



# ***TRANSITIONAL PASTOR MINISTRY*** ®

## **TRAINING MANUAL**

A Service to Southern Baptist Churches  
Provided by  
LifeWay Christian Resources  
of the  
Southern Baptist Convention

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# WELCOME!

Welcome to Transitional Pastor Ministry, a challenging and rewarding way to contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom through the building up of His churches.

You are not a novice in ministry, but you are entering a new and unique experience in ministry. You have learned much through formal and informal training and in the practice of pastoral ministry, but you are not finished with learning. This ministry will challenge you to learn and use ministry methods you may not have used before. To fall back on an often used cliché, "Don't knock it till you try it."

Churches in periods without pastors need experienced, sanctified, and wise leadership. Their needs are unique and challenging; their leadership must be uniquely qualified and willing to accept difficult challenges.

Methods proposed in this Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manual reflect understandings developed by LifeWay Christian Resources in assisting churches for many generations and formal and informal research into the unique needs of churches without pastors. They also respond to the nature of effective church ministry in the early years of the third millennium as it has been discovered through extensive research.

LifeWay Christian Resources (cooperating with state conventions and associations) provides kingdom-focused, denominationally relevant resources to churches in the period without pastors. This support includes:

- LifeWay will provide electronic versions of current Transitional Pastor Ministry Training Manuals to state conventions who agree to use the Transitional Pastor Ministry process and materials.
- LifeWay will continue to maintain the Transitional Pastor website and will post training events for each participating state convention.
- LifeWay will provide Transitional Pastor Train-the-Trainer events periodically in Nashville for those serving as Transitional Pastor Ministry trainers in state convention events.

## TRANSITIONAL PASTOR MINISTRY TRAINING TEAM

### **Monty Hale**

Monty is Director of the Pastoral Ministries, Bivocational and Guidestone Office of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. His duties include assisting pastors and churches in transition; developing projects and initiatives to promote healthy leaders, and assisting churches with effective conflict resolution. Prior to joining the SCBC staff in April 2005, Hale served as Leadership Development Specialist for the Missouri Baptist Convention and as a pastor for various Baptist churches.

### **Brett Selby**

Brett serves as the Pastoral Leadership Specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. Previously he served as a Church Consultant in the Church Resources Division of LifeWay Christian Resources for the Southern Baptist Convention. He also was an Editor in the Adult Sunday School Ministry Department. Selby, a native of Oklahoma, is a graduate of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, where he earned a Doctor of Ministry. In addition to his denominational service, he served sixteen years as a pastor in Oklahoma.

### **Henry Webb**

Dr. Webb was pastor of Kalihi Baptist Church, Honolulu, Hawaii, for nine years. He served at LifeWay since 1977 as editor of *The Deacon*, national deacon consultant, director of Discipleship and Family Leadership, director of Pastor-Staff Leadership, director of Church Leadership Publishing, and retired as director of Pastoral Ministries in 2005. He has served as transitional pastor for a number of churches. He is author of *Deacons: Servant Models in the Church*.

## **A TALE OF THREE CHURCHES**

Highways and Hedges Baptist Church, Fortified Hills Baptist Church, and Sweetsong Baptist Church, three fictitious churches represent the 10 percent of Southern Baptist churches without pastors at any given time. The reasons they are without pastors are as varied as the churches themselves.

Regardless of age, size, or location, churches will benefit from wise counsel and experienced leadership through the stages of transition between the end of one pastor's ministry and the beginning of another's. That is what this manual is about. That is the work of a transitional pastor.

**Highways and Hedges Baptist Church (HHBC)** was experiencing rapid growth, out of proportion to its demographically static community. Since George Evergreen came to serve as pastor, fresh from seminary and bustling with enthusiasm, people had been joining the church and filling available classrooms and the worship center. Members liked Brother George's preaching; sermons related to their everyday lives. The choir sounded better; vocal discords were less obvious to those who knew the difference. Benefiting from his seminary course in worship planning, Brother George informed the music leaders of his sermon plans. Music and message were usually in agreement like a harmonious marriage. Brother George was affable; hugs were as natural as handshakes and hellos. Within three years HHBC discussed bringing in a person to serve as minister of education and youth, building a new worship center, and converting the old one to classroom and office space.

Building plans had been approved and pledges had reached 75 percent of the goal when a surprise event shocked the heart of fast-growing HHBC. Brother George announced his resignation, citing plans to become pastor of a much larger church in the suburbs of Capital City. Stunned, some members wept in disbelief, feeling as they did when the high school football coach resigned just after coaching the team to its only state championship. Several long-term members openly expressed feeling that they had been used by a "church climber" to build his credentials and earn a more prominent spot in the denomination and a bigger salary. Many younger members, mostly friends of the pastor's wife, Eva, felt some "old-timers" in the church had hurt their pastor with criticism. They were determined to find out who did it. Very soon you could hear talk about getting an older preacher next time, one who wouldn't make them just a stepping stone, who believed it more rewarding to grow a big church than to get called to one somebody else helped build.

In a short time HHBC went from boundless enthusiasm to self-pity. HHBC needed someone to help them sort out all that was happening in order to transition to new leadership without losing the enthusiasm and vision they had known for four years and becoming players in the "whose fault is it" game.

1. Identify the emotions found among HHBC members after George Evergreen announced his resignation.
2. What are some of the factors you sense led George Evergreen to leave?
3. How would you "help them sort out all that was happening" (paragraph 3) if you become transitional pastor of HHBC?

**Fortified Hills Baptist Church (FHBC)** celebrated both the church's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Joshua Long's 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary as their pastor the same week. The adjective heard most often to describe both anniversaries was "comfortable." Members were comfortable with the reputation their church had maintained in the community and the denomination for many years. They were comfortable with their pastor who had preached to them, counseled them about becoming Christians and living for Christ, baptized them, married them, helped them dedicate their babies to the Lord, bragged on their covered-dish-lunch casseroles, and conducted funeral services for generations of their families and neighbors.

What they weren't comfortable with was the announcement Pastor Long made in the afternoon service that he would retire, effective at the end of the month. Happy memories and haunting fears flooded their minds: Could anyone else ever love us like Pastor Long loves us? Can we ever find another pastor like him? Privately they told him he would always be their "real" pastor.

FHBC would soon need help in going through the stages of transition between pastors. They needed help seeing spiritual growth opportunities in uncomfortable circumstances. They needed help sorting through memories both painful and pleasant, celebrating the past and turning it loose, deciding what God desires the church to be and do now, and seeking pastoral leadership for a new era in the life of their beloved church.

1. What are some overt or covert factors you sense led to Pastor Long's retirement?
2. How would you, as transitional pastor of FHBC, go about making the "comfortable" membership uncomfortable for the sake of effective ministry and growth?
3. How would you, as transitional pastor, help make Joshua Long's relationship to the membership of FHBC positive and constructive rather than negative and destructive if (1) he continues to reside in the church community, or (2) he chooses to move away from the church community?
4. How can a transitional pastor help them in "sorting through the memories both painful and pleasant . . . [and] deciding what God desires the church to be and do now" (paragraph 3)?

Tom Ably knew **Sweetsong Baptist Church (SBC)** had a record of short pastoral tenure. Only one of the last five pastors had lasted four years. Two of them had been asked to leave because of what was perceived to be sexual misconduct, something he would never be guilty of. No one told him that just as the other two short-timers began to provide growth leadership, the spiritual pride of two long-time members launched gossip campaigns against them. Though the gossip was blatantly false, none of the other members were willing to support the pastor and challenge men whose relatives had led church organizations for years and contributed much to the budget.

Brother Ably launched his Sweetsong ministry confidently preaching the gospel, visiting the sick and the prospects, and promoting the growing church ministries. All went well for a couple of years—that is, until he suggested reorganizing the Sunday School and including some of the “outside the family” members in key places of leadership. In less than three months the subject of many telephone conversations was the “problem” with Pastor Ably’s preaching: “He just doesn’t feed us like we’re used to.” Then a rumor circulated that just before coming to Sweetsong Pastor Ably and his wife had gone to a marriage retreat to get some help because of his wandering eye. He tried valiantly and prayerfully to help them understand the purpose of the retreat was to make good marriages better, but his ministry there had been damaged beyond repair. In pain, Brother Ably resigned. The first Sunday morning after he left, the choir called Sweetsong to worship singing “There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place.”

Sweetsong Baptist Church desperately needed help with understanding how their church had become dysfunctional and how it could be changed before a new pastor was called and the tragic scenario reenacted. They needed a transitional pastor to lead them in the process of self-awareness and spiritual renewal if Sweetsong Baptist were ever to be more than bittersweet.

1. What actions could prospective pastor Tom Ably have taken to improve the possibility of effective, long-term ministry at SBC?
2. As SBC’s transitional pastor, how would you develop positive and productive relationships with the “two long-time members”?
3. Identify actions a transitional pastor can take in helping SBC members recognize the dysfunctional characteristics and how the church got that way.

## THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD IN THE LIFE OF A CHURCH

### The Transition between Pastors

Many church members see the period between pastors as the “hold things together, keep things going” period. Nominal church members likely view it as the “wait and see” period. Church members who attend only Sunday-morning services may use it as the “I’ll just stay home since my preacher left us” period. Prospective church members often treat it as the “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; look elsewhere” period. But with effective transitional leadership, the period between pastors can be very productive—a time of growth in personal and congregational awareness, renewal, and celebration; and a time when people are attracted by congregational worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, and personal and family ministries of the church.

*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines “transition” or “transitional” as “a passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another.” However, this definition speaks more of change than transition. William Bridges distinguishes between change and transition with the difference being that “change is situational: the new site, the new boss, the new team roles, the new policy. Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation.”<sup>1</sup> For that definition to be appropriate to churches, spiritual processes as well as psychological processes are required. According to Leonard Sweet, “Change is when you have to do better what you already know how to do. Transition is when you have to do what you don’t know how to do.”<sup>2</sup> Applied to church leadership, those definitions force transitional pastors to prayerfully seek and humbly follow God’s counsel in all matters.

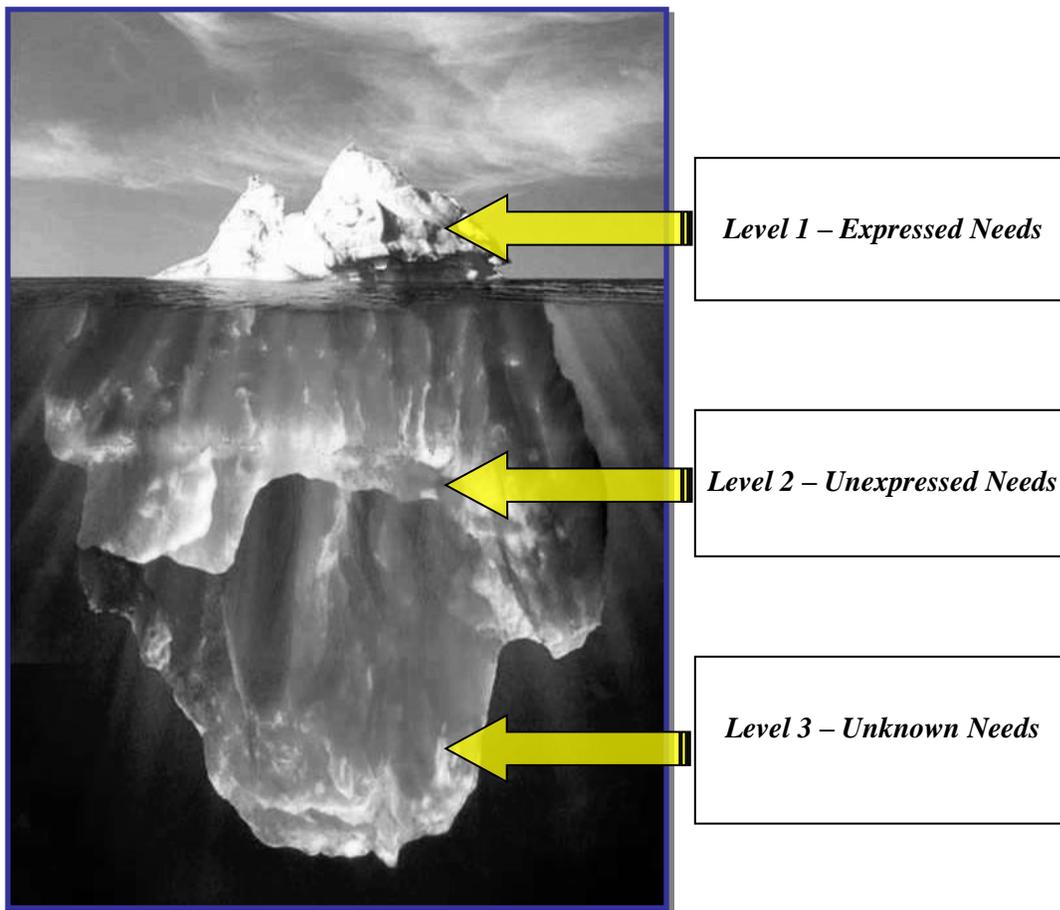
Churches passing from the leadership of one pastor to another may be well served by transitional pastors who help make the passage as positive and constructive as possible, gaining momentum and productivity in the process of change. The period between pastors should be treated as a time to:

- Define current reality
- Assess strengths and weaknesses
- Mend broken fences
- Focus on the mission
- Align ministries with the mission
- Revitalize the church
- Pray – Pray – Pray – Pray

Some churches without pastors have smooth transitions because of the healthy ministry of the former pastor and a cadre of effective ministry leaders in the church. Even these churches need help in dealing with grief resulting from the loss of a helpful and trusted friend, in overcoming fear that accompanies the uncertainties of change, and in developing trust in a new pastor who has a personality and style that differ from those of the former pastor. Other churches have rough transitions because the previous pastor left just before relationships and trust were damaged beyond repair. Some churches have crisis

transitions because of the circumstances surrounding the previous pastor's departure and because of a variety of disabilities that render church leaders spiritually unprepared to guide the church through emotional healing and comprehensive preparation for a new pastor.

Effective communication is essential during all situations of transition. However, communication is sometimes described as the iceberg model (see below). This model expresses graphically the extreme challenge of helping people talk about needs that vitally affect their participation in the life of the church, both with individuals and groups.



Level 1 Needs are expressed openly like the part of an iceberg that is visible above the water line. The needy share their needs and feelings openly and ask for help. People listen, question for clarity, remember, and feel free to respond openly when response is appropriate. Meanings are clarified, feelings are acknowledged, supplies are provided, and relationships are maintained or improved. However, only a limited percentage of the needs are expressed and responded to at Level 1.

Level 2 Needs are below the surface and unexpressed. People are hesitant to express these needs. They are not confident that others will understand. They fear criticism and rejection or that they will be considered unspiritual or uncooperative. They may fear they will not be able to express their needs so as to be understood. All the while their feelings are unknown by those with whom they worship, teach, lead, minister, and fellowship. They need friends who will ask helpful questions, listen carefully, and remember.

Level 3 Needs are deep beneath the surface, either unknown or not understood even by the needy. For whatever reasons, the needy are unable to express their thoughts or feelings. They need friends who sense or know that there are needs they cannot express and ask questions, listen carefully, discern meaning in the spoken and unspoken, and remember what they have learned in order to minister graciously to the needy.

### **Pastoral Leadership Options for Periods without a Pastor**

1. The church may call a transitional pastor to lead the ongoing church ministries and to guide the church through the spiritual, situational, and psychological stages of transition that end in the calling of a new pastor.
2. Multiple-staff churches may assign pastoral responsibilities to staff members according to their gifts and available time. This approach may cover most of the usual pastoral duties. However, it does not provide for the distinctive leadership function of a pastor.
3. A series of preachers may be enlisted to preach in one or more services, giving members opportunity to hear a variety of preachers during this period. This may be appropriate for the first weeks or months after the pastor has left. However, using this option long-term will not provide the continuity in the pulpit that the congregation needs.
4. An interim preacher may be employed to preach in some or all meetings of the congregation in which sermons are appropriate. In such arrangements other pastoral duties may be assigned to church staff members or lay leaders. This approach provides continuity in the pulpit. However, it does not provide the pastoral leadership the church needs.
5. A professional consultant may be enlisted to guide the church during the time of transition.

Churches without pastors will choose the best option by calling transitional pastors with experience, training, and ministry gifts that assure high-quality transitional leadership. Transitional pastors are prepared to lead churches through their smooth transitions, their rough transitions, or their crisis transitions. Transitional pastors are able to serve effectively in all three roles of preacher, pastor, and consultant.

### **Objectives of Transitional Pastor Ministry**

LifeWay Christian Resources and state conventions assist churches by enlisting, training, and providing resources for transitional pastors to serve during the period between pastors.

Its aim is to meet the following objectives which focus on church health and which result in church growth and kingdom priorities.

- The church will become more effective as it learns from past experiences, frees itself from hindering traditions, and replaces discord with harmony.
- The church will understand the mission of the church.
- The church will develop more effective church practices to fulfill its mission.
- The church will have an increased understanding of the pastor's role and responsibilities.
- More members will become equipped for their church's ministries.
- Energy previously spent addressing conflict will be redirected to expanded ministries.
- The effectiveness of the next pastor will be increased and his tenure will be extended, sparing the church the expense of frequent pastoral changes and making more money available for ministries.

## **LEADING THROUGH THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD**

### **Preparing to Lead through the Stages of Transition (First 8 weeks)**

Leadership in the first two months should focus on getting prepared to lead the church through the stages of transition. This preparation will influence the level of success in the crucial change-oriented decision-making activities during the following months.

#### **1. Get Acquainted with the Church Leadership Team.**

Familiarize yourself regarding the church's schedule of events, elected leaders, community resources, and its denominational resources. Give particular attention to the Church Leadership Team. The Church Leadership Team, sometimes called Church Council, is composed of leaders (chairmen, directors, and coordinators) of ministry and service organizations such as deacon ministry, Bible study (Sunday School), discipleship, music ministry, and finance ministry. The team assists in coordinating and promoting activities essential to the applications of biblical principles in church practice.

#### **2. Conduct Listening Sessions.** (Optional)

Lead a series of listening sessions using the guidance on pages 16-17.

#### **3. Form the Transitional Focus Team.**

##### **Option One**

The Transitional Focus Team will be the key working group throughout the period of transition. Some of its work will be in subgroups. The transitional pastor will form the Transitional Focus Team from people already in elected positions in the church such as those in the list below. However, members of the Transitional Focus Team may suggest that one or more other key influencers be added to the Focus Team.

- Church Leadership Team (Church Council)
- Deacon Officers
- Ministry Staff (full-time, bi-vocational, or volunteer; include only one or two)
- Chairmen of strategic committees or ministry teams (such as prayer, personnel, finances/budget, properties, and nominating)
- Pastor Search Committee

The number of Transitional Focus Team members will be according to the size and needs of the church. Since members may serve in more than one of the positions, the number of Focus Team members will not equal the number of positions in the church's organization chart, but the number of people serving in those positions.

##### **Option Two**

The transitional pastor will lead the church to be involved in selecting the Transitional Focus Team using the guidance on pages 18-19.

#### **4. Schedule a Church Memories Workshop for Month 3.**

Guidance for this workshop is found on pages 79-85.

#### **5. Train the Transitional Focus Team.**

Use the principles on pages 20-26 to train the Transitional Focus Team to work together effectively as a team.

#### **6. Use *Come to the Lord's Table* for spiritual preparation.**

Use the book, *Come to the Lord's Table*, as the resource for adult and student Sunday School classes for four weeks. Use the Pastor Guide and the Small-Group Leader Guide in the back of the book. Climax this study by leading the Lord's Supper in a Sunday morning service.

#### **7. Develop a Sequence of Process for leading through the stages of transition.**

Develop a Sequence of Process for leading the church through the stages. That schedule will influence the church's calendar of events and the planning of worship emphases and your sermons. Estimated times required for each of the stages are provided below. Special events and circumstances unique to each church and transitional pastor will determine the actual time needed for each of the processes. However, the process should not be hurried to the point of moving to another stage before the prerequisite stage is completed.

8 weeks	Preparing to Lead through the Stages of Transition.
4 weeks	Stage 1: View the Church's History through the Eyes of Christ
8 weeks	Stage 2: Assess the Church's Current Reality
4 weeks	Stage 3: Affirm Biblical Principles for Church Growth
4 weeks	Stage 4: Focus on Kingdom Results
4 weeks	Stage 5: Establish Church Practice
8 weeks	Stage 6: Refocus the Church around Mission
Open	Stage 7: Find a Pastor to Lead in Fulfilling God's Future for the Church
Open	Stage 8: Help the Pastor Get a Good Start in the Church and Community

See pages 27-28 for a Sample Sequence of Process.

If this Sample Sequence of Process is followed, two months will be invested in getting acquainted and getting started and eight months in getting the church ready to commission a pastor search committee. Then the church can proceed to find and call a new pastor. Completing the get-ready process should resolve relational conflicts and negative emotions that would otherwise hinder the work of a pastor search committee and provide the committee information about what the church desires its future to be for interpretation to a prospective pastor.

#### **8. Communicate the Process to the Congregation.**

## LISTENING SESSIONS

A transitional pastor may begin to feel anxious early in the process. Within the first month after coming to the church, the church may seem to be asking, either verbally or non-verbally, “When are we going to get started?” While it is important to lay a relational foundation in the beginning that cannot be rushed, the tension is nevertheless real and should be addressed.

Aubrey Malphurs gives a valuable caution: “Good listening, not necessarily more talking, is the key to good communication. Failure to listen well communicates that we may not value the person talking or we may not think what he or she is important enough to give him or her a hearing. It could also mean that we have made up our mind. We owe it to our brothers and sisters in the faith to give them a hearing, whatever the topic. This is especially true if they disagree with us or stand on the side of an issue that we do not support. On the one hand, we tend not to discuss issues in the church that divide us. On the other hand, when we do, we can short-circuit the process by not listening well.”<sup>3</sup>

Asking questions, listening, discerning, and remembering will guide the transitional pastor’s leadership and enrich his preaching. Therefore asking good questions and listening actively enables the transitional pastor to get a more effective start for his ministry to the church.

The transitional pastor should conduct a series of listening sessions early in the transitional process, most likely the first or second month. The benefits of this approach are as follows:

1. Since some in the church struggle with impatience, the listening sessions will address the concern that “nothing is going on and we are wasting time.”
2. This approach allows the transitional pastor time to assess and discern some dimensions of the current reality in the church.
3. It affirms and encourages church members with their concerns, grief, and fears.
4. It validates their importance as members of the body of Christ and allows them to be heard.
5. It communicates to the church that the transitional pastor has not come with a preconceived agenda.
6. It provides the transitional pastor a look at the personalities that will likely emerge on the Transitional Focus Team.

### **Scheduling and Size of Group**

On average, the transitional pastor should schedule three listening sessions. For example, invite all members and regular attenders with last names that begin with A to G to the first session, H to Q to the second session, and R to Z to the third session. A smaller church might only need one or two listening sessions while a larger one will need multiple sessions. In determining the number of groups, consider that a group with more than 20

people will hinder discussion. However, keep in mind that not everyone in the church will attend.

## **Agenda and Contents**

The agenda for each listening session should be simple and built around a series of open-ended questions that promote healthy and thoughtful discussion. Begin the session by briefly stating the purpose, which is to help the transitional pastor begin to understand the church and get to know its members. Affirm that the members and regular attenders will do the majority of the talking during the session, not the transitional pastor. It might be helpful to provide nametags for everyone present and ask those who speak to identify themselves before they begin.

Should the transitional pastor take notes or have someone present to do that for him? Opinions vary: Some believe that doing so would squelch discussion while others believe that helpful information might be lost. Whichever approach is used, great care should be taken to make those present feel safe and comfortable in sharing without it being used against them in the future.

Here are some possible questions:

- What is your name and what first brought you to this church?
- Why did you continue coming?
- Why did you decide to join?
- What distinguishes this church from other churches (other than denominational affiliation)?
- What is the most significant change that has happened here since you became a member?
- Picture in your mind what you would like this congregation to look like five years from now. How does that picture differ from today?
- What is the biggest barrier to making your vision become the reality for the church five years from now?
- What is the primary issue with which this church needs to deal?
- What does this church do best? Brag to me about this church.
- What is the question that I should have asked but didn't know enough to ask?

*The Interventionist* by Lyle E. Schaller contains hundreds of questions used in various stages of discovery in church consultation.

## **FORMING THE TRANSITIONAL FOCUS TEAM OPTION TWO**

One of the first tasks for the transitional pastor is to put together the Transitional Focus Team that will lead the church through the transitional period. It is important to remember that every investment made with this team stays with the church after the transitional pastor departs. Thus, the formation and development of the Transitional Focus Team will be one of the most significant leadership development tasks accomplished by the transitional pastor.

### **How Is the Team Selected?**

The team must be representative of the congregation and have the respect of the congregation. Therefore, the congregation must have a significant role in selecting the team. Beginning with early discussions with the church, the transitional pastor should make it clear that the congregation will nominate members for the team. The process of nomination is not an election per se, but provides a very good pool of names and priority of selection. The transitional pastor will make the final determination of members in order for him to have the latitude to include or exclude individuals who can contribute to or may detract from the work.

For example, if the church nominates a good team, but does not include a significant leader because they are not popular or because they have a contrary opinion, the transitional pastor may want to add that person to the team anyway. Though the personality may be challenging to manage, it is often important to have all sides represented at the table for the outcome to have integrity. There may be occasions where contrary individuals change their opinion when they serve on the team because they realize they are alone in their perspective. In the same way, there may be family members or other relationships that would dominate the team. The transitional pastor may choose to limit participation to only one or two family representatives. Husbands and wives should not both serve on the team. If a married couple is nominated, the transitional pastor will allow the couple to decide which one will serve.

### **Who Should Serve on the Team?**

Ministry or support staff members should not serve on the Transitional Focus Team. Their input is important and they will have an important voice in the process, but they are not formal team members. Because of their roles in the church, their opinions tend to put the team discussion out of balance. Exceptionally mature high school students might serve on the Transitional Focus Team. However, a student's spiritual growth could be negatively impacted by certain types of discussion within the Transitional Focus Team, such as in the aftermath of a pastor's moral failure and termination.

The size of the team is an important consideration. A good rule of thumb is 10-15% of the regularly attending congregation. In churches of 100 or less, this number could be increased to 20%. In congregations of over 500, this number should be reduced to less

than 10%. Usually the Transitional Focus Team would have a maximum of 50 members. Having more than a 75-person team would be unwieldy for the transitional pastor.

### **A Recommended Process**

On an announced Sunday morning, nomination sheets are distributed and members are given the opportunity to nominate up to five names for the Transitional Focus Team. The nominations are collected and are also accepted throughout the week. After one week, the church secretary or another designated person tallies nominations and ranks them according to the number of nominations received.

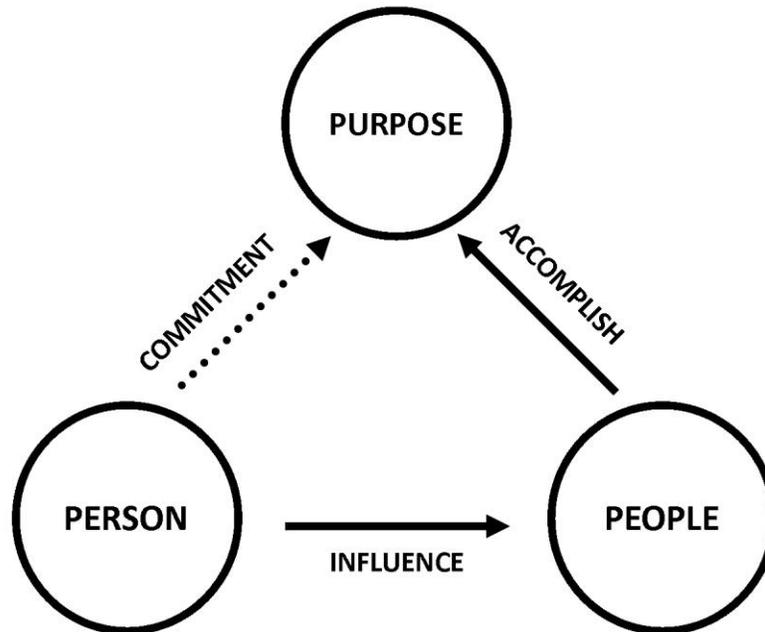
The transitional pastor should evaluate the nominations and form a draft slate of names. These names should be evaluated by one or two trusted individuals (chairman of deacons, senior staff member, etc.) for input as to who might or might not be included. Additions or deletions should be made to the list. The resulting slate for the transitional pastor should include about five additional names in the event some people decline to serve.

Starting at the top of the list, the transitional pastor should personally contact each nominee and request them to serve on the team. This should be a personal contact by phone or private conversation (not a contact by letter). They will have questions and need to understand they are being recruited for an important task. The task will require commitment of time and energy for a short duration. There will probably be weekly meetings while the team gets started and then additional assignments will come as the process unfolds. Generally, personal recruitment yields a better response and a higher level of commitment from the participants.

Once the list of committed persons is completed, the transitional pastor will announce the membership of the Transitional Focus Team to the church. The church should have a commissioning service for the team including a time of prayer and a commitment by the congregation to continue praying for the team.

## TRAINING THE TRANSITIONAL FOCUS TEAM

Functionally speaking, the most important work you do as a transitional pastor is the work you do with the Transitional Focus Team. This is not to minimize your interaction with and ministry to other individuals in the church. However, the role of an effective transitional pastor involves the empowering of others to make a difference in the lives of individuals. Pulpit skills are not enough. Leadership is needed – the ability of a person (pastor) to influence people (the church) toward a purpose (the Great Commission). The following is adapted from *The Performance Factor* by Pat MacMillan.



This leadership must be hands on in nature. The Transitional Focus Team will need encouragement in the process because their work will become difficult and laborious. Yet it is vital that they own the process as well as the report they will bring to the church. Apart from your work with them, it is doubtful that this will happen.

The ever-present danger for you as a transitional pastor is that your work—the time, effort, energy invested in a church—will in itself become transitory. Many factors can influence that and most are out of your control. However, the greatest factor to determine the lasting impact of your ministry is in your hands. It is the nature and quality of your leadership of the Transitional Focus Team. The crucial question then is, “How will I lead and work with this team?”

### Why Is This Important?

Any truly great work requires the involvement of more than one person. Kingdom ministry is such that one person cannot do it alone and so requires a cooperative effort for its success. Consider the example of a great man of God, Moses. He led the children of

Israel out of Egyptian bondage and toward the land of promise. However, even someone as great as Moses needed help. In Exodus 18, his father-in-law Jethro came to visit Moses, observed his leadership of the people, and asked, “What is this thing you’re doing for the people? Why are you alone sitting as judge, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?” (Exodus 18:14)

Moses explained to Jethro the details about his ministry and perhaps expected an accommodation for his labor. However, no pat on the back was forthcoming. “What you’re doing is not good,” Moses’ father-in-law said to him. “You will certainly wear out both yourself and these people who are with you, because the task is too heavy for you. You can’t do it alone.” (Exodus 18:17–18)

Let Jethro’s last five words there be a reminder to you. You can’t do it alone. Effective ministry requires a team. Effective leaders understand this and direct their leadership accordingly. If you want the impact of your transitional ministry to last beyond your brief time on the field, then you must give serious consideration to the task of teambuilding.

### **What Determines the Impact of a Ministry Team?**

Effective teams are marked by high levels of cooperation and synergy. The adage, “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts” is never truer than it is with an effective ministry team. Let synergy become a reality and the math of a team’s impact changes. It moves from the standard  $1+1=2$  to the synergistic  $1+1=5$ . God promised the Israelites that they would experience synergy in the conquest of the land of promise: “Five of you will pursue 100, and 100 of you will pursue 10,000.” (Leviticus 26:8)

This level of teamwork and cooperation is a choice by those on the team. By nature, people are independent and must be persuaded to begin working in an interdependent manner. It is a choice. Two factors determine this choice, willingness and skill. Some may not desire to cooperate. Others may want to cooperate but don’t know how to do so in an effective manner. Your responsibility as a transitional pastor is to address both.

A group of people is not a team. It can become one but only through intentional effort and leadership. A collection of individual stars, however gifted they may be, is not a team and will not cooperate in a way that true kingdom ministry requires.

How do you facilitate this? How does it happen? What model is available to guide a team in its cooperative efforts? How can this model be used to motivate individuals to cooperate for the sake of the Great Commission?

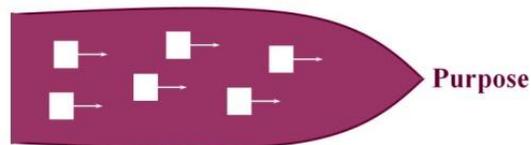
### **What Are the Characteristics of an Effective Transitional Focus Team?**

According to Pat MacMillan, effective teams have six defining characteristics and each one is very important. Failure to incorporate any one of the six will likely derail any type of team building initiative.

## 1. Common Purpose

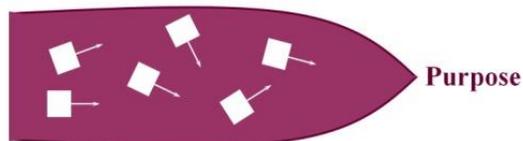
All effective teamwork begins with a common purpose. This purpose must be both clear and compelling. Humanly speaking, only you as the transitional pastor can make this happen. Don't assume that the Transitional Focus Team knows their purpose. It must be crystal-clear in your mind before it will become clear in theirs. Remember the old saying: a mist in the pulpit brings a fog in the pew. Along with clarifying the purpose, there must be an inspirational element as well. Make sure the team understands what is at stake and why their work is so important.

Your goal as team leader is the alignment of the team. Each person must embrace the team purpose for themselves if the team as a whole is to become powerful in its work. While



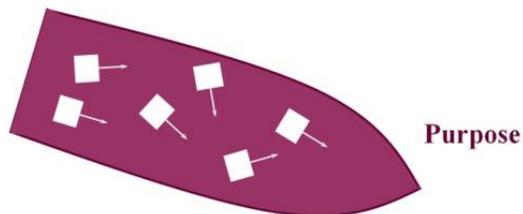
**Team**

... team and members "aligned"



**Team**

... members "not aligned"



**Team**

each person may have slightly different motivation for working together, there must be a shared sense of direction. These diagrams visually and vividly make this crucial point.

## 2. Clear Roles

Dividing the task is a crucial activity in the formation of a team. The question must be asked and answered: “Who will do what on this team?” However, the issue is more than just one of clarity of assignment. Appropriate division of labor is important as well. As a team leader, you must seek to put people in roles matched with their strengths.

Notice strengths are not the same thing as interests. You will discover that the best person to strategize about worship is not always the person who leads worship each week. Sometimes it is the person who experiences worship each week. MacMillan advises a leader to “look to the edge.” By this, he is referring to the edge of experience and expertise. Sometimes the most helpful insights will come from the edge and from the least likely individual.

Resist the temptation to build a team comprised of people who are all alike. The more different a team is, the stronger and smarter it is. Just because a team gets along well doesn’t mean that it will produce great results.

Equally important as the tasks associated with different roles are the accompanying attitudes. Some will say, “This is my job, stay out” and others will say, “That’s your job, see you later.” The preferred attitude is that of “This is *my* part of *our* job.” A great team principle is illustrated in Joshua 1:12-18 where Joshua in essence teaches the people of God that no one is finished until everyone is finished.

## 3. Accepted Leadership

Leadership styles run the gamut between being highly directive to passively laissez faire. The current tendency is less directive and more participative. However less leadership is not the same as better leadership. Effective leaders provide structure for the teams they lead. Balance is crucial. Too much structure and the team will become overly dependent on the leader. Too little and they begin to flounder in unproductivity.

It is hard to imagine a real leader who does not care whether or not his or her leadership is accepted. Assuming as much, begin with review of a definition of leadership as “a person influencing people to accomplish a purpose.” In this context, purpose becomes boss. This is the character of true servant leadership, where everything is subservient to the accomplishment of the God-given purpose. Servant leadership is more than a willingness to perform servant-like tasks; it is an attitude that views everything, including oneself and ministry, through the lens of the Great Commission.

The acceptance of one’s leadership is earned, not demanded. The very wording of this characteristic assumes that some types of leadership are not accepted. A leader will find their leadership being accepted by the team when they: (1) serve the purpose with determination and (2) embody the qualities that followers look for in a leader.

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner have been conducting surveys on the leadership qualities desired by team members since the early 1980s. What they have discovered through the years has been consistent. The top four characteristics of admired leaders are: (1) they are honest, (2) they are forward-looking, (3) they are inspiring, and (4) they are competent.

#### 4. Effective Processes

It is hard to imagine certain types of teams apart from effective processes. The surgical team that performs your operation has them. You see it in the crew on the flight deck of your most recent airplane ride. Your favorite football team has a playbook which delineates their process for team success.

The same will be true of a successful Transitional Focus Team. Plan carefully the process which the team will use to accomplish its purpose. Processes are the “how” that speaks to the “what” of the purpose of the team. Think of your team process as the map for your journey. As the team leader, you hold the map and are using it to guide the team and navigate the trip. However, this is not the time to engage in “black box thinking.” Do not hold the map so close that no one else can see it. Make your thinking visible and let others see the process to be used through appropriate visual aids (such as A Church Model and Process on page 97) as well as ongoing communication.

Examples of the processes of a team would include how a team reaches consensus, how they resolve conflict, how they divide the workload, how they brainstorm issues, and how they think together on strategic issues. Leadership is crucial in the facilitation of these functions.

#### 5. Solid Relationships

Teamwork demands high quality relationships. This is not to assume that all team members must be great friends. In fact, the best teams have enough diversity of personality that probably eliminates the possibility of a team of “chums” that socializes together after the meeting is over. The relationships on a team do not necessarily have to be close in nature but they do have to be solid. By this we mean the ability to withstand the inevitable bumps and jolts along the pathway of growing cooperation.

As with one’s personal leadership, on a team the balance between task and relationship is vital. The team should not just be about getting something accomplished. Time should be dedicated in meetings for interaction with each other without team meetings becoming mere “Kum Ba Yah” sessions, marked by “interpersonal warm fuzzies” but accomplishing little. On the other hand, an overemphasis on productivity and “getting this job done” can create a pseudo-community where team members fail to experience the dynamic of God’s Spirit in their midst as well as their work.

Solid relationships are characterized first and foremost by *trust*. No one will be interdependent with someone they do not trust. It is built one person at a time through character, competence, and concern. In addition, *understanding* must be a component of teamwork. Members need to be aware of what each person brings to the table, the respective strengths and weaknesses. In addition to these, *acceptance, respect, and courtesy* are necessary for solid interpersonal relationships on a transitional focus team.

A final characteristic of relationships on effective teams is *mutual accountability*. Each member must be willing to give an account of their actions, progress, or results. The key word in this context is “mutual.” No one is exempt. While our tendency may be to resist it, this inclination is minimized and quieted when a team is aligned and has embraced the whole team concept. Remember what was said about clear roles: “It isn’t my job, or your job, but *my* part of *our* job.”

The question might be asked, “Accountable to what?” The answer is found in a set of team operating principles. These vary from team to team and they cannot be arbitrarily imposed. Just like cooperation, a choice must be made by each team member. These principles should be stated in the present tense to convey the idea that “this is what we do, not what we hope to do someday.” Here are some examples of team operating principles:

- We will treat each other with dignity and respect.
- We will listen for understanding.
- We will not take things personally, and we will not mean things personally.
- We will ask, but we will not assume motives.
- We will avoid degrading language, and we will not attack each other’s credibility.
- Everyone has input, regardless of position.
- We will not take ourselves too seriously.
- Silence is agreement: If I don’t speak up about an issue, then I agree to the conclusion to which the team comes.
- We will honor our commitments and keep our promises.
- We will maintain confidentiality.

## 6. Excellent Communication

Teams are ultimately about work. The very word “teamwork” highlights this. Some teams are able to accomplish much because of their capacity for communication. It allows the collective brilliance of the team to emerge and shapes the strategic plan for the future of the church. Yet, as most understand, communication is an endeavor that is fraught with the proverbial peril.

Perhaps the greatest misconception regarding communication is that it is primarily about sending a message. Wisdom and experience, along with actual research, teach us that until a message is received as the sender intended, there is no communication. The actual words we use are not as influential as our tone and inflection, as are facial expressions and postures.

Teams are all about purpose but common purpose cannot be sustained apart from excellent communication. As the leader of the Transitional Focus Team, you must be aware of the following communication dynamics and plan how to lead in light of them:

- Communication is crucial to cooperation and teamwork.
- Focus is typically placed on message sending when it should be focused on message receiving.
- “Groupthink” and an undue stress on conformity of thought expressed through giving acceptable answers will thwart true synergy on a team.
- Clear communication does not prevent but rather leads to conflict.

## SAMPLE SEQUENCE OF PROCESS FOR THE TRANSITIONAL PASTOR MINISTRY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Before 1 <sup>st</sup> Month                               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a Covenant of Relationship between the Transitional Pastor and the Church.</li> <li>2. Call and install a transitional pastor.</li> </ol>  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Month                    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Get acquainted with the Church Leadership Team. (page 14)</li> <li>4. Conduct listening sessions. (Optional; pages 16-17)</li> <li>5. Form the Transitional Focus Team. (pages 14 and pages 18-19)</li> <li>6. Schedule a Church Memories Workshop.</li> <li>7. Train the Transitional Focus Team. (pages 20-26)</li> <li>8. Use <i>Come to the Lord's Table</i> for spiritual preparation. (page 15)</li> <li>9. Develop a Sequence of Process for leading through the stages of transition. (pages 27-28)</li> <li>10. Communicate the process to the congregation.</li> </ol>   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Month<br><b>Stage 1</b>                    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Preach on the Seven Realities of Experiencing God, the kingdom of God, the activity of Satan, and the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. (page 78)</li> <li>12. Conduct the Church Memories Workshop. (pages 79-85).</li> </ol>   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> Months<br><b>Stage 2</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Provide the Transitional Focus Team an overview of the information on church culture. (pages 87-88)</li> <li>14. Provide the Transitional Focus Team an overview of the information on community context. (pages 89-90)</li> <li>15. Request a demographic report and review it with the Transitional Focus Team. (page 91)</li> <li>16. Preach a sermon related to demographics using Acts 10:1 – 11:18. (pages 92-93)</li> <li>17. Complete the Current Reality worksheets, follow the instructions at the bottom of the forms, and lead a discussion with the Transitional Focus Team. (page 86)</li> <li>18. Give an overview of the Church Model and Process strategy. (page 97)</li> <li>19. Optional: Provide an overview of values to the Transitional Focus Team and lead it through the Values Inventory exercise. (pages 94-96)</li> <li>20. Optional: Lead the church to take the Transformational Church Assessment Tool and interpret the results to the Transitional Focus Team and the church. (page 86)</li> </ol> |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Month<br><b>Stage 3</b>                    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Lead the Transitional Focus Team in studying about the Great Commission and the five functions—evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship. (pages 104-109)</li> <li>22. Preach on the Great Commission and the five biblical functions.</li> <li>23. Divide the Transitional Focus Team into five subgroups, one for each function. Each subgroup will use the SWOTs form (page 110) to evaluate its assigned function and report to the total Focus Team.</li> <li>24. Use the development of key objectives for the 5 functions. (page 111ff)</li> </ol>   |

- 7<sup>th</sup> Month  
Stage 4**
25. Lead the Transitional Focus Team in studying about the four kingdom results—numerical growth, spiritual transformation, ministry expansion, and kingdom advance. (pages 125-127)
  26. Preach on the four kingdom results.
  27. Divide the Transitional Focus Team into four subgroups, one for each result area. Each subgroup will use the SWOTs form (page 110) to evaluate its assigned result area and report to the total Focus Team.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Month  
Stage 5**
28. Lead the Transitional Focus Team in studying about the four church practices of open groups, closed groups, corporate worship, and ministry teams. (pages 129-132)
  29. Communicate to the congregation about the four church practices.
  30. Lead the Transitional Focus Team in a discussion of the church practices using the drawing exercise. (page 133)
  31. Divide the Transitional Focus Team into four subgroups, one for each church practice. Each subgroup will use the SWOTs form (page 110) to evaluate its assigned practice and report to the total Focus Team
- 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>  
Months  
Stage 6**
32. Lead the Transitional Focus Team to use the principles and concepts learned during the previous five stages to review or write a mission statement. Use the process on pages 135-136.
  33. Lead the church to recommit to their mission statement or adopt the new mission statement.
  34. Communicate the mission statement to the church through a series of sermons.
  35. Lead the Transitional Focus Team and the leaders from all church ministries on a retreat. The purpose of the retreat is to refocus the church around the five functions and the mission of the church. Use the Strategy Map using the guidance on pages 137-139.
  36. Use the results of the six stages to develop initiatives to be recommended from the church. (page 134)
  37. Present the recommended initiatives to the congregation for affirmation.
- Stage 7**
38. Lead the church to elect a Pastor Search Committee and begin the search or to release the Pastor Search Committee previously elected to proceed with their assignment using the plans the church has adopted in finding the pastor the Lord has prepared for the church. (page 140)
  39. Train the committee for its task using the *Pastor Search Committee Handbook*.
  40. Continue to serve as a process consultant to the committee.
  41. Interpret the search process to the church.
- Stage 8**
42. In preparation for the coming of the newly elected pastor, preach a message on “Honoring the Pastor.”
  43. Help the pastor get a good start in the church and community.

## THE TRANSITIONAL PASTOR IN THE LIFE OF A CHURCH

This section focuses on the qualities of leadership which continue to be admirable and necessary in the ministry of a transitional pastor. We will examine who you are as a person, as a man called of God, and the abilities which enable the transitional pastor to effectively serve the church.

The transitional pastor is to lead the church through a viable transition. You are most important! There is a difference between a supply preacher, an interim, and the transitional pastor. With a transitional pastor this time is unique. It is a small window in the life of the church—to change concepts, attitudes, develop a vision, and prepare for the future.

This explains the need for qualified men to take the church through this vital time, to prepare the church to call a strong, fruitful, and long-term pastor. Transitional pastors perform pastoral ministries according to mutual agreements expressed in a covenant of relationship.

### Duties of Transitional Pastors

Among Paul's farewell words to Timothy are "discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5, NIV). Some writers and teachers refer to functions, roles, or tasks instead of duties. Whether the word is *duties*, *functions*, or *tasks*, the obligation is as serious to a pastor's work as breathing is to his body. On trial before the Sanhedrin, Paul declared, "I have lived my life before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23:1).

In a Covenant of Relationship, the church and transitional pastor agree on the transitional pastor's duties. The list will vary from church to church, but consideration should be given to each of the following general and specific duties. In good conscience, the pastor will be diligent in fulfilling these duties, believing them to represent his duty to God in this relationship.

#### General Duties:

- Provide spiritual leadership.
- Guide the church through the stages of transition.

#### Specific Duties:

- Preach the gospel.
- Coordinate worship.
- Counsel staff and church ministry leaders.
- Coordinate baptismal services; officiate weddings and funerals when available.
- Supervise staff.
- Provide pastoral care and involve others in caring actions.
- Manage conflict.
- Lead the Transitional Focus Team.
- Represent the church in community and denominational activities.

The transitional pastor may move his membership to the church. This will be dependent on the family's or wife's involvement with the church where the transitional pastor may live. There are advantages to membership since leadership has a stronger impact when giving guidance to needs and changes within the church. It gives credibility to say "our church." The people will know you give your tithe to the church and see your personal involvement. If married, your wife, who is a vital part of your ministry, should be supportive of this ministry in this church. If you have family at home, the same support is needed from the family.

If the church is some distance from where you reside, it is advantageous to live in the community if provisions are made. This allows the transitional pastor to assume more of the administrative and pastoral care responsibilities than commuters are expected to assume. Those who commute and those who have other employment may coordinate the work of other church staff members and/or lay leaders as they lead in administrative and pastoral care ministries

Priority attention of transitional pastors is given to leading church through the stages of transition so the church will be prepared for effective ministry under the leadership of a new pastor. Because the ministry of transitional pastors is normally completed within 12–18 months, they must have servant hearts and gifts that enable them to quickly gain credibility and trust in order to become effective leaders in a brief period of time.

### **Dimensions of a Pastor's Life**

Biblical standards set guidance for strong character traits (1 Timothy 3:1-7). This does not suggest you are lacking in any of these traits. But you need to give evidence as to who you are, what you do, and what you represent. These standards should be examined in the life of any pastor or person who ministers in the church.

1. Observable balance
2. Good family
3. Observable maturing
4. Respect for others

There are six dimensions of a pastor's life. Each person should be well balanced in these areas to strengthen the positive character traits.

1. Intimate relationship with God
2. Marriage and family
3. Integrity
4. Physical health
5. Emotional health
6. Financial responsibility

Transitional pastors must be confident in God's call to this ministry and committed to it because of a holy compulsion. The evidence of call is observed in these four areas:

1. to salvation
2. to discipleship
3. to ministry
4. to a place of service.

### **Stages of a Pastor's Ministry**

Pastors go through various stages as they move along the journey of ministry. The chart on page 35 gives one approach to understanding those stages. Many transitional pastors see this ministry as part of multiplying themselves as they invest in a spiritual legacy.

### **Character Traits**

Just as normal pastoral ministry in general is more than "a way to make a living," the ministry of transitional pastors is more than a way to supplement another salary or earn some additional retirement income. Rather than novices in pastoral ministry, they must have demonstrated personal character and pastoral competence in the testing fires of prior experience, including knowledge of the spiritual and psychological impact of pastoral changes and how to enable churches and individuals to work together in making wise choices. Their lives must reveal the fruit of the Holy Spirit as identified in Galatians 5:22-23: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control."

Working through the following character traits does not mean you lack or are weak on them. However, it is good to re-emphasize them and gauge ourselves on our strengths and weaknesses. The character traits of the transitional pastor's life should be taken for granted, especially for someone with many years of experience. This is simply a reminder of the personal character and pastoral competence essential for effective transitional pastor ministry.

- **Healthy Spirituality**

With 10% of our churches without pastors and pastors staying 42 months as an average with some averages as low as 18 months, churches need an example of healthy pastors who will serve long-term in the church. The transitional pastor can be what they look like. The transitional pastor can portray to the congregation spiritual growth as a person and as a leader. Healthy spirituality grows through disciplined prayer and Bible study that focus and clarify a pastor's relationship with God. Healthy spirituality bears the fruit of the Spirit, equips pastors for effective relationships and productive work, and manifests itself in piety without pretense and compassion without compromise.

- Emotionally Stable

Love leads the “fruit of the Spirit” list and self-control anchors it. Leaders with self-control are stable and not stirred to displays of anger or depression when confronted with disagreement and resistance. They are not easily provoked. They calm troubled waters, not churn them. They encourage optimism in working for a solution. By their example of self-control they elicit from the people love, joy, and peace.

- Christ-like Love for People

Transitional pastors do well if they like the work and love the people. If they love the people as Jesus did, they will relate to them effectively in the ministries of the church. Peter called on Christians to “honor everyone” (1 Pet. 2:17), by which he meant those in authority, fellow Christians, those who agree with us, and those who disagree with us. Technical skills in organizational development or sermon delivery cannot substitute for relational skills that do not reflect Christ’s love.

- Clothed with Humility

Peter contrasted humility with pride and admonished all Christians to be clothed in it and live humbly under God’s control (see 1 Pet. 5:5-6). David knew that God guides the humble in knowing and doing what is right (see Ps. 25:9), and Solomon cautioned people “don’t consider yourself to be wise” because God “gives grace to the humble” (Prov. 3:7, 34). Humility is not the opposite of strength; it is neither self-effacing nor self-exalting.

- Visionary Leader

Vision, applied to effective pastoral leaders, is spiritual discernment or foresight. With time, you can observe the condition of the church and then recommend your vision for the church. A visionary leader, inspired by the Holy Spirit and informed by the counsel of spiritually mature friends, sees with the eyes of the soul those things God is doing in the church as well as things God wants to do through the church and shares the vision with the church.

- Man of Integrity

Spiritual leaders with integrity adhere carefully to biblical standards of morality and character. They are committed to being holy, with Jesus Christ as their example, aware they must hate and avoid evil and hold fast to what is good in God’s eyes. The holiness requirement applies in all personal, family, and public behavior. In a society of compromise, sexual morality and financial ethics are of special concern.

- Energetic

Concerning Moab, Jeremiah declared, “Cursed is the one who does the Lord’s business deceitfully!” (Jer. 48:10). Paul urged slaves to be industrious. “Whatever you do, work at it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the LORD” (Col. 3:23-24). Transitional pastors who balance diligent work and healthy recreational leisure set a good example for others.

- Experienced in Pastoral Ministry

Because one has to deal with all issues of ministry, effective transitional pastors draw on effective pastoral experience in a variety of churches. No amount of classroom training alone can prepare someone to lead churches in the midst of transition, especially those in emotional turmoil. Experienced pastors will continue to grow in wisdom through study that enables them to apply lessons learned in the trenches of experience to the circumstances of each new transitional pastor challenge.

- Zealous for Missions and Evangelism

Paul instructed Christians: “Do not lack diligence; be fervent in spirit; serve the Lord” (Rom. 12:11). Zeal is never more important than in the ministry of personal and public evangelism. Diligence or zeal for missions and evangelism enables a transitional pastor to say, as Paul said, “Follow my example” instead of “Do as I say and not as I do.” Zeal for missions and evangelism should represent who he is in Christ, not just who he is in church leadership work.

- Patience

Patience has the same spiritual DNA as love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control. They exist together as a collective whole. If you don’t desire all, you won’t have any. Transitional pastors are often tempted to be impatient because they need to accomplish so much in a relatively short period of time. In leading people to achieve kingdom goals, patience (not impatience) produces the greater harvest.

- Denominational Commitment

Transitional pastors must be committed to the greater work of the kingdom of God. This implies that they understand the connectedness of a local church to the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. Knowledge about Southern Baptist heritage, congregational polity, cooperative relationships, and structure enables transitional pastors to guide churches toward a greater commitment to ongoing missions and ministries through the Southern Baptist Convention, their state conventions, and their associations.

- Unavailable

A transitional pastor is unavailable to be called as the pastor of the church he is serving. His pastoral calling is to the unique role of transitional pastor. With this fact clearly established prior to beginning a transitional ministry, time and emotional energy will not be misdirected to deliberating whether or not he should become the pastor. Though church members love him and are blessed by his ministry, they will not be encouraged to try to persuade him to be the pastor.

## Stages of a Pastor's Ministry

**Foundation Stage** – Responding to God's call and becoming oriented to pastoral ministry

**Maturing Stage** – Developing the pastoral ministry skills to accomplish God's work

**Multiplying Stage** – Executing effective ministry and reproducing yourself through others

**Legacy Stage** – Leaving a spiritual legacy by finishing well and investing in others

Stages of a Pastor's Ministry	Approximate Age Range	Calling Issues	Source of Help	Educational Challenges	Major Concerns	Personal Issues	Dangers
Foundation Stage	15-40	Call to "the" ministry	An encourager like Barnabas	Completing formal education	Getting off to a good start	Laying a foundation for spiritual, marital, and family health	Career-ending mistakes or attacks
Maturing Stage	25-50	Call to "this" ministry	A mentor like Paul	Developing the study skills to be a life-long learner	Developing and enhancing skills for ministry	Strengthening spiritual, marital, and family health	Failing to grow, not developing strong people skills
Multiplying Stage	35-65	Reaffirm and refine "my" calling	A network like Paul's missionary friends	Participating in continuing education	Finding a good fit where my unique ministry blossoms and reproduces	Maintaining spiritual maturity, launching children, refocusing marriage	Growing weary and dropping out, failed marriage, estranged children
Legacy Stage	50 & beyond	Call to invest in a spiritual legacy	A protégé like Timothy	Training others who will impact future generations	Finishing strong with continued fruitfulness and joy	Walking close to God, celebrating marriage, enjoying grandchildren	Finishing tired, bitter, and alone

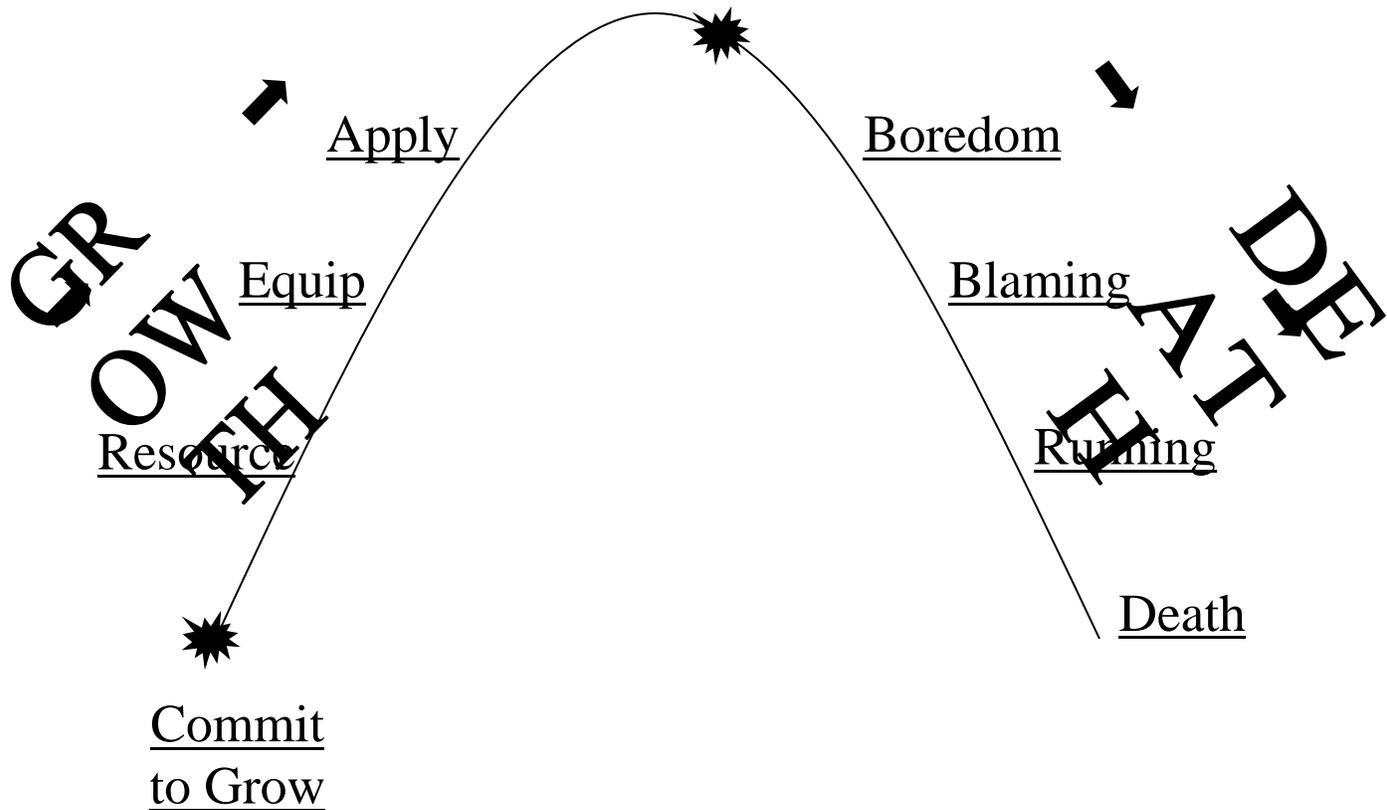
## THE SKILLS USED BY THE TRANSITIONAL PASTOR

Transitional pastor effectiveness results from both the *character traits* that describe *who you are* and the *skills* that demonstrate *what you can do*. Christ-like character is refined as we walk humbly with God through mountains of celebrations and valleys of sufferings. Ministry skills are honed through purposeful study and careful observation with minds open to truth and growth. God can bless and use people with all levels of training, but those not willing to learn and grow and to improve their skills will be limited in their contributions to kingdom growth. Paul saw the potential in Timothy and admonished him to “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

Most transitional pastors have had extensive training in biblical and theological studies, as well as practical pastoral ministries, but they continue to participate in formal and informal training experiences that produce growth in understanding truth and skill in performing the ministries called for by truth. That is consistent with Paul’s life view. Trained formally in Hebrew law under the tutelage of the renowned Gamaliel, taught about saving grace in solitude sessions with the Holy Spirit, coached by the disciples in Damascus, and endorsed by Barnabas in Jerusalem, Paul honored the Lord with passionate and convincing use of his knowledge and skills. After years of experience in life transforming, church-nurturing ministry, Paul declared he was not yet complete. He vowed to “pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). That is the educational model for transitional pastors. The goal is to keep growing as long as you live.

Training helps for these transitional pastor ministry skills are not presented to imply that every transitional pastor needs all of the information because of deficient skills. Much of it will be useful to you. That which is not useful to you, will be useful to someone else. All of it will be useful to some among the hundreds to be enlisted and equipped for effective transitional pastor ministry.

## Staying Alive All Your Life



Staying alive all your life requires continuing growth. When growth stops (or slows down), the decline to death begins.

Personal growth is not an accident. It results from a personal commitment to growth. It requires personal accountability. No one else will be made responsible for your success or failure. The growth goal must be specific and measurable. Effective growth goals measure progress incrementally.

“Resource” in this model is a verb. You must find tools to use in growing your ministry skills. In this computer-serviced age, ministers are blessed with an abundance of electronic resources. Except for some who minister in some third-world nations, book stores and libraries are accessible to all. Conferences and seminars abound. Friends with good experience in pastoral ministry are excellent resources for those with good listening skills.

With commitment and resources, you must invest a reasonable portion of your time in equipping activities. One pastor, unable to attend seminary, earnestly desired to learn Greek in order to be a better Bible teacher, He enlisted a seminary professor to tutor him in Greek with the use of text books and audio tapes. He blocked out time five days each week for that purpose. After achieving the desired level of proficiency in Greek, he found

another professor to do the same thing with Hebrew. In doing so, he grew in ministry to a level that had previously appeared unlikely, even impossible.

The ultimate reward is not being equipped with knowledge. The payoff is in applying knowledge in the practice of ministry.

Caution: Continuing to grow in ministry requires continuing to update and expand ministry skills. Yesterday's learning is not sufficient for tomorrow's ministry. The world of ministry is changing too fast for that. Skills that are not updated or expanded every two or three years become outdated. The repetition of behavior becomes boring. The asterisk (\*) at the top of the curve emphasizes that you must set a new growth commitment into place at least every three years.

Without the stimulation of a new venture in learning, boredom is predictable. Boredom begins a downward plunge toward death. Boredom is a self-inflicted disease. A mind void of new learning and the application of new skills is a fertile field for boredom. Active minds, stimulated by the constant search for new skills and better ways of responding to eternal truths, serve as a "keep out" sign to boredom.

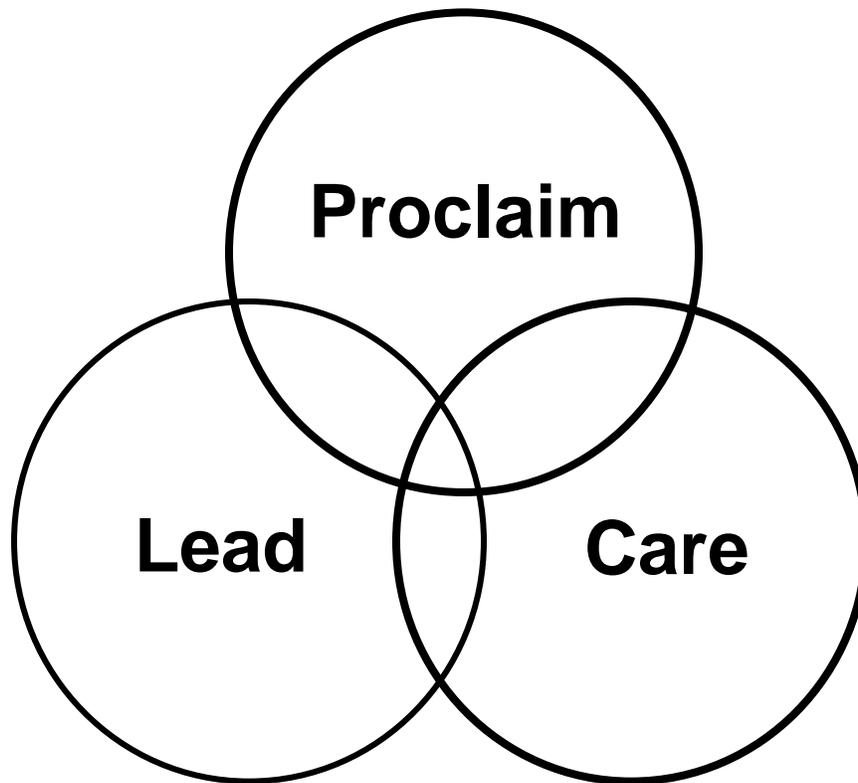
If boredom does not raise a caution flag that leads to a new commitment to growth, the next stage in the decline to death is blaming. Whether in ministry, other forms of employment, or family life, there is always someone else to blame when boredom takes the place of personal growth.

Non-growth leads to boredom, boredom leads to blaming, and blaming leads to running. Running away is an unplanned action plan for many people in our society. This includes running from job to job, from church to church, from marriage to marriage, or from drug to drug. "Absolute futility. Everything is futile" (Eccl. 1:2b)

Many pastors preach through their file of sermons and lead the church in the activities they have used in another church. When they become bored with personal non-growth in about three years, they begin looking for greener pastures. Such pastors are simply moving to "apply" at the top of the curve. In a very short time they find themselves moving back down the right side of the curve. After two or three years in their new church, they repeat the process until vocational death sets in.

Too much of life spent on the right side of the bell curve may result in premature physical death. The vital organs can't handle the strain produced by constant negativity. Death may be relational. A dead marriage appears to be alive because two spouses continue to live in the same house. Death can be vocational. An employee may appear alive on the job when he is just going through the routine until retirement income is available. Any such form of death is a tragedy because God made us to stay alive all our lives. He gave us growth resources to make it happen. The only solution for the move toward death on the right side of the bell curve is to return to the beginning of the left side of the bell curve: commit to grow while still at the top of the curve (\*).

## Pastoral Ministry Tasks <sup>4</sup>



What do churches need from pastors to become and remain spiritually healthy and dynamically reproductive? Church members need the pastor to proclaim the gospel. They need the pastor to lead them according to the spirit and style of Jesus. They need the pastor to provide care that creates a caring community in which members are cared for and involved in caring for others. Proclaim, lead, and care are interdependent tasks. To produce the desired results in one task area requires good quality of service in each of the other two areas.

The transitional pastor cannot do all that is needed in each task, but he can equip and partner with others in the church to see that all the needs of the congregation are met. When they are, dynamic fellowship like that in the post-Pentecost Jerusalem church will flourish.

## **The Spiritual Gift of Discernment** (Foundational for All the Skills)

The strategic work of leading a church in the transitional experience of turning loose, grieving, healing, reorienting, taking hold, or whatever else must be experienced cannot be done effectively without God's guidance, regardless of the leader's education or experience. Spiritual discernment is required. God said, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unreachable things you do not know" (Jer. 33:3). That is God's promise to help us with discernment.

Some mistake discernment for wisdom and vice-versa. What is the difference? Wisdom is knowing what to do with knowledge, while discernment is knowing what to do with wisdom.

Demographic data, statistical charts, historical documents, and anecdotal reports provide knowledge but do not assure discernment of truth. Spiritual discernment is essential in transitional ministry. Such discernment is available from God to those who seek it through disciplined prayer, both talking to Him and listening to Him.

A person who is able to understand and clarify the obscure has discernment. A discerning person sees inside (sights in) to what is not evident on the surface, that which the average person does not see, and uses the insight to help others. Discernment has the ability to "see through" with spiritual intuition. As a result a person applies the ability to weigh the pros and cons of a situation. Such discerning insight is mental tuning which in turn clarifies thought for leadership, sensitivity for caring, and revelation for preaching.

### 1. Biblical Example about Spiritual Discernment

First Kings 3–9 tell the story of Solomon's great wisdom and leadership in building the nation and the temple after asking one thing of God—an understanding heart. God was pleased to grant Solomon's request. "I will give you a wise and discerning heart," God said, "so that there has never been anyone like you before and never will be again. In addition, I will give you what you did not ask for: both riches and honor, so that no man in any kingdom will be your equal during your entire life. If you walk in my ways and keep my statutes and commandments just as your Father David did, I will give you a long life" (1 Kings 3:12-14). Solomon's discernment was soon revealed in a conflict resolution situation involving two women who claimed to be the mother of the same child.

The writer of 1 Kings affirmed Solomon's discernment in matters of government and teaching. "God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.... Solomon composed 3,000 proverbs, and his songs numbered 1,005.... People came from everywhere, sent by every king on earth who had heard of his wisdom" (1 Kings 4:29, 30, 32, 34).

Shamefully, Solomon's head was turned from seeking after God to seeking after pleasure and the applause of those who admired his wisdom. "The LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. He had

commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, Solomon did not do what the LORD had commanded. Then the LORD said to Solomon, ‘Since you have done this and did not keep My covenant and My statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant’” (1 Kings 11:9-11).

Spiritual discernment is God’s gift to those who earnestly seek it and faithfully use it with integrity to honor the Lord. Spiritual discernment cannot co-exist with self-interest and self-service. God’s invitation still stands. “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and wondrous things you do not know” (Jer. 33:3).

## 2. Prayer as a Door to Spiritual Discernment

Transitional pastors, though enriched with training and much experience, should often hear their hearts speak the words the boy Samuel spoke to the Lord: “Speak, for your servant is listening” (1 Sam. 3:10b). The testimony to Samuel as a listener follows in the last three verses of the same chapter. “Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let nothing he said prove false. All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a confirmed prophet of the Lord. The Lord continued to appear in Shiloh, because there He revealed Himself to Samuel by His word” (1 Sam. 3:19-21).

Honestly evaluate how much of your prayer time is given to speaking and how much is given to listening. Remember the adage: God gave us two ears and one mouth so He must have intended for us to listen twice as much as we talk. Use the young-Samuel model, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” Then listen to his counsel to your soul. Pray with the words of an old prayer song: “Speak to my heart, Lord Jesus; speak that my soul may hear.”

T. W. Hunt, whose writing and speaking on prayer enriched many pastors’ lives, often shared his experiences of listening to God. He would get up early each morning, prepare two cups of coffee, go to his quiet place, and sit at a table with his cup of coffee. An empty chair was at the other side of the table with the second cup placed on the table in front of the empty chair. In that setting he had a quiet conversation with God. Conversation involves exposing one’s understandings, feelings, and desires to God and listening to God’s understandings, feelings, and desires. That is the way to become rich in discernment.

## 3. Devotional Bible Reading as a Door to Spiritual Discernment

Devotional Bible reading dismisses any idea of gleaning information for the sake of teaching or preaching. It focuses entirely on gleaning information because I want the truth of God to penetrate every fiber of my being, control and order every desire of my heart, and guide me in every relationship involved in my daily walk. Through devotional Bible reading, God can speak to our hearts so our souls may hear.

Pastors, as people who work with the Word vocationally, are most liable to be lax in exercising themselves unto godliness by feasting on the Word personally.

## Leading Skills

Extraordinary skills are required for becoming a trusted leader and guiding a church through significant change in 12–18 months. Listening and relating skills are vital interpersonal platforms for this acceleration of trust development. Spirituality without false piety, confidence without arrogance, wisdom without snobbery, and boldness without brashness are some of the personal qualities that enable a leader in the process of guiding a church through the stages of transition.

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and their men of high positions exercise power over them. But it must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you [*leader/pastor*] must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be a slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42–45).

Jesus calls transitional pastors not to lordship but to leadership. He calls to servanthood. Servanthood is responding to the lordship of Jesus Christ by using the resources God has graciously given you in building up Christ’s bride, His church. Servanthood is strong work, hard work—Jesus work.

### 1. Unique Challenge of Leadership as a Transitional Pastor

Leadership for transitional pastors focuses on the unique nature of a ministry that calls for significant constructive change in a relatively short period of time. For decades pastors have been cautioned about recommending major changes in church practices before getting to know the church well and to being known by the church. That normally takes more than a year, perhaps two or three years. However, transitional pastors are challenged with the responsibility to lead a church through critical growth processes in approximately 9 to 18 months. That’s a challenge!

A transitional pastor begins serving with a position and a reputation, two shaky launching pads. Many church members, including organizational leaders, will not understand the work the transitional pastor is to do or the relationships required in doing the work regardless of the means used in the process of calling and covenanting to interpret his work. It is a new breed of leader to them and they aren’t sure what to expect. (They are more familiar with preachers who “fill the pulpit” for an interim period.) Initially they follow because they are supposed to or they feel obligated to. That shaky leadership launching pad will collapse into follower-ship lethargy after a short period of time unless the transitional pastor is able to move to a second level of leadership.

The reputation represented in the transitional pastor’s biographical data form may be impressive on paper but will soon cease to evoke awe unless it is expressed in the day-by-day and week-by-week events of church life. Church “attenders” may continue attending with confidence because of good sermons from the pulpit but church leaders will lose confidence if their leader’s leadership style threatens them.

Prolific author and prominent speaker John Maxwell identified stages of leadership in five levels.

- Position – Rights: People follow because they have to.
- Permission – Relationships: People follow because they want to.
- Production – Results: People follow because of what you have done for the organization.
- Personnel Development – Reproduction: People follow because of what you have done for them.
- Personhood – Respect: People follow because of who you are and what you represent.

Maxwell notes that the last level is “reserved for leaders who have spent years growing people and organizations. Few make it. Those who do are bigger than life.”<sup>5</sup>

The transitional pastor’s success depends on whether or not he moves from position (rights) leadership to personhood (respect) leadership and how quickly that progress is made. That is the transitional pastor version of the X-Games (extreme challenge), and it starts over with each new transitional pastor covenant.

## 2. Definitions of Leadership

According to Bobb Biehl, “Leadership is knowing *what* to do next; knowing *why* that is important; and knowing *how* to bring appropriate resources to bear on the need at hand.”<sup>6</sup>

Instead of focusing on what a leader knows John Haggai defines leadership in terms of what a leader does. “Leadership is the discipline of deliberately exerting special influence within a group to move it toward goals of beneficial permanence that fulfill the group’s real needs.”<sup>7</sup>

John Maxwell takes the role of influence a step farther, insisting that “leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.”<sup>8</sup> “The only thing a title can buy is a little time—either to increase your level of influence with others or to erase it.”<sup>9</sup>

In their book, *Spiritual Leadership*, Henry and Richard Blackaby write, “Spiritual leadership is moving people on to God’s agenda.”<sup>10</sup>

## 3. Enhancing Leadership/Influence

The unique challenge in becoming a productive leader in a short period of time is a reason for prayerfully selecting the Transitional Focus Team as soon as possible. These influencers in the church can help you accomplish this time-sensitive goal. As the Transitional Focus Team members demonstrate confidence in your leadership and provide counsel regarding the needs of church leaders affected by change, they will lead others to follow with respect and personal involvement. With their endorsement you will build relationships, produce positive results, and reproduce leaders for growing ministries.

The unique challenge makes it imperative that transitional pastors not attempt to be all things to all people. Remember that Paul instructed the Ephesians that pastors were called to “prepare God’s people for works of service,” not to *do* all the works of service that need doing. In transitional pastor terms that means putting before the people a biblical challenge; helping them

know what to do next, why that is important, how it can be accomplished, and what results they can expect; and coaching them gently yet firmly with godly wisdom as they navigate the period between pastors.

#### 4. The Management Factor in Leadership

Leading sets the course, managing guides the process. Leadership is a wrap-around for management. It plans the menu and sets the table. Management cooks and serves the meal. Then leadership returns to evaluate the experience, affirm those who prepared and served the meal, and celebrate its delights.

Leadership is a primary role as transitional pastors relate to the organizational life of the church; management is secondary. Transitional pastors focus on the big picture, the direction and overall movement. They assign details to other employed and elected leaders along with clear understandings of responsibility and accountability.

The pastor provides general leadership in evaluating progress toward the process goals and in affirming the managers and workers and celebrating the group effort. Effective management involves prioritizing, delegating, coordinating, team building, and supplying resources.

##### (1) Prioritizing

Transitional pastors have a limited amount of time and none to waste on non-essentials. In no other vocational endeavor is prioritizing more important. Simply stated, priorities take precedence. Every project needs a priority ranking in the family of projects, and the component elements of every project must be prioritized. Priorities affect scheduling, funding, and staffing. Not all the good things that can be done and are needed can be done at the same time. A key question is: Of the many tasks to be performed, which must be done first to set the stage for that which must be done next?

##### (2) Delegating

Delegation, for transitional pastors, is the management activity of discovering the abilities and limitations of others and involving them in doing some of the work that is not necessary for you to do but is essential to the overall ministry of the church. The abilities of some will be obvious because of their history of effective service in church organizations. The Transitional Focus Team may provide insight about others with abilities to carry through on special assignments. If lack of ability limits a willing person but the person is teachable and the work to be done is recurring, arrange for training to prepare the person for responsibility in the future.

Bring others onto the team. Involve them in doing some of the work. Challenge them with the opportunity to contribute to something that is important to the church and to the kingdom of God. Provide them with a clear picture of the work to be done and the ways it can best be done. Honor their creativity and initiative as long as their work moves the job toward completion. Agree on an accountability procedure. When and how is progress to be reviewed? When is the job to be completed? How will you measure effectiveness in the job?

Bobb Biehl suggests 10 questions to ask “when you want to bring the resources of others to bear on the responsibilities that weigh you down.”<sup>11</sup>

- Exactly what needs to be done?
- Why does it need to be done?
- When does it need to be done?
- Who is the best person to do it?
- How well must it be done?
- How much budget is available for getting it done?
- What training is needed for doing the task?
- What reports do I need from the person who does it?
- Who else may need to be aware of this assignment?
- If it isn’t done, what difference will it make?

Make sure the work they are assigned is essential to the overall ministry of the church. Being assigned busy work demeans people. If the project considered for delegation is not essential to the overall ministry of the church, forget it. The concept of giving everyone something to do whether or not it is important to the Great Commission devalues people and ultimately destroys their desire to help the church accomplish its mission.

Read Matthew 10. Think through the answers to the following questions concerning Jesus and delegation.

- What tasks did He assign the disciples? (vv. 6-8)
- How thorough was his orientation session? (vv. 9-42)
- How did this project relate to the original call to the disciples? (Matt. 4:19)
- What did Jesus do after sending the disciples out to do their work? (Matt. 11:1)
- What did the disciples do when they returned from their mission? (Luke 9:10)

### (3) Coordinating

Coordinating is enabling the various components of the church to relate harmoniously, complementarily, and productively. Coordinating requires supervision (super-vision)—maintaining a view of the whole organizational landscape—including structure, personnel, and resource allocation. Supervision and coordination are “hand in glove.” Supervision sees the many parts of one body; coordination results in the many parts working together as one body. (See 1 Cor. 12:12.) With supervision none is neglected; with coordination each makes a significant contribution to the whole.

Coordination is teamwork, every person manning his station and backing up others when needs arise. So very evident in all team sports, coordination is no less required in successful churches, and the transitional pastor is the team coach working to see that the team is well organized and the energy of all players is utilized in the most productive ways. Coordination is essential to assure that all ministry bases are covered and to avoid duplication of services, competition for resources, and “lone ranger” separatism.

#### (4) Team Building

Team building is relating persons to persons and persons to tasks in ways that build up people and achieve the goals of the church. One of the transitional pastor's most valuable contributions can be relating to leaders in ways that stimulate them toward growth and greater achievement that brings fulfillment as members of effective ministry teams.

Team building does not use up people for the sake of the church; it builds up people for the sake of the kingdom of God. It builds up people spiritually, socially, emotionally, and technically. Many inactive church members, who were leaders in church organizations, were used up in doing "church work" instead of built up in the joy of serving with Christ's followers in compassionately carrying out the Great Commission. They found their respite as dropouts.

The law of multiplication says the time spent in growing leaders is more productive than time spent in growing followers. The result will serve the church well into the future.

Teamwork is as important to a church on mission as it is to a championship sports team. There is no place for prima donnas seeking glory for themselves at the expense of team success and kingdom growth. Every team member needs to be fully committed to team tasks and equipped with "how-to" training and enthusiasm (*en theos*, God with us).

The following adapted excerpts from Price Pritchett's handbook on teamwork are basic principles transitional pastors can use in helping the church leadership team to grow.<sup>12</sup> Use them as teaching tools with the church leadership team.

- Communication breathes the first spark of life into teamwork, and communication keeps teamwork alive. Nothing else is so crucial to coordination of effort. No other factor plays such a precious role in building and preserving trust among teammates. Communication is *the* make-or-break issue.
- One of the most basic elements of teamwork is this: Be good at what you do. Teams need talent. The more of it you bring to the group, the more you can contribute. Build your skills, and, in a very real sense, you are building the team. Set a high standard, and others will follow.
- Sometimes you'll need to cover for teammates, of course, since everyone needs a little help now and then. But don't poke your nose into their business or get in their way. Usually you support your teammates best by playing *your* position to perfection. Teach *team*. Think *team*. Instead of focusing narrowly on your personal assignment and nothing else, watch what's going on with the rest of the group.
- The struggle of "me versus we" is no stranger to team members. You can expect occasional conflict between your selfish interests and what's best for the team.
- Do your part to help bring new teammates up to speed. Get to know them as much as you can during the months of your role as team leader. Provide the training new team members need to carry their load on the team.
- You'll never build the team by acting like a big shot. You do it by building your teammates. Don't showcase your résumé. Team members may admire it but they don't follow it. The fact is only the admiration and respect you earn from others can cause them to follow you as their team leader. Build up others, and they'll end up singing your praises.

- Give priority to time spent with your teammates. The most powerful bonding occurs away from the church. If you can possibly do so, plan a leadership retreat. Play together, pray together, and tell life stories, laugh, and cry.
- In the times you are able to be with the group, concentrate on giving what it needs at the moment. Contribute in such a way that you clearly add value. Make enough of a difference that the team would obviously miss you if you weren't there.
- Effective teams require trust. Church teams should be characterized by trust. In a climate of *mistrust* the risk factor climbs so high that they become barriers to cooperative effort. Preach trust. Teach trust. Demonstrate trust. Christian gossip is an oxymoron.

#### (5) Supplying Resources

Paul encouraged believers in Philippi that God would “supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). What an encouragement! God would not ask them to do something for which he would not supply them the resources with which to do it.

That is a good model for church ministry development. Decisions must be made about distributing church resources needed to conduct the ministries. Ministry teams will need to be staffed, provided facilities in which to do their work, and allocated needed financial resources.

It is no more reasonable to assign responsibility to church leaders without allocating the resources with which to manage the responsibility to a successful conclusion than it is to enlist an army and send it into battle without the weapons that are essential to their engagement.

Three questions help pinpoint priorities in resource allocation:

- What can we not afford not to do? These are the primary priorities in allocating personnel, space, and finances.
- What can we not afford to do? These are secondary priorities that will be implemented as soon as resources are available.
- What can we afford not to do? These are not priorities and should be funded only after the primary and secondary priorities have been supplied. If a church treats as priority that which it can afford not to do, weak, understaffed, under-budgeted, and poorly housed ministries will be allowed to claim emotional energy and become sources of dissension and embarrassment to the church.

## Caring Skills

Even in a numerically small church, no one person can provide all the special-needs care of individuals and families in the church and community. An effective transitional pastor shows his love and compassion for all of these people. In that sense he is a “soul-source” but does not presume to be their “sole source” of pastoral care. He knows how to be directly involved with them and to equip individuals and groups (deacons, Bible study classes, and special ministry teams) and to involve them in caring ministries.

The compassion of Jesus is referred to many times in the New Testament; it is demonstrated many more times than it is talked about. The promise that Jesus cares for you is given one time (1 Pet. 5:7); the evidence that Jesus cares for you saturates the biblical accounts of His life and His death.

At no time in a church’s life should there be words of love that are not demonstrated in compassion-driven acts of caring. That is never more important in a church than in the disrupted period between pastors. Both the direct pastoral care ministry of the transitional pastor and the directed pastoral care ministry are vital to the health of the church from his first day of service until the last.

Direct pastoral care ministry is responding to personal needs with personal contact or pulpit ministry. Directed pastoral care ministry is responding to personal needs by equipping and leading others to minister through personal contacts and as teachers and leaders of groups in the church. In this way a transitional pastor demonstrates compassion by providing pastoral care beyond the resources of his limited time and energy.

### 1. Direct Pastoral Ministry: Counseling People through the Process of Change in the Church

As churches move through the stages of transition, impending change will become evident. That will be encouraging to some and threatening to others. Traditional ways of doing things provide a comfort zone of familiarity requiring little new learning or adjustment. For many it’s just easier to keep the same old saggy, lumpy mattress than to adjust to scientifically improved ones that respond to the needs of their skeletal systems. Some are being dragged by their occupations from typewriter traditions to computer challenges. “Surely,” they plead, “the church can be a place that doesn’t take from us everything that is familiar.”

Personal counseling is needed by some to deal with the impact change will have on their lives. Transitional pastors should not lead in making major changes in the church without also scheduling time for personal counseling with those who need help and bringing the truth of Scripture to bear on the circumstances of change.

Preaching is an effective tool of pastoral care through which people may get help with both understandings and attitudes.

- The New Testament contains the account of drastic change in a religious system with which Jews were very familiar and comfortable. Review the accounts in the four Gospels and the Epistles to see how pervasive and impacting the changes were to those who followed the promised Messiah.
- Consider the “you have heard it said, but I say unto you” passages and the “except a man lay down his life” passages. Through gracious and informative preaching many people may receive answers to important questions and the emotional support needed to adjust to change. The Bible is rich with truth and inspiration all people need in managing change in a rapid-change society.

There are three basic reasons why church members resist change.

*First, people resist change because it threatens to move them outside their comfort zones.* They need help in understanding the religious-system changes Jesus brought to the lives of His disciples and all those who came to believe Him and serve Him.

We are not left alone in managing the change. Jesus assured His disciples the coming Holy Spirit would help them face the fear of the unknown and help them to do things they had never done before. Review John 15:26 and 16:5-16. See the challenge to change in Acts 1:8 and the first fruit of change in Acts 2. The message is that the Holy Spirit introduces change to our lives, walks with (comforts) us through change, and celebrates with us the growth that change produces.

*Second, people resist change because they fear the loss of power, influence, or control in the church.* They need help in understanding “there’s plenty good power in my Father’s kingdom, there’s power enough for you, there’s power enough for me, there’s power enough for all.” One person does not have to give up power for another person to have power. He may need to give up an office, but he does not have to give up significance unless he is using the office as a base for self-assertion, a base for controlling decision making or for manipulating others.

*Third, people may resist change because they do not intellectually agree that change is improvement.* Information is powerful. If the process of proposing and approving change was not easy to understand or time to study it and comprehend its strength not adequate, then better presentation of the rationale, without coercion or disrespect for those who do not agree, will help some accept it and support it.

In personal counseling review the rationale, invite questions, and respond to the questions with information and without emotional pressure. Encourage careful consideration of the rationale. If agreement is not expressed, encourage support based on the actions of the majority with confidence that the experience of change will lead to greater understanding and approval as the process unfolds.

## 2. Direct Pastoral Ministry: Assisting Families through Life Transitions

The amount of time a transitional pastor will give to weddings and funerals should be clear in the Covenant of Relationship. Bivocational transitional pastors will not be available to respond to all needs, especially those for which arrangements could not be made in advance. An important factor is consistency: don't respond selectively; don't be available to prominent families without also being available to those less prominent in the church and community. Another important factor is communication. Use the telephone and/or written communication to let members know you care. When you can arrange to do so, visit them to personally extend your blessings.

Your personal contact also is a great encouragement at the time of the birth of babies into the families of church members. Visit when you can. Even if you can't visit the newborn and parents for several days, contact them to know if all is well and to share your joy with them.

Because transitional pastors have much experience in ministering at weddings and funerals, skill development information for these ministries is not provided in this document.

## 3. Directed Pastoral Ministry

Many churches have equipped deacons, Sunday School teachers, and others with skills for use in ministering to people with special needs. They have highlighted this ministry as an important part of all teaching, training, and ministry groups. Care has become a characteristic of the church. Transitional pastors who minister in such churches can use the structures and the prepared people to assure that people will not be neglected even if the transitional pastor is not available as much as their pastor was.

If this is not the case where you serve, arrange a meeting with deacon officers and a meeting with Sunday School leadership for exploring the ways those organizations may involve people in effectively caring for those who are sick, shut-in, and distressed. The primary concern is to reduce the possibility that people needing attention and care may not receive it.

From the pulpit and through print media inform the church that, when it comes to pastoral care, the pastor is not the church. The pastor represents the church in this ministry but cannot assume the burden of being the only manifestation of the love of the church for its people. The church is just as involved in the ministry of care when a deacon or a Sunday School teacher ministers lovingly to a person in need as when the pastor does it personally.

In many churches deacons, or an assigned staff member, assume responsibility for benevolence ministry. Check with them to determine the policies that guide their decisions in order to be informed when people ask you about how people in need receive help.

The transitional pastor period in a church is a good opportunity to train congregations that the evidence of care is not so much in who provides it as in the fact that care is provided. But the pastor must relate to people in ways that lead them to know he really cares about them.

## **Proclaiming Skills**

In what was apparently Paul's final communication to Timothy, he wrote him "Before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom, I solemnly charge you: proclaim the message, persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:1-2). Preaching the Word as a transitional pastor should inform, inspire, and equip the church for moving effectively through the stages of transition. Sermons need to be relevant and fresh in the heart of the preacher; warmed-over messages prepared for other times and places may not adequately address here-and-now issues. While preaching is the most public expression of pastoral proclamation; teaching, personal evangelism, and writing are other important ways to proclaim the truth and call for action.

### **1. Through Preaching**

The pulpit and preaching provide transitional pastors their greatest visibility and opportunity to impact the life of the church. Transitional pastors must take preaching as seriously as Paul did when he instructed his young protégé Timothy: "Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Sermons prepared years ago may have served congregations in other times and places well but, without thorough review and contemporary adaptations, rarely respond adequately to the here-and-now challenges facing transitional pastors. Following the recommended messages during the stages of transition will guide much of the transitional pastor's study time and pulpit time. Several preaching themes requiring multiple sermons are recommended in the Sample Sequence of Process (pages 27-28).

Negatively, the transitional pastor is not in the church to show how great a communicator he may be, nor is he called to this pulpit to "straighten out" the church. In general he is to "feed the flock." He does this as he speaks to issues of specific need without addressing specific individuals; focuses on life situations; and draws the people closer to God as an encourager and healer. His messages will be biblical and expository. The transitional pastor is in a unique position through his pulpit ministry to assist the church to understand and participate in the stages of transition. He can inform, challenge, call to commitment, and address positive change.

To nurture churches and reach people for Christ through preaching, every new opportunity is like a new day. While retaining all that you have learned and all the ideas you have compiled in previous preparations for preaching, don't depend so much on the work of the past that you fail to carefully prepare for the opportunities of the present.

Help for sermon ideas and preparation can be found on the LifeWay website at [www.lifeway.com/sermons](http://www.lifeway.com/sermons).

## 2. Through Effective Invitations

Do not hesitate to give a positive invitation at the end of the sermon. The entire message calls for decision in one way or another. It also gives the hearers the opportunity to reflect on the need and ability to make commitment both to Christ and to the church.

When Jesus began His ministry, He said, “Follow Me . . . and I will make you fish for people” (Mark 1:17). At the end of His ministry, Jesus said, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. . . . I am with you always” (Matthew 28:19–20).

Since Jesus began His ministry and closed His ministry with these divine imperatives, it is the responsibility of every Christian to win the lost. A great opportunity to fulfill this commission is giving a powerful invitation at the climax of each service to lead people to the most defining moment of their life, the moment they receive Christ as Lord and Savior.

Consider these 6 vital requirements in extending a great invitation.

1. A great invitation begins with *conviction*. We must be absolutely convinced that Jesus is not a way of salvation, not the best way of salvation, but the only way of salvation (John 14:6).
2. A great invitation burns with *compassion*. We must look on the congregation not as prospects but as persons dearly loved by Christ and desperately in need of Him (Romans 9:2–3).
3. A great invitation is bold because of *consecration*. Any tolerated sin in our lives hinders our anointing in reaching the lost in the invitation (Romans 12:1–2).
4. A great invitation is beautiful in *clarity*. Since the lost might not understand Baptist jargon, we must be very clear in what we are asking them to do (John 3:16).
5. A great invitation is backed by *counselors*. Since this is the defining moment of a person’s entire life, we need to make sure it counts. Each person needs an individual counselor in a private place to thoroughly clarify the decision they are making. This cannot be accomplished by taking three minutes to fill out a card on the front pew. The counselors must be thoroughly trained so that this moment will not be lost (2 Corinthians 5:18–20).
6. A great invitation is bathed in *celebration*. Since this is the most significant moment of a person’s life, we must make sure that they and the entire church recognize this as we publicly celebrate, along with the angels in heaven, the decision that has been made (Luke 15:7).

## 3. Through Personal Witnessing

Churches should not have to put personal soul winning in a pastor’s job description; it is already in the pastor’s life description. It is in every Christian’s life description. A church cannot pay enough salary to a pastor to make him a soul winner if he is not already one.

## Technical Skills

The challenges involved in serving as transitional pastor call for the best possible use of resources, including technological resources. Whether you are technologically challenged or technologically gifted, the need is the same. Do whatever you need to do to use every tool available for the advancement of the gospel. By adding two letters to the word “technical,” an *h* and an *o*, you create a new word, “theochnical.” That word can mean “using technical resources to the glory of God” which is exactly what we want to do.

1. Use Bible study software and the Internet in sermon preparation.

Wherever you live as a transitional pastor, an abundance of resources for use in sermon preparation are as close as your computer. You no longer need to move your library to have access to much of the information stored in books. You can find biblical commentaries, cross-reference tools, Bible dictionaries, etc. in Bible software such as WordSearch, QuickVerse, Logos, and others.

LifeWay also provides free models sermons as well as articles on preaching skills. Access these resources at [www.lifeway.com/sermons](http://www.lifeway.com/sermons).

LifeWay provides a free online Bible tool at [MyStudyBible.com](http://MyStudyBible.com). Other free online Bible tools include [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com), and [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org).

2. Use the Pastors Today website ([LifeWay.com/pastorstoday](http://LifeWay.com/pastorstoday)).

This area of [LifeWay.com](http://LifeWay.com) provides free articles covering all areas of a pastor’s life and ministry. Its purpose is to:

- Express love for pastors
- Encourage pastors
- Inform pastors
- Resource pastors

3. Subscribe to the Free Pastors Today E-newsletter.

Pastors Today is a free weekly newsletter that provides notice of the latest articles posted on [LifeWay.com](http://LifeWay.com). Subscribe at [www.lifeway.com/pastorstoday](http://www.lifeway.com/pastorstoday). Weekly issues feature notices of new practical articles and solutions to help you in your ministry.

4. Maximize the use of email messages to church leaders.

Use your e-mail program to create a group e-mail address list of key leaders: staff, Church Leadership Team (Church Council), Transitional Focus Team, deacon officers, etc.

- Every Thursday or Friday, post a message to the key leaders in this address group.
- Express personal appreciation for their friendship and support of ministries of the church.
- Share personal information that is appropriate among friends.
- Provide information about plans for Sunday and prayer needs related to Sunday’s events.

Check email messages regularly. Reply as soon as possible with at least an acknowledgement of receiving the message. Use the telephone if a conversation is deemed necessary. Use your e-mail program to create an automatic e-mail signature that will be appended to each of your outgoing messages:

John Doe, Pastor  
Johnsonville Baptist Church  
555-555-5555  
<http://www.JohnsonvilleBaptist.org>

5. Maximize the use of presentation software.

PowerPoint (or other presentation software) graphically produces images that promote the church's activities and reduces the need for oral announcements in worship services. They may be projected as people are assembling for services or as a special feature during the services. They may be accompanied by sound tracks.

PowerPoint may be used to provide congregations with visual outlines and illustrations accompanying sermons. PowerPoint may be used to reinforce teaching such as Bible studies and leadership training. If you choose to use PowerPoint, keep your slides to 7-9 slides per sermon.

Individuals are available in many churches who are professionally involved in developing and using presentation software in their jobs or have developed the skill through formal training or individual study to use this technology effectively. Enlist them and provide them opportunities to make significant contributions to the church's ministry.

6. Use the church's Web page to extend the ministry of the transitional pastor.

This can be especially useful for those who do not live in the church community but want to stay in touch with church members and witness to the community as much as possible. Church websites are a cost efficient way to provide basic information about your church. You will want to enlist the help of a person with knowledge and skills to create an attractive, informative website and update it regularly.

- Your website should provide non-church members basic information about the church, meeting times, directions to the church, phone numbers, basic staff bios, and other useful information.
- Your website should inform church members of current programs, activities, special ministries, and schedules of particular events.
- Your website might also provide inspirational material for church members and other interested viewers.
- Provide a link with a presentation of the gospel of salvation to people whose curiosity may lead them to access the page and review its contents. NAMB.net provides many resources to help you at [thegoodnews.org](http://thegoodnews.org)
- Some church websites have an area where members log in to a secure area where they can get updates on hospital admissions, hospital releases, prayer requests, special events, and changes in meeting schedules and locations.

## Listening Skills

Listening prayerfully, patiently, and purposefully to people who see events differently, who want different things for the church, who are at different levels of spiritual maturity is an affirming gift to others and a resource God can use in sharpening the pastor's discernment of truth. Churches don't exist in vacuums but in communities. Church celebrations and church conflicts are soon known in the community outside the church. Satan is happy when news of conflict filters through the community faster than news of celebration. Prayerfully listening to people outside the church can help in discerning the true impact of the church on the community.

Consider the following four types of listening.<sup>13</sup>

- Inactive listening — This is the kind of listening you want to avoid. It is inefficient and unproductive. You hear only the words. They go in one ear and out the other.
- Selective listening — This kind of listening is probably the most common. It is when you hear only what you want to hear. You filter the message. Like inactive listening, it is also inefficient and unproductive.
- Active listening — This is when you make a conscious effort not only to hear the words but also to listen for the complete message the speaker is sending. It takes into consideration the intent and the nonverbal communication of the speaker. Active listening also uses empathy and is nonjudgmental.
- Reflective listening — Like active listening, reflective listening takes in the whole message. It is particularly important if you are dealing with a complicated issue or resolving a conflict. Reflective listening is used to clarify what is being said and to convey mutual understanding. The listener often asks the speaker questions to help clarify the message.

Communication is a challenging process. In many ways it is amazing that we can communicate with each other at all. A person puts his or her own thoughts, feelings, and experiences into words, vocal communication, and body language and sends his message across to the other person. The difficulty in communicating is that the other person has his or her own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. These act as a filter to what is heard and seen coming from the other person. Thus, the receiver is tempted to assume that he or she knows exactly what the other person desires to communicate. However, since that is not the case at all, the receiver must resist the temptation of that assumption. The effective listener will use listening skills and listening principles in the response. The original speaker will then have the opportunity to correct the receiver if he or she has not completely understood. The goal of good communication is to facilitate this clear understanding.

## Relating Skills

The ability to work with people who are different in spiritual maturity, values, personalities, and life experiences requires good relational skills. People are gracious, mean-spirited, hurting, lonely, greedy, loving, generous, happy, and sad. All of these people need the respect and encouragement of a transitional pastor. One person may be most or all of these over a period of time. Transitional pastors must have a healthy self-esteem and good interpersonal skills to minister to all the people God has put in their care.

The church is not of wood or brick and mortar. The church is not organizations and meetings. The church is people, and the most critical issue of the church is relationships.

Bring all you learned about listening to the skill of relating. Listening demonstrates respect and humility. Respecting others enough to listen actively and reflectively affirms their worth and enhances their self-esteem, two qualities of good team members. Acknowledging that you are still learning and want to learn from them helps them relate to you not just as an authority figure but also as a fellow pilgrim on the journey of faith.

Transitional pastors have the opportunity to model good relationships inspired by the example of Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit. All churches need pastors and others who serve as models of healthy, nurturing relationships. A church is a body of many parts. How these parts relate to each other determines the health and productivity of the body. How the transitional pastor relates to all parts of the body, weak parts and strong parts, diseased parts and healthy parts, may serve as the tuning fork by which the church discovers its harmony or discord.

John Maxwell reminds us that “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. Leadership begins with the heart, not the head. It flourishes with meaningful relationships, not more regulations.”<sup>14</sup>

The incarnation of Jesus was God’s demonstration of how much He cares for people, including those who reject Him and scorn His Son. In an undeniable way, He showed them His heart. He showed them divine love in human flesh. He offered them not a new religion but a new relationship, one that expresses itself in laughter and tears, in submission and sacrifice, in acceptance and rejection. The relationship flourished first in a few and then bore fruit in many.

The excellent book written by Brooks Faulkner, *Getting on Top of Your Work*, is full of counsel about relationships necessary for effective pastoral ministry. Knowing the characteristics of many real people in real churches who shape the realities of church leadership life, Faulkner introduced a chapter on getting along with difficult people with some relationship tips.<sup>15</sup> The most difficult part of your job as a transitional pastor may be to love difficult people.

- Be kind to difficult people; you never know what demons they are fighting.
- Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate. Don't rush to judgment.
- Church rage is a lot like road rage, except the weapons are words instead of automobiles.
- You cannot be manipulated by difficult people without giving them permission.
- Reconciliation always begins with someone willing to give another the benefit of the doubt.
- Almost any relationship can be improved if we recognize the fact that *we* cannot change people. Only God can do that.
- Life is full of absurdities; difficult people try to make sense out of all of them.
- Mistakes are springboards to personal growth. Only the difficult person sees mistakes as ends in themselves.
- The two most distinguishing traits of a difficult person are hopelessness and helplessness. Point them toward hope and help, and you have made a friend forever.
- Difficult people enjoy the comfort of anonymity, resulting in unsigned letters and craftily shaped rumors. Throw away the anonymous letters.
- Tell the truth and you will not have to remember what you said.

Faulkner concluded the chapter with guidelines for working with difficult people.

- Be assertive, but not aggressive.
- Clarify, but avoid contradicting.
- Develop controls.
- Develop the power to wait before you react to a volatile situation.
- Work on your technical skills.
- Remember that the primary problem is always secondary.
- Ask yourself, "W.W.J.D.?"

Here is a personal and practical exercise in honest reflection.

- Reflect on your relationships in church ministry. Ponder awhile. Take time to think about it.
- Write the names of three church members with whom you had a pastoral relationship that blessed both of you and enhanced ministry in the church. Did those church members exhibit common characteristics? If so, identify them. Were those characteristics similar to or different from the person you perceive yourself to be? What lessons do you learn from reviewing those pleasant and productive relationships, lessons that instruct you for continuing relational ministry?
- Again, ponder and reflect. Write the names of three difficult church members you have dealt with in your ministry. Did they exhibit common characteristics? If so, identify them. Did these characteristics threaten you at the point of some personal insecurity? If so, identify the insecurity. From those relationships, what lessons did you learn that made you a better person and pastor? To what extent were you able to help the difficult church members grow relationally and productively in ministry?

## **Conflict Management Skills**

We all wish it were not so, but wishing will not make it “not so.” The serpent of the Garden of Eden is the serpent of today’s churches. Satan’s attack on church fellowship increases as the day when he is cast eternally into hell grows nearer. The conflict that characterizes social systems throughout the world infiltrates churches. Paul’s epistles addressed churches in conflict, especially the Corinthian church. He appealed to the churches to live out the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Still there was conflict. Centuries later, there is conflict in churches; the redeemed are not yet perfected.

Many churches will employ transitional pastors because the church has become entangled in conflict requiring third-party assistance to clarify the conflict issues and take the steps necessary to resolving the conflict. Conflict management is supported through the efforts of employing good listening, relating, leading, proclaiming, and caring skills. Other specific skills, such as diagnosing, prescribing, negotiating/mediating, and affirming/celebrating, are required in leadership actions that produce a resolution of conflict.

How does the transitional pastor help churches in conflict? What is your role? Are there principles and actions that help churches confront the conflict in the spirit of Christ and come to work together as the forgiving and forgiven children of God?

Norris Smith, Bob Sheffield, and Scott Phillips have all contributed to these resources. Some of what follows is adapted from various sources listed in the bibliography.

### **Definition of Conflict**

- Dictionary: “The opposition or simultaneous functioning of mutually exclusive impulses, desires, or tendencies.”
- Latin: “To strike together.”
- Speed Leas: “Conflict happens when two pieces of matter try to occupy the same space at the same time.”
- Larry McSwain: “Conflict is a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not by both.”
- Composite: “Conflict is the tension that exists because of real or perceived differences over resolving issues or problems.”

## **Old Testament Biblical Examples**

- Contention in a family: Cain and Abel
- Focus on self: Jacob and Esau
- The seduction of power: Saul and David
- The power of desire: David and Uriah

## **New Testament Biblical Examples**

- Religious traditionalism versus Christ (John 8:1-11)
- Struggle of self-interest versus servanthood (Mark 10:35-45)
- Diversity in membership, prejudice (Acts 6:1-3)
- Partners in ministry split when they couldn't agree (Acts 15:36-40)
- Personal and spiritual immaturity (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)
- Church was full of cliques (1 Corinthians 1:10-12; 11:17-22)
- Individual response to issues, values (Galatians 2:11-12)
- Prominent women couldn't get along (Philippians 4:2-3)
- People treated rich believers better than poor believers (James 2:1-9)
- Self-will and rebellious spirit (James 4:1-3)

## **Patterns of Conflict**

Ongoing conflict – The issue continues over time.

Isolated conflict – There are several distinct and separate issues over time.

Examples: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15); Paul and Peter (Galatians 2); Paul and Alexander the metalworker (2 Timothy 4)

## **Biblical Principles**

### **Ken Sande**

- Know what is worth fighting over. (Proverbs 19:11)
- Know what part you contribute to the issues. (Matthew 7:3-5)
- Practice mercy and grace in your relationships and actions. (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1)
- Practice Christian communication. (Ephesians 4:15)
- Practice Matthew 18.
- Develop a forgiving spirit. (Colossians 3:12-14)
- Show an unselfish spirit toward others. (Philippians 2:4)
- Overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

## **Goals of Conflict Management**

1. Make clear decisions.
2. Increase tolerance for differences.
3. Reduce aggressive behavior.
4. Reduce passive behavior.
5. Reduce manipulative behavior.

## **Truths about conflict**

1. Conflict is inevitable.
2. Conflict is neutral.
3. We need to confront a conflict as soon as possible rather than denying or ignoring it.
4. You cannot have healthy change without conflict.
5. If you don't manage the rate of change appropriately, you will produce destructive conflict.
6. The pastor's leadership style is a key factor in whether a conflict is constructive or destructive.
7. God is not the author of chaos but the provider of qualities that lead to peace.
8. Prior unresolved church conflict exists as a key ingredient in most current church conflict situations.
9. When people grow spiritually and emotionally they are less likely to be the initiator of destructive conflict.
10. We need to pray more and talk less about issues for church approval. We should not seek an answer from our human reason but from the revelation of God's will.

## **Causes of Friction**

- Stress
- Confusion
- Power
- Fact or rate of change
- Communication difficulties
- Congregational differences
- Unmet needs within the congregation
- Fear
- Worldview
- Decision-making style

## **Constructive Conflict vs. Destructive Conflict**

### **Descriptions by Bob Sheffield, lists adapted from Speed Leas**

Constructive conflict is the problem solving process which results in a positive impact on the ability of the congregation to solve the problem and also increases Christian growth and church fellowship.

1. Members feel confident in dealing with their differences.
2. The decision-making processes are fair and exercised impartially.
3. Members behave themselves in an appropriate Christian manner.
4. People are willing to cooperate with the leadership and each other.
5. Their main focus is on a common purpose.

Destructive conflict is the problem solving process which results in a negative impact on the ability of the people to solve the problem and also hinders Christian growth and fellowship.

1. Members are unsure whether their relationships can stand the strain of their differences.
2. Members are rejected by some people who once were their friends.
3. People use words with violent meanings.
4. People feel a sense of loss of control.
5. It seems that “others” want to split the church down the middle.
6. The membership loses sight of God’s purpose.

### **7 Rules for Keeping Conflict Healthy**

1. Conflict can be healthy and useful for our church.
2. Conflict is neither negative nor positive – it is managed or mismanaged.
3. Resolutions for quick agreement are worse than those worked out over time.
4. Manage conflict fairly: Take one issue at a time and explore all dimensions of the problem.
5. Work in an agreed upon setting.
6. Use appropriate behavior: no name calling, no mind reading, and no information from unnamed sources.
7. Know who or what issue is fueling the conflict so you can respond appropriately.

### **Thought-Provoking Questions**

1. What’s the difference between offering a dissenting opinion and being divisive?
2. What’s the biblical definition of submission?
3. What makes it difficult for us to submit to one another?
4. How can we lovingly challenge leaders who feed a divisive spirit?
5. When have you seen a quick resolution to a conflict, only to find the resolution was inadequate?

## Spiritual Cycle of Healing

### Norris Smith

#### Fractured Relationship

- An event or issue created a break in relationships.

#### Confrontation “face to face”

- Assertion – Someone has to take the initiative to share the hurt.
- Compassion – The attitude is to help not hurt.
- Redemption – The motive is to heal the relationship.

#### Communication “to understand”

- Hear – Listen to an explanation of the facts about what happened.
- Feel – The sharing of how one feels about what happened.
- Understand – The willingness to walk in the other person’s shoes.

#### Forgiveness “to release”

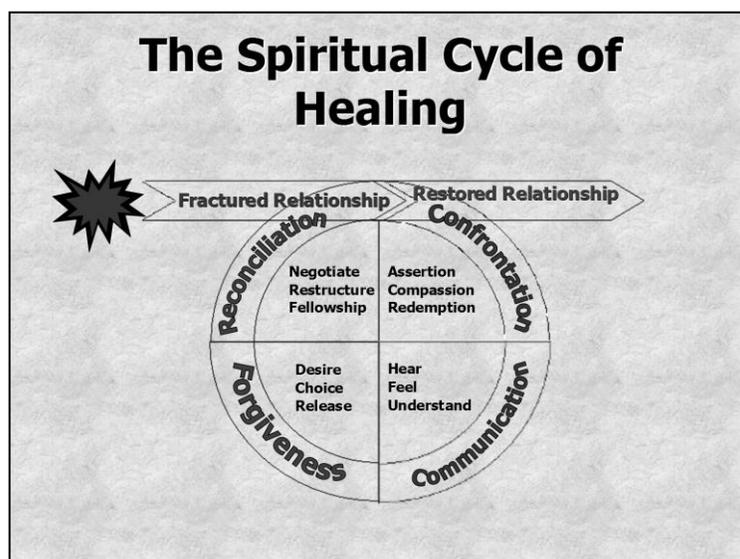
- Desire – A willingness for healing to take place.
- Choice – An act of the will to absorb the hurt.
- Release – A conscious decision to release the offender of the responsibility for the hurt they have caused you.

#### Reconciliation “to restore”

- Negotiate – Both parties can now agree to disagree.
- Restructure – Both parties restructure how they will relate in the future.
- Friendship – Each desiring the best for the other.

#### Restored Relationship “friendly again”

- Each is now speaking in kindness, looking each other in the eyes, and relating in love.



## **Preparation for Confronting a Difficult Person** **Norris Smith**

- ◆ Pray. This prepares us spiritually.
- ◆ Write it out. This prepares us mentally.
- ◆ Rehearse it. This prepares us emotionally.
- ◆ Feed self-worth. This prepares us psychologically.
- ◆ Anticipate response. This prepares us decisively.
- ◆ Make an appointment. This prepares us ethically.
- ◆ Decide next plan of action. This prepares us futuristically.
- ◆ Keep accurate records. This prepares us authentically.
- ◆ Pray some more. This prepares us redemptively.

## **Process in Confronting a Difficult Person** **Norris Smith**

1. Make an appointment. You take initiative.
2. State purpose. Be honest up front about the purpose of the meeting.
3. Go alone. Agree on who meets with you, if wisdom dictates going alone is not wise.
4. Request they listen. Ask that they hear you through before discussion takes place.
5. Describe behavior. Keep the confrontation focused on what they did, not why they did it.
6. Share feelings. Share how you felt about the behavior.
7. Request behavioral change. Ask if in the future you can relate differently.
8. Get a response. Ask: "Is this a possibility?"
9. State future process. Clarify how you will relate in the future.

## **A Reconciliation Dialogue with a Colleague**

- Behavior:** "Bob, when you accused me of sabotaging your project and called me a betrayer in front of the whole staff,"
- Feelings:** "I felt confused, angry, and defenseless."
- Desires:** "I would like for you to come to me personally and in private when you have these kinds of problems with me."
- Reward:** "I would be more than glad to work with you and solve any conflicts we may have in the future."
- Response:** "Is this a possibility?"
- Future:** "In the future, if other problems arise between us, I'll come to you about them."

## Levels of Conflict

### Level One: Problem to Solve

Real disagreement: conflicting goals, values, needs; problem oriented rather than person oriented

### Level Two: Disagreement

Real disagreement: mixing of personalities and issues; problem cannot be clearly defined; beginning of distrust and personalizing the problem

### Level Three: Contest

Begin the dynamics of win/lose: personal attacks; formation of factions or sides; distortion of the problem

### Level Four: Fight/Flight

Winning: means getting rid of the other person or persons; breaking the relationship by leaving or getting others to leave

### Level Five: Intractable

No longer clear understanding of issue: personalities have become the issue; the conflict is now unmanageable; it focuses on the elimination and/or the destruction of the other

## Issues Worth Battling Over

- Biblical fidelity. Don't discount the teachings of Christ.
- Living out what we believe. Biblical teaching must affect our daily lives.
- Our church's unity. All members must support this, divisiveness is sin.
- Verbal integrity. Remain truthful in confrontation or conflict.

## Conflict Acrostic

**C**alm down; keep a cool head.

**O**pen your mind; try to understand opposing view points.

**N**ever resort to name calling in personal insults.

**F**ight fair.

**L**ook to the Scriptures for guidance.

**I**nvide others who can shed light on the discussion.

**C**onsider solutions that all parties can accept.

**T**rust the Lord to help you implement solutions.

## Styles of Approaching Conflict

A creative perspective sees conflict as an opportunity for “both/and” solutions. This model of conflict management changes the linear approach into a matrix, creating a number of new conflict possibilities. The vertical axis defines “My” goals or interests. *Assertive Behaviors* are those actions that promote the achievement of my goals. The horizontal axis represents “Your” goals or interests. Anything I do to support your success is called *Supportive Behavior*. Combining these two axes introduces a wider array of conflict strategies than a linear perspective.

The objective in any conflict situation should be to achieve a wise solution as efficiently as possible and in a manner that protects or even enhances the relationship. Depending on the circumstances, any of these five styles could achieve this objective. The key is to be able to choose the style most appropriate for the circumstances. There are also potential risks if the style is inappropriate to the situation. Compromise is the least desirable option. Relevant uses and possible risks for each style are found on the following pages.



## **Competition – My Way**

### Relevant Uses

- Time is of the essence.
- It is a matter of principle.
- It is important to the organization.
- You are sure you are right.

### Possible Risks

- It would strain relationships.
- It would hinder “buy-in.”
- You might be wrong.

## **Accommodation – Your Way**

### Relevant Uses

- It is important to protect the relationship.
- If the issue is more important to the other party.
- If you are not confident you are right.

### Possible Risks

- You may lose self-esteem.
- It may lead to frustration of unmet needs.
- You may sacrifice a better solution.

## **Avoidance – No Way**

### Relevant Uses

- When emotions are high.
- When more information is needed.
- When there is not enough time.
- The issue is unimportant.

### Possible Risks

- The issue is not resolved.
- Everyone has unmet needs.
- Emotional energy is wasted.
- There is a loss of credibility.
- The decision is made by default.

## **Compromise – Both Ways**

### Relevant Uses

- There is no time for collaboration.
- A short-term solution is needed.
- Goals are not worth competing.
- Both sides are equally strong.
- Goals are mutually exclusive.

### Possible Risks

- No one is content.
- You lose a higher solution.
- There will be a weak commitment to implementation.

## **Collaboration – Our Way**

### Relevant Uses

- Commitment is important.
- Importance and complexity demand a collective IQ.
- Concerns of both parties are too important to meet halfway.

### Possible Risks

- The issue not worth the time.
- Trust of competence and character is placed on the other party.
- It may require involvement of uninformed people.

## **Principles of an Orderly Business Meeting**

“Everything must be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).

1. Provide orderly procedure.
2. Give justice to all.
3. Show courtesy to all.
4. Uphold the rule of the majority.
5. Recognize the rights of the minority.
6. Encourage teamwork rather than individual agendas.
7. Make the business meeting a time of joy and celebration.
8. Remember that Jesus is the head of the church.
9. Focus on the lordship of Christ and His kingdom growth.
10. Always ask what Jesus would do and say.

## SUMMARY OF FORCED TERMINATION STATISTICS

Year	Full-Time Pastors	Bivocational Pastors	Full-Time Staff	Totals	Number of States
1996	818	441		1259	14
1997	607	285	300	1192	22
1998	614	314	246	1174	26
1999	531	301	245	1071	26
2000	482	268	237	987	22
2001	528	212	254	994	18
2003	615	323	295	1233	26
2004	408	192	184	784	19
2005	655	314	333	1302	29
2006	496	184	265	945	28
2007	361	165	203	729	28
2008	296	165	183	644	22
2010	299	151	159	609	22

### The leading causes in descending order

1. Control issues (Who will control the church?)
2. Poor people skills on the part of the pastor
3. Church is resistant to change
4. Pastor's leadership style is too strong
5. Prior unresolved church conflict (church already in conflict when pastor arrived)
6. Decline in attendance and/or conditions
7. Pastor's leadership style is too weak
8. Pastor lacks administrative competence
9. Sexual misconduct
10. Disagreement over doctrine
11. Conflict with other church staff
12. Ethical misconduct (mismanaged money, dishonesty)

## THE TRANSITIONAL PASTOR COVENANT OF RELATIONSHIP

### Spiritual Preparation

The role of the transitional pastor is not an easy task. If this important time is to be successful, prepare yourself spiritually. Here are some suggestions to consider before you take a transitional pastorate.

1. Take several days to pray asking God if He is calling you to this place of service.

Too many of us jump into areas that require skills that we do not possess. For instance you may be called to a conflicted church that will require a lot of time and energy calming groups of people before you can accomplish any of the tasks of the transitional pastor ministry. If that is not your strength, you will quickly find yourself worn out and frustrated. If the Lord is not calling you to the church, please don't take the transitional pastorate. This may be a given, but the point is to only go to those places where God is leading you with a clear mind and a genuine heart.

2. Ask the Lord to give you a clear picture of the needs of the church.

Since this is not a program, you must have a clear picture of what is needed in that specific church before taking the pastorate.

3. Spend a couple of weeks alone with the Lord, charging your spiritual batteries before you begin as transitional pastor.

You might want to take a few days of spiritual retreat and restful vacation. It is important that your approach the time with the church with a fully charged spiritual battery.

4. Beware of your need to "fix" the church.

This ministry is not a "fix it" ministry. Over responsibility is a curse that many pastors have to deal with. We constantly think that we have the solution for every church's problem. Many have developed a "messiah" mentality and actually believe they are they have all the answers for a church's problem. This ministry requires you to rely on the Holy Spirit and turn the people of the church toward that power in order to reach their respective communities for Christ.

5. Allow God to do the work.

It is your responsibility to turn the people of the church toward the Lord during this time of transition. If you get ahead of the Lord, you will only lead the church to do what you can do. If you allow God to work in the lives of the leaders and members of the church, more will be done in the short time you are with them than you or any other person could possibly accomplish.

## 6. Focus on the role of the Holy Spirit.

Many stories have been shared during the course of this transitional pastor ministry that testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in this process. If a transitional pastor will go in to the church with a biblically sound concept of the work of the Holy Spirit, more will be accomplished than any program could possibly do. Notice from Acts 2 how the Holy Spirit can work in the life of the people of God.

### (1) The People Were Together in One Place. (v. 1)

Gatherings are important. We Baptists have a lot of meetings. You may have heard the saying, “Politicians build roads and Baptists wear them out going to meetings!” We certainly don’t want to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, but that’s not what the writer is recording here. The word he used actually is interpreted; *together, together*. The 120 people in the upper room that day were together, together. They were of one heart and mind and were ready to receive whatever the Lord had for them. This includes the concepts of unity and oneness. Please don’t read that as sameness. They were unique individuals, but corporately they deferred to one another so that the body would be together, together.

The transitional pastor must be very aware of the areas where the church he is serving is not together and ask the Lord to break down those barriers and strongholds. As stated earlier, this is not the responsibility of the transitional pastor; it is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit. Consecrated private and corporate prayer is essential in this work.

### (2) The Place Was Filled. (v. 2)

The word is *replete*. That means that every bit of the place was filled to capacity. Because the people were open to whatever the Lord had for them, He filled them with His Holy Spirit to the maximum. They were open to change and to the things that God desired for them, so the Holy Spirit filled them and the place where they were meeting.

We have all been in those times in leadership when there was a filling of the Holy Spirit in the church. The air was electric and it seemed that nothing could stop the flow of the work. The lost were being saved, and the broken were finding Christ. The transitional pastor must pray for this sort of filling in order to do the work that is set before him. He himself must walk with the Lord daily in order to lead the church toward the filling of the Holy Spirit.

### (3) There Was a Purpose. (v. 3-4)

Tongues of fire were given to those gathered. They were able to speak the languages of those outside the upper room for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit was never repeated in Scripture. It was a one-time event that had a purpose. The Holy Spirit desires to fill God’s people so that they can accomplish the task that is before them.

Every church in transition will have certain things that need to be done before the next pastor arrives. Some of those tasks will seem impossible. They may be something that the church has attempted for years or possibly decades. As the Transitional Pastor discerns those needs, he must rely on the Holy Spirit to accomplish those things according to His will.

## The Process of Engagement

It is as important that the transitional pastor be thorough in determining where his ministry can be most effective as it is for a church to determine who they believe can best serve the church. Accepting the role of transitional pastor on the basis of convenience, church prominence, or financial benefits without carefully considering how one's experience, spiritual gifts, and personal strengths match the needs of the church serves as a predictor of difficult times, perhaps failure.

According to the Sample Sequence of Process provided on pages 27-28, the following actions take place before the first month.

1. If you have been contacted by a church seeking a transitional pastor and are free to pursue the possibility, request from the church a copy of the following reports:
  - The church's history in whatever form it is available (book, anniversary programs, etc.), including the beginning and ending dates for the last five pastors
  - The organizational structure of the church, including the names and length of tenure of church staff members
  - Attendance in worship services and Sunday School for the past year
  - A statement of circumstances that affected the prior pastor's departure from the church
2. Request from the associational office that serves the church, the state convention office, or LifeWay Christian Resources a copy of five recent Annual Church Profiles. Do not take lightly the information on these profiles. They will tell you much about the church, its leaders, and some existing circumstances affecting the church.
3. Prepare a list of questions you will ask members of the transitional pastor search committee and others in the interview process. Consider some questions to choose like the following (some for the committee and others for other influential church members):
  - How long has each of you lived in this community (town, city)?
  - During what decade did you become a member of this church?
  - How many other members of your family are members of this church?
  - How many youth or adult members of your family are not members of this church?
  - What do you consider to be the church's major strength?
  - What do you consider to be the church's major weakness?
  - In the past five years, what event or activity of the church gave you the most satisfaction?
  - What event or activity gave you the most disappointment?
  - What about this church influences people to join the church?
  - What about this church influences people not to join the church?
  - What about this church influences members to leave the church and join another church in the area?
  - What about this church influences members to become inactive members?
  - What do you understand to be the reason the former pastor left the church?
  - How do you classify your relationship with the most recent pastor? (friend/close friend/uncomfortable/distant/adversarial)

- What do you understand to be the work of a transitional pastor?
  - How long should it take this church to get another pastor?
  - If I should come to this church as transitional pastor, what would be my greatest challenge?
  - What would be my greatest source of enjoyment?
  - What is the issue the church most needs to focus on?
  - Please write the names of three members who most influence the church's decisions then pass the paper to me.
4. If the committee requests an interview, ask that the schedule include time for you to interview the committee and, separately, four or five other members who impact the decision-making processes of the church. If logistics make an on-location interview impractical, request the committee to arrange for a telephone or video conference call with the committee and the other members separately.
  5. If the previous interview process provided opportunity to meet with only the transitional pastor search committee, request that time be provided for meetings with some or all of the following as can be arranged:
    - persons not on the search committee who strongly influence church decision making
    - two or three currently active members with the longest tenure in the church
    - two or three members who joined the church in the past six months
    - two or three high school student members
    - church staff members, including the building superintendent or custodian
    - one pastor with at least five years' tenure in a neighboring church

Requesting these interviews tells the search committee you desire to be thorough and patient in making this decision. If you and the church enter into a transitional pastor relationship, you will invest huge amounts of mental, emotional, and physical energy in the relationship and you want to assure the greatest possibility of effectiveness. Many churches need transitional pastors. You need to be a good steward of the experiences and ministry gifts God has given you.

6. If invited to visit the church and preach in one of its services, prayerfully review the information gained and the feelings experienced in contacts with church members. Evaluate the potential for effectively using your ministry gifts in this church at this time. If the evaluation up to this point is positive, schedule a time to visit the church and inform the committee of the contacts you would like to have with individuals and groups while in the church community.
7. If the church visit results in a positive response from the transitional pastor search committee and you feel accepting this church challenge would be good stewardship of your ministry resources, ask the search committee to draft a covenant of relationship. Provide each committee member a copy of the Sample Covenant of Relationship between the Church and the Transitional Pastor to use as a starter in preparing the Covenant to be proposed for approval by the church. When their draft is completed, it should be sent to you for your input.

Refinement of the draft continues until mutual agreement is reached to recommend action by the church based on the covenant of relationship.

## **The Covenant of Relationship**

The statement of desired relationships between a church and a transitional pastor is best referred to as a covenant instead of a contract. Churches enter into legally binding contracts with secular organizations and become liable to courts of law if contracts are violated. Churches enter into covenants when dealing with business within the church, agreements that should never be enforced in courts of law. This concept identifies the church with the constraints of new covenant grace rather than the controls of law.

Covenants are statements of solemn agreements within a community of faith expressing commitments and responsibilities between two or more parties. Covenant language abounds in the story of God's relationship with His people.

The purpose of a covenant of relationship is to assure common understanding of the role, relationships, tenure expectations, and financial provisions related to the transitional pastor. A covenant of relationship should be written by the group representing the church in the search process, in consultation with the prospective transitional pastor, and approved by the transitional pastor before presentation to the church for approval.

Covenant agreements vary depending on where the transitional pastor lives, whether the transitional pastor is bi-vocational or fully funded, and the scope of ministry responsibilities. This may mean the covenant will exclude from pastoral responsibility duties like officiating at weddings and funerals or others normally handled by a pastor. The church and the potential transitional pastor need to be honest in dealing with expectations on behalf of both parties. The covenant should clearly address essential areas but not be cluttered with unnecessary detail.

A covenant of relationship expresses what the relationship requires in order to meet the needs of the employer and the employee with the goal being kingdom growth and church growth to the glory of Christ. Such a covenant between a church and a transitional pastor focuses on what each party brings to the relationship more than on what each party requires of the other. Such a covenant should not be entered into unless there is conviction that God has led in bringing the two parties together and that each is worthy of the confidence of the other. The following Sample Covenant of Relationship provides ideas about structuring and wording that may be adapted to express the desires in any church/transitional pastor relationship. (This may be copied for use in stimulating the committee's thinking.)

**SAMPLE  
COVENANT OF RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE  
TRANSITIONAL PASTOR**

This Covenant between \_\_\_\_\_ Church, at (address), and \_\_\_\_\_ (“transitional pastor”) is entered to provide clear understandings about relationships and responsibilities necessary to bring glory to God through the growth of the church and the transitional pastor throughout the tenure of his ministry.

The church and the transitional pastor are pleased to enter into this covenant, effective \_\_\_\_\_ (date). This covenant shall continue until a pastor called by the church has begun his ministry in the church or until health problems or other emergency conditions make it necessary for the transitional pastor to resign.

Led by the Spirit of God, the transitional pastor agrees to the following:

- Seek the mind of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all things.
- Be a person of integrity in his family, the church, and the community.
- Be loving and gracious to all.
- Be diligent in work according to the work schedule shared with the church.
- Use his ministry gifts, knowledge, and wisdom to glorify Christ through the church.
- Provide spiritual leadership to the church.
- Lead the church through the stages of transition:
  1. View the church’s history through the eyes of Christ.
  2. Assess the church’s current reality.
  3. Affirm biblical principles for church growth.
  4. Focus on kingdom results.
  5. Establish church practice.
  6. Refocus the church around mission.
  7. Find a pastor to lead in fulfilling God’s future for the church.
  8. Help the pastor get a good start in the church and community.
- Preach to instruct, inspire, and enable the church through transition.
- Coordinate baptismal services; officiate weddings and funerals; or delegate responsibility, as needed and available.
- Manage conflict to produce healthy, productive relationships in the church.
- Lead the church staff and delegate responsibilities to staff members or church officers.
- Lead the Church Leadership Team (Church Council) in its tasks or delegate responsibility.
- Counsel other church leaders and ministry teams about their work.
- Evangelize the lost through preaching and also personally as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Care for people with special needs and lead others to be involved in caring ministries.
- Respect the ministry gifts of church members and encourage their growth and involvement in the life of the church.
- Train the Pastor Search Committee and assist as a process consultant.
- Be unavailable for a call to the office of pastor.
- Represent the church in community and denominational activities.

Led by the Spirit of God, the church agrees to the following:

- Be loving and gracious to the transitional pastor and his family.
- Pray for spiritual power in his life and work.
- Respectfully relate to him as God's anointed leader for this task.
- Support his leadership with active participation in the church's ministries.
- Talk with him about personal concerns instead of talking about him to others.
- Provide the resources for doing the work to which he is committed.
- Provide a salary and benefits commensurate with the duties of his office.
- Free him to do the work for which he is called as other church leaders and members fulfill their responsibilities.
- Follow his leadership in forming a Transitional Focus Team.
- Follow his leadership in conducting a Church Memories Workshop.

### Work Schedule

Inasmuch as the transitional pastor has responsibilities that cannot be measured in definite schedules of time, he will give care to scheduling his time and activities to best serve the Lord and the interests of the church, allowing time for personal and family needs. He is encouraged to have two days off per week while being on call in times of crisis. If the transitional pastor is not to live in the community and serve in the position full-time, the agreed upon work schedule should be stated. The pastor and the church will be best served if the pastor establishes a schedule of office hours and informs members of the schedule. The pastor's responsibilities require many hours of isolation for prayer, study, and preparation. Church members will regard this time as vital to the ministry and, whenever possible, arrange meetings at other times.

### Salary and Benefits

The church will provide the following transitional pastor salary and benefits: These benefits should take into consideration variations in residency; amount of time the transitional pastor will commit to pastoral work, fully funded or bivocational; and protection benefits already being received from other sources. As a rule of thumb, the salary of the transitional pastor should be no less than the salary of the former pastor if the transitional pastor is to provide pastoral services similar to the former pastor. If the transitional pastor serves on a part-time basis the salary may be reduced proportionately. See the *Pastor Search Committee Handbook* for descriptions of a pastor's salary, housing, benefits, and expenses.

A. Salary

B. Housing

C. Protection Benefits

- Medical insurance
- Disability insurance
- Life insurance
- Church annuity plan (10% of salary and housing)

Note: Retired or bivocational transitional pastors may have some or all insurance already provided and not need additional coverage.

D. Ministry Expenses

- Mileage allowance
- Book allowance
- Costs for attending meetings

E. Vacation or Leave Time

When the duly elected representatives of the church and the transitional pastor agree on the conditions of this Covenant of Relationship, the committee will recommend that the church adopt the Covenant of Relationship and thereby call the transitional pastor.

This COVENANT OF RELATIONSHIP is entered into by:

---

Transitional Pastor

---

Authorized Church Representative

---

Date

## Biblical Church Covenant<sup>16</sup>

God established a covenant relationship, first with His people—Israel, and then a new covenant with His people—the church (Hebrews 8:7-13; 9:15). Therefore, as members of God’s covenant family known as \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church, we commit ourselves to God and to one another to be Christlike in our lives and relationships through the presence, guidance, and power of God’s Holy Spirit.

We will . . .

- love one another as Christ loved us (John 13:34),
- honor one another above ourselves (Romans 12:10),
- be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32),
- encourage and build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11),
- comfort one another (2 Corinthians 1:4),
- and offer hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9).

We will . . .

- have a spirit of unity based on our common bond in Christ (Ephesians 4:3-6),
- be united in mind and convictions (1 Corinthians 1:10),
- meet together regularly (Hebrews 10:25),
- have equal concern for each other, suffer when one suffers and rejoice when another is honored (1 Corinthians 12:25-26),
- and consider others more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3).

We will . . .

- use our God-given knowledge to instruct one another (Romans 15:14),
- use our spiritual gifts to bless one another (1 Corinthians 12:7),
- use the Word of Christ to teach and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16),
- and nurture one another toward spiritual maturity measured by the life and ministry of Jesus (Ephesians 4:12-13).

We will . . .

- confess our sins to one another, pray for each other (James 5:16),
- warn those who are idle, encourage the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:14),
- forgive one another as the Lord forgave us (Colossians 3:13),
- and gently restore those who sin (Galatians 6:1).

We will . . .

- not talk negatively about one another (James 4:11),
- not pass judgment on one another, not put any stumbling block in one another’s way (Romans 14:13),
- not be morally impure, not use obscenities, not be greedy (Ephesians 5:3-4),
- rather we will be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

We will let the light of our godly lives shine together to bring glory to God (Matthew 5:16).

## STAGE 1: View the Church's History through the Eyes of Christ

You, as transitional pastor not subjectively involved in the history of the church, can lead objectively in reviewing the church's history to determine both positive and negative effects the history has on the present nature and ministry of the church. You serve much as an outside consultant to an organization while bringing the trust of the congregation, spiritual discernment, and compassion for healthy and productive church life to the task. You can help the church understand the impact of church history on the present nature of the church.

1. Review chapter 5 of *Experiencing God*, written by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King and published by Broadman & Holman in 1994. This chapter introduces seven realities of experiencing God, realities that “identify ways God works with a person or group to involve them in His work.” Praying through the realities provides a valuable starting point for looking at and learning from the church's history. *Reality, 7 Truths from Experiencing God* by Henry & Richard Blackaby provides materials for seven small group sessions, daily devotions, and sermon notes for a 40-day experience. Consider preaching one or more sermons based on the following seven realities.
  - God is always at work around you.
  - God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
  - God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
  - God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
  - God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
  - You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
  - You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.
2. The context for looking at a church's history is the kingdom of God. The eternal kingdom is God's. It knows no limits, but we limit our involvement in His kingdom when our attitudes and actions do not conform to the nature of the kingdom. A message on God's kingdom could be valuable context for the congregation.
3. Teach the church to clarify what the Bible says about the activity of Satan in seeking to discredit Christians and blunt the church's spiritual power. Keep the focus on God's power.
4. John's letters to the churches of Asia Minor recorded in Revelation 2–3 would provide a biblical basis for a series of sermons preparing church members to deal with both personal sin and corporate sin as the Holy Spirit guides them.
5. Involve the Transitional Focus Team in a Church Memories Workshop (4 hours). The Focus Team can help determine who else should be invited to participate such as teachers, leaders, and committee/team members. See the following pages for guidance for this workshop. The transitional pastor will serve as leader/facilitator of the workshop. The workshop will take about four hours (such as 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon on Saturday or 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. on Sunday). Take breaks when needed.

## **CHURCH MEMORIES WORKSHOP**

### **Reflect on the Past; Prepare for the Future**

#### **Introduction**

Our church's history is yesterday, last week, last month, last year, and all the way back to the beliefs and practices of the spiritual ancestors of our church's founders. Church history reflects the constant love and absolute power of a perfect God as well as the successes and the failures, the victories and the defeats of His imperfect followers. The history of most churches can be expressed in the theme of a televised sports program several years ago: "The joy of victory and the agony of defeat." The ups and downs of a church's history affect how the church perceives itself today.

Though often unconsciously, that perception affects how power and control issues are expressed in the church, how decisions are made, and how personal and group relationships flow. How a church perceives itself in light of its history influences congregational values, faith actions, and expectations of the future.

Many churches find dysfunctional characteristics in their pasts that profoundly influence their present and call for awareness and an on-guard posture. They need help in recognizing how the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms have led the church to relationships and behaviors that do not reflect the spirit of Christ or advance the kingdom of God (see Eph. 6:12). Churches need help in recognizing how the spiritual forces of evil can be resisted in the power of the omnipotent God. They need guidance in recognizing and repenting of personal behavior that perpetuates the sins of the past.

Churches also find periods of dynamic spiritual health in their history that call for celebration and recovery of the characteristics that produced such spiritual health. They need help in discerning how God's Spirit moved in the lives of church members and in the church as a body in its times of spiritual health and growth.

This Church Memories Workshop will provide an opportunity for an interactive review of our past to determine both positive and negative effects the church's collective memory has on the present nature and ministry of the church. The focus of the process is to view the church's history through the eyes of Christ. During the workshop participants will discover both the dynamic and the dysfunctional qualities in our church's past. Then church members can respond appropriately with repentance and celebration. The workshop is part of helping our church turn loose the past in order to take hold of the present and move with spiritual power and holy confidence into the future. Then we as a church can celebrate how the Lord has blessed us in the past and how He can use us in the future. This workshop will include three major parts: (1) What did Jesus say to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3? (2) What would Jesus say to our church? (3) What are the good memories and painful memories throughout the time each of us has been a part of our church? (Use this paragraph in promotion.)

### **Step One: What Did Jesus Say to the Seven Churches (Revelation 2 & 3)**

Break into small groups at each table (five to seven people). Assign each table one of the seven churches. Each church may be assigned to more than one table, or a table may be assigned more than one church. Have a sheet of paper with the name of the assigned church on each table. Distribute copies of the worksheet (page 84) to all participants.

#### Small groups

Ask each group to choose a facilitator to guide the discussion, a recorder to prepare the group response on one of the worksheets, and a reporter to share the group's response with the large group.

Each group will study the assigned passage and prepare a group response for its assigned church: What is the Lord's opinion of this church—His compliment, His criticism, His command, and the consequences? State that Laodicea did not receive a compliment; Smyrna and Philadelphia did not receive criticisms or consequences.

#### Large group

In the large group, let the reporter from each table give a brief report on their assigned church.

Ask for the reporter from the first table assigned Ephesus to report on the compliments. Then let the second table assigned Ephesus (if there is one) to add any compliments not already mentioned. Then ask the second table to report on the criticisms. The first table can then add any criticisms not already mentioned. Then ask the first table to report on the commands. The second table can add any commands not already mentioned. Then ask the second table to report on the consequences for Ephesus. The first table can add any consequences not already mentioned.

Then use the same pattern for the other six churches – Smyrna (no criticisms or consequences), Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia (no criticisms or consequences), and Laodicea (no compliment).

### **Step Two: What Would Jesus Say to our church?**

#### Individual responses

Give each participant a copy of the worksheet (page 85). Have all participants write their personal responses on the worksheet. Also give each participant two sets (different colors) of five dots for use later.

Note: Since some participants may be responsible for areas of ministry that are thought to be criticisms for your church, it may be difficult for other participants to be open and honest. Encourage openness and frankness, reminding the group to speak the truth in love. Lead the group to understand the need for confidentiality.

### Small groups

When everyone has finished writing their personal responses, ask each person to take turns within the same table group to name one compliment from his or her worksheet. As they are mentioned, the recorder will write the compliments on a worksheet. Allow time in the groups for everyone to name all the compliments on their lists that have not already been mentioned.

Then use the same process of taking turns within the group to name (and write on a worksheet) the criticisms from his or her worksheet.

When all the responses have been given, ask each person in the small group to vote for the top three compliments. Record the votes for each compliment. Circle the three with the highest number of votes. The recorder will then write the group's top three compliments on a tear sheet.

Then, ask each person in the small group to vote for the top three criticisms. Record the votes for each criticism. Circle the three with the highest number of votes. The recorder will then write the group's top three criticisms on a tear sheet.

Each small group will post their two tear sheets on the wall (compliments in one area and criticisms in another area).

### Large group

In the large group, the leader (transitional pastor) will read all of the compliments on the tear sheets posted on the wall. Acknowledge that there are similar compliments but it is difficult to merge them at this time because valuable wording could be lost. Do not make comments on specific compliments at this time.

Then the leader will read all of the criticisms on the tear sheets posted on the wall. Acknowledge that there are similar criticisms but it is difficult to merge them at this time because valuable wording could be lost. Do not make comments on specific criticisms at this time.

Then ask each person to vote for the five most important compliments from all of the tear sheets by using one set of five dots. Place a dot beside or below the compliment without covering any of the words.

Then ask each person to vote on the top five most important criticisms from all of the tear sheets by using the other set of five dots. Place a dot beside or below the criticism without covering any of the words.

Review with the large group some of the top compliments. Have a time of prayer to thank God for all of the compliments.

Then review with the large group the top criticisms. Acknowledge that it is much more difficult to face the reality of criticisms of our church by Jesus. Have a time of prayer to thank God for what He has done despite these criticisms. Lead the group to pray for wisdom to strengthen the church. Acknowledge our absolute dependence on the Lord as a church.

Later gather all of the tear sheets. After the workshop, the Transitional Focus Team can create a summary report identifying the top compliments and the top criticisms. The team will use this information in developing recommendations for actions later in the process.

### **Step Three: Time Line and Memories**

Prior to the workshop, prepare to post on the wall a piece of butcher paper (10-15 feet long). Put the date the church began on the far left of the paper and the next decade on the right end of the paper. Write each decade someone has memories of the church. Write in the first year of each decade for which information is available information such as the resident church membership, average Sunday School attendance, discipleship enrollment, number of baptisms, number of other additions, and total contributions. Write the names and dates of service of each pastor. Possibly post a picture of each pastor at the point he began his service to the church. Possibly write a few other key events in the life of the church. Provide plenty of yellow and blue post-it notes (at least 3" by 3") at each table.

#### Introduction

This part of the workshop asks an important question: What are the good memories and painful memories throughout the time each of us has been a part of our church? Our memories impact the decisions we make today and the plans we have for the future. Each church has a unique past that influences the present and the future. Surfacing memories is one way to turn loose of the past in order to take hold of the present and move with spiritual power and holy confidence into the future. With the Holy Spirit's guidance, this exercise may be the most powerful part of the workshop.

#### Good Memories

Ask everyone in the group to use the yellow post-it notes to write their good memories of the church and the approximate year of that memory. These are anonymous, so remind them not to write their names on the post-it notes. Each person will write one memory per post-it note. Good memories may include (1) people – such as a pastor or staff member, Sunday School teacher, or other church member; (2) events – such as your baptism, baptism of a child, your wedding, the date you joined the church, a specific church service that had life-changing implications, a significant revival, or a new building; and (3) ministries – such as a year of many baptisms, a Sunday School class, choir, a discipleship study, the year you began serving in a ministry role, or the year you made a commitment to tithe. (Post this list on the wall or have as a handout on each table.)

Ask the participants to post their good memories on the appropriate decade on the time line sheet on the wall. When all good memories have been posted, the leader will read some of them aloud and invite additional comments. Also, people will be able to read these at a break or after the workshop.

Lead a time of celebration (including a song and prayer) for these blessings.

### Painful Memories

Ask everyone in the group to use the blue post-it notes to write their painful memories of the church and the approximate year of that memory. These are anonymous, so remind them not to write their names on the post-it notes. Each person will write one memory per post-it note. Painful memories may include (1) people – such as the death of a loved church member, departure of a pastor or staff member; (2) events – such as the funeral of a family member, a major church conflict, members leaving the church; and (3) ministries – such as the discontinuation or reduction of a meaningful ministry. (Post this list on the wall or in a handout.) Remind the group to be tactful as they write in generalities rather than specific details. The purpose is to be constructive not hurtful. These will not be read aloud.

Ask the participants to post their painful memories on the appropriate decade on the time line sheet on the wall. When all painful memories have been posted, the leader will comment on the clusters of painful memories and lead a time of prayerful confession. Ask the Lord to remove any bitterness or bad feelings that remain. After the prayer, collect all of the blue post-it notes, and shred them to symbolize that we will no longer allow these painful memories to drag us down.

### **Closing**

Form a circle around the room holding hands. Close with sentence prayers, allowing all members to voice thanksgiving for what the church has meant in their lives.

Celebrate the community of faith by singing a church family song such as “We Are One in the Bond of Love” or “I’m So Glad I’m a Part of the Family of God.”

## WHAT DID JESUS SAY TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES?

Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7), Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11), Pergamum (Rev. 2:12-17),  
Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29), Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6), Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13),  
Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22)

**What did Jesus say to the church in \_\_\_\_\_?**

**Compliments** – “I know your works....” (none for Laodicea)

**Criticisms** – “But I have this against you....” (none for Smyrna and Philadelphia)

**Commands** – “Therefore, you must....”

**Consequences** – “If you do not....” (none for Smyrna and Philadelphia)

## WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY TO OUR CHURCH?

**Compliments** – “I know your works....” (What would Jesus say that our church does well? How has God uniquely gifted us as a body?)

**Criticisms** – “But I have this against you....” (What would Jesus say are our church’s shortcomings, faults, and failures? What would Jesus say we are not doing well? What would Jesus say we should be doing that we are not doing?)

## STAGE 2: Assess the Church's Current Reality

The transitional pastor should lead the church to understand and accept the current reality in the church and its community. Current reality is the state of things as they really exist.

1. Provide the Transitional Focus Team an overview of the information on church culture on pages 87-88 of this Transitional Pastor Manual.
2. Provide the Transitional Focus Team an overview of the information on community context on pages 89-90 of this Transitional Pastor Manual.
3. Request a Site Express Report from LifeWay Church Partners (615-251-5692) or request a demographic report from your state convention. This is a simplified demographic snapshot of the area in a 10-mile ring around the location of the church.
4. Lead a discussion of the demographic report with the Transitional Focus Team using the guide on page 91.
5. Preach through Acts 10:1 – 11:18, using insights from the demographic report. Use the ideas on pages 92-93.
6. Complete the Current Reality worksheets available at [www.LifeWay.com/currentreality](http://www.LifeWay.com/currentreality). Follow the instructions at the bottom of each form. Lead a discussion about the counts, containers, and characteristics with the Transitional Focus Team using these questions:
  - What did we learn?
  - What does it mean?
  - What will we do in response to this?
7. Give an overview of the Church Model and Process on page 97 as an introduction to Stages 3, 4, and 5.

### Additional Options

8. Provide the Transitional Focus Team an overview of the information on values and lead them through the Values Inventory exercise on pages 94-96.
9. Provide the Transitional Focus Team an overview of the Transformational Church process.
  - Read *Transformational Church* to gain understanding and insight around the seven elements of transformation.
  - Consider a sermon series on the elements of transformation.
  - Lead the church to take the Transformational Church Assessment Tool (TCAT).
  - Interpret the results of the TCAT to the Transitional Focus Team and the church in order to better understand the church's strengths and challenges.
  - Lead the church to celebrate its strengths and to begin addressing the challenges.
  - Help the Pastor Search Committee to consider the impact the TCAT results have on the skills and gifts needed by a prospective pastor.

## UNDERSTANDING CHURCH CULTURE

You have a wonderful opportunity in your role as transitional pastor to lead your church to better understand the elements that make up its unique character. God has provided the resources and opportunities for your church to become exactly what He desires. If there is no compelling reason to change, churches will continue to repeat programs, ministries, and practices from year to year regardless of what impact they may, or may not, be having on the community or the congregation.

Church practices and structures must be viewed through the church's culture (see the chart of "A Church Model and Process" on page 97) to determine how relevant they are in their here-and-now world. Church culture means the local context of church life that shapes the way a church views itself and that leads to the unique identity and style of the church. Every church has its own history, consequently its own culture.

Reviewing the present status reveals "the way we do church" expressed in the history and traditions of the church. It is a rich source for understanding the style of the church and what a church wants to become. Analyzing church culture requires a church to wrestle with the questions, "Who are we as a church today?" and "Who does God want us to become?" Multiple and complex appraisals influence a church's identity. Every church is different. Every church develops a culture whether the church has a long history or is a new start.

Asking appropriate questions can help the congregation discover its personality and its image in the community. What is the present reality for your church? What resources, events, and personalities shape the nature of how the church responds to a changing world? What vision is there of a future that will honor God?

To understand the culture of your church you need to investigate the following criteria:

- What affect is the church having on the lives of those who attend?  
How do church members express their devotion to the Lord Jesus? Who has been on a short-term mission trip? How many participate in evangelism visitation? Do you have a prayer ministry? How is the financial support of the church?
- How is the community affected by the presence of the church and its members?  
Who lives in the immediate areas around the church? How does the church reach out to them? What services are provided for children, youth, singles, elderly, handicapped, or others? What does the community really think about this church and its members?
- What does the church emphasize?  
What percent of the church budget is allocated for evangelism and missions? What place does prayer fit in the daily schedule of the church and staff? How do the events and activities of the church relate to the overall mission of the church?

- How does a guest feel when they visit your church?  
How many parking spaces do you have? Is there adequate seating space in the worship center? Do you have a welcome center clearly identified for guests? Is your preschool space clean, safe, adequately sized, and well staffed? Do you have adequate discipleship opportunities for all ages in spaces that are inviting and welcoming?
- Are the leaders functioning in their ministry roles?  
What should the deacons be focused on? Is there relevant teaching and preaching that seeks to change lives and strengthen disciples? Do members of the church understand their responsibilities and their spiritual gifts?
- Do the attenders have a good time when they come to church?  
How does the church fellowship together? What ministries are designed to help break down the sense of the large group and allow people to experience the joy of relationships?

In the same sense individuals are guided by their self-esteem, church tend to be guided by the congregational church-esteem. With low church-esteem we are reluctant to mention our church in conversations at the grocery store, soccer field, or gym. With a high sense of church-esteem we recognize the value our church is in our own lives and the potential value it has for those around us.

Guests who visit your church are 83% more likely to remain a part of your church six months later if they have been a part of a small group such as Bible Study or Sunday School. So many in our culture, both young and old, are looking for a place to establish deep lasting relationships. Your church should be the place people turn to find acceptance and support.

Simple church principles call for each church to evaluate every activity in light of how it relates to the main function of the local church. Programs do not need to be complex or expensive to be effective. Seek to focus the ministries of your church around your unique set of core beliefs and values. Involve the whole church in developing a clear understanding of your present reality. Create an environment where the church begins to dream again about the future God has planned for them. Then organize leadership and direction around seeking to focus on those ministries that move the church toward that new desired future state.

## UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Every church has been placed within a community. Understanding some key indicators and trends about that community will help the church determine better ways to relate to those who live around it.

Communities, and churches, go through a series of common stages or lifecycles:

- Birth – figuring out how to survive
- Growth – how to handle new people and the challenges of growth
- Maturity – slowing down, how to get unstuck
- Decline – trying to hold on, what do we do next to fix this

God's ideal plan is for the church to renew itself and start a new cycle before it reaches the maturity stage. If the church waits until it begins to decline, the momentum works against it and regeneration becomes more difficult. For a church to maintain relevance within its community, it must understand who makes up the community. It also must understand who makes up the people in the church and how those people compare to the local community. This is the context in which the church must function.

Demographic data is available from a number of sources that will tell you how many people live within a certain radius of the church. The data will provide current and projected increases for race, age, income level, and a number of other variables.

Equally important to understanding the community is the need to understand who makes up the attenders at your church. Age groups can be estimated by tabulating Sunday School rolls. Other demographic information is more difficult without using some kind of survey or enlisting the assistance of an outside consultant.

In addition to the age, gender, race, and income levels, computer technology has enabled the identification of lifestyle segmentation groups within areas as small as 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a square mile. Each of these clusters of people share a great deal in common. Most churches will have about 80% of the congregation in three or four of these segmentation groups. The extent to which these clusters in the church match up with similar clusters in the surrounding community determines how well the church is reaching the community.

In a very large church it may not be unusual for every social group to be represented in the congregation by at least one family. Churches are not exclusive of anyone. However, in churches of any size (small, medium, or large), most of the members will be from a limited number of the social groups identified in the study. These are the people that God has gifted the church to reach.

Lifestyle segmentation is based on the concept that “birds of a feather, flock together.” People who fit into a certain cluster that is highly represented in the congregation are more likely to continue to associate with your church because they find people similar to themselves. The opposite is also true. If your church primarily consists of three clusters and someone from a radically different cluster visits, they may find very few people like them.

Cluster analysis goes beyond just identifying who the different clusters are, but also provides information as to what locations have large percentages of those lifestyles. Now your church can make outreach in focused geographic areas to people who are very similar to those within the church body. You might organize a prayer walk of those communities, a door-to-door survey campaign, or a ministry event targeted to appeal to those particular segments of the community.

Most research indicates about 50% of any community is un-churched. Once your church has identified who the most receptive prospects might be, the field truly is “white unto harvest.”

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY

Why should a church be interested in demographics? Isn't it a secular marketing concept best reserved for businesses and those trying to make money? The word *demographics* itself simply means "writings about people." It is the research on and study of groups of people in society on either a large or small scale.

The biblical rationale for demographics is found in John 4:35 when Jesus said, "Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, then comes the harvest'? Listen [to what] I'm telling you: *Open your eyes and look at the fields*, for they are ready for harvest." Demographic studies can be an eye-opener for some churches and help them begin to see through kingdom eyes the communities in which God has planted them.

After providing a printed summary of the report, presenting it verbally, and explaining the information in it; use the following questions to lead a discussion:

1. What surprised you in this report?
2. What did not surprise you in this report?
3. Does our church reflect the people who live within our primary ministry area?
4. For example, how do the percentages of age compare to our church? In other words, if our community is made up of 8% who are 10-14 years of age, shouldn't that be reflective of our church as well? What does it say about us if it is less? What does it say about us if it is more?
5. What does the population change map have to say about our growth rate as a church?
6. Some people say, "Birds of a feather flock together." Would you say that the U.S. Mosaic profile of our community is reflective of our church? If it isn't, what can we do about that? If it is but we're not growing as fast as the population rate, what does that tell us?
7. What does the population breakdown according to families and non-families have to say about our strategy as a church?
8. The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention asserts that 70% of the U.S. population is lost and does not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. How many people does that represent in our community? What is your response to that?

## **IDEAS FOR SERMON ON DEMOGRAPHICS USING ACTS 10:1 – 11:18**

### **CHANGING THE SCORECARD**

Where are we going church? If we don't know where we are going or why we exist, some things happen to fill the void. Here are some responses from different perspectives:

- The status quo folks – Let's keep doing what we have been doing.
- The deconstructionists – These are leaders who are obsessed with what they will not do anymore. They are often angry folks who do not like the status quo folks so they want to throw out tradition and do everything differently.
- The methodologists – These folks are captured by the latest and greatest tool or method that promises to deliver new ministry and more results.
- The doctrinal purists – They embrace a certain doctrinal purity that they believe sets them apart from those just mentioned.

But there are better ways to carry on ministry in an ever changing culture and context. Luke's account in Acts 10-11 give us some principles that I want to lift up for our examination and consideration.

In the flow of the book of Acts, Peter has seen the early church launched, preached the first sermon where 3000 came to Christ, seen the lame walk, and been released from prison by an angel. Yet he did not see or understand what Christ wanted to do with his life and the life of the church. He believed that Christ had come for the Jews and that the gospel was for the Jews. He was right that the Gospel was and is for the Jews, but it is also for all peoples everywhere. Christ had made that clear on Acts 1:8 – the mission is *from everywhere to everyone*. But something dramatic had to happen for Peter to get it. He did not get that the gospel was for people not like him. Yet, really, neither do we. What happened to Peter needs to happen to us if we are to understand why we are here and what we are to be doing. What God did was change the scorecard for Peter.

#### Listen to the Story of the Encounter.

God spoke to Cornelius, a Gentile who had been praying. His prayers had been heard. Does God hear the prayers of those who seek Him? Yes, and He not only heard the prayers, He answered in dramatic fashion. At the same time as the servants were on their way to find Peter, he was on the rooftop of Simon the tanner praying. God spoke to him in a dramatic vision. Peter went with the servants to the house of Cornelius. When Cornelius shared his vision, notice the response of Peter: "God does not show favoritism." Think on that for a moment. Does God has favorites in your community? Are there people that God would say are unclean and unfit for salvation? Once Peter got the message of no favorites, he shared it with the Jewish leaders. The key phrase is in 11:18 – "even the Gentiles."

Who are the "even these" in your life and in the life of this church? Our eyes need to be opened by God to who is around us. Our minds need to be changed by God to understand new ways of doing ministry. God will change the way we keep score and the way we measure success.

### Open Our Eyes Lord.

If you opened your eyes in the year this church was founded, you would have seen a strong working class neighborhood populated by folks who knew about church and were open to the ministry of the church. [Adapt this to fit your church's beginning.] However, to open our eyes today to the community in which this church is called to minister is to see a vastly different population. [Read from the church's Site Express Report]

This means that the way you do ministry today has to be different than the way you did ministry even 10 years ago. And it will need to continue changing as the world and community around you changes. Once our eyes are opened to those around us, we have to get the people who are in our community on our hearts. Then we will open our hands to help.

However, it all begins with a personal encounter with the living Christ. What would God have you do? What would God have me do? Consider these actions:

1. Pray that God will open our eyes and hearts to the ministry He has for us – from everywhere to everyone – beginning right here and going to the ends of the earth.
2. Begin to see the “even these” through the eyes of Jesus.
3. Begin to do ministry to reach the “even these.”
4. Change the score card in order to do discipleship – to make disciples.

Here are some examples of ways we can do that:

- Create an environment of community and family.
- Build one-on-one disciple making relationships.
- Provide space for the messy and difficult people.
- Have systems and processes that foster disciple making through life-on-life change.
- Create a culture of inviting where people are constantly inviting others to get connected to the church and then be sent out in meaningful ministries.
- Continue to be a praying church. When we bow before God, He works in and through us.
- When we pray, God changes us.
- Sunday School teachers, deacons, and leaders, pray for people by name.
- Engage the community around you through prayer.
- Ask God to open your eyes.
- If you don't see it before you see it, you will never see it.

## VALUES INVENTORY <sup>17</sup>

One of the most important aspects of understanding the culture of a church is the exploration and clarification of its core values. Briefly defined, values are beliefs put into practice. While it is possible for a congregation to have “aspirational” values—collective behaviors that they would like to see—their culture consists of their actual values.

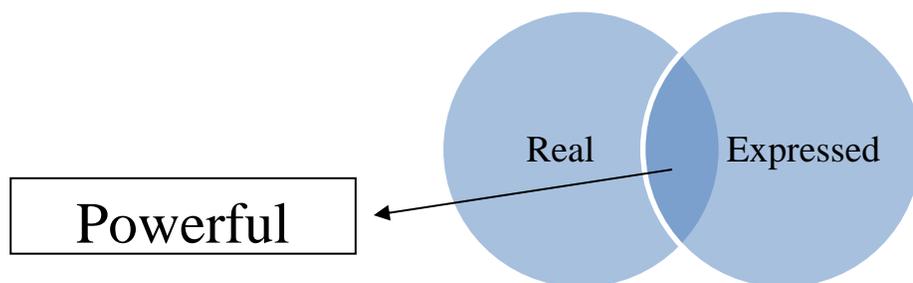
The values of a church are those things that are non-negotiable, that for which we would be willing to sacrifice everything. Although the form in which they are expressed may vary, biblical values should never change. Core values should be marked by great passion. And these beliefs drive behavior that should reflect the actions and attitudes of Christ Himself.

An organization must know what it stands for. A study of values can be very powerful because it seeks to answer the questions: “Why do we do the things we do? Why does it matter?”

Values are behaviorally examined. A church can look at its budget and determine its values. It can do so by looking at its calendar because we always make time for what is important to us. And finally reviewing its collective decisions helps a church know what its true values are. In other words, a church’s business meeting minutes offer clues as to its values. As values get clearer, so do the decisions needing to be made.

Why should a congregation spend time examining its values? First, they are frequently held without awareness. Congregational culture has been compared to a fishbowl. Asking your congregation to describe it is like asking a fish to describe water. Values are so much a part of us that it is difficult to talk about them in an objective fashion. Second, any attempt to implement change in a congregation will be futile without factoring corporate values into the picture. They function as railroad tracks within the organization. Even if a desire for change is present, congregational behavior will stay the same unless new tracks and patterns of behavior are established.

It may be helpful to compare the types of values as “real” versus “expressed.” It is, of course, possible to have expressed values that are not real. It is also possible to have real values that have not been clearly and passionately articulated. Great synergy takes place when a congregation’s values are both real and expressed. We can call those values that are both real and expressed “powerful” because they become the impetus for change in the congregation.



### *Leading the Exercise*

Distribute copies of the Values Inventory on the next page. Remind team members that they are surveying the values of the church, *not their own personal values*. Briefly define each value, adding any needed clarification. Instruct team members to complete the inventory according to the directions. (Note: you may want to add to the list. Be sure that team members are clear as to definitions.)

### *Group Follow-up of the Exercise*

Write each value on butcher paper or tear sheets. (Probably two or three per sheet will be optimal.) Allow sufficient room to the left or right for the placement of color coding labels. Give each team member a limited number of labels (probably four but no more than six). Ascribe a numeric value to each color, such as red – 1, blue – 2, etc.

Total the numeric value of the dots placed by each value. The top six represent the actual values of the congregation. After identifying the actual values, lead the Transitional Focus Team in a discussion through the following questions:

- Is this accurate? Why or why not?
- What glaring omissions do you see? (Note: these can become aspirational values toward which the church will strive.)
- How will actual values strengthen the transitional process?
- How will they threaten it?

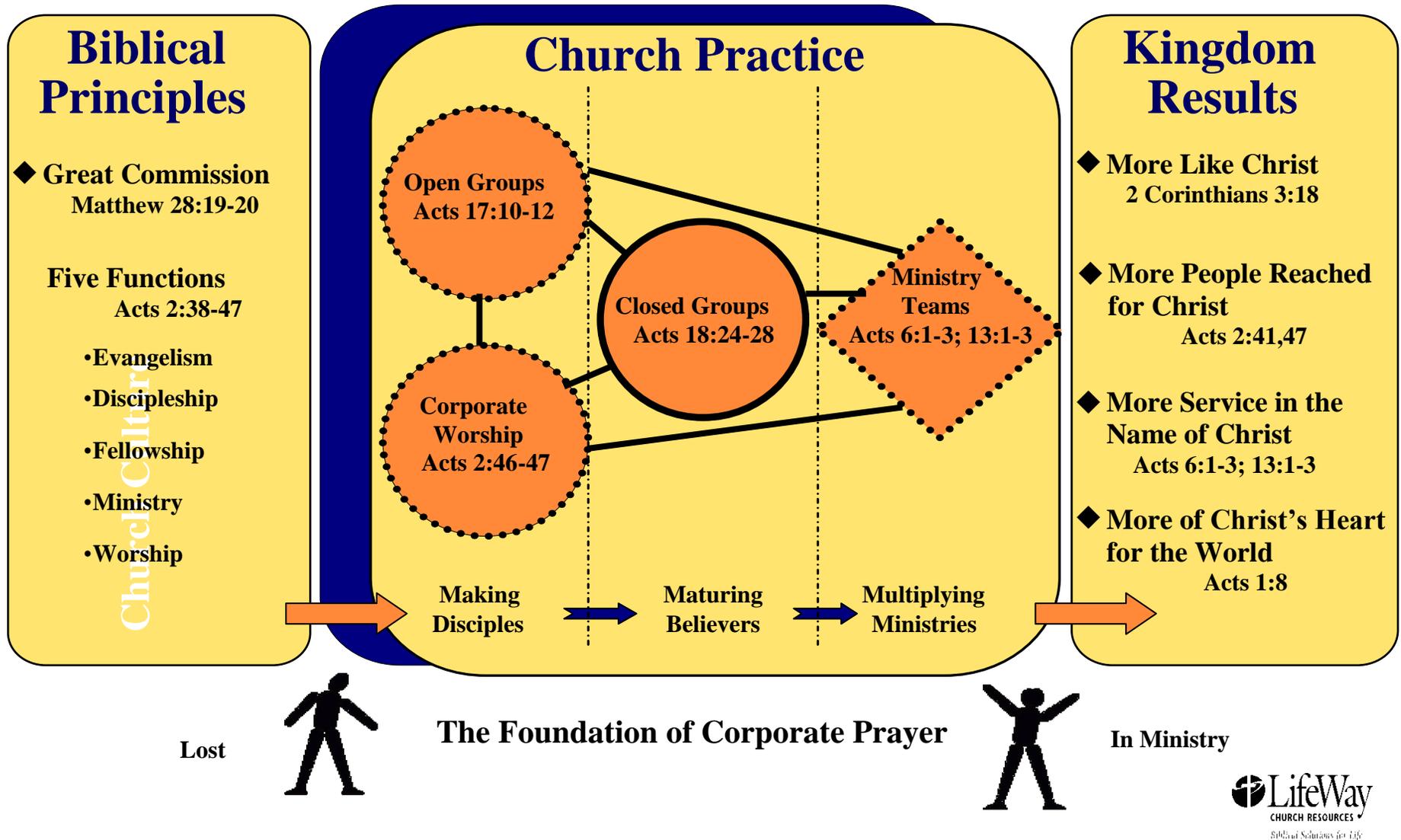
## Values Inventory

1	2	3	4
Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Most important

**Directions:** Using the scale below, circle the number that best expresses to what extent the following values are important to your church (actual values). Work your way through the list quickly, going with your first impression.

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. <b>Preaching and teaching Scripture:</b> Communicating God’s Word to people                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. <b>Family:</b> People immediately related to one another by marriage or birth                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. <b>Bible knowledge:</b> A familiarity with the truths of Scripture                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. <b>World missions:</b> Spreading the gospel of Christ around the globe                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. <b>Community:</b> Caring about and addressing the needs of others  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. <b>Encouragement:</b> Giving hope to people who need some hope   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. <b>Giving:</b> Providing a portion of one’s finances to support the ministry                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. <b>Fellowship:</b> Relating to and enjoying one another  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. <b>Leadership:</b> A person’s ability to influence others to pursue God’s mission for their organization | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. <b>Cultural relevance:</b> Communicating truth in a way that people who aren’t like us understand it    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. <b>Prayer:</b> Communicating with God   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. <b>Excellence:</b> Maintaining the highest of ministry standards that bring glory to God                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. <b>Evangelism:</b> Telling others the good news about Christ  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. <b>Team ministry:</b> A group of people ministering together with synergy                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. <b>Creativity:</b> Coming up with new ideas and ways of doing ministry                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. <b>Worship:</b> Attributing worth to God  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. <b>Status quo:</b> A preference for the way things are  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. <b>Cooperation:</b> The act of working together in the service of the Savior                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. <b>Lost people:</b> People who are non-Christians and may not attend church (unchurched)                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. <b>Mobilized laity:</b> Christians who are actively serving in the ministries of their church           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. <b>Tradition:</b> The customary ways or the “tried and true”  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. <b>Obedience:</b> A willingness to do what God or others ask  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. <b>Innovation:</b> Making changes that promote the ministry as it serves Christ                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. <b>Initiative:</b> The willingness to take the first step or make the first move in a ministry setting  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. <b>Benevolence:</b> Caring for basic human (physical) needs, either within or outside the church        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26. _____   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. _____   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. _____   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

# A Church Model and Process



## THE FOUNDATION OF CORPORATE PRAYER (Acts 4:23-33)

Though they may not verbalize it, the hearts of many church members are saying, “Transitional pastor, teach us to pray.”

Corporate prayer is absolutely essential to the spiritual well being of any church. Three Bible verses, selected from many, affirm corporate prayer as a biblical principle foundational to effective church practice and essential to producing desired kingdom results.

- “If I close the sky so there is no rain, or if I command the grasshopper to consume the land, or if I send pestilence on My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.”—the LORD (2 Chron. 7:13–14)
- “My house will be called a house of prayer.” – Jesus (Matt. 21:13; quoting Is. 56:7)
- “Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” – Paul (Phil. 4:6)

The following testimonies from godly leaders spanning three quarters of a century affirm corporate prayer as a biblical principle foundational to effective church practice and essential to producing desired kingdom results.

One of the most prolific writers on prayer is E.M. Bounds. A recent compilation of his writings on prayer is *The Classic Collection on Prayer* (Bridge-Logos Publishers). Bounds spent the last seventeen years of his life devoted to prayer, reading Scripture, and writing. He affirmed that prayer is the most important ingredient for spiritual growth and continuing power in the church.

In 1924 R. A. Torrey published a series of Bible studies on prayer in which he spoke about the blessings prayer will bring to churches. He wrote about the church gathered for prayer. “Prayer will bring blessing, definite and rich and immeasurable blessing, to the Church; praying will do more to make the Church what it ought to be than anything else we can do. Prayer will do more to root out heresy than all the heresy trials that were ever held. Prayer will do more to straighten out tangles and misunderstandings and unhappy complications in the life of a Church than all the councils and conferences that were ever held. Prayer will do more to bring a deep and lasting and sweeping revival, a revival that is real and lasting and altogether of the right sort, than all the organizations that were ever devised by man.”<sup>18</sup>

Writing in 1942, George Buttrick asserted that “the decline of the church prayer meeting is a more disturbing symptom of ill health than the alleged decline in church attendance or even than sectarian strife.” He charged churches with prayer meetings consisting of stereotyped and casual phrases that were repeated *ad nauseam* and declared “the church cannot redeem a tragic world without the vitality of corporate prayer.”<sup>19</sup>

Fifty years later T. W. Hunt wrote about the blessings that come through a church intercessory prayer ministry concentrated toward God’s glory and honor. “If a church develops a successful Intercessory Prayer Ministry, other programs of the church will be

blessed. Baptisms will go up, Sunday School attendance will increase, Discipleship Training will take on a new importance, and all programs will be enhanced. The church will discover God blesses a ministry that comes from Him and depends upon Him.”<sup>20</sup>

In 1997 Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, wrote *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, describing how that church was transformed through corporate prayer. Citing an experience when God told him how to lead the church, he said, “From this day on, the prayer meeting will be the barometer of our church. What happens on Tuesday night will be the gauge by which we will judge the success or failure because that will be the measure by which God blesses us.”<sup>21</sup> Cymbala, who speaks in conferences of church leaders across the country, including Southern Baptist conferences and churches, emphasizes to pastors that “for our churches and ministries to be all God wants them to be, they *must* be saturated with prayer. Spiritual power is *always* linked to communion with God.”

These testimonies provide a message particularly pertinent to transitional pastors. Regardless of the circumstances in which you find the church, corporate prayer is a vital part of the solution of problems and determining directions for the future.

Growing out of this prayer emphasis from the 1990s that carries into the third millennium, many churches are returning to experienced traditional practices of prayer or are making significant changes to impact the church.

- Leaders are challenged to make corporate prayer the primary focus of the church and its work.
- Prayer is considered a prerequisite for all ministry efforts.
- Churches are adding several types of prayer-related meetings to the church schedule.
- Prayer is a weapon and a shield in preparing for evangelistic meetings.
- Leaders are encouraged to rely on the work and power of the Holy Spirit rather than gimmicks or techniques.
- Prayer for personal repentance and confession of sin occurs in meetings of church members.
- Prayer becomes a personal priority in leaders’ lives and ministries.

Transitional pastors can make a lasting contribution in many churches by helping them move beyond using prayer just as a way to open a meeting and to close a meeting or as a way to transition from one activity to another in worship services. Ritual praying may make *some* contribution in corporate meetings, but it falls dismally short of the blessing that comes from a dynamic encounter with the living God through prayer, the access into which He has invited us. One way to strengthen the ministry of prayer is to develop an ongoing process of prayer partners taking seriously the need for specific prayer for the work of the transition.

Another way is to recapture the meaning and practice of prayer meetings. Prayer meetings are becoming the key focus of the work of the church and corporate prayer an essential part of the ministry of the church.

John Franklin in *And the Place Was Shaken* provides the following guidance for revitalizing the prayer meeting.<sup>22</sup>

God has three desires He wants to fulfill in a prayer meeting.

- He wants to reveal Himself to His people.  
The result is... People glorify God, learn the love relationship with Him, and become like Him.
- He wants to move people to His agenda.  
The result is... People of God are on mission with Him.
- He wants to build and minister to His people, especially through His people.  
The result is... *koinonia*.

Your job as a leader is to work with God by:

- Designing a format that encourages the three desires of God.
- Facilitating activities that encourage the three desires of God.
- Shepherding your people to do the desires of God.
- Discerning the activity of God before and during prayer meeting to increase the three desires of God.

A leader must especially master three types of activities.

- Knowing how to set the focus on God.
- Knowing how to facilitate participation from the laity.
- Knowing how to facilitate ministering activities.

Transitional pastors can use the chart on page 101 as one way to develop a dynamic prayer meeting. This can be an effective way to help church members know how to pray. You can duplicate the form on page 102 to use as a planning sheet for your prayer meeting.

# DEVELOPING A DYNAMIC PRAYER MEETING

**HOW TO USE THIS CHART:** Design a prayer meeting by understanding what God wants in your church, developing the **FORMAT**, and then choosing **ACTIVITIES** to use in each segment of the format. An example of this is in the center. **FORMAT + ACTIVITIES = PRAYER**

## A GOD-CENTERED FORMAT

A format is the organization and process flow of the prayer meeting. In this one-hour model, 5 segments are listed.

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### FOCUS ON GOD – 10-15 MINUTES

The Goal: To set the people's focus on God. God desires an intimate relationship with Him. Therefore, a prayer meeting must begin with God. The focus can be set on God by highlighting any reality about God – *who He is, what He can do, what He likes or dislikes, the reality of His presence, His purposes, etc.* Prior to the prayer meeting prepare yourself by seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to know what to emphasize about Him and the implications of our relationship with Him.

### RESPOND FROM THE HEART – 5-10 MINUTES

The Goal: To create an opportunity for the heart to respond to God. When the focus is on God, the heart will respond to Him as the Holy Spirit reminds the people of key issues such as *surrendering personal agendas, faith, gratitude, dependence, repentance, praise, honesty, thanksgiving, etc.* Having an intentional segment allows the people to solidify their response which will prepare their mind and spirit as they continue their prayer.

### SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM – 15-20 MINUTES

The Goal: To lead the people to be on God's agenda. God said if we seek first the kingdom He would give us everything else. That is why this segment occurs before we ask our requests. Deliberately utilize this time to encourage an outward focus on God's agenda by praying for various themes such as *missions, evangelism, social impact, the backslidden, the homeless, etc.* Remember also to pray consistently for projects and efforts occurring in the life of your church in which God is leading. Present these themes so that they become heart issues, not head issues only.

### PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS – 15-20 MINUTES

The Goal: To pray for needs from God's perspective and minister to one another. Teach the people how to think of prayer requests from God's viewpoint. Also use this segment to minister to one another as prayers are offered for various requests such as *the sick, marriages, financial concerns, crises, the youth, mothers, bereaved, traveling mercies, etc.*

### CLOSE IN CELEBRATION – 5 MINUTES

The Goal: To reaffirm expectation in God. This closure will be a reminder to the people to expect God's answer. You can use different means such as *giving thanks, singing, clapping, unified declaration, etc.* When God is present, people want to respond, and it sends them out on a positive note.

## AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER MEETING

### FOCUS ON GOD

1. As a reminder of what God can do, read **Eph 3:14-21. Recruit a member to give a testimony of how God answered prayer during the week.**

### RESPOND FROM THE HEART

(The number of prayer times may vary.)

1. Encourage dependence by praying in small groups.
2. Encourage faith and put hands together to symbolize expectation receiving.

### SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM

(Use a theme. The number of prayer times may vary.)

1. Have the mission team come to the front and other members surround and pray for them on their upcoming trip.
2. Pray in small groups for those who will hear the gospel from the mission team.
3. Pray in small groups for local Christians where the team will serve.

### PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS

(The number of prayer times may vary.)

1. Have every member write a prayer card and send to the Jones family currently battling with cancer.
2. Pray for couples with troubled marriages. Let the congregation symbolize standing in the gap for these couples by standing in pairs to pray.
3. Pray in small groups for those needing jobs.
4. Have open prayer time in small groups to pray for needs on members' hearts.

### CLOSE IN CELEBRATION

Have members sing "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" in a spirit of thanksgiving trusting Him.

## INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

An activity is any way or means to focus the heart on God, elicit participation, and facilitate ministry to one another.

\*\*\*\*\*

There are 3 groupings of activities. They are organized this way to highlight their importance to you as a leader. Keep in mind that any activity can occur anywhere in the format and may also fit in more than one segment.

### FOCUSING ACTIVITIES

The Goal: To set peoples focus on God. The Holy Spirit stirs hearts through various focusing activities such as *the leader's words, use of Scripture, singing, testimony, drama, etc.* Especially use these types of activities at the beginning of the prayer meeting when you are seeking to set the focus on God. Continue orienting people to God as you progress through the prayer meeting. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, select what is appropriate for your prayer meeting.

### PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

The Goal: To involve as many people as possible, both numerically and physically. This structures likely opportunities for God to speak and work through all the body. You facilitate this two ways:

**NUMERICALLY:** God wants all of His people (not a select few) to participate in the prayer meeting. Therefore: (1) Give away leadership roles in various ways including having a number of participants *read Scripture, give testimonies, guide prayer times, etc.* (2) Give everyone a chance to vocalize their relationship with God. Create these opportunities through activities such as *singing, small groups, individually praying out loud all at once, responsive reading, large group sentence prayers, etc.*

**PHYSICALLY:** People's bodily participation often encourages their heart to participate. Utilize various activities such as *coming to the altar, kneeling, writing a prayer card, clasping hands, standing to pray with another, breaking into small groups, etc.* This doesn't have to be calisthenics. It could be as simple as taking another's hand, but don't create spectator mode by allowing them to just sit there in the pew.

### MINISTERING ACTIVITIES

The Goal: For the body to minister to and build itself up in love. God wants us to minister to each other. Employ activities such as *kneeling beside another at the altar, having new mothers stand as the congregation prays for them, having participants put their hand on each other's shoulder, having the church surround someone with a special need, having small groups surround those struggling with cancer, etc.* Incorporate these activities into the format to let the body build itself up in love.

God Centered



### **STAGE 3: Affirm Biblical Principles for Church Growth**

Biblical principles identify the primary scriptural teachings that direct the scope and work of the church. Biblical principles are the same for all churches in all places in any era. They require a church to wrestle with questions like: “Why do we exist?” and “What does God call us to do with Him that brings glory to Himself?”

Transitional pastors should teach and preach to help people understand and affirm the biblical principles that guide the church in its planning for growth and shape its practice. Leading churches through the following sequential steps is a major responsibility of transitional pastors.

1. Distribute to each member of the Transitional Focus Team a copy of “A Church Model and Process” chart on page 97 and “Biblical Principles for Church Growth” on pages 104-109. Lead the Focus Team to pray faithfully and fervently for God’s guidance in understanding and applying the biblical principles upon which churches are to be built.
2. Preach a sermon on the Great Commission: God’s Purpose and Plan for His Churches. Also preach on the five biblical functions of the church revealed in Acts and in selected portions of Paul’s letters to churches. Emphasize that God empowers the body of believers to bring people into the family of God and nurture them in faith and work. It is more than having a church name, a traditional church building, and regularly scheduled activities.
3. Divide the Transitional Focus Team into five subgroups, one for each of the five functions. Each subgroup will use the SWOTs form (page 110) to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats the church has in its assigned function area.
4. Each subgroup will present a summary report to the full Transitional Focus Team.
5. The five subgroups then work through the development of key objectives for the five functions of the church using the guidance on pages 111-123.

See the following pages (104-109) for an overview of the biblical principles. These may be copied to give to the Transitional Focus Team.

## BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHURCH GROWTH <sup>23</sup>

Church growth is the result of God's supernatural work through His people to accomplish His kingdom purposes. Church growth also is the result of God's people obeying His will and His Word in the world.

### **The Great Commission defines for His church God's mission in the world.**

“Then Jesus came near and said to them, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age’ ” (Matt. 28:18-20).

The Great Commission is God's mission expressed to His people in His Word and through His people to the world. At its core, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) is a command to join Christ in His mission.

It represents the overriding mandate—the driving force—to any New Testament church. That mandate is “to make disciples.” Making disciples involves leading people to personal faith in Jesus Christ as God's Messiah and humanity's personal redeemer, assimilating new believers into the life and ministry of the church, and leading them toward maturity in Christ.

Without the driving force of the Great Commission, church growth will be little more than a misguided attempt to gain numbers, increase enrollments, discover methods, utilize marketing techniques, and do something different. The Great Commission defines God's mission (which is our mission) in the world. The Commission is the Lord's marching orders for every believer and church.

*“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”* – We cannot fulfill the Great Commission in our own strength and in our way. The power and authority to do what our Lord commanded are His, not ours.

*“Go, therefore.”* – Christ commands us to go into our world with His message of hope and salvation. We go to family, friends, neighbors, and strangers because Jesus tells us to go. For a Christian, going is not an option; it is the Lord's command.

*“Make disciples.”* – The best translation of the Greek word sometimes translated *teach* is “make disciples.” To become a disciple, a person has to turn from sin and receive salvation from Christ. A disciple is a learner, a follower of Christ who has experienced a radical change of life and lifestyle. Christians are partners with the Lord in redemption.

*“All nations.”* – The kingdom of God is for all people. It is not limited to any racial, national, social, or cultural group. The gospel reveals the Lord’s love for all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances in all kinds of places. There are no limits on the gospel, geographic or otherwise.

*“Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* – Baptism is an act of obedience and a picture of a person’s identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. It symbolizes what God has done for us in redemption. When Christ redeems us, we die to sin and rise to new life in Him.

*“Teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.”* – Christians are to bring disciples into a deeper relationship with Christ and into a better understanding of His will. New disciples are led to spiritual maturity by other believers who help them know and do the things Jesus commanded.

*“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* – Jesus assured His disciples that His constant presence would be with them to help them fulfill His Great Commission. Our Lord is beside us, around us, and within us. We join Him, at His invitation, in His redemptive work.

### **The church fulfills the Great Commission through five functions.**

The New Testament describes five functions or purposes that every church can and must do in order to fulfill the Great Commission. These functions are evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship. Each believer must do the same five functions to fulfill his or her personal calling in the world.

#### **1. Evangelism**

Evangelism is the process of sharing the gospel with the lost and leading them to a personal relationship with Christ that enables them to enter the kingdom of God. It is asking them to repent of their sins, to put their faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the free gift of eternal life, and to follow Him forever as Lord.

“ ‘Repent,’ Peter said to them, ‘and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’ And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, ‘Be saved from this corrupt generation!’ So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about 3,000 people were added to them” (Acts 2:38-41).

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has

committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; certain that God is appealing through us, we plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.' He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:17-21).

Evangelism is the good news of the gospel spoken by believers and lived out in their lives. Christians are saved to fellowship with the King of kings and Lord of lords. That is too much blessing to be kept to oneself. Evangelism is sharing the blessing with those who do not have it. It is a spiritual interaction between saved people and the lost.

Evangelism under the lordship of Christ is the only way to make disciples. The need for the gospel is universal and the message is universal and effective in all cultures. Evangelism is a believer sharing the gospel with a lost person of any age or culture in ways both understand. God saves His people for fellowship with Him and sends them into the world to help others to personally know the joy of forgiveness and the blessing of wholeness through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

## **2. Discipleship**

Discipleship is a lifelong journey of obedience to Christ that transforms a person's values and behavior and results in ministry in one's home, church, and in the world. Disciples are people who have responded to the Holy Spirit's conviction by repenting of their sins, have trusted Jesus Christ's redeeming work for forgiveness from sin, and have begun the journey of life with Christ desiring to grow into the likeness of Christ. Mature discipleship, living for the Lord in every aspect of life while awaiting the coming of the Savior to bring everything under His control, is a goal for all believers.

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers. Then fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles" (Acts 2:42-43).

"For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are His creation—created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

Nothing about the Christian life is natural or easy. The life of a disciple involves struggle, inconvenience, and sometimes terrible suffering. Believers must be taught to understand and practice the ways of Christ. They must see kingdom living displayed in believers who are more spiritually mature. Then they must model kingdom living for those who are younger in their faith.

Nurturing disciples is the process of teaching the new citizen in the kingdom of God to love, trust, and obey God the King and how to evangelize and train others to do the same. The discipleship process requires commitment, patience, and obedience, because maturing believers requires time.

### **3. Fellowship**

Fellowship is an intimate spiritual relationship with God and unity with other believers brought together in Jesus Christ, the way members express their “oneness” in Jesus Christ. The biblical word means “to share in” or “to come into communion” and suggests unity and community. See the biblical church covenant on page 77.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.... And every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42, 46, 47).

Fellowship does not happen by accident. It is the result of the power of God working in individual believers and in the church body. As believers share with others their salvation experiences, practice living Christlike lives, and demonstrate their faith by serving others, fellowship flourishes as surely as summer follows spring.

Without warm, loving fellowship churches will not grow. People will not come where bickering, selfishness, coldness, and tensions prevail. People want to be where peace, joy, love, and family relationships prevail.

In addition to the local fellowship of believers, the church is a great family of believers across the world. When one Christian meets another anywhere in the world, regardless of language, color, or culture, they have an immediate bond with each other because they share in the same saving grace of Jesus Christ. Jesus described His relationship with the Father in terms of oneness and offers His followers that same kind of relationship with Him and with each other.

Christ’s unity with the Father is the pattern for churches not bound together by creeds or confessions, programs, and ministries, but with the bonds of God’s love and the bonding power of the Holy Spirit. A prerequisite to fellowship among believers is dynamic worship of the living God who makes all people one through the cross of Christ. Those who experience fellowship with God in worship cannot withhold fellowship from others who worship this same one and only God.

### **4. Ministry**

Ministry is meeting another person’s need in the name of Jesus, both members of the church and non-members. Using the resources God provides, it is expressed as service to people inside the church family and expressed as missions to those outside the church. This ministry grows out of a transformed and serving life.

“Now all the believers were together and had everything in common. So they sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need” (Acts 2:44-45).

“And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ” (Eph. 4:11-15).

Christian compassion demands that we minister to all people without regard to their race, religious affiliation, abilities, or circumstances. Ministry is rooted in the compassion and concern the Lord builds into the hearts of believers when they enter His kingdom.

Human need is so staggering that our own resources alone will never be enough. As God expects us to minister, He gives us the power and the means to do so. We must be good stewards of the faith, abilities, and resources God has given us.

Every church has the responsibility to equip its members to discover, develop, and use their ministry gifts in ways that honor Christ and build God’s kingdom. Ministry is as natural to growing Christians as are evangelism and discipleship because of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Churches that are relevant to their community grow.

## **5. Worship**

Worship is the response of believers to the presence, holiness, and revelation of Almighty God that transforms them into His likeness. It leads worshippers to a greater appreciation for God, a better understanding of His ways, and a deeper commitment to Him. Worship brings us face-to-face with our Creator and draws us closer to His image. Worship arises from the commands of God in Scripture and the grateful hearts of the redeemed. Worship is to the soul what breathing is to the body.

“And every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46-47).

“Jesus told her, ‘Believe Me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth’ ” (John 4:21-24).

Christian worship is first a personal experience; then it is a family and a congregational experience. Church leaders have the responsibility to help new believers grow in all aspects of worship: prayer, devotional Scripture reading, praise, adoration, confession, repentance,

profession, and stewardship of life. In addition, corporate worship is fostered through public Scripture reading, preaching, and the ordinances.

The first worship experience of all Christians is when their yielded hearts bow before God confessing and repenting of sin, turn to Jesus Christ for salvation from sin, and rejoice at the reality of salvation. Encountering God in worship transforms believers more and more into His likeness.

# S W O T s

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<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>

## DEVELOPMENT OF KEY OBJECTIVES

In this phase of the transitional process, the Transitional Focus Team actually gets to the work of thinking through specific objectives for the church. This is done through the use of scenarios investigating the five functions of the church: worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, and fellowship.

These areas can be briefly described as follows:

- Worship – Our worship serves as dress rehearsal for eternity for believers and as a powerful witness to unbelievers (Rev. 4—5).
- Evangelism – Our Lord has told us that the fields are ripe for harvest and has given us the Great Commission (John 4:35; Matt. 28:19-20).
- Discipleship – We are commanded to mature so that the image of Christ is formed in us (Col. 1:9-14).
- Ministry – Our personal and corporate growth will be demonstrated in ministry to others (Eph. 4:1-32).
- Fellowship – The early church enjoyed a sense of unity and community that allowed them to accomplish their mission (Acts 2:42-47).

The Transitional Focus Team will be divided into five subgroups, one for each function of the church. The transitional pastor should divide the group purposefully, not arbitrarily. By this stage in the process, the transitional pastor should know the team well enough to make the selection of who to serve on the subgroups. People should be placed on a subgroup where they do not have strengths. For example, although it may seem logical to place choir members on the worship subgroup, they should not serve there. The best person to evaluate worship is someone who sits in the congregation and participates in worship each week. The church's Sunday School director may be consulted by the discipleship subgroup, but he should not be a member. His voice will be too strong and other subgroup members may not feel free to offer criticism in his presence.

Once the division is made, the Transitional Focus Team members should assemble with their subgroup. Their first agenda should be to elect a chairperson. Following that, each subgroup will be given a brief description of their function and a set of scenario questions, backcasting questions, and an action plan outline (pages 114-123).

The scenario questions are designed to help the subgroup ask, "What if?" Without assistance, subgroups have difficulty imagining the future and many possible scenarios. These questions are designed to help them begin "future-thinking." The ability to ask future-oriented questions is almost as important as the answers. There should not be too much weight placed on the answers to the questions. The questions are simply a tool to help begin thinking about the "What If?"

The backcasting questions ask, "What is?" After looking at a future scenario, we should ask how our present reality compares to that scenario. For example, a good scenario question for evangelism or discipleship is: "Would we do anything differently in our worship service if we knew that 40% of the attendees were non-believers?" Most

subgroup members would agree that if almost half the congregation were non-believers, we would probably plan and execute the church service differently. The obvious corresponding backcasting question is: “How many attendees today are non-believers?” Most subgroup members would probably have no idea. Then the logical conclusion is: “Then we don’t know the spiritual condition of our attendees, do we? Should we? How will we?”

The purpose of the scenario and backcasting questions is to fully examine each function in the church. This is an opportunity to critically evaluate the church’s effectiveness in each area. The subgroup is free (and encouraged) to consult with staff, obtain relevant data and information, and develop all the resources necessary to thoroughly evaluate their assigned area of focus (function).

The final subgroup task is to formulate an action plan. The action plan includes seven key areas for the subgroup to address: leadership, people resources, prayer, facilities, technology, calendar, and budget. While these areas may seem arbitrary, experience has proven that successful implementation of church strategy addresses these seven key areas. The subgroup must evaluate the present effectiveness using these areas. They must then prepare an action plan to address weaknesses. The action plan may have as many recommendations as they deem necessary. However, they are encouraged to have at least one recommendation that can be immediately implemented with little or no cost. This is referred to as “low-hanging fruit.” Each subgroup should consider the question in regards to their function: “What is one thing that we could do immediately and easily that will make a difference?” Likewise the subgroup should include at least one short-term (six months to a year) and one long-term (one to three years) recommendation.

To help in their evaluation, each subgroup should recruit at least two more people to serve on their subgroup from the congregation at-large. This expands the group of people committed to the process and outcome. It enables the subgroup to gain any help they deem necessary. They should report to the transitional pastor who they have recruited.

The subgroup will set their own meeting times and schedule to conduct their work. They are given a very short period of time to accomplish their assignment. The short time raises the level of intensity and urgency. It elevates the importance of what they are doing and helps to ensure that the work gets accomplished. If this task is stretched out over a longer period of time, it tends to lose effectiveness and commitment wanes. A two to three week period is long enough to accomplish the work. They will need to meet on their own several times during this period.

To help them understand how to accomplish the task, the transitional pastor should lead the Transitional Focus Team in an example scenario evaluation and mini-action plan development. The transitional pastor should also meet with each subgroup at least once during the process. He should begin with the subgroup he considers the most challenged by the task. Subgroups often have difficulty getting the ball rolling and they can benefit from encouragement and reassurance.

After two to three weeks, when the subgroups are finished, they should make a presentation to the Transitional Focus Team. It is an exciting time when the subgroups discover that they have all made some common recommendations. It is in this area of common recommendations that the team's hard work is validated and the members begin to see real, tangible opportunity for the future.

After the presentations, the leaders of each subgroup are asked to meet and formulate one set of integrated recommendations that represents the work of all the subgroups. This set of recommendations will form a collective recommendation presented to the church. After the recommendations have been formulated and a presentation for the church developed, the leaders should rehearse their presentation in front of the Transitional Focus Team. This will give them helpful feedback as well as assure the Transitional Focus Team that their recommendations have been faithfully represented.

The transitional pastor may lead the Transitional Focus Team to hold these recommendations so they can be integrated with the total work of the team throughout Stages 1-6 (see pages 134).

## **EVANGELISM**

### **Scenario Statements – “What if ...?”**

1. We have six or more major outreach events per year aimed at reaching pre-Christians.
2. Church members regularly bring their un-churched and pre-Christian friends to worship experiences and church events.
3. Our church regularly and intentionally prays for the conversion of specific individuals in our church prayer ministries.
4. Half or more of our church evangelism expenditures target youth and children (below 19 years of age).
5. Our church follows up with guest visits with personal contacts by church members.
6. At all church leadership meetings we spend time praying for the lost and for church evangelistic efforts.
7. At least 15 percent of attendees of our worship/outreach events are un-churched.
8. The leaders in our church demonstrate strong evangelistic values.
9. People are frequently made a part of our church’s life even before they become Christians.
10. Our church cooperates with other evangelistic congregations in our community to present the gospel to pre-Christians.
11. Church members are trained in sharing their faith.
12. Other statements:

### **Backcasting Questions – “What is ...?”**

1. Are our church leaders (pastor, staff, deacons, key lay leaders) personal evangelists?
2. What is our church’s attitude toward pre-Christians? Are they to be avoided? Should they be let into the church only after they first adopt Christian values? Do we see them as people who matter to God and therefore should matter to us?
3. How is our church acquainting itself with the harvest? Surveys? Demographics? Psychographics? What do pre-Christians consider important?
4. What have been our evangelism results over the past five years? How many conversions of children/youth of church members? How many conversions of children/youth of non-church members? How many adult conversions?
5. What is the percentage of pre-Christians currently attending our church worship experiences?
6. What is the percentage of pre-Christians currently attending our church outreach events?
7. How many outreach events do we conduct each year?
8. What tracking system do we use to register guest attendance at worship experiences and other church events?
9. Do we conduct ongoing training for helping our members share their faith?
10. Do we have working relationships with other churches in our community, cooperating with them as partners in reaching pre-Christians and the un-churched?
11. What strengths can we build on to help us improve our evangelistic efforts?
12. What information do we need for better assessing our evangelism future?
13. Other questions:

### **Evangelism Action Plan Outline – “What now ...?”**

The emerging vision of our church’s next chapter in growth seems to be:

The strengths we have to build on include:

We have identified/uncovered these issues:

- Leadership
- People resources
- Prayer
- Facilities
- Technology
- Calendar
- Budget

Our next step(s) of action:

1. What:

By whom:

By when:

2. What:

By whom:

By when:

3. What:

By whom:

By when:

## FELLOWSHIP

### Scenario Statements – “What if ...?”

1. At least 20 percent of our small groups (classes, ministry teams, discipleship, support groups, etc.) have been formed in the last two years.
2. Twenty percent of our leaders are newcomers within the past two years.
3. We have an intentional process to help new people develop significant relationships within six months of becoming a part of our church.
4. Our church has an intentional orientation process for new people.
5. Our church routinely contacts members after two consecutive absences.
6. The primary care of church members occurs through church members looking after each other.
7. Most of the ministry of this church is done by lay people rather than clergy.
8. The church routinely forms ad hoc groups to address emerging ministry opportunities.
9. Our church members are empowered to develop ministries that may or may not have been thought of by church leaders.
10. Members can articulate the church’s mission and vision.
11. Members contribute time, money, energy resources willingly and enthusiastically.
12. Church leaders are covenanted with each other and the congregation to handle disputes in a biblical and mature manner.
13. Our church has adequate communication systems (Website, e-mail, print media, phone system, etc.).
14. Other statements:

### Backcasting Questions – “What is ...?”

1. Do we intentionally orient new people into the church? What elements are involved (classes, receptions, group experiences, member sponsorship, or shepherding)? How do we facilitate the development of significant relationships?
2. How many new units (classes, work/ministry groups, support/discipleship groups) have we developed in each of the last three years?
3. Do we currently track members’ attendance? At which activities? Do we know who has missed two consecutive weeks? Who has this information?
4. Who contacts the absentees? How is the contact reported and to whom?
5. What is our current care system? How is this responsibility distributed? What are the expectations of pastor/staff? Deacons? Sunday School teachers/care leaders? Small group leaders? Members?
6. What is the path of a new idea for ministry? Where can it start? Where does it have to go? What people/groups have veto power over it? Does it have to travel through multiple layers of bureaucracy? Are ad hoc groups or standing committees charged with ministry development (research shows that innovation usually emerges through ad hoc channels)? How long does it take “to get something done around here”? Is the prevailing attitude “no” or “yes” to new ideas?
7. How are people kept informed about church life? Are we utilizing technology to enhance congregational communication through Website development, e-mail capabilities, etc.?

8. What is the frequency and what are the forums used for casting the vision of the congregation?
9. What team-building/team-leading skills does our leadership possess?
10. How do our leaders secure feedback from the congregation?
11. How well positioned are our leaders to lead? Is the congregation ready to follow? Why or why not?
12. Do people trust one another? Can they share concerns without fear of exposure?
13. Do groups exist with competing agendas? Is conflict elevated to the point that decisions are driven by it?
14. What is our financial health? Remember: Money follows mission. Are donors told “thank you” for their giving? Do they know how their gifts are being used? Is a wide range of giving motivations being tapped (commitment and compassion)? Do we offer adequate giving opportunities (capital needs, missions offerings, etc.)?
15. What information do we need to better assess how our congregational life can be improved?
16. Other questions:

### **Fellowship Action Plan Outline – “What now ...?”**

The emerging vision of our church’s next chapter in growth seems to be:

The strengths we have to build on include:

We have identified/uncovered these issues:

- Leadership
- People resources
- Prayer
- Facilities
- Technology
- Calendar
- Budget

Our next step(s) of action:

1. What:  
By whom:  
By when:
2. What:  
By whom:  
By when:
3. What:  
By whom:  
By when:

## **DISCIPLESHIP**

### **Scenario Statements – “What if ...?”**

1. We regularly hear testimonies of people whose lives have been transformed by the Lord through the ministry of this church.
2. Most of our regular adult worship attenders are part of a small group (may include Sunday School units if small group dynamics of accountability are practiced there).
3. Our church has a small group for every 12-15 adults (again, Sunday School counts if intentional small group dynamics are present).
4. Our people are able to request and to receive mentoring for spiritual growth.
5. Our spiritual leaders are accountable to God, each other, and to the congregation for their personal spiritual growth.
6. Proven Christian character is a pre-eminent qualification to be a leader in our church.
7. Our church recognizes the importance of spiritual vitality for the pastor and staff and takes steps to insure this through appropriate time off and sabbaticals.
8. Our church interviews each person/family annually to plan their spiritual development agenda.
9. Our church has an intentional plan and goals for the spiritual growth of our members.
10. Other statements:

### **Backcasting Questions – “What is ...?”**

1. How do we determine peoples’ spiritual progress? Is the central question for our church, “What kind of people are we developing?”
2. How do we celebrate transformed lives?
3. Do our church goals include spiritual growth objectives for both people and families?
4. Are we providing settings where people can share heart-to-heart and be coached in their spiritual growth? In Bible study classes? In small group discipleship?
5. How do we communicate an expectation to our members that they be involved in spiritually accountable relationships?
6. What small group support does our church provide for specific family/life issues (divorce recovery, blended families, single parents, etc.)?
7. How is our pastor/staff expected to maintain their personal/family spiritual vitality? Does our church provide for adequate time off (studies indicate that consistent 50+hour weeks for clergy debilitates their spiritual leadership), personnel policies that include vacation, personal retreats, family week-ends off, sabbaticals, etc.?
8. Does our church calendar promote or inhibit family life? What is the expectation of church members’ participation in church functions, activities, ministry?
9. How are our church members challenged in financial stewardship?
10. How does prayer occupy a prominent place in our church ministry?
11. How do we hold our leaders accountable for their Christian conduct and character?
12. What strengths do we have to work with?
13. Other questions:

## **Discipleship Action Plan Outline – “What now ...?”**

The emerging vision of our church’s next chapter in growth seems to be:

The strengths we have to build on include:

We have identified/uncovered these issues:

- Leadership
- People resources
- Prayer
- Facilities
- Technology
- Calendar
- Budget

Our next step(s) of action:

1. What:  
By whom:  
By when:
2. What:  
By whom:  
By when:
3. What:  
By whom:  
By when:

## MINISTRY

### Scenario Statements – “What if ...?”

1. Increasing numbers of our people are involved in ministry targeting the community.
2. Our pastor and staff spend at least 30 percent of their time training and developing leaders in intentional settings (individual mentoring, classes, small groups, etc.).
3. Our church contributes an increasing share of its financial resources to missions through individual, organizational, and/or church-wide missions ministries.
4. Our church helps members become involved in ministries (church and community) that express their passions, gifts, and talents.
5. Our church uses a strengths-based approach to recruiting leaders and ministry workers.
6. Each of our church ministry leaders is training an apprentice for future leadership.
7. Our church addresses the needs of families through special seminars, retreats, Bible study classes, small group support.
8. People in our community regularly receive practical spiritual help for life issues through our church ministry efforts.
9. Our church intentionally studies the community, state, nation, and world to discover mission opportunities.
10. Our church members (including children, youth, and adults) have frequent opportunities to become personally involved in missions projects and activities.
11. Our church leaders are personally involved in missions projects.
12. Our church intentionally researches and identifies ministry opportunities in our church and community.
13. Each new church member is guided into discovering a ministry in the church or community.
14. Other statements:

### Backcasting Questions – “What is ...?”

1. How do we guide our members into ministry? How are expectations communicated?
2. How are ministry opportunities discovered and communicated to the congregation?
3. How do we help people discover and express their ministry passions?
4. How do we help people discover their spiritual gifts and calling?
5. How do we help people find a place of ministry (in the church or community)?
6. What has our church done financially each year over the past five years in direct mission support for individual, church, and denominational missions efforts? Include special missions offering. What is the trend relative to the percent of the church budget in each of those years?
7. How do we encourage the development and coordination of missions efforts?
8. Does our church participate in state convention partnership missions or other joint missions endeavors? Financially? People?
9. How do we coach people in their ministry performance?
10. What system of volunteer enlistment do we use? Do we begin with organizational and program needs or with peoples’ passions, gifts, temperaments? Can we combine the two?

11. How do we address life concerns of our ministry population (family, marriage, finances, etc.)?
12. What percentage of time will our leaders spend developing other leaders (30 percent minimum)?
13. What is our current leadership development process (pastor/staff development, mentoring, coaching, training volunteers, etc.)? Do people who accept ministry assignments receive the coaching they need?
14. How do we celebrate missions involvement?
15. What information do we need in order to be prepared as a global missions center?
16. Other questions:

### **Ministry Action Plan Outline – “What now ...?”**

The emerging vision of our church’s next chapter in growth seems to be:

The strengths we have to build on include:

We have identified/uncovered these issues:

- Leadership
- People resources
- Prayer
- Facilities
- Technology
- Calendar
- Budget

Our next step(s) of action:

1. What:  
By whom:  
By when:
  
2. What:  
By whom:  
By when:
  
3. What:  
By whom:  
By when:

## WORSHIP

### Scenario Statements – “What if ...?”

1. Our church is conducting multiple worship experiences targeting different groups (ethnic populations, generation groups, etc.).
2. Our church is offering multiple worship experiences targeting the same target group (different time, same basic worship service).
3. Our church conducts worship experiences on days other than Sundays.
4. Our church conducts worship experiences in places other than the church sanctuary or other church property.
5. More than 15 percent of our worship experience attenders are pre-Christians.
6. Worshippers regularly feel ushered into the presence of God.
7. Our worship experiences are led by worship teams, not all of whom are paid staff.
8. Our worship services are culturally relevant utilizing a variety of communication approaches to connect with different target groups.
9. Other statements:

### Backcasting Questions – “What is ...?”

1. What is the goal and measure of the worship experience(s) for our congregation?
2. What is (are) the target population(s) we want to reach in a relevant way with our worship experience?
3. What makes worship relevant to each of these target populations? Can we describe a worship experience for each target group? Can we describe a worship experience designed to reach multiple targets? Which approach will we adopt?
4. Will we consider days other than Sunday, multiple times on Sunday, worship places other than the sanctuary or worship center? In other words, how many times and types of worship are we willing to consider?
5. What is our current leadership development process for creating new worship leaders?
6. What range of talent in our congregation is currently used in our worship experiences (audio, technical, vocal, instrumental, drama, etc.)?
7. Are worship participants aware of the intentional purpose/theme of our worship experiences? Should they be?
8. Are our worship experiences evangelistic even though they may not be expressly evangelistic in nature?
9. Do we track worship attendees so that guests' and members' frequency can be identified?
10. Do we have a follow-up plan for contacting guests in worship?
11. What information do we need for better assessing our worship experiences for the future?
12. When do we put our best foot forward in worship? What strengths can we build on?
13. How do our present strengths match our opportunities?
14. Other questions:

## **Worship Action Plan Outline – “What now ...?”**

The emerging vision of our church’s next chapter in growth seems to be:

The strengths we have to build on include:

We have identified/uncovered these issues:

- Leadership
- People resources
- Prayer
- Facilities
- Technology
- Calendar
- Budget

Our next step(s) of action:

1. What:  
    By whom:  
    By when:
  
2. What:  
    By whom:  
    By when:
  
3. What:  
    By whom:  
    By when:

## **STAGE 4: Focus on Kingdom Results**

Kingdom results mean the supernatural activity of God is being expressed through the body of Christ and is being reflected in the changed lives of people. The results are measures or indicators of faithful obedience in responding to the Great Commission and serving God in growing His kingdom.

Having interpreted the Great Commission in terms of evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship, it follows that a church should plan for the results of faithfully and effectively performing these functions enlightened by the Scriptures and empowered by the Holy Spirit (see chart of “A Church Model and Process” on page 97).

Transitional pastors should teach and preach to help people understand and affirm the kingdom results that guide the church in its planning for growth. Leading churches through these sequential steps is a major responsibility of transitional pastors.

1. Distribute to each member of the Transitional Focus Team a copy of pages 125-127 on Kingdom Results. Use those pages and the chart of “A Church Model and Process” on page 97 to lead the Transitional Focus Team to pray faithfully and fervently for God’s guidance in understanding the kingdom results that God want churches to achieve.
2. Preach a sermon series on the four kingdom results—spiritual transformation (More Like Christ), numerical growth (More People Reached for Christ), ministry expansion (More Service in the Name of Christ), and kingdom advance (More of Christ’s Heart for the World).
3. Divide the Transitional Focus Team into four subgroups to evaluate the church’s effectiveness in each of the four result areas using the SWOTs form (page 110). Each subgroup will give a report to the full Transitional Focus Team.

See the following pages (125-127) for an overview of kingdom results. These may be copied to give to the Transitional Focus Team (step 1 above).

## KINGDOM RESULTS

Kingdom results mean the supernatural activity of God is being expressed through the body of Christ and is being reflected in the changed lives of people. The following four results are measures or indicators of faithful obedience in responding to the Great Commission and serving God in growing His kingdom.

### 1. More Like Christ — Spiritual Transformation

Spiritual transformation is God's work of changing a believer into the likeness of Jesus by creating a new identity in Christ and by empowering a lifelong relationship of love, trust, and obedience that glorifies God.

In the Great Commission, Jesus said the church must be teaching new disciples to obey everything He commanded (Matt. 28:20). Paul wrote, "We all . . . are reflecting the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

New believers need to understand and live the true meaning of discipleship. Just as children pass a series of milestones on their way to maturity, believers go through transformational passages on their way to spiritual maturity.

Spiritual transformation can be observed in at least four dimensions.

- Developing in our relationship with Christ – We get our daily growth and spiritual nourishment from the same source we got our eternal life—Jesus Christ (John 15:5). Jesus desires for us to have the same kind of relationship with Him that He has with the Father (John 17:21). We are to grow to the point that He lives His life in and through us (Gal. 2:19-20).
- Developing in our relationships with believers – The mark of a church is the warm, loving relationships believers enjoy with one another (John 13:34-35). Although we have many different backgrounds, cultures, ideas, opinions, and experiences, we have a common bond in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28).
- Developing in our relationships with unbelievers – Those who are objects of the Father's love and concern must be on our hearts and minds as well. Believers have been given the ministry and message of reconciliation as His ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:18-20). With the power of the Holy Spirit, we are His witnesses to those nearby and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).
- Developing Christian disciplines – The Christian life is built on important disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, worship, witnessing, and faithful participation in the fellowship of believers. These activities will not produce mature Christians by themselves, but believers need them to grow spiritually.

## **2. More People Reached for Christ — Numerical Growth**

Numbers are important in the kingdom of God or the Bible would not have recorded them. Twice in the second chapter of Acts, Luke records the number of people who were baptized and added to the church (v. 41, 47). Luke reports in Acts 6:1 that “the number of disciples was multiplying.” Six verses later the number of disciples “multiplied greatly.” It is obvious that God is pleased when His children serve in ways that help His kingdom come on earth. Numerical growth means increases in all areas of the church. Also numerical growth means any size church can grow.

There’s nothing wrong with seeing numbers as evidence of God at work. The danger is in seeing numbers as statistics rather than people and in using numbers as the only measure of growth.

What numerical growth does the church desire? Results can be expected in each of the following areas if the church is faithfully and effectively involved in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship.

- Professions of faith and baptisms
- People attending Bible study
- People participating regularly in corporate worship and corporate prayer

Churches that expect numerical growth are normally engaged in training for these growth areas, involved in ministries outside the church, practicing biblical stewardship, providing effective discipleship, and participating in mission projects. Some churches already have practical and challenging growth goals while others have become comfortable being on a growth plateau or in a gradual decline.

## **3. More Service in the Name of Christ — Ministry Expansion**

When Jesus spoke of the final judgment in Matthew 25:31–46, He talked about ministry. “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (25:40).

As the church becomes sensitive to the unmet needs in the fellowship, the community, and the world, they will expand their ministries to meet those needs. Ministry expansion means that as a church grows numerically and as people are transformed spiritually, the Holy Spirit opens additional doors of ministry. As long as we minister to hurting people, we will never lack for an audience.

“In those days, as the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. Then the Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, ‘It would not be right for us to give up preaching about God to wait on tables. Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty’” (Acts 6:1-3).

“In the local church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius the Eyrenian, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work that I have called them to.’ Then, after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off” (Acts 13:1-3).

God intends to meet the needs in the fellowship, community, and world through the lives of His children who seek out areas of ministry in which to serve. God expects us to place our gifts, abilities, and resources in His hands for His use. He will bless them and add to them so that we will have more than enough to meet the needs of all people. The church must listen to the Holy Spirit’s voice through the Word of God and prayer and must depend on the Spirit to lead it to the ministry He desires. The more mature believers are the more likely God will lead them to do greater and different things.

#### **4. More of Christ’s Heart for the World — Kingdom Advance**

Kingdom advance is God’s daily work of extending His kingdom throughout the world. The church is involved in reaching the world for Christ by praying, giving generously, and sending members on mission into the world. This is the Great Commission in its purest and best form. Remember, however, the Great Commission’s “go” is not complete until people are sent out from local churches—to advance His kingdom to “all nations”—as the Lord directs.

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Kingdom advance results from kingdom consciousness. Sights are lifted above self-interest, or one class or group or team, or one church or denomination. Above all human structure is the kingdom of God. The measure of kingdom advance in a church is the church praying “Your kingdom come, your will be done” (Matt. 6:10) and accepting God’s rule in all of its affairs.

When a church grows numerically, spiritually, and in ministry, believers become sensitive to the need to extend the gospel beyond their community to a world lost in sin. Their window on the world is enlarged. Their desire to witness, disciple, and minister is multiplied and enlarged. Involvement in missions reveals that the people of God have developed a worldview that is proper and biblical. The church will see the world as God sees it and will respond by sending its members into the world as missionaries.

God calls out believers to go into the world with the message of redemption. For some believers, the call will be to their families, churches, and neighborhoods. Others will be called to faraway places. But all believers are commissioned by Jesus to go into the world. “Just as the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21).

## **STAGE 5: Establish Church Practice**

This is a crucial stage in transitional pastor ministry—leading a church from convictional principles to productive practice. Church practice means how you involve people in evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship. It determines how people will relate to people and to tasks in carrying out the Great Commission. Shaping church practice answers questions like “What is the most effective way to do our work to make the greatest difference in the lives of people?” Strategy is the course a church decides to take to achieve kingdom results. Church practice is the operational plan to get there.

As transitional pastor you have the challenge of leading the church in the hard work of praying and planning. To succeed you must inspire churches to move beyond lethargy, constricting traditions, low expectations, and low commitment. To do that, you must pray for a discerning heart.

1. Distribute to each member of the Transitional Focus Team a copy of pages 129-132 on Church Practice. Although you have already distributed the chart of “A Church Model and Process” on page 97, have extra copies available. Lead the Transitional Focus Team in studying about the four church practices of open groups, closed groups, corporate worship, and ministry teams. Challenge them to pray fervently for God’s guidance in applying the church practices in order to carry out the biblical principles for church growth and to accomplish the kingdom results God desires for the church.
2. Communicate to the congregation about the church practices through sermons and church publications. Display the chart of the Model and Process (page 97) throughout the church facilities.
3. Lead a discussion of the Church Practices with the Transitional Focus Team using the drawing exercise on page 133.
4. Divide the Transitional Focus Team into four subgroups to evaluate the church’s effectiveness in each of the four church practices using the SWOTs form (page 110). Each subgroup will give a report to the full Transitional Focus Team.

See the following pages (129-132) for an overview of church practice. These may be copied to give to the Transitional Focus Team (step 1 above).

## CHURCH PRACTICE

The “Church Model and Process” diagram provides a model for church practice defining three stages of growth: (1) making disciples through open groups and corporate worship, (2) maturing believers through closed groups, and (3) multiplying ministries through ministry teams. Understanding open groups, closed groups, corporate worship, and ministry teams and the process and essential actions for making them effective in achieving kingdom results may be the turning point for growth in your church. The visuals described in this section are on the diagram.

### Open Groups

Open groups are on-going, evangelistic Bible study units including both believers and unbelievers. The dotted circle shows this is an entry point for unbelievers.

An open group is primarily an evangelistic Bible study group or event comprised of an intentional mix of both believers and unbelievers. The focus is evangelism, the context is Bible study, and the intent is to begin assimilation. It is also a great environment for building relationships and encouragement. Participants can enter the group at any point. Prior knowledge of the content being studied is not required.

An open group should be defined by its purpose, nature, function, and participants rather than by its resources, label, time frame, or location. “Open” means both believers and unbelievers are invited to participate in the Bible study experience. The group is intentionally formed around the study of God’s Word. Sunday School classes are open groups that have proven over time to be an effective way to involve families and individuals in Bible study.

Five transferable principles are valuable in guiding the effectiveness of open groups.

- The Principle of Foundational Evangelism – Open Bible study groups provide the best long-term approach for building a ministry environment that guides preschoolers and children toward conversion through foundational teaching, encourages unsaved people to come to faith in Christ, assimilates new believers into the life of the church, and encourages believers to lead others to Christ.
- The Principle of Foundational Discipleship – Open group Bible study provides a foundational step of discipleship for involving people in seeking the kingdom of God and fulfilling the Great Commission.
- The Principle of Family Responsibility – Open groups equip Christian parents to fulfill their responsibility as the primary Bible teachers of their children. These groups work to nurture sound, healthy families that help children and adults to integrate the Scriptures into their lives influencing how they think and act.
- The Principle of Spiritual Transformation – Open groups engage learners in the biblical method of instruction that leads people toward spiritual transformation. These groups champion the absolute truth and authority of God’s Word. They also lead believers to integrate a biblical worldview into their minds, hearts, and lives through ongoing systematic Bible study.

- The Principle of Biblical Leadership – Open groups call for leaders to follow the biblical standard for leadership. These groups call leaders to a prophetic ministry, listening to God’s voice, discovering His message, integrating the message into their lives, and proclaiming His truth through His church to the nations. Every leader is to be accountable for being an authentic example of Christ in personal living.

## **Corporate Worship**

Worship services are focused on God but are designed for both believers and unbelievers. The dotted circle shows this is an entry point for unbelievers.

Worship that transforms is the response of believers to the presence, holiness, and revelation of Almighty God. As the leader of the church, the pastor is the primary worship leader. He will involve others in planning and leading worship experiences. The form of worship is not as important as the purpose of worship. *That* we worship is far more important than *how* we worship. A worship service must be designed to meet the fellowship needs of the church. This will create a family spirit that unites believers with the Lord and one another.

Corporate worship is open to unbelievers as the church gathers to praise God, study the Bible, and help people to understand, believe, and respond to the truths of the Bible. Some worship experiences focus primarily on the needs of Christians and others focus primarily on the needs of unbelievers, but the Holy Spirit can use both to speak to the needs of believers and unbelievers.

The New Testament identifies at least eight elements of worship the early church practiced. Worship must be planned with an intentional effort to balance and integrate these elements of worship.

1. Corporate Prayer – Prayer is communication with God that leads the congregation to an awareness of His presence.
2. Praise – Praise expresses to God our adoration and thanks for His character, being, and work. It assists the congregation in understanding the reality of God’s kingdom and His reign over the world and their lives.
3. Confession and Repentance – God restores fellowship when the congregation confesses (agrees with God regarding the reality of their sins) and repents (turns from their sin to God).
4. Profession of Faith – Profession provides the opportunity for the congregation to acknowledge God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer and to respond to His Word and His activity.
5. Scripture Reading and Study – God transforms His church through His Word. The Holy Spirit uses the hearing, reading, and study of Scripture to draw attention to God and our fellowship with Him.
6. Preaching – God uses the preaching of the Word to teach, challenge, confront, convict, and exhort the congregation to obey His Word. Preaching focuses on the Lord and His magnificence.

7. Lord's Supper and Baptism – Jesus established these two ordinances as dramatic symbols to make the congregation aware of His work on their behalf.
8. Offerings – A Christian's giving of self, abilities, tithes, and offerings are responses of obedient stewardship, gratitude, and trust. To worship fully means to give yourself in obedience to God.

### **Closed Groups**

Closed groups are short-term, self-contained units that (1) develop disciples to serve and (2) equip kingdom leaders. The solid circle shows these groups are focused on believers.

The focus of closed groups is training, the context is discipling, and the intent is to continue assimilation. Closed groups build kingdom leaders and equip believers to serve by engaging people in discipleship that moves them toward spiritual transformation through short-term training units in an atmosphere of accountability to God and to each other. Because the discipleship group or event has a specific purpose, it is comprised of believers only who covenant to meet together for a limited period of time.

The church creates and maintains groups in which church members are led to discover their spiritual gifts and to develop knowledge and skills for effective ministry. The number and focus of closed groups should be determined by the felt needs of church members for spiritual transformation, teaching and leadership skills, family living skills, ministry and mission skills.

Six principles are valuable in guiding the effectiveness of closed groups.

- The Relationship Principle – Transformation takes place in relationships that start with and are based on an intimate relationship with Jesus. Also, transformational discipleship expresses itself in other relationships including marriage, family, friendships, church, work, acquaintances, community, and society.
- The Fellowship Principle – The church provides a spiritually sensitive environment that encourages believers to respond to God's call to follow, challenges them to fulfill that call in the Body of Christ, and develops their skills for service.
- The Empowerment Principle – Throughout His ministry Jesus empowered, equipped, disciplined, trained, built up, developed, and prepared His disciples to serve. The Holy Spirit empowers the church to develop servant leaders who depend on His power.
- The Flexibility Principle – Diverse people need flexible and adaptable ways to exercise spiritual transformation. A church ensures that its methods are appropriate for people of all learning styles, personality types, genders, ages, family types and situations, cultural differences, economic conditions, and ethnic backgrounds.
- The Lifestyle Principle – The bulk of Scripture is the story of diverse, ordinary, common people who demonstrated a life transformed by God. The church helps disciples express biblical principles in their everyday lives.
- The Accountability Principle – Although believers are ultimately accountable to God, God uses spouses, other family members, church members, friends, and others to keep us aware of our accountability to Him. The measure of discipleship is the degree to which a believer is like Jesus in attitudes, behavior, and relationships.

## Ministry Teams

Ministry teams provide opportunities for service within the church (left side of the diamond) and involvement in missions beyond the church (right side of the diamond). The dotted diamond shows this is an entry point for unbelievers.

Ministry teams exist to build up the body of Christ to accomplish its work of ministry both within the church and outside the church. Ministry teams represent the multiplying stage that lets members extend their reach and their impact on the culture.

Five transferable principles are valuable in guiding the effectiveness of ministry teams.

- The Principle of Filtering – To keep the church and its ministries focused on work that is its calling, the church must filter out any proposed ministry action that is not compatible with its purpose based on fulfilling the Great Commission, accomplishing one or more of the five functions, and achieving one or more of the kingdom results.
- The Principle of Internal/External Focus – Church ministry teams can be focused on strengthening the church body or on sharing the love of Christ beyond the church. Churches must have ministry teams that focus internally and externally.
- The Principle of Universal Involvement – Every Christian has a place of responsibility within the total ministry of the church and must accept responsibility for personal involvement in a ministry team.
- The Principle of Ministry-Team Integration – Churches integrate ministry teams into the life of the church as they staff various ministries of the church. For example, open-group, closed-group, and corporate worship activities are led by ministry teams.
- The Principle of Commission – Ministry teams are not an entity unto themselves. They function under the commission or authorization of the church. The leadership of the team is responsible for reporting the results of the team's ministry to the church.

## CHURCH PRACTICES EXERCISE

It has been estimated that 80% of the general population are visual learners. The Church Model and Process diagram helps church members have a picture in their mind's eye and thus understand the mission and purpose of the church. In addition, many individuals prefer to learn in a kinesthetic manner, which means they prefer to learn by action.

In light of these two realities, the following drawing exercise is recommended. Divide the Transitional Focus Team into groups of four to five. Provide them with blank sheets of paper and pencils. (Have butcher paper, tear sheets, or other drawing surfaces available for later in the exercise.)

Direct team members to draw the church practice section of the Church Model and Process as they see it currently existing in their church. Emphasize that they are attempting to picture current reality or “where we are,” not the ideal reality or “where we should be.” Make sure that team members understand that the four elements of church practice are not restricted to certain programs or events. Help them to see that they are evaluating overall effectiveness in each of the four areas.

The size of the shapes (circles, diamond) should be drawn to reflect effectiveness. For example, a large corporate worship circle indicates effectiveness in this area. Dotted lines indicate accessibility for the unchurched, while solid lines denote an intentional focus on believers. Lines between the shapes convey connectedness. An example might be as follows: a line between corporate worship and open groups might indicate visitors to worship services are invited to participate in small group Bible study experiences.

Note to facilitator: You will have to assure team members that this is not an art class and their “creation” will not be judged or critiqued. Help them see that the point is to promote discussion and interaction, not to produce an artistic masterpiece. Remind the team that there is not a right way to draw the church practice. Rather, the drawing is a diagnostic tool that leads to dialogue. It helps a church see where they are and to talk about that.

Allow time for each team member to complete their drawing of church practice as it currently exists in their church setting. Provide time in each group for each person to show their drawing and to explain why they portrayed as they did. As time permits, have each group enlist one volunteer to share their drawing with the entire team and facilitate follow-up discussion.

## **STAGE 6: Refocus the Church around Mission**

1. Lead the Transitional Focus Team to review or write a mission statement using the process on pages 135-136. Make copies of those pages. Use the principles and concepts learned in the previous five stages.
2. Lead the church to recommit to their mission statement or adopt the new mission statement.
3. Communicate the mission statement to the church through a series of sermons.
4. Lead the Transitional Focus Team and the leaders from all church ministries on a retreat. The purpose of the retreat is to refocus the church around the five functions and the mission of the church.

Use the Strategy Map using the guidance on pages 137-139.

Use the following resources from Stages 1 through 6 to develop initiatives to be recommended to the church.

- The compliments and criticisms from the Church Memories Workshop
- The discussion of the demographics report
- The review of the Current Reality worksheets (counts, containers, and characteristics)
- The Values Inventory exercise (optional)
- The results of the Transformational Church Assessment Tool (optional)
- The SWOTs evaluation of the church functions
- The development of key objectives for the five functions
- The SWOTs evaluation of the kingdom results
- The SWOTs evaluation of the church practices
- The discussion of the church practices using the drawing exercise
- The church mission statement
- The results of the discussion of the Strategy Map

5. Present the recommended initiatives to the congregation for affirmation.

Optional Stage 6: Use the major strategy from your state convention.

Example: The Oklahoma Convention's Revitalizing the Sunday School Strategy (contact Brett Selby, 405-942-3000, ext. 4400; bselby@bgco.org)

## WRITING A CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

Use the following process to lead the Transitional Focus Team to write or rewrite a church mission statement. Even if the church has a mission statement, it may not be clear or stated as a discipleship process. This can be a healthy exercise in leading the team members to rethink and refocus on the mission of the church. It will help prepare the way for the new pastor.

Begin by asking these four questions as you review what the Bible says about the mission of the church:

1. Why does the church exist?
2. What are we to be as a church? (Who are we to be as a church?)
3. What are we to do as a church? (What does God want done in the world?)
4. How are we to do it?

The biblical foundations for the church are numerous, but three passages are essential to understanding the mission of the church:

- The Great Confession – Matthew 16:13-18
- The Great Commandment – Matthew 22:35-40
- The Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20

Based on these three foundational Scriptures, write in the space provided what you believe the mission of the church to be. Don't get bogged down in the wording or flow, just write out what you understand these scriptures to say about the mission of the church.

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If your church currently has a mission statement, write it in the space provided.

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An effective mission statement should have two components: what (purpose) and how (process). What is the purpose of the church and how will that purpose be accomplished.

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger in *Simple Church* gave the example of Cross Church. “The leaders of that church decided that they want to be explicitly clear on the purpose of the church. They knew that they would be less effective in reaching either the unchurched or the dechurched without a clear purpose. In fact, they knew that their own members needed a clear path of discipleship.”

The mission statement of Cross Church is simple and sequential: “Love God, love others, serve the world.” That describes not only the purpose but how the purpose will be accomplished. In *Essential Church* the purpose statement of Cross Church is expanded to include the following connections:

- Love God – Every member of Cross Church is expected to be a regular participant in the worship services where they will draw closer to God.
- Love Others – The people of Cross Church should be involved in a Sunday School class and/or a small group so they will be connected to others in the church.
- Serve the World – Cross Church has numerous ministry opportunities to serve others. Members should be involved in at least one of these offerings.

Cross Church has clarified its purpose. The church has stated its purpose as a process of discipleship. And it shows how the various ministries and programs fit into the overall purpose.

Below are some additional examples of church mission statements that express both what and how. They give clear statements that also give a sequential discipleship process.

We exist to:

- Create a climate of worship that enables people to say “yes” to the love of God.
- Cultivate a community that nurtures spiritual growth in the lives of believers.
- Commission every believer to serve the world through their unique talents and gifts.
- Communicate the gospel to everyone we can.

To bring believers to spiritual maturity through:

- Fellowship with other Christians,
- Learning and living Christ’s teachings,
- Outreach to all people,
- Worshipping Him alone, and doing
- Service in His name.

We exist to welcome people to faith; to equip people with a faith that works in real life; and to send us in service into the world in Jesus’ name.

## USING THE STRATEGY MAP

The strategy map can be used in a retreat setting with the Transitional Focus Team and leaders from all church ministries. The purpose of the retreat is to overview all the information gathered in Stages 1-6 and to give the team a time to dream about the future. The retreat can be conducted on a Saturday or on a Sunday afternoon and evening. A good timeframe is from 4:00 – 9:00 p.m. including a light soup and/or salad dinner.

The purpose of the strategy map is to create conversations and clarity around the goal of a better future for the church. It will help the Transitional Focus Team better understand what was, what is, and what could be concerning their church.

Before the retreat, give each member of the Transitional Focus Team and other leaders attending the retreat a packet containing all the following data and findings from the previous stages and ask them to review the information before the retreat.

- The listening sessions (optional)
- The compliments and criticisms from the Church Memories Workshop
- The discussion of the demographics report
- The review of the Current Reality worksheets
- The Values Inventory exercise (optional)
- The results of the Transformational Church Assessment Tool (optional)
- The SWOTs evaluation of the church functions
- The development of key objectives for the five functions
- The SWOTs evaluation of the kingdom results
- The SWOTs evaluation of the church practices
- The discussion of the church practices using the drawing exercise
- The church mission statement

Begin the retreat with an overview using the following:

**What was** – Review the compliments and criticisms from the Church Memories Workshop. As you also share your observations of the past, emphasize what the church can build on for a better future.

**What is** – Review some of the information learned from the rest of the data and findings and your observations as their transitional pastor. Use this time to move them to dreaming about the better future for the church.

**What could be** – Introduce the strategy map by using the Super Bowl as an example that will help them begin to understand how to use the strategy map to look at their church. The goal is to get them dreaming about the church's better future.

Divide the Transitional Focus Team and other church leaders into groups of 4-7. Ask each group to complete their strategy map for the church. Allow plenty of time for the groups to complete their maps. They will need you to move them through the process. Here are some suggested times for each of the four areas.

- 15 minutes – Defining barriers
- 15 minutes - Current State
- 15 minutes – Critical Success Factors
- 30- 45 minutes – Strategic Initiatives

After a break, have each group present their map. Begin to note the common themes and ideas that are emerging. After each group has presented, take a 15 minute break and capture the common themes and ideas onto one map.

**What will be** – Share the common themes that emerge from each group’s strategy map. Ask the group if you have missed anything. Ask them to help narrow the initiatives to no more than five things to focus on in the next three months, in the next six months, and over the next year.

It will be the responsibility of the Transitional Focus Team to present the recommended initiatives to the congregation for affirmation. Then the Transitional Focus Team will make assignments to begin implementing those strategic initiatives.

#### **Example of How to Use the Strategy Map** (see next page)

**The future state** – “Win the Super Bowl”

**Barriers:** Identify some barriers that must be overcome in order to reach our goal.

- Other teams want to win the Super Bowl
- We must learn to play as a team
- Salary cap is limiting our draft picks and trades
- We have never won the Super Bowl

**Current State:** Define current reality of where you are in relation to the goal.

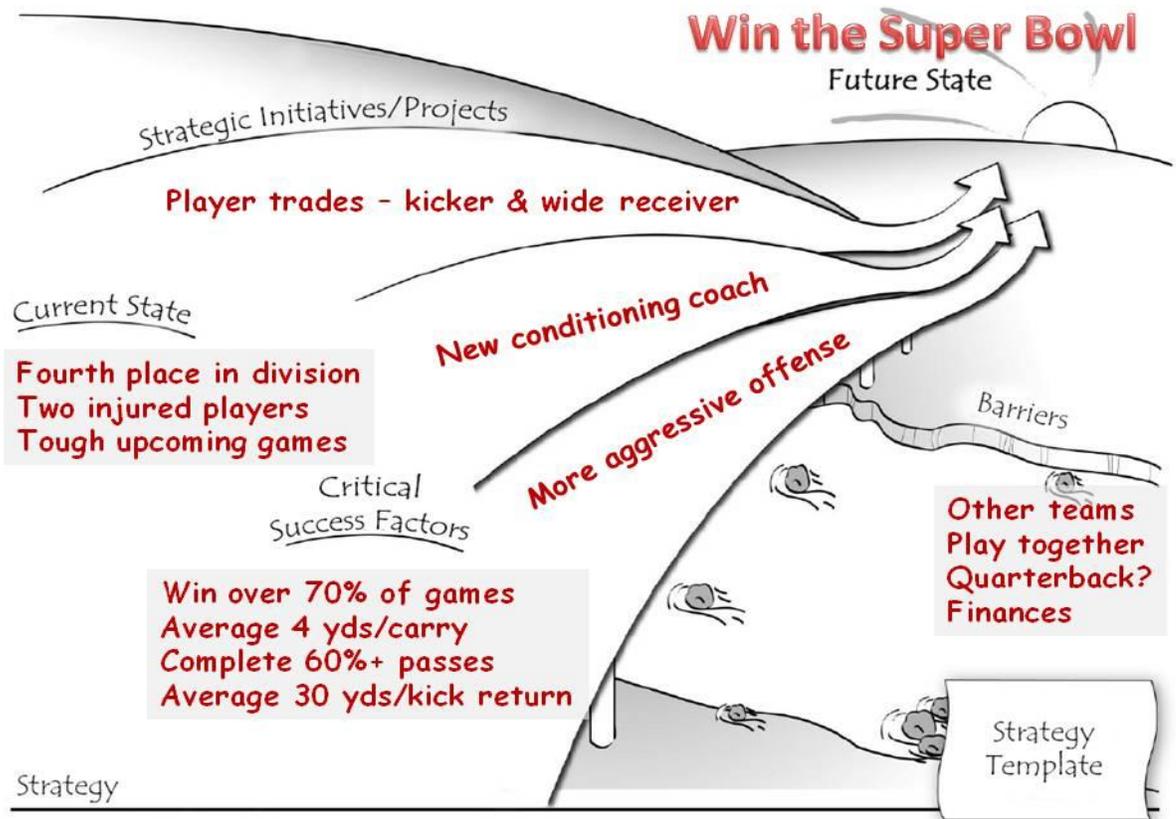
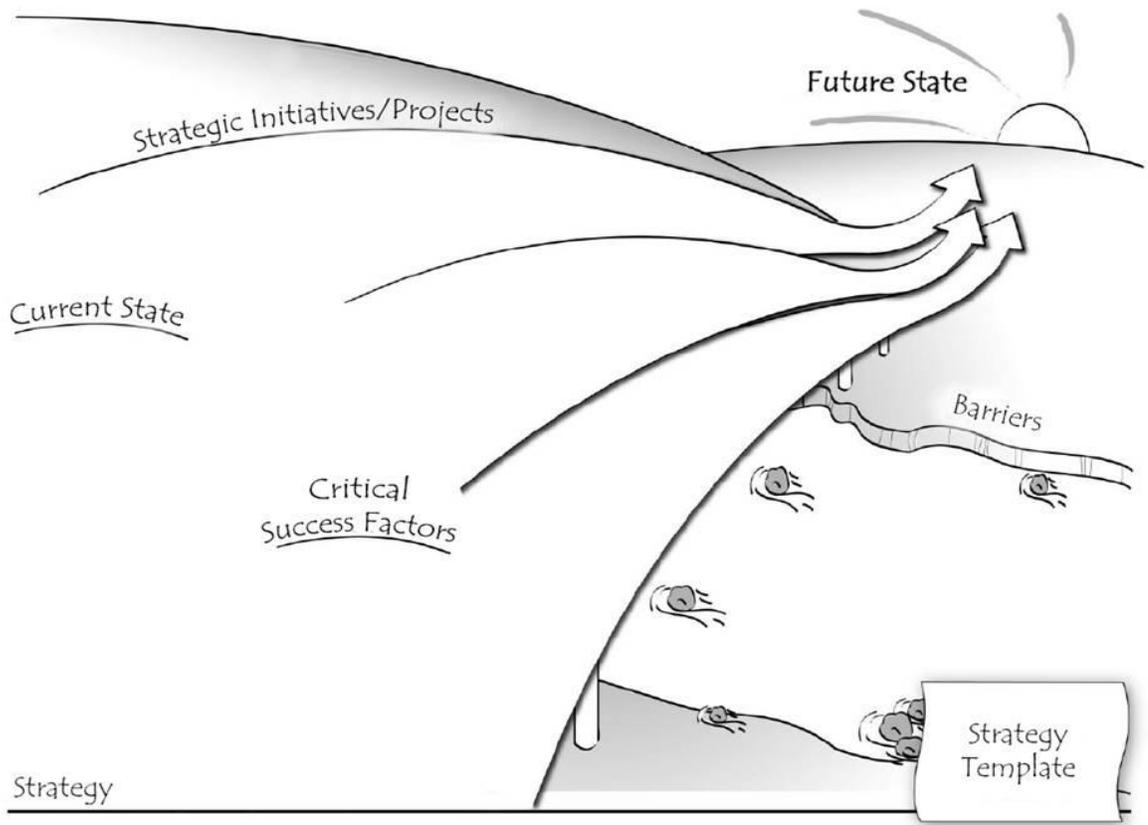
- We are fourth place in our division
- Tough schedule ahead
- Star quarterback is injured
- Have come close to winning some big games

**Critical Success Factors:** These should be measureable and attainable.

- Must win 70% of our remaining games
- Average 4 yards per carry
- Complete 60% of passes
- Average 30 yards on kick-off returns
- Cause 2 turnovers per game by the other team while limiting our turnovers

**Strategic Initiatives/Projects:** These are the things that will need to be done to overcome the barriers and implement the critical success factors.

- Player trades – backup quarterback and experienced offensive linemen
- Implement a new conditioning regime to be more effective in the fourth quarter
- Install a more aggressive offensive scheme



## **STAGE 7: Find a Pastor to Lead in Fulfilling God’s Future for the Church**

Use the following five transitional pastor leadership actions in helping a church to find, call, and install a new pastor. The goal is to prepare the church to call a strong and fruitful pastor.

1. Order copies of the *Pastor Search Committee Handbook* from LifeWay Christian Resources for each Pastor Search Committee member. This handbook provides guidance for the church in finding and calling a pastor. It serves as a very important tool for the transitional pastor as he guides the committee and the church through the steps necessary to a wise decision.
2. Train the committee for its task using the *Pastor Search Committee Handbook*.
3. Continue to serve as a process consultant to the committee.
4. Interpret the search process to the church.
5. In preparation for the coming of a new pastor, the transitional pastor should preach a message on “Honoring the Pastor.”

It is unethical for a transitional pastor to attempt to sway the committee to choose his personal friend. It is also unwise because the church may blame the transitional pastor for causing them to call a pastor whose leadership or character do not live up to the information they received in the search process.

## **STAGE 8: Help the Pastor Get a Good Start in the Church and Community**

Barring disabling illness or injury, transitional pastors serve the church until a pastor is called and begins his work. Normal tenure lasts from 12 to 18 months. Guiding a church through the stages of transition will rarely be accomplished in less time; some require more time.

As soon as the date when the new pastor is to begin his work with the church is known, arrange for extending invitations to community leaders, other churches in the community, and denominational leaders to attend and participate in a service of installation for the new pastor under the guidance of the transitional pastor and led by the pastor search committee. See Tool 26 and Tool 27 in the *Pastor Search Committee Handbook* for celebration suggestions. The transitional pastor may be asked to participate in the service of installation and symbolically pass the mantle of leadership to the new pastor.

The transitional pastor may be asked to continue as a consultant to a new pastor for a prescribed period of time after the new pastor arrives for the purpose of orienting the new pastor to the people and process of the church.

Some churches will also desire the transitional pastor's assistance to introduce the new pastor to leadership in the community and denomination. If the church and the new pastor desire your assistance, as soon as possible in the new pastor's ministry, make appointments and introduce the pastor to civic and religious leaders in the community, such as:

- Chairman of the interdenominational ministers' fellowship
- Mayor and council member representing the area in which the church is located
- Principals of schools serving the area of the church (at least some of them)
- Pastors of neighboring Southern Baptist churches
- The director of missions for the local association of southern Baptist churches
- A local hospital administrator
- Some of the faithful church members now physically unable to attend activities at the church.

In the event the transitional pastor does not provide this leadership, the pastor search committee members should be encouraged to see that at least some of these introductions are provided early in the new pastor's ministry.

If the transitional pastor's wife can participate in this orientation process, she can introduce the pastor's wife to grocery stores and other shops, the public library, and other services important for the pastor's family. Facilitating a brunch or tea at which the pastor's wife may meet and fellowship with women of the church may be helpful. Any such activity that helps the pastor's wife become more comfortable in the new environment reduces stress normally associated with moving and adjusting to different living circumstances. If the transitional pastor's wife is not available for this ministry,

encourage some of the women on the pastor search committee to coordinate orientation activities for the pastor's wife.

Whether the transitional pastor remains on the field or not, it will be constructive for him to write a letter to the church or communicate through a church publication thanking the church for the privilege of serving them and being blessed in the relationship. Include affirming words about the new pastor, words that encourage full support of him by the entire church for the sake of the kingdom of God.

## SUGGESTED READING FOR CONTINUING GROWTH

1. *And the Place was Shaken: How to Lead a Powerful Prayer Ministry*, John Franklin, B&H

Emphasizes the importance of corporate prayer in the life of the church and provides guidance for revitalizing prayer meetings.

2. *Comeback Churches*, Ed Stetzer and Mike Dotson, B&H

Research shows that over time, most churches plateau and then eventually decline. To counter this trend, the authors surveyed 300 churches from across ten different denominations that recently achieved healthy evangelistic growth after a significant season of decline. The result is an exciting method of congregational reinvigoration that can be adapted by any church.

3. *Equipping Deacons to Confront Conflict*, Robert Sheffield and James White, LifeWay Press

This resource provides a basic understanding of conflict and how church leaders can respond as peacemakers.

4. *Essential Church*, Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer, III, B&H;  
*Tools for an Essential Church*, Thom S. Rainer, Sam S. Rainer III, and Dan Garland

In response to their research showing young adults leaving the church because they do not see it as essential in their lives, the authors share insight from churches that are successfully retaining young adults. The companion book, *Tools*, provides practical instruments for assessing a church's current reality and for implementing the principles of the book.

5. *The Interventionist*, Lyle E. Schaller, Abingdon Press

Provides a conceptual framework for asking questions about congregations and classifies various syndromes that prevent a church from making the changes needed for new life; a productive guide for transitional ministers.

6. *Jesus on Leadership*, C. Gene Wilkes, LifeWay Press.

Published in workbook format, this book is designed to lead members of the body of Christ to apply biblical principles of servant leadership to all areas of their ministries.

7. *The Kingdom-Focused Church*, Gene Mims, B&H; *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*, Revised and Expanded, Gene Mims, Convention Press

These books present a biblical foundation emphasizing process, not methods, with the Great Commission as the driving force for a kingdom-focused church, five essential church functions, four kingdom results, and four key church practices.

8. *The Life-Changing Power of Prayer*, T.W. Hunt, LifeWay Press

The author shares from years of study and his own personal walk to help readers grasp a biblical understanding of prayer and develop a more meaningful prayer life.

9. *Pastor Search Committee Handbook*, LifeWay Press

Identifies dozens of essential checkpoints to help expedite the work of this committee and make sure it makes right decisions. The first part of the text focuses on the elements of committee organization; while the second section outlines the steps the committee should follow to accomplish its goal. There's even a set of reproducible tools included in the back to help gather information and compare candidates.

10. *Paul on Leadership*, C. Gene Wilkes, LifeWay Press

This book helps your church navigate through change. It uses the life of the Apostle Paul as the one entrusted with taking the gospel to the world. His experience at a mission outpost in Antioch became a model for him as he set out to plant churches on his missionary journeys. The author pinpoints principles and strategies from Paul's experiences that are transferable to individuals and churches today.

11. *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, Ken Sande, Baker Book House

This practical resource provides clear guidance for equipping Christians and their churches to respond to conflict biblically.

12. *Reality, 7 Truths from Experiencing God*, Henry & Richard Blackaby, LifeWay Press

This interactive book provides materials for seven small group sessions, daily devotions, and sermon notes for a 40-day experience. This resource includes the essence of the widely-used *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* study.

13. *Simple Church*, Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, B&H

Many churches have blended many models into a complex and busy approach to church life. Based on research, this book proposes four simple words—clarity, movement, alignment, and focus—to help a church follow God in designing a more streamlined approach.

14. *Spiritual Gifts*, David Francis, LifeWay Press

God never intended for each of us to be alike. In fact, He delights in giving His children a variety of gifts for ministry and service. Explore how your spiritual gifts can be matched to ministry, and discover a new appreciation for the gifts of others in your church.

15. *Spiritual Leadership*, Henry & Richard Blackaby, B&H

Drawing upon their own extensive leadership experience as well as their ministry to leaders in all walks of life, Henry and Richard Blackaby offer insightful counsel into the ways God develops, guides, and empowers spiritual leaders.

16. *Spiritual Warfare: Biblical Truth for Victory*, John Franklin and Chuck Lawless, LifeWay Press

This 8-session video-enhanced study teaches that the key to victory is focusing on God. It teaches participants to recognize and respond to spiritual attacks and evaluates popular issues in the spiritual warfare movement.

17. *Your Church Experiencing God Together*, Henry & Melvin Blackaby, LifeWay Press

This 9-session video-enhanced study was written by Blackaby and his son, Mel. This study is filled with engaging stories from both Henry's and Mel's pastoral experiences.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> William Bridges, *Managing Transition* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1991), 3.
  - <sup>2</sup> Leonard Sweet, *SoulTsunami* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 77.
  - <sup>3</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books), 86-87.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ernest E. Mosley, *Called to Joy* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1973), 26.
  - <sup>5</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1993), 5.
  - <sup>6</sup> Bobb Biehl, *Thirty Days to Confident Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 3.
  - <sup>7</sup> John Haggai, *Lead On!* (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 4.
  - <sup>8</sup> John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 13.
  - <sup>9</sup> Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 12.
  - <sup>10</sup> Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 20.
  - <sup>11</sup> Bob Biehl, *Thirty Days to Confident Leadership*, 80.
  - <sup>12</sup> Price Pritchett, *Teamwork* (Dallas: Pritchett & Associates, Inc., 1992).
  - <sup>13</sup> Jim Dugger, *Learn to Listen* (Shawnee Mission, KS: National Press Publications, 1992), 7.
  - <sup>14</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, 8.
  - <sup>15</sup> Brooks R. Faulkner, *Getting on Top of Your Work* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1999), 31–32.
  - <sup>16</sup> Written by Henry Webb.
  - <sup>17</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books), 110-113, 326.
  - <sup>18</sup> R. A. Torrey, *The Power of Prayer* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1924), 52–53.
  - <sup>19</sup> George A. Buttrick, *Prayer* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), 279.
  - <sup>20</sup> T. W. Hunt, *Church Prayer Ministry Manual* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1992), 1.
  - <sup>21</sup> Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 27.
  - <sup>22</sup> The copy on this page and the charts on pages 102-103 are adapted from John Franklin, *And the Place Was Shaken* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005).
  - <sup>23</sup> The chart on page 98 and the copy for biblical principles, kingdom results, and church practices on pages 105-110, 126-128, and 130-132 have been adapted from Gene Mims, *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth, Revised and Expanded* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1994, 2001) and Gene Mims, *The Kingdom-Focused Church* (Nashville: B&H, 2003).