministry in 1995, I took pride in being a person who was accountable. I was accountable in my choices: I wouldn't counsel with a woman behind a closed office door. I wouldn't give a teenage girl a ride home from church without another person in the car. I wouldn't do lunch with a female without my wife or another male at the lunch. At all costs, I wanted to be accountable.

When we started a church in 2002, I knew that accountability would be of utmost importance. I sought out a guy in our core group and asked him if we could meet each Wednesday morning to "hold each other accountable." As a church planter, I had a church planting coach. He and I would meet every Thursday morning and he would ask me questions about my relationship with God. He would ask me questions about my marriage, my struggles, my weaknesses. He wanted to hold me accountable. I had a group of Elders that I met with once a month that were the spiritual leaders of our church, and I was accountable to them.

So with all of these boundaries and all of these safe guards and all of these great leaders and friends holding me accountable, how could I ever be unfaithful to God and my wife? That's not possible, right? But I was unfaithful, despite all of my accountability.

What I discovered is accountability is useless.

Accountability is only as valuable as the transparency you and I offer in the context of that accountability.

We have a unique ability as humans to B.S. each other. It is easy for me to fake you out. It is easy for you to lie to my face. It is easy to pretend like your marriage is better than it really is. It is easy to offer just enough accountability to make yourself look spiritual. At the same time that partial accountability can be so dangerous because you are not only fooling me, you are fooling yourself.

The truth is you and I can meet every Wednesday and I can lie to you. The truth is that you can have several

circles of accountability and unless you are 100% transparent in at least one of those circles, implosion is on the horizon.

I am not saying you should be 100% transparent with everyone, but I am saying you should be 100% transparent with someone. There are two people in my life to whom I give 100% truthful answer no matter the question they ask. I withhold nothing. I know if I am struggling, need to confess something or am in a dark place, I can share that with these two people.

One of the biggest mistakes I made in my life, my marriage and my ministry is I substituted accountability for transparency. Accountability without transparency is useless. It is easier in the short term to offer accountability and it seems more spiritual...but you experience more of the grace and mercy and love of Christ when you offer transparency.

In fact, when you are willing to offer transparency, you will find you don't need to be "held accountable".



JUSTIN DAVIS >

Justin is one of the campus pastors for Cross Point Church, recently named the 6th fastest growing church in the country. Justin received his BA degree in Christian Education in Lincoln and Trisha later earned her degree from Indiana University. He and his wife Trisha run a blog and a ministry called RefineUs. Their first book, *Beyond Ordinary: When a Good Marriage Isn't Good Enough*, is available now from Tyndale House Publishers.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: INFLUENCE >

BY MARK DEYMAZ

Sometime in the winter of 2002, only eighteen months after we had launched Mosaic, someone who was writing a book on church planting contacted me. Fascinated by the intentionality with which we were developing a church for all people, he asked if he could feature our work in one of the book's chapters despite the fact that we had only 150 or so people attending at the time. Soon after the book's publication, a local magazine in Little Rock also ran a story highlighting our unique vision. In April 2005, a picture of our gospel choir (all eleven members) was published in a sidebar article discussing our church and published that month by Christianity Today. The cover read, "All Churches Should Be Multiracial."

In no way do I share such things to boast. I share these things to point out that early interest in our church had nothing to do with large numbers or explosive growth. Rather, it had to do with the collective heart of our people. Quite frankly, nothing has changed.

In other words, what I have found is that any measure of encouragement, influence or significance that Mosaic has had to date, within

Don't be discouraged, then, or surprised, when seeking to build a healthy multi-ethnic church, if rapid numerical growth is not something you experience early on or ever at all.

our own community or beyond, has not come about because of the size of our ministry, but because of its scope; not because we have

attracted great numbers of people, but because we continue to exercise great faith, courage and sacrifice, setting aside personal preferences in order to walk, work and worship God together as one so that the world would know God's love and believe. Indeed, pursuit of a multi-ethnic and economically diverse congregation is something that even non-believers recognize as intrinsically good or "the way church ought to be."

Don't be discouraged, then, or surprised, when seeking to build a healthy multi-ethnic church, if rapid numerical growth is not something you experience early on or ever at all. Keep in mind that the multi-ethnic church, as movements go, is currently in a pioneer stage; and early-adoption of the Biblical mandate, core commitments and best practices of a diverse congregation may still be ten years away.

THE TRUTH BE TOLD, I REALLY LIKE, AND HAVE NO PROBLEM AT ALL WITH, A LARGE CHURCH SETTING.

I left a church of 5,000 or so to start Mosaic, and would be thrilled to see our church soon advance beyond the 500-600 people we currently engage on Sunday mornings. Yet, there's something even more interesting that I've come to realize when comparing the size of a multi-ethnic church to its potential significance.

When the 5,000 or so people of my former homogeneous church are dismissed to leave on a Sunday morning, they largely head back to the same neighborhoods and offices, the same athletic facilities and country clubs, the same schools and social settings. When the 500-600 people of our multi-ethnic church are dismissed for the week, they literally leave to permeate every quarter of the city.

Whether you are in a large or smaller congregational context, know that the pursuit of the multi-ethnic vision matters to God and to your community.

The homeless return to their camps, while other members return to homes in the hood, the barrios, the suburbs, and everywhere else in between. Many of our immigrant members hold jobs in service industries, while other members run for political office. From hospitals to corporate boardrooms, from working maids to small business owners, I have found that such diversity has carried our message and influence much farther and wider than our size might otherwise suggest.

So whether you are in a large or smaller congregational context, know that the pursuit of the multi-ethnic vision matters to God and to your community. Indeed, it is helping to shape the future of the American Church and, therefore, the advance of the gospel in an increasingly diverse and cynical society.



MARK DEYMAZ >

Mark DeYmaz is the founding pastor of the Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas (www.mosaicchurch.net), a multi-ethnic and economically diverse church where significant percentages of Black and White Americans, together with men and women from more than 30 nations, walk, work and worship God together as one. He is the co-founder of the Mosaix Global Network (www.mosaix.info), a contributing editor for Leadership journal and an online editor for Outreach magazine. He is the author of "Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church" and "Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church." His latest book, "Real Community Transformation: Beyond Rhetoric to Results for the Glory of God" was recently published by Leadership Network as part of its Leadia line.

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WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN...>

BY BILL EASUM

My education has let me down over the years. The only thing I use on a daily basis from High School and nine years of college, seminary, and graduate work is typing (and I use all my fingers, not just my thumbs!). Even spelling is done by a spell checker. All in all, I feel greatly let down by my education.

My superiors (I'm United Methodist) weren't much help either. In fact, most of their advice was totally wrong. Like - "don't do anything new in your first year. Just get to know them first." Perhaps that's some of the worst advice ever given because most church turnarounds come in the first year of a pastor's tenure. That was one piece of advice I didn't take. I knew it was dumb.

That gets me thinking – what do I wish I had known when I restarted the church I stayed at for 24 years? Here are a few of the things that would have saved me lots of heartache.

I wish I had been taught how to hire and fire people. I tried to save my first pastoral hire. He was a good man, but he was a chaplain type and I needed a self starter. I was told to do whatever I could to help him succeed. I did – for three years. I wish someone had come along side of me and said, "Ask the Bishop to move him, right now!" I finally did, but my waiting to do so cost the church three years of growth.

I wish I had known that most churches need a program/pastoral type paid person for every one hundred people in worship including children and youth. We had solid growth for 24 years but it took me five years to become acquainted with this ratio. When I finally made use of the ratio, the church grew much faster, retaining more people due to the relationships the staff formed with new people.

I wish I had known that it was better to stay in crowded conditions and add more worship services than to build as soon as possible. We had three services, two of which were full so I felt we should build. The problem was we had to build small because we didn't have the money. Now, as a consultant, I have learned that some of the largest churches remained in cramped quarters, putting money away, so that when they did build they could build for a longer future.

I wish I had known that it was easier to retain people than to attract people. If I had known this, I would have instituted a small group system earlier than we did. People have to be involved in something more than just sitting in worship or going to programs (that brings up another thing – **I wish someone had told me that programs weren't the way to go**). I wish I had known that the more I got people involved in the community, the more people we would have in worship. Oh, we did many community projects, but not every week. Most of the growing churches today have their people out in the community doing ministry almost every week.

I wish someone had told me that there are only four processes that grow a church. You have to bring people to Christ or the church. You have to retain them. You have to grow them. Then you have to send them back out to be backyard missionaries. By the way, my partner and I write about these four core processes in our new book, *Effective Staffing for Vital Churches: The Essential Guide for Finding and Keeping the Right People*. If I had known this, I would have eliminated any program that did not contribute to one of these four processes.

I wish someone had told me a church didn't need an elaborate structure in order to thrive. This is the one thing that cost me years of growth in my church. In 1986 we had 360 people on Boards and committees all mandated by my denomination for a church our size. I lived with it for several years. It took months of lobbying to get anything done. When Bil Cornelius and I wrote *Go Big*, we compared the time he spent getting new things done to the time I spent. Bil had a Board of three people, none of whom were church members, and no committees, and I had a Board of 150, plus over two dozen committees. His church grew to eight thousand in ten years and mine grew to 2000 in twenty four years. We concluded that I had lost 6-8 years (out of 24) trying to get things through committee and past the Board. I spent more time lobbying the larger we became. This sort of reminds me of our Federal government today. In late 1986, we eliminated our Board and all committees and the church exploded with growth.

Finally, I wish I had known how and when to start a second service. I started a second service my first year but the way I went about it was all wrong. I put it at 8:30 to avoid conflicting with Sunday School and I didn't treat it like starting a new church, with advertisements to the community. It wasn't long before I realized that Sunday School for adults was on its way out, so I started a service at the same time and it quickly became the second largest service out of our three.

These are the things I wish I had known when I started in ministry. I hope these lessons will serve you in your new church plant.



BILL EASUM >

Bill Easum has been the senior consultant for 21st Century Strategies since 1993. Prior to that he was a pastor. Bill has consulted with over 700 churches. He also spends much of his time coaching individual pastors. Bill is the recipient of the prestigious Donald McGavran award for outstanding church leadership and is the author of over 20 books.

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THE COMMUNITY CARD >

BY RON EDMONDSON

I almost hesitate to share this idea with you. It's not that I don't trust you, and I certainly believe in you as a Kingdom builder and church planter. It's just that this idea is so good. And, so cheap. And, so simple. And, so effective.

I almost hate to lose the specialness of this idea if everyone starts doing it.

It's that good.

But, since you like simple ideas and you are a church planter who has little money with which to do fancy campaigns...and since I have "been there and done that" myself, I guess I will share it with you.

Do you promise not to tell anyone? Promise?

Are you ready? This is going to blow your socks off. Trust me.

Every year, at the beginning of the year, I send a personal card to every key leader in my community.

Wow! Did you catch that? Deep, isn't it?

Here's how it works. I create a message I want to convey to our leaders. It goes something like this:

Thank you for your leadership in our community. Our desire is to be of assistance to you in making

_____ the best city it can be. Please know we are praying for you this year and if there is any way you know of that we can better serve our community, please let me know.

I change the content of the card every year, but that is basically what it says. I professionally have a card made with this message on it. I sign every card. We find the addresses and we mail them. Simple.

My intent in this process is to let these leaders know our church cares for them and that we are here to help them any way we can. The reputation outside the church is that few churches really care for their community. You know that, right? The perception is that they say they love their community, but that few do anything about it. I want our leaders to know that our church is ready to help make our community better.

I send the card to anyone I consider a leader. That includes local and state (from our area) elected officials, school administrators, chamber officials and anyone considered a key influencer in our community. In my case, that includes college administrators, athletic officials and coaches. In most cases, it has been less than 200 cards each year. (I told you...it's a cheap idea.)

Thank you for your leadership in our community. Our desire is to be of assistance to you in making _____ the best city it can be. Please know we are praying for you this year and if there is any way you know of that we can better serve our community, please let me know.

The response?

Well, I knew you would ask. The response has been amazing. Over the last ten years or so of doing this, we have engaged with school and court systems, mayors, council members and state representatives. We have had some of these leaders visit our church after receiving the card. Some continued to attend after their visit. We have been given opportunities to serve our community. In fact, we have organized entire ministries as a result of one contact from a community leader.

It seems these leaders are so surprised that a church would take an interest in them that they willingly reach out to us with opportunities.

One word of counsel I must give you - You have to back up the card with action. You may not be able to do everything these leaders suggest or request

that you do, but if these same leaders never see or hear of you doing anything in the community they will be less likely to take your card seriously the next time you send it.

It seems these leaders are so surprised that a church would take an interest in them that they willingly reach out to us with opportunities.

It may take a few years for some community leaders to respond, but be consistent. In time, they will see you as a partner in the community. You will be known as a church that truly cares. You will have a seat at the table of leadership in your community, simply because you took the time to reach out.



RON EDMONSON >

Ron is pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church and a church leader passionate about helping established churches thrive, planting new churches, and assisting pastors and those in ministry think through leadership, strategy and life. In addition to his role as a pastor, he consults with church and ministry leaders.

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5 LESSONS LEARNED WHILE STARTING NEW THINGS >

BY DAVE FERGUSON

It was twelve years ago that Community Christian Church started a new campus for the first time. Since then, we have started a total of twelve campuses and have #13 and #14 in the queue for next year. Seven years ago, Community planted our first new church and went on to form NewThing. Since that time our networks' outreach has grown from one church reaching a couple thousand people to twenty networks of churches reaching tens of thousands in three movements. During the last decade our passion has been about starting new things – new campuses, new churches and brand new expressions of God's ecclesia. During that time, we have learned some lessons about starting new things.

When you are able to share where God is working, that is always a compelling vision that people will want to follow!

1. VISION LESSON: THE "GOD-THING" OFTEN COMES BEFORE THE VISION

If you would've asked me a few years back how change is initiated, I would have said it starts with a compelling vision from a gifted leader. While that is true, it's not the whole truth in my experience. I didn't really have the vision for being a multi-site church. God did! It was a God thing! I often get the credit for being a visionary leader, but what is closer to the truth is this: God did something extraordinary and I share what God has done with the rest of the church as the vision; and people follow. When you are able to share where God is working, that is always a compelling vision that people will want to follow!

2. STRATEGY LESSON: FIT IT ON A NAPKIN.

If something can't be explained on a napkin, it is too complicated. Make sure everything - from your slogan to your process for disciple-making to how you will create a movement - can be explained on a napkin. Just this morning I was meeting with two of my apprentice leaders at Caribou Coffee. I wanted to explain our process for developing leaders and then our leadership path. I simply pulled out a napkin and wrote it out for them. Many leaders never have a following because the vision and strategy cannot be explained simply. If it is simple and reproducible, you can mobilize the masses.

3. FINANCE LESSON: MONEY ALWAYS FOLLOWS VISION

People give money to a compelling cause with a clear vision. When economic times are hard, leaders are tempted to reduce the budget and shrink their vision, but it's when economic times are hard that you need to increase the vision. The money will follow. It was Lyle Schaller who once told me, "Dave, you know who is going to get the money?" Then he answered his own question, "The leaders who ask for it!" Never forget – God is always at work and vision is free!

4. INNOVATION LESSON: LEAD WITH A "YES" AND ASK "HOW" LATER

If you want to lead in bringing about innovation, you must learn to lead with a "yes" and not "how." When others approach us with new ideas, our first reaction is often "no" or "how"? What people need is affirmation of their

dreams and space for them to figure out how to make them really work. People are born with dreams from God and they want to make a difference. What they need most is a leader who will say “yes” when they ask for permission to give it a try.

5. REPRODUCING LESSON: TAKE RISKS ON EMERGING LEADERS.

Resist the urge of telling young leaders to wait a few years; they need and deserve opportunities to lead. You will always have young and emerging leaders who will come to you and want to do a new thing. You can either dismiss it or you can bless it. Bless it! What we need to do is take risks on young leaders and give them our blessing.

THE “GOD-THING” OFTEN COMES BEFORE THE VISION.

STRATEGY SHOULD FIT ON A NAPKIN.

MONEY ALWAYS FOLLOWS VISION.

LEAD WITH A “YES”.

TAKE RISKS ON EMERGING LEADERS.



DAVE FERGUSON >

Dave Ferguson is the Lead Pastor of COMMUNITY (www.communitychristian.org), an innovative multi-site missional community who is passionate about “helping people find their way back to God”. CCC has grown from a few college friends to thousands every weekend meeting at twelve locations throughout Chicago and was recognized as one of the most influential churches in America. Dave provides visionary leadership for NewThing (www.newthing.org) whose dream is to be a catalyst for movements of reproducing churches. He is also the co-founder of the Institute for Community (www.instituteforcommunity.org), who partner with real estate developers and apartment communities to accomplish their mission of “helping people build quality relationships where you live and work through the power of genuine community.” He is the author of *The BIG IDEA* (2007), *Exponential* (2010) and *On The Verge* (2011). Next to Jesus, Dave loves his wife Sue immensely and his three terrific kids Amy, Joshua and Caleb.

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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STORY >

BY BRENT FOULKE

"Why plant churches?" is a question all of us in "church plant world" get asked and love to answer. I get it on airplanes, in board rooms, at mission committee meetings and in all kinds of informal settings. Like most of my colleagues in this ministry business, I usually answer with some form of Wagner's statement about church planting being the most effective strategy available for accomplishing God's purpose in the world.

However, the analysis of effectiveness is really trumped by the inspiration of the stories. Having a front row seat to what God does when a church planter engages a new community is downright thrilling. For instance Joe McGrew, a planter in Collinsville, IL, tells a story about a woman collecting aluminum cans on Saturday when she encountered a new church block party.

"Shelly is a lady who walks around with her husband during the week and collects aluminum cans to bring in extra money for bills and other basic needs. She stopped by the block party we had on Saturday and we told her to finish her route and come back and we would set aside cans for them. We did. They came and collected the bag, grabbed some lunch and left. She came Sunday morning (to our first preview service) alone, but she was smiling and seemed to have a genuine excitement to be there. One of our staff women recognized her and walked up to say hello. Shelly proceeded to tell her that on their way home Saturday after the block party, her husband said, 'now that is a church I would go to.' Her husband hates what church stands for and has always refused to go no matter what the circumstances. Who knew a few aluminum cans and some free food could knock down years of bitterness towards God and the church?"

Who knew?! As a support person for this new church, I'm not sure the metrics of attendance, offerings, even baptisms has more power than the initial change of heart in Shelly's husband. Being the church in the community, this new launch team has already started helping God transform hearts. Engaging people like Shelly and her

husband in a conversation about life starts changing the way they view Jesus and His Body - the church. What could be better than that?

That's why we plant churches. That's what makes God smile. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!



BRENT FOULKE >

Brent's church planting adventure began in 1991 when he and his wife Kay

were called to plant Christ's Church in Albany, NY. After coaching several dozen church planters sponsored by churches, foundations and church planting agencies, Brent left the staff of Christ's Church to work full time facilitating new churches throughout the U.S. He served three years as Executive Director of the Exponential Conference before accepting his current role as Stadia's Mobilization Executive. Encompassing network formation, planter recruitment, and marketing communications in the U.S. and globally, the Mobilization team is distributed across North and South America. Brent and Kay continue to call Upstate NY home, where they still worship with Christ's Church, garden together and travel to visit their children and grandchildren in Philadelphia and Chicago.

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ADVICE TO CHURCH PLANTERS >

BY DERWIN GRAY

Several times a month, a church planter emails and says, "I'm about to plant a church. What advice would you give?"

Here is how I answer that question:

1. LOVE JESUS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. From the overflow of His love, you will grow in your capacity to love your wife, children, congregation, and those who have yet to receive the love of Christ.

2. TRUST GOD TO DO RIDICULOUS THINGS THROUGH YOUR MINISTRY. If your vision does not scare you and the people you lead, why bother?

3. CAST A VISION that causes people to say, "If I don't join this movement or give to it financially, I'm missing out!"

4. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ORGANIZED! Systems and processes matter! People don't follow disorder and chaos.

5. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH LEADERS SMARTER AND MORE GIFTED THAN YOU. You will only soar as high as the leaders that surround you.

I pray this advice helps as you journey with Jesus on the great adventure of church planting!



DERWIN GRAY >

Derwin L. Gray is the founding and Lead Pastor of Transformation Church (www.TransformationChurch.tc). He is considered to be one of America's leading voices on multi-ethnic, multi-generational, missional ministry. In their first two years of existence, Transformation Church was recognized as one of the top 100 fastest-growing churches in America by Outreach Magazine (2nd on the list by percentage for 2010). Derwin has been married to his best friend Vicki for 21 years. They have two children, Presley and Jeremiah. After graduating from Brigham Young University, he played for six seasons in the NFL for the Indianapolis Colts (1993-1997) and the Carolina Panthers (1998). Derwin graduated from Southern Evangelical Seminary magna cum laude, with a Masters of Divinity with a concentration in Apologetics, where he was mentored by renowned theologian and philosopher Dr. Norman Geisler. He's also recognized by many as the "Evangelism Linebacker." Derwin is also the author of *Limitless Life: You Are More Than Your Past When God Has Your Future* (Thomas Nelson, September 3, 2013). Learn more about Derwin at www.derwingray.com.

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LEADERSHIP IS KEY >

BY STEPHEN GRAY

There can be no more fundamental step in the process of watching a church become healthy than finding the right leader(s). Leaders who are called of God, prepared for ministry and wired to plant new life-giving churches. Whether you are planting a fast-growing church or a more organic house church, who leads is often the most important issue to be determined. While many proclaim the desire to plant, helping an individual discover God's shape for their ministry is more complex than a simple nod of the head or pat on the back. As Jim Collins wrote in *Good to Great*, it is about "getting the right person on the bus."

Over the last decade, the war has raged on in the church-planting world over models and methodologies. We have clamored for the latest and greatest way to plant a church. A myriad of solutions have been offered in an attempt to suggest "the right way". It seems that every time a new, God-Ordained church planting success shows up, everyone proclaims, "This is the new way. Follow this way and you, too, will succeed."

One week we celebrate a new organic church explode across city and multiply it like wild fire. Church Planting Leaders blog about their new success and the pendulum swings in a different direction. Across the state, someone else launches a church as a bi-vocational pastor and experiences great success... and the pendulum swings again. Then out of nowhere, a planter rises up through the ranks as a social justice leader without any intention to plant a church. He experiences great success and the pendulum swings.

My point is simply this: We watch an exceptionally gifted leader start and grow a ministry (not always numerically) and we automatically proclaim that this leader has discovered the new, cultural way to reach the new generation. If that leader grows the church in an unconventional way or in a way that smacks against the norm of the established methodology, then we proclaim that a new era has arisen! We mark the birth of this new movement as proof that our culture has changed.

Here's a few examples.

If only we would teach pastors to become bi-vocational, then we would experience greater efficacy. If bi-vocational ministry was the issue, then we should already be winning the war. The greater percentage of pastors today is considered bi-vocational.

Maybe we should stop throwing so much money at a church plant and do it on a shoe-string budget, then we would have greater success. If that was the solution, the Church around the globe should be knocking it out of the park. The average church

around the world works with paltry sums to do ministry.

The clear answer must be that we should simply become better disciple-makers, then we could see a real move of God. This is not a new problem just now plaguing the Church.

While all of these issues are worthy of a discussion, are they the primary, foundational issue? The problems are many and far more complex than reducing it to a simplistic model or methodology. In fact, there is a whole plethora of issues we could bring to the table. Models and methods on how we do church have been elevated above everything else.

I believe we have focused for too long on the wrong issues. I would dare say that ninety-eight percent of the speeches you have heard about "doing" church-planting centers around how rather than why and the call of planting. We have failed to stop and look at one primal issue: The leader!

Jesus said in Matt 9:35-38 "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

It seems that every time a new, God-Ordained church planting success shows up, everyone proclaims, "This is the new way. Follow this way and you, too, will succeed."

In these three simple verses, Jesus shares the dilemma we, too, face. The harvest is still plentiful today, but the workers are few! The problem is not model-specific, nor is it about a methodology. The issues we face today are not new to the Church. Rather than discuss the issue of how, let's spend the time discovering the who and helping them to realize how God has wired them.

I feel pretty safe proclaiming that the most foundational issue concerning ministry leadership is the CALL of God on a person's life. The call placed on an individual's life is tantamount. Furthermore, as we look at ministry leadership beyond the initial call, there are three more foundational matters which must be considered if we are to experience greater efficacy in the church planting world. If we don't consider these issues, I believe we can quickly misalign called leaders and set them up for potential failure.

In order to position called leaders for success, we need to concentrate on the following:

1. Leadership Capacity

2. Strategic Placement of the Leader (which involves determining the condition of the soil, as well as matching the person's God-shaped experiences and environment)

3. Developing Proper Expectations (keeping in mind leadership capacity and the place determined to plant).

You will notice that methodology hasn't even been considered. I feel we must spend more time focusing on who is leading new churches and less on how to plant the church.



STEPHEN GRAY >

Stephen Gray, D-min has spent the last decade of his ministry helping plant new churches and restart dying congregations. He is recognized as one of the leading church planting and church growth experts in the U.S. Over the last 27 years he has been involved in pastoring, transitioning, restarting, and planting new churches. Dr. Gray is an alumni of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, where he received both his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degree. Stephen presently he serves as Superintendent of the Oasis Free Methodist Church, and church planting consultant for the Western Region of the Free Methodist Church (USA).

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A SCARY TALE >

BY STUART HALL

Once upon a time, in a land not too much unlike the one you and I inhabit today (unless you live in Tahiti or Malibu, in which case, we are all jealous and want to come visit), lived a teenage boy. He was a typical teenager, full of bravado and himself, quick to run to a good time and always in search of a new adventure. He was not from the wealthiest of families. To be quite honest, he was "PO", which is much worse than being poor, because you don't even have enough to afford an O or an R. He understood his social plight, but refused to allow it to deter his zest for life. In fact, he learned how to leverage his dire straits for his own gain. His quick sense of humor and prose made him a magnet to any and everyone his age.

As is usually the case with most teenage boys, this young man was also infatuated with a girl. Not just any girl, mind you. We are talking about a portrait of all that is good, beautiful, charming, and lovely. She was exquisite, even as a young woman. Her laugh? Contagious. Her smile? Bright, inviting. Her appearance? Only the imagination can conceive of such a breathtaking array of lines, curves, and features too grand to articulate by pen. Furthermore, she was from the greatest, wealthiest and most respected and powerful family in town. She never lived in want. Even in her exalted position in life, she was kind, considerate, a great friend to any and all she met. She was a picture of perfection.

One fateful day, upon the invitation of a mutual friend, the two were introduced at a party. The young man was in awe of her beauty. The young woman marveled at his wit, zest for life and unyielding potential. She immediately found her heart becoming his property. Despite their obvious social and positional differences, there was a connection unlike any other.

She fell madly in love with this boy. And she told him so. In letters too moving to include in this story, in acts of selflessness too many to count, this beauty began to pour out her heart to this young man, in hopes that he would become her one and only.

One would think that such a revelation of passionate love would have been received with unshaken devotion.

One would think that the young man's heart and life would have become hers wholly, completely. After all, she was the most beautiful of the beautiful, the fairest of them all.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. This young man found his heart constantly wandering to other girls, other interests, other beauties, whether be it the opposite sex, intoxicants, sports, friends, or the like.

He hated this about himself. He knew that his heart should be completely consumed with her, and he questioned why he could not fetter his heart to hers alone. In fact, he resolved to do everything in his power to make his heart love her. He set his alarm every day at 4:00 am so that he could awake and read the love letters she continued to send him, even despite his waywardness. He separated himself from those friends that tended to bend his behavior in a way that he felt would disappoint her. He actually obeyed his parents, despite their prehistoric ideals, because he knew that this beauty loved her own father and would never disobey him. He tried as hard as he could to become selfless, to be ever-so-conscious of his choices, to not allow himself to wander into places and with people that typically caused his heart to flutter like a leaf in a fall breeze.

She fell madly in love with this boy.
And she told him so. In letters too moving to include in this story, in acts of selflessness too many to count, this beauty began to pour out her heart to this young man, in hopes that he would become her one and only.

As well intentioned and valuable as these character traits and disciplines proved themselves to be, they did not secure his heart to hers. They certainly made him more lovable, trustworthy, more mature and more accepting of others; alas, their ultimate goal, an unyielding love and

never-changing devotion to the only one really worthy of such devotion, never came to be. He still could not resist counterfeit beauties. These discrepancies created doubt and confusion. "What must I do to deserve her love?" he thought. "Why can't I love only her in the way she loves me?" His doubt began to grow into apathy and lethargy. The young man, once full of life, became a walking zombie, afraid to feel, refusing to trust others, especially himself, void of passion for any and all...

Sound familiar? It may not in the realm of fairy tale. It is, however, a scary tale, a very familiar yet disturbing story to all of us who pour our lives into students. The countless numbers of teenagers we have watched flitter into apathy because their heart would not or could not remain true to its Maker. The means by which we have convinced students that the devotion and commitment they so desperately desire can be achieved.

What has it birthed? Apathy. Confusion. Lethargy. An adulterous lover who has not been so shaken, moved, floored, despondent, amazed and bewildered by the love that Jesus has lavished and proven as ours. A tilted view of the beauty, grandeur, power and might of a God

that has gone to every length to sing a love song to the depths of our heart.

I do not want to be a part of contributing to the apathy. Perhaps this story is my therapeutic way of dealing with the guilt I feel for my own divulgence into the ridiculous notion that duty equals devotion.

Call it what you will. What I know to be true is that we all desire, as leaders, to see lives of passion, wonder and discovery nurtured, welded and forged under our influence. Tangible markers of devotion may be desirable, but they only reveal a fraction of our story.

When our daughter Cameron was five, she looked at me one day while we were snuggling and said, "Daddy, I love you." I asked if she knew what it meant to love someone. Her five-year old mind, vocabulary and heart struggled to articulate love.

And you know what? I still struggle to articulate love, and I am forty something years old. Love is a hard thing to describe, isn't it?



STUART HALL >

Stuart provides vision and leadership for two highly effective non-profit organizations (XP3: A Division of the Rethink Group & DASH INC) and deeply desires to develop spiritually influential students that engage culture, partners with great organizations like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes to develop students as leaders. He travels and speaks to thousands of students and leaders each year, has coauthored three books (The Seven Checkpoints: Seven Principles Every Teenager Needs to Know, MAX Q: Developing Students of Influence and Wired: For a Life of Worship, Leaders Edition), is working on authoring one or two more, laughs incessantly, loves his beautiful wife Kellee and their children with every fiber of his being.

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HOW TO MINISTER TO YOUR WIFE WHILE PLANTING A CHURCH >

BY CHRISTINE HOOVER

Words of encouragement to a wife are like water to a plant.

When I read that quote recently, I thought about how true that statement is. Every wife needs and craves encouragement from her husband.

My husband is masterful at showing me love. He plans date nights, he gifts me with a box of Junior Mints just when I'm withdrawing, he lovingly engages our children, and he leads our home well... but there is nothing like a well-timed word of encouragement from him! Hearing Kyle say that I'm a good mom, that he appreciates my cooking, that I'm beautiful, that he sees God using me—those words will reenergize me for days.

There is another reason why his words of encouragement are necessary: my husband is a church planting pastor. For the past three years, God has used us to build a church from the ground up, work that has been both grueling and rewarding. The first year of church planting was especially difficult for me because of the uncertainty, instability, and magnitude of the work. Without my husband's verbal encouragement and attentiveness, I could not have made it through.

Your wife, too, will face unique challenges in your first year of church planting. At times, she will feel discouraged, overwhelmed, and even resentful of the time and energy your job requires of you. As you seek to nurture your wife, there are many things you can do. Draw clear boundaries between ministry and home life from the very beginning, protect her from essentially becoming a second staff member, and strive to ease your own worry and distraction so you can give her your undivided attention... but there is nothing you can do that equals the effect of your encouragement.

After a sermon or a church outreach event, my husband receives a pat on the back or words of affirmation at how God has used him, but who encourages me in my role as the pastor's wife—the one with the focus on the

needs of the pastor? That opportunity primarily belongs to my husband. When he acknowledges and affirms my ministry to him and to others around me, he waters my soul, helping me grow and blossom in my role.

This need that pastors' wives have isn't irrational or the result of a wrong focus. Proverbs 31 describes a husband who is well known in the community, sitting among the elders of the land. At the gates of the city, he receives respect and affirmation. His wife also offers him her admiration and honors him by how she lives. Where does the godly wife receive encouragement? "Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: 'Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.'" Proverbs 31: 28-29

Just like the Proverbs 31 husband, water your wife through specific praise:

- "I was feeling discouraged but your words helped me persevere."
- "You and your gifts are vital to our ministry."
- "You are more important to me than the church."
- "Thank you for the sacrifices you make that allow me to do my job well."

Church Planters - like you, your wife continually gives to others. Many people don't think about or understand her needs or the demands on her life. You may be the only source of encouragement your wife receives on a continual basis and her well-being will have profound influence on your success. Through your words of blessing, you have an opportunity to minister to your wife in a way that no one else can, especially through the first grueling year.



CHRISTINE HOOVER >

Christine Hoover is the wife of a church planting pastor and the mom of three boys. She is the author of *The Church Planting Wife: Help and Hope for Her Heart* and a blogger that encourages women in ministry to live and lead from grace.

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LEARN HOW TO FISH >

BY CHAD HUNT

An Excerpt from "7 Things that can Cripple your Church"

In Luke 5, we are introduced to a group of fishermen named Peter, James, and John. These guys busted their hump the night before, casting nets and caught nothing. Frustrated and tired, morning came and they began cleaning their nets to head home. Suddenly this guy named Jesus comes on the scene and borrows Peter's boat and uses it for a pulpit. Afterwards, he tells Peter to go out into the deep and cast his nets. Peter must have looked confused (because you don't net fish in the daytime or in deep waters). Nevertheless, Jesus said, "Let down your nets for a catch" Peter, still frustrated, agreed. End result? A ton of fish.

As the story goes on, Peter realizes Jesus is something special; he falls to his knees, trembling. I love what Jesus says next, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." Basically Jesus said, "Your occupation as a fishermen isn't going to change; but what you catch will change." In other words, Jesus called us to catch people with the net of the gospel. I know there are good churches, who have good intentions and really want to see people come to Jesus. Yet at the end of each year, they can only celebrate a few conversions and fewer baptisms. Poor theology and lack of discipleship can slow down spiritual and numerical growth; but there's something else that's crippling the local church; it's the lack of fishing skills. Yeah, I know that sounds weird. However, I'm pretty sure if Jesus used fishing as one of his first analogies to talk about evangelism, so can we.

I believe Jesus used the fishing analogy because there are principles that translate into the church; principles that can help us keep paralysis out of our mission of catching people with the gospel. In the days of Jesus, the local fishermen used nets. In Kentucky where I live, we seldom fish with nets, but give us a creek bank, a fishing pole, and a box of night crawlers and we'll catch fish all day long!

Although American fishing differs from the days of Jesus, the concept is the same. Here's three things that will help your church become a fisher of men.

Christ-followers must learn where to fish to catch people who are far away from God. We have to be intentional about hanging out where unsaved people are.

One of the biggest mistakes churches make is fishing in the wrong places. A good fisherman knows how to fish. If he's after crappie, he'll likely fish around some underwater stumps, because that's where crappie lay eggs. If he's after catfish, he'll have his bait on the bottom, because that's where catfish hang out. Evangelism doesn't start on a corporate level, it starts on an individual level. Christ-followers must learn where to fish

to catch people who are far away from God. We have to be intentional about hanging out where unsaved people are.

Yes, I know, the religious will put three nails in you for it, but in case you haven't noticed, religious people aren't catching souls for Jesus.

If you were to ask the average Christian, "How many unchurched friends do you have?" Most would say, "I know a lot of unchurched people!" Others would say, "I have unchurched friends that I see at the gym all the time." Yet, I think there is a difference in having a friend and simply being friendly to the guy at the gym. The law of religion basically tells us not to associate ourselves with "sinners." Religion has taught us to surround ourselves with other Christians and shun those who aren't Christians. Of course, there are boundaries, and the Holy Spirit is great at letting us know what they are.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes a letter concerning a church member who was having an open sexual relationship with one of his father's wives (it took a while to get polygamy out of some of the early churches). Paul tells them to throw this man out of the church because of his lack of repentance (1 Cor. 5:1-5); and they did. I love what Paul says next. He identifies the fishing hole. He writes, "When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin, but I wasn't talking about unbelievers who

indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to do avoid people like that. I meant that you are not supposed to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with them" (1 Cor. 5:9-11, NLT).

Paul teaches us that we should disassociate ourselves with anyone who claims to follow Jesus, yet lives a lifestyle that's opposite (and might I add there is a path to restoration for such people; read Paul's letter regarding this same man in 2 Cor. 2:5-11). However, he also teaches us that we are not to disassociate ourselves with unbelievers who have sinful lifestyles. He said we would have to leave the world to do that, and Jesus said the world is the mission field (Mt. 9:37,13:38); that's our fishing hole. Too often, we think isolation from the world is a sign of holiness; it's actually a sign of religion. It's poor fishing. Fishing in the right place requires you to go into the places of your community and city and engage people with God's love, make friends and build relationships. By doing so, you'll earn the permission to speak into their lives and when the time is right, the Holy Spirit will nudge you to share the gospel.

The weekend service can also be a place to reach the unchurched. Obviously, the weekend service is not a natural place to catch souls for

Jesus, because unchurched people normally don't wake up Sunday morning with a desire to hear singing and preaching. However, with the right invite, culture, attraction, and mission, the weekend can become a strategic place to fish. Over the years, there has been the argument whether the church should be missional or attractional or both. Personally I believe the church should be both.

Today there are a lot of pastors and leaders who ask the question, "Why should the church be attractional?" Many would say churches who are attractional are sinful; they are accused of putting on a "weekend show" or entertaining people. Unfortunately, there are churches who put more energy into entertainment than inspiration, but that doesn't mean we should abort everything that appeals to people. I mean, people are who we're trying to reach, right? To say churches should not be attractional is like saying the best way to fish is without a lure. To catch fish, you have to have something to lure them to the hook. One of my favorite lures is a spinner bait called the "Rooster Tail." Rooster Tails come in bright colors; the tail part is soft, hair-like material with a three-pronged hook underneath. In the water, the spinning metal and the bright colors attracts fish, especially bass, from the deep dark waters. They chase it, they bite it, and they're hooked.

If you want to catch unchurched people at your weekend service, there has to be an attractional aspect

to lure them out of the dark places of their life. Many churches in America have moved towards a post modern style, most have not. If we are going to catch new generation people, we have to use the right bait. Old school ideologies, dry services, and trying to preach in Old English may lure the religious, but it's not luring those who are far away from God. Your building, preaching style, dress style, worship style, children's ministry, etc should be attractive to the people of today and tomorrow's generation. If your church is attractive only to the religious, your chances of catching souls on the weekend are few. Again, I know there are some churches who go way over the edge; they care more about impressing people with the light show than inspiring people with the gospel. However, when you look at attraction as part of the overall strategy, it changes everything.

Fishing strategies always begin with using the right lure and fishing in the right place. Depending on what you're fishing for, both the lure and the location will change. However, there is one thing that will never change, and that is the hook. Regardless of what kind of rod and reel you use or what kind of lure...without the hook, you'll never reel one in. Our buildings, lights, and worship styles are the attractional pieces, they can lure people in who are far away from

One thing that will never change, and that is the hook. Regardless of what kind of rod and reel you use or what kind of lure...without the hook, you'll never reel one in.

God. Yet, the attraction is pointless if there is no missional piece.

When a church lacks the mission, it's the same as fishing without a hook. Fancy lighting, loud music, and casual dress codes will not save people; it may lure them to your building, but you'll never catch their soul for Christ.

When a church lacks the mission, it's the same as fishing without a hook. Fancy lighting, loud music, and casual dress codes will not save people; it may lure them to your building, but you'll never catch their soul for Christ. When it comes to the church, there is only one hook: the gospel. Our attractional strategies should always change in order to remain relevant and reach the unchurched, but our message can never change. According to Jesus, the Great Commission has two basic parts: preach the gospel and make disciples. Engaging people with the gospel of Jesus Christ is the first part of the mission and making disciples is the second part. Anytime our attractional pieces get in the way of either of these, they need to go. The gospel and making disciples

are non-negotiable.

Never let anything stand in the way of the gospel. Without it, you'll never catch people for Jesus. I have spoken at several conferences around the country and in doing so, I discovered a new thought floating around out there in the church planting world. The thought is, "If we play cool music on a cool stage and preach in a cool way while wearing a cool shirt, I'll reach everyone in my city!" First of all, you probably won't. Secondly, even if you did, without gospel-centered intentionality and disciple-making strategies, you're no different than the guy who fishes all day using the coolest, newest fishing pole and lures... without a hook.



CHAD HUNT >

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5 MISCONCEPTIONS THAT HURT YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS >

BY MAC LAKE

A lack of leadership development could be an early indicator that your organization is headed for serious decline.

Here's the scenario: There's a shortage of leaders in your pipeline and you're beginning to feel the effects organization-wide: You're unprepared to handle additional growth; The organization as a whole is in jeopardy if you lose one or two key leaders; Potential leaders can't break into the organization because it's the same people doing the same jobs for years. The need is great, you recognize it, but you're not sure others do. You've made efforts in the past to get a leadership development movement started but it didn't stick. You've said the right words, cast the right vision and even set the right goals but still not gained any traction.

Why? It could be you've failed to understand that people's actions are based out of their assumptions. Their deeply embedded assumptions have greater power than your words of inspiration. If you're unaware of these basic assumptions, you may not be able to get any movement toward your leadership development objectives.

Here are Five Common Misconceptions that you need to constantly dismantle in your organization.

DEVELOPING LEADERS IS NOT MY ROLE

They may nod their head and smile politely as you declare the urgent need for leader development, but deep down most people have the assumption "developing leaders is not my job". It's not that they're being stubborn or rebellious. Most people take a job because they love it and they love the responsibility that comes with it. So, equipping someone else to do what they do is not a natural thought for them.

GOD WILL PROVIDE THE LEADERS WE NEED

While your leaders may feel the pain of the leadership shortage, their primary strategy to fill the gap is to pray for God's provision. I'm not down-playing prayer as part of the process; of course we have to depend on God for the provision of leaders. However, prayer as a singular strategy ignores the leader's Biblical responsibility to replicate himself. Ignoring the discipline of leader development is unhealthy for the leader and the organization long term.

I CAN HANDLE THE CURRENT SCOPE OF WORK

Some leaders look at their area of responsibility and think, "I can do it myself, there is no need to develop anyone else." This assumption indicates a lack of leadership maturity and cripples the long-

term growth and health in that area of ministry. While they may be very adequate at handling the current responsibilities, their refusal to develop others is short-sighted and selfish, and it ultimately puts the ministry at risk if the leader were suddenly removed.

DEVELOPING LEADERS REQUIRES A SPECIAL SKILL SET THAT I DO NOT POSSESS

Yes, leader development requires some specific skills but they are skills that can be easily developed. I'd rather have someone trying to develop leaders and doing it poorly than making no effort at all. At least when they're trying, I can step in and provide coaching that will help them grow in this discipline. As long as you're providing feedback on their efforts they'll get better in this area.

THERE ARE NO CONSEQUENCES IF I DO NOT DEVELOP LEADERS

They may not say this out loud but deep down some people think, "If I am a good 'doer' I will be rewarded and my superiors will overlook my inattention to leader development." We cannot allow current leaders to settle for simply being "doers". To expand, grow and create vital ministries requires the replication of new leaders. Every healthy organism reproduces. Measuring and celebrating the replication of new leaders will provide accountability and over time remove the wrong assumption.



MAC LAKE >

Mac Lake is the Chief Launch Officer of LAUNCH. Mac served seven years as the Senior Pastor at Carolina Forest Community Church before God began to lay a huge burden on his heart for Leadership Development. In 2004, Mac joined Seacoast Church to help develop leaders for their multi-site movement. He remained as the Leadership Development Pastor for nearly seven years before accepting the call to start the LAUNCH Network. Mac's passion is growing leaders for the local church. Mac has three children: Brandon, who is on staff at Seacoast Church as a Worship Leader. Jordan, an aspiring graffiti artist and Junior at North Paulding High School. And Brianna, who has an amazing eye for fashion and design and Sophomore at North Paulding High School.

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BUILDING A GENEROUS CULTURE FROM DAY ONE >

BY BRAD LEEPER

The leader in you responds to the call, the urge, the deep dream to plant a church. The cost has been counted. The restless nights, the inexpressible joys, the fellowship of the dream team make the call even more irresistible.

The head scratcher? The funding of your plant. Funding your plant is not sexy. There are many tips and techniques that can give you the sense you are doing well in funding, but rarely do those tips create what your plant needs to thrive for years – a sustained culture of generosity.

How do you create a culture of generosity to build sustained, radical giving from day one?

Make Funding Your Highest Priority

Your plant will falter without funding. Mission and money are inextricably intertwined. You can have the best people, the best vision, the best location, but without money in the bank, your plant and your dream settle in mediocrity.

Your attention will be drawn by more fascinating church plant methods. None of those elements make it into reality without the funding.

As the visionary leader, you are and always will be the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Consider assigning more than 50% of your time in funding the mission before your launch. The more successful church planters will spend 25% of their time in CFO work post-launch.

This self-analysis from a successful church planter on how he would change his planting: I would talk more about money and funding. I did not work hard enough to create a culture of generosity or teach on money. Needs to happen. Has to happen.

When you make funding a high priority, you will have more ministry, more impact, more discipleship and better teams through your ministry of being the CFO.

Be Personally Generous

Speed of the leadership will always dictate the speed of the team.

You must demonstrate a private world of generosity to lead with credibility. External investors to your plant want to know if you are in financially. Your launch team will want to know. Your model of generosity significantly matters years into the life of the church.

“Brothers, what must we do to be saved?” Their reaction to Peter’s message was, “You don’t need to do an invitation, we’ll invite ourselves! Forget doing an altar call, we’re calling ourselves to the altar!” And thousands were baptized that day.

Whether speaking with an external investor or your launch team, you must be able to tell your personal financial investment story with conviction and without waver.

“My spouse and I are deeply invested in this plant. For the next 2 years, we are committing 25% of our income to this plant.”

You are qualified to plant your church when you can lead from this level of fiscal integrity. Your private world and personal world must align. This generosity choice will validate your personal leadership and draw money investments like mad.

Normalize the Generosity and Money Conversation from the Start

Whatever you highlight now will carry forward in your church DNA for decades. Weaker church plants cloak the money conversation either out of fear, a misguided belief about faith and finances, or from lack of knowing

how to lead in the giving area. Come out of the gates with a passion for generosity.

Here's the unexpected consequence about normalizing the generosity value: you will attract more people. Generosity is winsome and contagious. Generosity may be the best evangelism strategy that you possess.

Tim Keller frames it this way:

"The early church was strikingly different from the culture around it in this way - the pagan society was stingy with its money and promiscuous with its body. A pagan gave nobody their money and practically gave everybody their body. And the Christians came along and gave practically nobody their body and they gave practically everybody their money."

You will know when the money becomes normal when people in your church say without prompting: "I get to be part of a church that gives itself away, that lives differently, that makes impact."

Generosity is the transformational element of our plant. The generosity value separates the strong plants from the weak plants.

Two practical steps you can do now to build your generosity DNA:

1. Place generosity in your top core values. Put it on your website. Highlight the value. Celebrate and model generosity at every opportunity. People eventually get it

when you celebrate, elevate, teach and model a concept.

2. Raise the bar for your launch team. Too often, the initial leadership team gets to have the fun of being part of a launch without financial commitment. If a person/couple will not invest heavily as a core team member, their hearts are not with you yet. Where their treasure is, their heart will follow.

Tell Stories of Life Change Often

People give to vision. People may give begrudgingly to duty and obedience, but they thrive when they sense their financial investments have impact.

A leader who highlights stories often and passionately captures peoples' attention and investments. We are a people of the narrative. Most giving decisions are made with the heart. The more we celebrate real stories of life change from the Jesus message, the more we draw people who want to give to see more of that happen.

Vision will rarely be underfunded. The church that consistently and creatively articulates a compelling vision and celebrates the successes will attract giving, even in hard times.

As a church planter, you have many moving pieces in a very complex project. The more financial funding that you have, the process becomes easier and more impactful for the Kingdom. Building your generosity culture now will likely be the most strategic decision for your church for the next 25 years.



BRAD LEEPER >

Brad Leeper is the President and a Principal at Generis. Generis and its team of 24 coaches exist to accelerate generosity toward God-inspired vision. Brad has helped to plant a church and frequently coaches church planters in how to build generosity.

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12 LESSONS LEARNED IN 12 YEARS >

BY SHAWN LOVEJOY

Twelve years ago, we launched weekly worship services at Mountain Lake Church. Wow. What a ride! God has used me despite my stupidity and I have learned so much along the way.

HERE'S THE TOP TWELVE LESSONS FROM THE LAST TWELVE YEARS.

HAVING A VISION IS EASY.

Sticking to the vision takes extraordinary discipline and effort. Every pastor and church has a vision. Every one I've seen is Biblical. However, many church planters get sidetracked from their visions within the first few years. We have stuck to our guns. We've been "mean about the vision." It's made all of the difference!

CONVICTION AND COURAGE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN STRATEGY.

My passion and sense of conviction, along with the courage to stay the course is more important than any brilliant strategy I could conjure.

NO PLAN IS PERFECT; SO, WORK YOUR PLAN!

Our ministry plan is not perfect. However, we've worked the plan every year the last twelve years and every year we've gotten better at what God has called us to do. We don't have "vision flavor of the month" or "small group method of the year." We've worked our plan. We've been consistent in our ministry approach.

PEOPLE COME. PEOPLE GO. GO WITH THE GO-ERS.

Don't focus who's leaving; focus on who stays. The ones who stay will see the mission through and experience the fruit of mission accomplished! When one leaves, God will bring five to replace them...if we stay focused!

GOD DOES THINGS THE WAY HE WANTS.

It has almost NEVER happened exactly the way we drew it up. However, that's precisely what has kept us dependent on Him! Proverbs 16:9 (NIV) says: "In his heart, a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." What a prophetic verse in my life these last twelve years! On many occasions, what I deemed as a failure was God's sharpening and sovereignty at work in my life and church!

IN GOD'S STORY, ORDINARY MATTERS.

God loves to use ordinary people. I am one of those ordinary people. The very reasons or excuses I might use to disqualify myself from being used greatly by Him make me the perfect candidate for extraordinary ministry! What are your excuses as to why God can't use you? Those are the very reasons God wants to use you; because you'll know it's not about you!

CHANGE THE WAY PEOPLE THINK ABOUT CHURCH.

In the first year of our church, we made a decision: In everything we do, we're going to seek to change the way people think about church. This is so much bigger than the type of music we do or our dress, even though they are parts of the equation! It affects everything we do. Examples? Folks don't have to be "Christians" to go on a mission trip. They might become one by going! They don't have to be a "Christian" to volunteer at our church, much less be a member! Our small groups are not only open to new people, but are going after people who don't go to church! Every group is responsible to "get off the couch", serve and care missionally for people groups in our community.

GO AFTER UNCHURCHED PEOPLE.

We're not worried about swapping sheep or reaching professional Christians. If they want to join our mission to reach the lost, great. If not, great. We are here to help as many people as possible find a relationship with God through Jesus. That's our laser beam focus. Take us or leave us! We're here to reach people who don't like Jesus or Christians.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR.

Did you know unchurched people don't walk in and start tithing? And it probably won't be a three-month process, either; probably more like three years! Unchurched people smoke and curse in the parking lot, and maybe even in the sound booth! All of these things happen in our church. Being a hospital for sinners is messy!

THE RIGHT TEAM IN THE RIGHT SEATS MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

We've always had a great Ministry Team at our church. I am thankful for every one of them. The right team members with the right gifts and skills, in the right seats, in the right seasons of the church,

allows a church to continue to breathe and grow and reach people for Jesus Christ. However, the wrong team members in the wrong seats for too long will put a lid on the church's effectiveness.

I MUST MEASURE SUCCESS GOD'S WAY.

Success is being who God called me to be and being obedient to what God has called me to do. I am so tempted to measure success by this week's attendance. However, I'm never as good as people think I am when we're exploding numerically; and I'm not as bad as I think I am when we're not. My role is to be obedient to the call and stay sane, centered, and happily married in the process. That is success!

GOD IS FAITHFUL.

God never gives up: on me or on my ministry! He hasn't given up on you, either! Don't give up on yourself. We only fail when we give up. God never gives up.

HE IS FAITHFUL!**SHAWN LOVEJOY >**

Shawn Lovejoy is the founding and lead pastor of Mountain Lake Church, the directional leader of churchplanters.com, and the author of *The Measure of Our Success*. God has used Mountain Lake Church and churchplanters.com to become one of the most influential church planting ministries in the world, and Shawn gives Jesus all the credit. Shawn loves his wife, his kids, the church, pastors, college football, and PlayStation3. In that order. He lives near Atlanta, Georgia.

A TALE FROM THE OTHER SIDE: FOUR THINGS I WISH I GOT RIGHT >

BY MICHAEL LUKASZEWSKI

Regret is a powerful emotion. And it's a powerful chapter in my own church-planting journey. After a dozen years as a student pastor, my wife and I moved to Atlanta to start a church. A hard year of core-group building led to a grand opening in a movie theater. Within a year, more than 700 people attended every week. Our staff grew. Our ministry grew. Our influence grew. But while I grew as a leader, I failed as a pastor, husband and father. Five years into the church plant, I confessed to a secret sin and resigned from my position. With a faithful and loving wife, a wonderful counselor, and the grace of God, my brokenness became new mercy. I share my story, openly and honestly, so my regrets don't become yours. Looking back on my church planting journey, here are four things I wish I got right.

1. I didn't love my wife as Christ loved the church.

I dove head first into the work of the ministry, leaving my wife on the sideline. Our ministry became my job. In the name of protecting her, I shut her out. I worked on my messages, but I didn't work on my marriage. The toil took its toll.

As pastors and church leaders, we're tempted to leave our family by the wayside because of the eternal significance of the work we do. The desire to help people, spread the gospel and do the work of the ministry can easily draw you away from ministering to your spouse and serving your family.

Looking back, I wish I had taken more time to invest in my marriage. I should have planned more dates, not led more meetings. I should have gone on more vacations, not attended that other conference. I should have hurried home with energy left in the tank. Anyone could have led my church, but nobody else should lead my family.

Looking back, I regret not working out my own faith. I should have read books about the faith, attended events to deepen my walk with Christ and engaged in authentic community.

2. I wasn't a Christian first.

A Thom Rainer study found 90% of unchurched people choose a church based on the preacher or the sermon. I worked hard to prepare quality messages, because I understood the importance of the sermon. It was a tremendous growth engine for our young church. Living a secret life didn't keep me from the platform.

But it was a terrifying thing to stand before a congregation on an empty tank. My ability to preach covered an empty soul. Most people couldn't see it, but I knew it. I was reading the Bible for message prep, not to grow

as a Christian. I let my identity be that of a pastor, not someone who abides in Christ.

Looking back, I regret not working out my own faith. I should have read books about the faith, attended events to deepen my walk with Christ and engaged in authentic community. I should have gone to counseling to work out my desire to impress people. I should have recognized that I was a Christian before I was a pastor.

3. I didn't develop real friendships.

It didn't look like it on the surface, but my years as a church planter were some of the loneliest years of my life. I knew a lot of people and I had a lot of relationships, but those relationships were superficial and work-related.

When I would meet with pastors and other leaders, we talked shop. I had coaches, mentors and leaders in my life who could answer church planting questions, but I didn't develop authentic friendships. Hallway conversations at conferences turned into idea sharing, when what I needed was lunch conversations about life.

I was more concerned with how many friends I had on Twitter than how many authentic friendships I had in real life. Relationally, I was a whitewashed tomb, with a fake system of accountability in place and no authentic relationships to back it up.

Pastors don't need a fake system of accountability but a real friend or two who stand with them no matter what. If a pastor is struggling with something, he needs to talk to someone that can't fire him. He needs someone who will get in his face, but not throw him out on the street. That's a friend.

And if you don't have those kind of friends, focus on being that kind of friend and see what happens.

4. I made vision an idol.

Fight for the vision. Protect the vision. Communicate the vision. I heard this great advice many times, but I failed to grasp the subtle truth that vision itself can easily become an idol. Before I knew it, selling out to the vision led me to take my eyes off the ultimate purpose. The vision,

rather than serving the giver of vision, became the objective.

When vision becomes an idol, you think everyone who disagrees with you is an enemy. Volunteers who don't understand something are labeled divisive. Pastors from different traditions don't get it. We create systems to insulate us from anything that can take our eyes off the vision.

Vision is a powerful thing, and it comes naturally to many church planters. Our entrepreneurial spirit mixed with a desire to minister creates a combination that could be used for much good or cause great harm.

Don't let the vision God has given you become an idol. Focus on the giver of the vision.

Vision is a powerful thing, and it comes naturally to many church planters. Our entrepreneurial spirit mixed with a desire to minister creates a combination that could be used for much good or cause great harm.



MICHAEL LUKASZEWSKI >

Michael is the CEO of The Rocket Company, a company that specializes in coaching the church – specifically in the areas of “money for ministry” and preaching. We are proud to call The Rocket Company one of our partners – they do great work for churches.

After a dozen years as a youth pastor and six years as a senior pastor, Michael joined The Rocket Company as the Executive Director. He's responsible for the message and the overall operation of The Rocket Company. He's married to Jennie and they have three children and a black lab. He's a football fan (pro is better), an avid movie watcher and a wannabe country music singer.

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PLANTING PREGNANT >

BY ERIC METCALF & JESSIE VACA

There's a good chance you turned to this chapter simply because it had a cool name. If that's the case, we're glad you're here and hope you'll read on because the topic we'd like to share with you could change the game when it comes to church planting.

What we're talking about is planting a church with a Leadership Resident (apprentice church planter) on staff with the intention of sending them out within 18-24 months to start a brand new church. We call this "Planting Pregnant" because, if you are launching a church with a Resident on staff, you intend to "birth" a new church right out of the gate.

Why plant pregnant? Isn't it a lot of work? Well, think about it. We tell our small group leaders to do this, right? We cast vision for small group leaders to get an apprentice so that, when the time is right, they'll be ready to birth a new small group.

If we ask our small group leaders to practice this, why aren't we doing this on a church level? Imagine what you're communicating to your new church by starting with a Leadership Resident in tow, with the full understanding that they'll be leaving to start a new church. By practicing this method, you're laying the groundwork for multiplication up front. You're setting "reproduction" as part of your core DNA, so much so that every new person checking out your new church will know from the very first moment that you're all about starting new things.

I, Eric, am in the process of planting a church in the City of Chicago, in the Lincoln Park | Old Town (LPIOT) neighborhood. My family and I moved here with a vision to not only plant in LPIOT but to also start a new location in Bucktown | Wicker Park.

And I, Jessie, am serving as a Leadership Resident on Eric's launch team and will eventually be sent out by Eric to plant a new church in the Bucktown | Wicker Park neighborhood of Chicago. We made the strategic decision to "plant pregnant" because we recognized the potentially hostile environment we were entering and knew that the momentum we could gain by working

together, coupled with the ability to start from day one with reproduction built into our DNA was something we each deeply wanted.

What's great about what we're doing is that it won't stop with just one. I, Jessie, am currently searching for a Leadership Resident who will join the launch team for Bucktown | Wicker Park and whom we will send out to start a new church in the near future. This isn't just theory for us. We believe it's the best way to plant churches. We got to a point where we asked ourselves "Are we even church planters if we have a one-and-done mentality? Are we really living true to our calling if we do nothing to reproduce what could be a movement?"

We cast vision for small group leaders to get an apprentice, in order that, when the time is right, they'll be ready to birth a new small group.

TOP 3 TAKEAWAYS

We believe there are Three Takeaways to help you think through how to give a Leadership Resident the most beneficial experience possible:

VISION

- **Keep it Up Front** - It's important to keep the vision in front of your church – giving the Resident "stage time" helps do that. Teaching, commissioning and videos that share the vision are invaluable.
- **Location, Location, Location**—It's important that you help the Leadership Resident determine location. Being able to communicate the location will inspire others to jump in with this new start-up.
- **Branding / Social Media**- If you can help your Resident see how important these aspects of the prelaunch phase are, you'll be pointing them in a great direction for

their future plant. Social media is free advertising for a new church and is a great way to communicate to the unchurched – use it!

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Proximity- We often say that Residents catch more than they're actually taught when they work with us. The personal proximity a Resident has to the Pastor they're working with guarantees they'll get real world experience too.
- Frequency – Being available for a Leadership Resident is important. Having weekly 1:1 meetings, regular staff meetings and spontaneous movie nights will create the right amount of relationship to truly develop a Resident.

FUNDRAISING

- Coaching- There's a good chance the Resident working with you doesn't have as much experience with fundraising as you do. Your experience, both successes and failures, will prove invaluable to the Resident you'll be sending out.
- Networking- You know better than anyone how

expansive your network is. No matter how unnerving it may be, it speaks volumes to your Resident when you open up your networks to assist them.

- Sending Well- This can mean so many different things - but one thing is for sure - the power of a successful sendoff can never be calculated. By sending them off well, you're communicating to your Resident and to your church that you're fully behind the new project and are truly birthing a brand new church.

Imagine that just 100 churches across our nation decided to plant pregnant. Imagine that they made the decision to build into their DNA the value of reproduction and to bring on a Leadership Resident that they'll send out to start a brand new church. Those 100 churches become 200. Those 200 carry that same Reproductive DNA. Those 200 become 400. And 400 become 800. You can see where we're going with this.

We, as a church, have got to stop thinking in terms of a one-and-done or might-plant-a-church- someday mentality. We have got to start thinking in terms of multiplication. We have to start thinking in terms of movement. Recruit your Leadership Resident today!



ERIC METCALF & JESSIE VACA >

Eric Metcalf is the Lead Planter of Community Lincoln Park | Old Town – a new church being launched in downtown Chicago. Eric also provides leadership to NewThing's Leadership Residency Program - a program designed to apprentice church planters to start new churches. Eric has been married for 14 years to his beautiful wife Erin and has three incredible children: Joey (9), Lydia (7), and Max (4).

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Jessie Vaca is a Leadership Resident at Community Christian Church. As a Leadership Resident, Jessie is being developed to launch Community Bucktown | Wicker Park in downtown Chicago, October 2014. Jessie recently co-authored with Eric Metcalf & Carter Moss: *Apprenticing Your Leadership Resident*. Jessie is married to his beautiful wife Carla and has 3 wonderful kids: Isabelle, Gabriel and Elijah.

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE BURDEN COSTS >

BY BRYAN MILES

At our companies ([eaHELP](#) and [MAG Bookkeeping](#)), we have the opportunity to chat with church leaders everyday about employee burden costs. Big churches, little churches, metropolitan churches, country churches, church plants, multi-site churches ... you name it. It still blows my mind when I find that a pastor or church leader doesn't know or fully realize the Employee Burden Costs of their church staff.

When you pay someone \$12.25 per hour, that is NOT your full cost of that employee.

We all know this, right?! Wrong. In fact, what I have discovered is that a lot of church leaders only look at the wage/salary of an employee when they think about costs associated with them. In case you have no idea what encompasses Employee Burden Costs are, here's a list:

- Wage/Salary
- Employer Related Taxes on Payroll
- Healthcare Costs
- Dental Costs
- Vision / Eye-care Costs
- Vacation Pay
- Sick Pay
- Bereavement Pay
- Sabbatical Pay
- Investment/Retirement Contributions
- Disability Insurance
- Life Insurance(s)
- Office Space
- Office Utilities (water, AC, heat, electric, trash, etc)
- Office Equipment (phones, copiers, printers, desks, chairs, whiteboards, etc)
- Computer
- Software
- Training / Continuing Education
- Conferences & Events
- Travel (air, hotel, rental car, meals, entertainment, & etc)

- Bonuses / Incentives
- Motivational Tools
- Employee Portal
- IT Support for Employees
- Mileage
- Holiday Pay
- Cell Phone with Text Plan, eMail, and Data Stream
- Housing

NOTE ... the first cost is just the wage. It's like the wage is just the price of admission.

There's great cost in being an employer. Do you FULLY know your costs? Do your employees know this too? Do your employees appreciate these other costs? Have you helped them understand that their wages are just a percentage of their cost to the church? Helping them be a better steward of their time should carry an understanding of all their other associated costs as well.

Know thy Employee Burden Costs! It will serve you well! Both in the minds of your staff and in the planning of future budgets! Let's face it ... this is not a sexy topic ... but, it's a topic every church leader needs to fully understand and appreciate.



BRYAN MILES >

Bryan is CEO & Co-founder of the Miles Advisory Group, Inc. Prior to starting the Miles Advisory Group, he worked for companies in the tech and construction industries including Cogun, Inc., a national church construction company as the VP of Consulting. Bryan obtained his B.A. in Business from Mount Vernon Nazarene University in Mount Vernon, OH. Bryan, Shannon and their daughter Rainey and son Harper attend church at the Browns Bridge Campus of North Point Community Church. Bryan also enjoys backpacking and mountain climbing.

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THIS IS OUR CITY >

BY CARTER MOSS

There's this question that has haunted me and embedded itself deep into my mind and heart, ever since I first heard it—"If your church were to ever have to close its doors for good, would your community even notice? Would your community care?"

I had been leading my church for 8 of the 10 years it was in existence in the small suburb of Montgomery, and my answer was "no." Why? How could this be? If we were truly "being the church" and embracing God's mission of bringing restoration to our cities (as God lays out in Isaiah 58, and Jesus confirms as His primary mission in Luke 4), how come our church wasn't helping restore our community back to what God intended for it to be?

I knew something had to be done and my team agreed. One of the most important missional practices we had been discussing recently was the practice of listening. Christ-followers are meant to be great listeners, but I doubt that's what many Christ-followers are known for. In fact, most likely their reputation is exactly the opposite.

We've been learning that reaching and restoring an individual, people group, or entire community isn't about simply jumping in feet first to start serving somewhere. Serving is great, but if we haven't taken the time to listen to the real needs of the community, we might end up serving in the wrong ways! So what would it look like to practice this art of truly listening, especially at the community level?

In our case, we began by listening to God and praying that He would help us really hear what our community was saying, what it really needed. And He did. It was near Christmas-time two years ago, when Shannon (my Children's Director) shared how some people in her subdivision were asking on their neighborhood Facebook page if anyone knew of any free, fun, local places to take their kids to see Santa. Someone had answered that the Village of Montgomery offered a city-wide Christmas event, so Shannon and I decided to attend this event to see what it was all about.

We were amazed at the huge amounts of people (especially young families) who showed up. Now that we were listening, we both sensed God speaking to us about one of the needs of our community—the people of Montgomery were looking for opportunities to get out with their families, experience some inexpensive local fun and experience some actual community. Our town has no mall or museums and very few community events, so there actually aren't many places that provide this.

Serving is great, but if we haven't taken the time to listen to the real needs of the community, we might end up serving in the wrong ways!

Our next step was to meet with the Village leaders and discuss this with them, and really listen to how they would articulate their needs. So Shannon and I met with a city leader and did exactly that—we listened. The city official agreed that the Village needed more opportunities like this, so Shannon and I shared with her that we had hosted an Easter Egg Hunt event at our church for the last couple of years that had been successful. We told her we'd be willing to move this event offsite from our church and host it in the middle of the town instead. We even told the Village that they didn't have to put our church name on the event, so they knew this wasn't some marketing ploy, but rather an opportunity for us to simply serve our city.

The Village leaders were ecstatic. We told them we'd provide all the volunteers and supplies, and run the entire event. So they offered to take care of advertising to the entire city, and even to pay for some of the expenses. But that wasn't all—they wanted to advertise it as the "City-Wide Easter Egg Hunt, hosted by the Village of Montgomery and Community Christian Church." Because we approached them humbly and

with a servant-heart rather than a marketing-bent, they made the choice to include our name. We chose to involve local businesses too (another way to show that this wasn't about us as a church), so we could serve free Starbucks coffee, free popcorn from a local independent shop, and more.

We showed up with our army of volunteers that Saturday morning at a park in the middle of the small downtown, not knowing what to expect, and wondering whether the cold, cloudy weather would keep people away. Then 30 minutes before our start-time, people started lining up. We didn't expect this, so we scrambled to create a place for the line to form. The line kept growing and growing and by the time we let everyone in to get ready for the egg hunt, we had over 200 hundred people in line. More kept coming throughout the day, and by the end, we had nearly 700 people stop by our event.

The event was a huge success! The Village of Montgomery was very pleased and grateful, and we were excited about our opportunity to "be the church" outside our walls. But we weren't done. This was only the first step. My prayer from the start was that this event would form the beginning of a long and beautiful partnership between a city and a church. We continued to listen to what the city needed so we could find the best ways to serve.

This was only the first step. My prayer from the start was that this event would form the beginning of a long and beautiful partnership between a city and a church.

Our next opportunity came two months later. We had decided as a church that we'd take a huge missional risk and cancel our Sunday morning celebration services so we could instead send all of our attendees out into the community to serve. When we asked the Village how a big group of volunteers could serve them on a Sunday morning, they said they really needed people to help clean up along the river. It wasn't a glamorous opportunity by any means, but it was a real need. I was proud of our volunteers for embracing it, and once

again, the city got to watch us serve them with no agenda.

The next opportunity came with the city's annual summer MontgomeryFest. This was the city's biggest annual event, and we knew we wanted to be involved. Rather than just be another vendor with a booth handing out marketing materials, we decided to again practice this virtue of listening and asked the city leaders what they most needed at MontgomeryFest. The event planner's eyes lit up as she explained, "I've been to lots of other city's festivals and they always have a family tent. It's a place for parents to change diapers, to sit in the shade to nurse their babies, a place for their kids to cool off and get a snack. We've never had that here."

It was a brilliant idea—one I would never have come up with on my own. I only found out by listening. So we agreed to help them, and last summer's MontgomeryFest had a fully-functioning family tent for the first time ever (sponsored by "Village of Montgomery and Community Christian Church").

I loved where this partnership was headed, but I was still praying that God would help us earn the city's trust enough that one day they would some be proposing their own ideas and asking us for help. And they did.

Last fall, the city then came to us and said "We hold a 5k benefit run every October, but we'd love to have some kind of Fall Festival event to offer as part of that. Could you help us?" The city had come to trust our church so much that now they were turning to us for help. Fortunately, we were still listening. In October, we helped the Village host another city-wide event - our third one of the year.

This Fall Festival wasn't just going to be run by our church. The city was involving another volunteer organization called The Arts Alliance. We got to meet more community volunteers in our planning meetings, and after one of these meetings, a lady from the Arts Alliance stopped me and said, "My husband hasn't been interested in attending church for the last 40 years. But I think he might be interested in checking out yours, because he's passionate about this community and he'd love what you guys are all about."

What a great example of another person I would never have been able to reach if I had not engaged in this common-good practice of listening! Listening has helped my team and I discern the best ways to serve our city, to be the church outside of our walls, and to live out God's mission to restore our city back to how He means for it to be. By the way, her husband came around Christmas-time, and has been coming every week since, always telling me how excited he is about how we engage with the community.

God continues to strengthen this partnership. This past December, the Village contacted us already asking for help doing this year's Easter Egg Hunt. After we

I pray that we will move toward doing more and more to help meet some real needs, help bring healing and restoration, help build trust and show people a glimpse of what our God is really like.

served at their Christmas Event, we were invited to January's Village Board meeting to receive an award of recognition. (we even received a small check and some free sub sandwiches).

I continue to pray that God will extend this partnership with our city to the next level. I pray that we will move toward doing more and more to help meet some real needs, help bring healing and restoration, help build trust and show people a glimpse of what our God is really like.

So if my church ever had to close its doors, would our community notice? Would they care? I pray and I hope that we are a whole lot closer to answering a resounding "Yes!" To be honest, while that is great, it is not our end goal. I simply want to be a church that is on mission with God, whose people learn to listen to the needs around them so they can find the ways God has called them to engage His mission. After all, isn't that what God designed the church to be—a community of Christ-followers on mission with Him?



CARTER MOSS >

After apprenticing his way through several church leadership roles and leaving his career as a software developer, Carter has been a Campus Pastor at COMMUNITY for over 8 years. He also oversees Adult Small Groups across their 12 campuses and for NewThing Network, and he helps write much of the training curriculum. He is passionate about missional engagement with the community, about his wife and 3 kids. He's also a wanna-be rapper, and has been caught rapping on stage periodically at weekend services.

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12 WAYS TO BRING YOUR BEST TO THE TABLE >

BY CAREY NIEUWHOF

WHAT YOU AND I SHOULD BRING TO THE TABLE EVERY DAY IS OUR BEST.

There are some people who can solve a crisis in a moment that others couldn't solve in a millennium. There are some people who are constantly learning, growing, adding skills and efficiencies to their repertoire. There are some people who make others better by simply being around. There are some people who are determined to solve a problem no matter what; even if they can't solve the problem, it wasn't for lack of trying.

There are some people who cultivate wisdom that makes everything they contribute to better. I have seen this present in 25 year olds and absent in 45 year olds – age is not the key determinant in wisdom. If you can bring this to the table on the majority of your days, you will bring more than most people. In fact, according to Seth Godin, you will become indispensable. In his words, you become a “linchpin” and your value goes up.

The only way I can live in this space regularly is by managing my energy, not just my time. Everyone gets the same amount of time in a day, but not everybody brings the same amount of energy to a day. For me, at this stage in my life and work, here's what I recommend to bring your best energy:

1. Get enough sleep (7-8 hours a night)
2. Exercise
3. Eat reasonably healthily
4. Start the day with the Bible and prayer...and cultivate a closeness with God that is with you throughout the day
5. Have some fun (for me, biking, taking pictures, watching movies, and hanging out with friends and family)
6. Write and Blog (this blog is a place where you can say whatever is on your mind)
7. Do more than one thing (being a full time pastor and writing and speaking is like cross-disciplinary training for me)
8. Get around people smarter and wiser than yourself

9. Have white space in your calendar with nothing to do but think and work 'on it' not 'in it'

10. Read

11. Start your day early and get your best work in before 10:00 a.m.

12. Cultivate life-giving friendships with church and non-church people

I have a lot to learn, but I do know this: when these twelve things are present in my life, I bring much better energy to whatever I'm doing. Figure out what fuels your energy and write your own list!



CAREY NIEUWHOF >

Carey is the lead and founding pastor of Connexus Community Church and has been serving in ministry since 1995. He is the primary communicator on Sunday mornings, and one of his key passions is to see people's lives changed as they encounter Christ. He and his wife, Toni, live north of Barrie with their two sons. You will hear Carey say that his family outshines him in skiing, mountain biking, hiking, water skiing and more, but he does everything he can to keep up with them!

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A SHIFT IN DISCIPLESHIP >

BY MATT KELLER

How Redefining "Discipleship" to "Leadership Development" Changed Everything at Next Level Church.

When I think of discipleship, I think of **Leadership Development**. Although not a phrase directly used in the New Testament, it is definitely a phrase that epitomized the ministry of Jesus. Around Next Level Church, it's a phrase we use quite frequently. For us, discipleship is all about leadership development.

We believe every person has leadership potential and our desire is to see that potential mined out and developed into all God wants for them to become. How we do that at Next Level Church isn't complicated, but it is extremely intentional. For us, it means 4 things.

First, we are big believers in people. We can't develop people we don't believe in. John Maxwell said, "The average person has no one in their life that they truly believe believes in them." At NLC, we have made it our mission to "Be believers in people." People are attracted to people who believe in them. So why not be that kind of person?

We go out of our way to make sure people feel believed in. We want them to know in no uncertain terms that we can see the potential inside them. What we're discovering is that this is magnetic for the young generation. Not surprisingly, they have very few people in their world who they believe believe in them.

At Next Level Church, the driving force behind everything we do is to see the potential in a young leader, believe in them and then give them a chance to grow.

Second, we see Leadership Development as THE thing we're doing. Around NLC, we don't think of leadership development, or discipleship, as one of the things we do, it is THE MOST IMPORTANT THING we do. We are not an organization that exists to use people to build services and programs. We use programs and services to build people. Developing people is the #1 thing we're doing. That means our staff, small group leaders, and

ministry team volunteers are constantly looking out for whom they can pour themselves into.

We go out of our way to make sure people feel believed in. We want them to know in no uncertain terms that we can see the potential inside them.

In fact, I would go so far as to say that one of the driving differentiators of our culture compared to other organizations like ours is that we are extremely proactive about seeking out leaders. We use the phrase "Picking Up Ducks" to encapsulate that process. When I was a boy I remember playing the duck game at our local fair each fall. For \$1 you got to pick up 3 ducks out of the "duck pond". If you found one with a red dot, you won \$5. It didn't matter if the first two ducks weren't winners, as long as you got a red-dot-duck on the third try, it was all worth it!

That's how we view leadership development. Sure, not every duck is a winner, but if you keep picking them up long enough, eventually, you'll find some red-dot-ducks. When you do, they change the game in your organization forever!

We believe the future of our organization rests solely on the quality and quantity of leaders we can develop in the next five years. We want to be that kind of church. We will only reach our full redemptive potential when we help the young leaders in our midst reach their full leadership potential.

Third, we dare to let people in. Leadership development is risky because it requires letting people in beyond the shiny exterior coating that exists in our lives. Quoting John Maxwell again, "We can impress people from a distance, but we can only impact people up close." That requires letting people in.

In practical terms, we don't just ask people to do their jobs, we're constantly looking for opportunities to allow young leaders to have access to meetings, thoughts, and conversations they wouldn't normally have access to otherwise. In other words, we dare to let them see behind the curtain of how a healthy, life-giving organization like ours runs. Hiccups and all.

Additionally, we work overtime to not just communicate the "How" and "What" of our organization, but to explain the "Why behind the What." After all, the why behind the what is what shapes the culture of an organization long term. Jesus did this all the time. He would teach a parable in public, and then pull his guys aside privately afterward and say, "Here's what I meant and why I said that."

Finally, we stretch our leaders. For us, discipleship means stretching. If someone isn't stretching, they're not growing. One of the great temptations of leadership is to want to rescue people when they're being stretched, especially when they're a volunteer! In order for people to become everything God wants them to become, we

have to allow them to be stretched. This is a learned art, and of course, I'm not talking about burning people out or abusing people. That's not discipleship, that's dictatorship.

I'm talking about putting leaders in situations that are bigger than they are. Jesus did that with the disciples time and time again. Remember the feeding of the 5,000 miracle? He called them together and said, "You give the people something to eat." That was a stretching moment. They were faced with a situation that was bigger than their capability to meet it. They all became more like Jesus that way! That's what it means to stretch our teams.

At Next Level Church, we are firmly convinced that developing leaders is how we disciple people to become more like Jesus. We believe developing leaders is the way to change the world and we're willing to bet the farm on it... or at least the ducks on our farm.

So far, so good.



MATT KELLER >

Matt Keller is the founder and lead pastor of Next Level Church (www.nextlevelchurch.com) in Fort Myers, Florida. God has used him to lead the church from 30 people at their grand opening in 2002 to now over 2,400 each weekend. Next Level Church was named by Outreach Magazine the 9th fastest growing church in the country in 2012. Matt is passionate about investing in other churches as well, having helped hundreds of pastors and church planters around the country take their leadership and churches to the next level. Matt travels and speaks often and is passionate about coaching pastors nationwide through online video coaching networks. (www.MyNextLevel.me)

An encourager, Matt has a God-given ability to look past what is to see what could be. One of his favorite sayings is "We're church planters. We figure it out. We don't take no for an answer. That's what we do." Matt is the author of *The Up the Middle Church*, and the soon to be released *God of the Underdogs* (fall 2013).

High school sweethearts, he and his wife Sarah enjoy baseball and are huge Rays fans! Keeping Matt and Sarah in line are their two sons, Will and Drew.

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WE PROVIDE PEACE OF MIND

for our clients by reducing the level of burn-out for their volunteers and by reducing the overall manpower needed. Our streamlined systems ensure that set-up and tear-down isn't the biggest experience people have on a Sunday.

WE'VE GOT GREAT PEOPLE

with great ideas, with great hearts.

WE ARE GRATEFUL for the opportunity to serve and enrich the local church as well as the lives of pastors and volunteers worldwide.



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