**LEADING YOUR CHURCH FROM GOOD TO GREAT**

2003 ELDERS/CHURCH LEADERS’ CONFERENCE

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**APPLYING GOOD TO GREAT PRINCIPLES IN YOUR CHURCH**

**Biblical Principle—Genesis 12:1-3**

“Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great. We don’t have great schools because we have good schools. We don’t have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for the good life. The vast majority of companies never become great, precisely because the vast majority become quite good—and that is their main problem.”

--Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, p. 1

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**For Reflection and Discussion:**

- Is it possible that being a “good” church could keep your church from becoming a “great” church?

- Is it legitimate or appropriate for Christians and churches to aspire to greatness? (See “A Biblical/Theological Perspective on Greatness”)

- How does church health impact church growth?

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**Action Steps:**

- Identify where your church is on the “Church Numerical Growth Plateaus” chart in terms of its size
  
  - If you have plateaued on one of the levels, identify what *quantitative* issues may be hindering your growth—staff size, facilities limitations, financial resources.

  - If you are in between two levels, identify what *qualitative* issues may be hindering your growth.

- From the “Quality Characteristics” chart identify which of the eight qualities may be limiting your church’s effectiveness and develop a plan to improve it.

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“The key issue for churches in the twenty-first century is church health, not church growth.”

-- Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*
A Biblical/Theological Perspective on Greatness

Gen 12 1 The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Deut 4 5 See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” 7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

Psalm 47 2 How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!

Psalm 108 4 For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Psalm 111 2 Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them.

Isaiah 12 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.

Jeremiah 32 17 Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers’ sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the LORD Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. 20 You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. 21 You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. 22 You gave them this land you had sworn to give their forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey. They came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey.

Joel 2 11 The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?

Malachi 1 11 “My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD Almighty.
Matthew 5  19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 1  31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.  
32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,  33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.

Hebrews 2  3 How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hebrews 4  14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, a Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.  16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 13  20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 20  25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”


When Nobel Peace Prize recipient Mother Teresa was asked about greatness, she replied:

“The needs are great, and none of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.”

—Mother Teresa
CHURCH NUMERICAL GROWTH PLATEAUS

Key

• Plateaus on levels = Quantitative Issues (increase size of staff, facilities, budget)
• Plateaus between levels = Qualitative Issues (improve quality)
• Elements beneath each level are foundational to that level
• Elements above each level are barriers to growth for that level
• Different development phases require different activities and leadership roles
• To grow to the next level a church must begin to act like a church at that level

1000-1200
1. Visionary leadership.
2. Delegated management.
3. Expanding leader base.
4. Exceptional quality.
5. Multiplication of "churches."

700-750
1. Managed, middle-management level staff.
2. Effective staff in proper roles.
3. Effective lay leader training programs.
5. Excellent quality of facilities/programs/preaching.
6. Moderate vertical diversification.

400-450
1. Managerial staff strengths.
2. Proper staff ratio.
3. Large church mindset.
4. Applied focused purpose.
5. Good quality of facilities/programs/preaching.
7. Begin small vertical diversification.
8. Mobilization of over 50% of congregation.

150-225
1. A warm, team leader pastor.
2. Unsaturated relationships.
3. Large group dynamics.
4. Outreach-oriented value system.
5. Develop a clear, focused purpose.
6. Average or better quality of facilities/programs/preaching.
7. Proper number/dynamics/diversity of open groups.

75-110
1. An attractive leader with outreach gifts.
2. Marginal quality of congregation/facilities/program/preaching.
3. Middle-sized group dynamics.
4. An unlimited homogeneous unit (matching your church) to draw from.
5. Proper number/dynamics/diversity of open groups.

25-45
1. A willing leader.
2. A cohesive group of willing followers.
3. No intolerable pressures.
4. No overwhelming competition for your role.

Priorities

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>What Is Measured</th>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Biblical Reference</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Empowering Leadership**    | Effective leadership begins with an intimate relationship with God, resulting in Christlike character and a clear sense of God’s calling for leader’s lives. As this base of spiritual maturity increases, effective pastors and leaders multiply, guide, empower and equip disciples to realize their full potential in Christ and work together to accomplish God’s vision. | • Match of pastor & congregation  
• Delegation & sharing of ministry  
• Leadership through vision  
• Leadership through mentoring and equipping  
• Leading change | Is the ministry of the leaders focusing on equipping other Christians to serve? | Ephesians 4:11-12 | John Carver, *Boards that Make A Difference, Reinventing Your Board*  
George Cladis, *Leading the Team-based Church*  
Larry Osborne, *The Unity Factor*  
Randy Richards, *How to Build An Effective Board*  
Alexander Strauch, *Making Meetings Work* |
| **Gift-oriented Ministry**   | The Holy Spirit sovereignly gives to every Christian spiritual gift(s) for the building of God’s kingdom. Church leaders have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop and exercise their gifts in appropriate ministries so that the Body of Christ “grows and builds itself up in love.” | • Understanding your gift(s)  
• Matching gifts to task  
• Significance of service  
• Coaching: -supported  
  -trained  
  -challenged | Are the tasks in the church distributed according to the spiritual gifts of individual Christians? | 1 Peter 4:10 | Paul Ford, *Your Leadership Grip*  
Jane Kise, David Stark, & Sandra Hirsh, *LifeKeys*  
Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church* |
| **Passionate Spirituality**  | Effective ministry flows out of a passionate spirituality. Spiritual intimacy leads to a strong conviction that God will act in powerful ways. A godly vision can only be accomplished through an optimistic faith which views obstacles as opportunities and turns defeats into victories. | • Personal spiritual disciplines  
• Corporate spiritual disciplines  
• Contagious faith | Do prayer, enthusiasm, and boldness characterize the spiritual life of the members? | Romans 12:11-12 | Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart*  
Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* |
| **Functional Structures**    | The Church is the living Body of Christ. Like all healthy organisms, it requires numerous systems which work together to fulfill its intended purpose. Each must be evaluated regularly to determine if it is still the best way to accomplish the intended purpose. | • Organizational structures & systems  
• Leadership oversight  
• Vision, goals, & planning  
• Creativity & managing change | Are the forms, structures, and regulations of the church designed to be most useful for the development of the church here and now? | Acts 6:1-7 | Jim Herington, Mike Bonem, & James Furr, *Leading Congregational Change*  
Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts* |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring Worship</td>
<td>Inspiring worship is a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. Both personal and corporate worship must be infused with the presence of God resulting in times of joyous exultation and times of quiet reverence. Inspiring worship is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group but rather the shared experience of God's awesome presence.</td>
<td>1 Thessalonians 5:16-19</td>
<td>Is participating in the worship service an inspiring experience for church members?</td>
<td>Feelings of being inspired, Care for children, Life transforming preaching, Visitor friendly, God-centered and celebrative music</td>
<td>Lynn Anderson, ed., In Search of Wonder, Sally Morgenthaler, Worship Evangelism, Michael Warden, ed., Experience God in Worship, Terry Donahue &amp; Ross Robinson, Building a Church of Small Groups, Bill Hull, New Century Discipling, The Disciplemaking Church, The Disciplemaking Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic Small Groups</td>
<td>Holistic small groups are disciple-making communities which endeavor to reach the unchurched, meet individual needs, develop each person according to their God-given gifts and raise leaders to sustain the growth of the church. Like healthy body cells, holistic small groups are designed to grow and multiply.</td>
<td>Acts 2:42-47</td>
<td>Are the small groups dedicated to answering the true questions and meeting the real needs of its members in a holistic way?</td>
<td>Atomsphere of transparency, sharing &amp; trust, Spiritually oriented, Meeting felt needs, Guest sensitive, Multiplication of disciples, leaders &amp; groups, Active participation of groups' members</td>
<td>Bill Donahue &amp; Ross Robinson, Building A Church of Small Groups, Bill Hull, New Century Disciplemaking, The Disciplemaking Church, The Disciplemaking Pastor, John 13:43-45, John 15:9-16, John 15:13, Acts 4:23-24, Acts 2:47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need-oriented Evangelism</td>
<td>Need-oriented evangelism intentionally cultivates relationships with pre-Christian people so they can become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who are actively participating within the life of the church. Using appropriate ministries and authentic relationships, believers can guide others into the family of God.</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 9:19-23</td>
<td>Are the forms and contents of the evangelistic activities related to the needs of those the church is trying to win?</td>
<td>Personal evangelism, Corporate evangelistic strategies, Seeker awareness, Assimilation of new converts</td>
<td>Tom Clegg &amp; Warren Bird, Lost in America, Bill Donahue &amp; Ross Robinson, Building a Church of Small Groups, Bill Hull, New Century Disciplemaking, The Disciplemaking Church, The Disciplemaking Pastor, Thom Rainer, Surprising Insights from the Formerly Unchurched, Mark Mittelberg, Becoming a Contagious Christian, Building a Contagious Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving Relationships</td>
<td>Loving relationships are the heart of a healthy, growing church. Jesus said people will know we are his disciples by our love. Practical demonstration of love builds authentic Christian community and brings others into God’s family.</td>
<td>John 13:34-35</td>
<td>Are the relationships of the members of this church characterized by a high degree of love and affection?</td>
<td>Atmosphere of love and affection, By a high degree of character development, Affirmation and encouragement, Intimate relationships, Love, Respect and affectionate care</td>
<td>Gary Delashmutt, Loving God's Way, Gene Getz, Building Up One Another</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRINCIPLE #1: ASSESSING SERVANT LEADERSHIP ("LEVEL 5 LEADERSHIP")


"Level 5 leaders (who blend extreme personal humility with intense professional will) channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves."

--Jim Collins, Good to Great, p. 21

"TOP TEN"

PARADOXICAL PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

10. Facilitate __________ by being __________________

9. Create __________ by seeing the __________

8. ____________ by ________________

7. Build ____________ through ______________

6. __________ your power by __________ it away

5. Allow your ______________ to be others’ ____________

4. __________ the institution by ________________ it

3. Let ____________ realities be the thermostat for ____________ issues

2. ____________ the organization by __________ the power

1. ________ by ________________

--Keith Ray, servant leader, LCCS

“Level 5 leaders look out the window to give credit to others when things go well. At the same time, they look in the mirror to take responsibility when things go poorly.”

--Jim Collins, Good to Great, p. 35
For Reflection and Discussion:

- As a leader do you seek to be a show horse (“look at me”) or a plow horse (“let’s get the job done”)?
- As a leader do you tend to look through the window to see all who contribute to success or do you tend look in the mirror to see your own reflection?

Action Steps:

- Evaluate your personal blend of the two sides of Level 5 (Servant) Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Will</th>
<th>Personal Humility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creates superb results, a clear catalyst in the transition from good to great</td>
<td>Demonstrates a compelling modesty, shunning public adulation; never boastful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an unwavering resolve to do whatever must be done to produce the best long-term results, no matter how difficult</td>
<td>Acts with quiet, calm determination; relies principally on inspired standards, not inspiring charisma, to motivate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sets the standard of building an enduring [organization]; will settle for nothing less</td>
<td>Channels ambition into the [organization], not the self; sets up successors for even greater success in the next generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks in the mirror, not the window, to [assume] responsibility for poor results, never blaming other people or external factors</td>
<td>Looks out the window, not in the mirror, to [give] credit for the success of the [organization]—to other people and external factors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

--Jim Collins, Good to Great, p. 36

- Identify where your personal and congregational leadership is on this continuum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Model</th>
<th>Transformational Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controlling _________ Enabling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on authority _________ Emphasis on mutuality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over/under _________ Under/up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-down process _________ Interactive process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution-centered _________ Person-centered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival-oriented _________ Growth-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program-oriented _________ Process-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on policies _________ Focus on climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine model _________ Organism model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resembles Matthew 20:25 _________ Resembles Matthew 20:26-27</td>
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</table>

- From the “What Is Leadership?” chart assess who is managing and who is leading your church. Is your church being “overmanaged” and “underled”?  

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## WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

**LEADERSHIP IS A PROCESS THAT CREATES CHANGE!**

### MANAGEMENT

1. **PLANNING AND BUDGETING**
   - Details and Timetables
   - Allocating Resources

2. **ORGANIZING AND STAFFING**
   - Organizational Structure
   - Staffing
   - Delegating Responsibility
   - Policies and Procedures
   - Monitoring Systems

3. **CONTROLLING AND PROBLEM SOLVING**
   - Results vs. Plans
   - Identifying Deviations
   - Solving Deviations

### LEADERSHIP

1. **SETTING DIRECTION**
   - Vision of the Future
   - Strategies for Change

2. **ALIGNING PEOPLE**
   - Communicating Directions
   - Influencing Words & Deeds
   - Teams “On Board”

3. **MOTIVATING AND INSPIRING**
   - Energizing People
   - Overcoming Barriers
   - Fulfillment

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**PRODUCES DEGREE OF PREDICTABILITY AND ORDER/KEY RESULTS**

**PRODUCES CHANGE, OFTEN DRAMATIC, AND EFFECTIVE RESULTS**

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**PRINCIPLE # 2: CLARIFYING LEADERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

(“FIRST WHO . . . THEN WHAT”)

**Biblical Principle—Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaders of great companies (churches)—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Get the right people on the bus (analogy for your leadership team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get the wrong people off the bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get the people in the right seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get the right driver in the driver’s seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get the bus going in the right direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keep the bus going in the right direction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Adapted from Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, pp. 41-43

**For Reflection and Discussion:**

- Has your church clarified the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of elders, deacons (ministry team leaders), and paid ministry staff based on your study of Scripture?

- Has your church documented in some way guiding principles that define responsibility, delegate authority, and demand accountability for each leadership function?

**Action Steps:**

- Study together Dr. Robert Lowery’s paper, “Making A Difference: Serving as Christian Leaders (With Special Focus on the Leadership Ministry of Elders and Deacons)”.

- Develop a leadership model that appropriately reflects the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of elders, deacons (ministry team leaders), and paid ministry staff. (See Don Green’s outline, “Becoming A Healthy Leadership Community”).

“Christian community always has leaders. All New Testament authors . . . insist that the Christian community has but one leader, Jesus Christ. . . Nevertheless, Spirit-initiated and empowered leadership is always provided in this community. It can take many forms, but it is invariably depicted as corporate in nature. In every instance in the New Testament, leadership is given by groups of people with differing functions.”

—Kevin Giles, *What on Earth Is the Church?*

- Simplify your church’s by-laws to reflect these changes.
Who or what shapes our understanding of leadership in general and our understanding of elders and deacons in particular? This is a crucial question facing many congregations. No doubt a variety of influences are present, for example—Scripture, tradition, experience, culture, and our opinions. Yet far too often Scripture takes a back seat to other sources of authority.

We must not assume that we know what the Bible says about leaders and the difference they make in peoples' lives. Far too often the ideas we hold are simply not found in Scripture. Indeed, I am convinced that a proper study of God's Word may very well break many of our paradigms and create new ones. Indeed, we may discover that there are some unsettling things God says and demands in his Word.

Accordingly, my strategy is to survey the relevant Scriptures and reflect on the positive impact godly leadership can make in peoples' lives. The study is broken into seven parts.

I. Two General Designations.

A. Ministry (*diakonia*)

By the general term "ministry" (or "service"), the New Testament designates the responsibilities of all Christians: every Christian is a *diakonos*, a servant or minister. The Church is the living body of Christ, and each member of this body is active, in his or her own role, with a view to serving God and people. "To serve" (*diakoneo*) is the vocation and duty of everyone who belongs to Christ who "came not to be served but to serve" and who has made service the norm of all greatness in the Kingdom (Mark 10:43-45).

B. Leader.

"In the biblical context, a person with a God-given capacity and a God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group." See J.R. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development*, p. 245.

Potentially, every Christian will be leading as he or she is involved in ministry. Indeed, leadership is never static, fixed, and limited to a select group of individuals; it is vibrant, responsive and inclusive. Responsibility lies with every member to play his or her
making a difference: serving as christian leaders

particular role in the leadership in the christian community. rather than being the task of one person (or a select few) with the remainder "obeying their decisions" or "being served," leadership is a corporate affair devolving in some measure upon all who participate in the community's mission. neither staff alone nor elders alone can do the ministry demanded of every congregation in order to carry out the mission to disciple the nations. leadership responsibility can never remain the preserve of a select few but always exists as an obligation upon every member of the community—even if some have responsibilities (due to their character and gifts) that have a more far-reaching impact on the community as a whole or on certain groups within the christian community.

ii. special designations for elders.

even though potentially all christians are involved in leadership ministry, it is true that within the congregations of new testament times there were men who were recognized as leaders who served as elders with specific responsibilities which affected the life of the whole body. it is instructive to be reminded of the six designations.

a. elder (presbuteros) and body of elders (presbuterion).

"a man of responsibility and influence in a community" (note: the bible provides no guidelines with regard to the age of elders; perhaps it could be assumed that these "leaders" would be older than the average person in a group.)

"a council of elders, with emphasis upon maturity of judgment more than mere age."

see acts 11:29-30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; i tim. 5:17, 19; titus 1:5; james 5:14; i pet. 5:1. see i tim. 4:14 for the reference to "body of elders."

b. fellow-elder (sumpresbuteros).

"a man who is an elder along with others"

see i pet. 5:1.

c. care-giver (episkopos/episkope).

"a man who has responsibility for the care of someone" (note: often this word has been viewed as stressing a position of power, but in reality the focus is upon the responsibility of caring for others.)

see acts 20:28; phil. 1:1; i tim. 3:1,2; titus 1:7.
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D. Pastor/Shepherd (*poimen*).

"a man who is responsible for the care and guidance of a Christian congregation"


E. Teacher (*didaskalos*).

"a man who provides instruction"

Eph. 4:11.

F. Steward (*oikonomos*).

"a man who is responsible for the welfare of a community (or household)"

Titus 1:7.

III. Serving as Servant-Leaders—The Ministry of the Elders.


"The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul."

Function:

B. Acts 14:23.

"And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe."

Function:
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"And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. . . . When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. . . . The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. . . . Then the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members . . . 'The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin' . . . As they went from town to town, they delivered the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem."

Function:


"From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. . . . 'Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you care-givers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. Therefore, be alert . . . And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified."

Function:

"The next day Paul went with us to visit James; and all the elders were present."

Function:


"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

Function:

G. Philippians 1:1.

"... To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the care-givers and deacons."

Function:
"The saying is sure: if anyone desires to be a care-giver, he desires a noble work. A care-giver must be blameless (that is, he is a person of integrity and genuineness; he is not perfect but he is striving to do God's will and no one can accuse him of hypocrisy), a husband who is faithful to his wife, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must care for his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way, for if one does not know how to take care of his own household, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. And he must have a good reputation with non-Christians, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil."

Function:

I. I Timothy 4:14.

"Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the body of elders."

Function


"Let the elders who care well be considered worthy of compensation, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox
while it is treading out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves to be paid.' Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest also may stand in fear."

Function:


"I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you: an elder must be blameless (that is, he is a person of integrity and genuineness; he is not perfect but he is striving to do God's will and no one can accuse him of hypocrisy), a husband who is faithful to his wife, having children who are faithful in obedience to him, specifically being children who are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. For a care-giver, as God's steward, must be blameless (that is, he is a person of integrity and genuineness; he is not perfect but he is striving to do God's will and no one can accuse him of hypocrisy)—not arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but rather hospitable, a lover of goodness, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message that has been taught, so that he may be able both to encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it."

Function:
L. James 5:14.

"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord."

Function:

M. 1 Peter 5:1-5.

"Now as a fellow-elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to shepherd the flock of God, serving as care-givers not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it--not for material gain, but eagerly; not lording it over the ones allotted to your care, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you younger men, be subject to elders, and all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you."

Function:
N. Summing up.

It appears as if elders quickly emerged within the life of the local congregations in New Testament times (cf. Acts 11:29-30). By the time the council of Jerusalem was held (Acts 15:1f.), elders had come to play a significant role in the leadership of the early Church. The following reflections are offered for consideration.

1. The designations "elder," "fellow-elder," "care-giver," "pastor," "teacher," and "steward" are used interchangeably to describe the functions of a group of individuals in a congregation who have ultimate accountability for the welfare of the congregation as a whole as well as its individual members. The two most frequently used terms are "elder" and "care-giver."

2. Rather than describing an office or a position, in every single appearance in the passages listed above the terms always stress responsibility and accountability. The reference to "office of bishop" in the KJV is, simply put, a corruption of the text; the word "office" does not appear in the Greek text. (Titles emphasizing office or position were readily available {"ruler" or "head") but in the New Testament they are never used to describe Christians who function as leaders. Indeed, the renunciation of offices, including the titles and honors that belong to them, is a radical departure from first-century attitudes in various religious groups, including both Roman and Jewish cultures. Cf. Matt. 20:28f.)

3. Never do we read in the New Testament of an individual being designated "the elder" or "the pastor." Rather the emphasis seems to be on a plurality of elders (or pastors, the two terms are used interchangeably) in a congregation. Perhaps such an emphasis frees us up from what may be called "the solo ministry trap" where there may well be pride of place, lack of accountability, and love of power.

4. Except for the involvement of the elders in the decisions reached by the believers in Acts 15-16, it is significant to note that the premier responsibility of leaders who serve as elders is not decision-making (or decision-yielding) but caring for people. Specifically, elders are responsible for the doctrinal well-being of a congregation by teaching sound doctrine and rebuking false teachers (I Tim. 3:2; 5:17f.; Titus 1:9), the equipping of saints for ministry (Eph. 4:11f.), shepherding and caring for the physical and spiritual needs of the members of the flock (Acts 20:28f.; Eph. 4:11f.; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1f.; Titus 1:5f.; James 5:14; I Pet. 5:1f.), and involvement in financial affairs (Acts 11:29-30; I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; I Pet. 5:2). Truly, elders are examples,
equippers, and encouragers, not enforcers. They are care-givers and counselors, not care-takers and controllers.

5. In light of the above, are elders decision-makers or shepherds? It is not a matter of being either one or the other; it is a matter of both/and. Yet if there is a tendency toward imbalance in many congregations, it is in the direction of decision-making. Is it easier to make a decision with regard to the spending of funds to repair a roof of a church building or to minister to a family whose loved one is dying of AIDS? Indeed, perhaps many decisions that elders feel they need to be making could be delegated to others who are gifted in the respective areas, thus freeing the elders up to shepherd the flock. Numerous texts place a high priority on personal ministry on behalf of others, with special focus on the view that healthy doctrine produces healthy Christians, while only a few find elders involved in making decisions. When elders provide sound doctrinal teaching and preaching and caring for members of the body, Christians will be able to minister more effectively in the name of Christ. Indeed, church growth depends upon congregational health.

6. Is it correct to say that no local congregation has the right to the designation "church" unless and until elders are in evidence? No. Elders are necessary for the well-being of a congregation, but not for its being. When Paul and Barnabas appointed "elders in every church" of South Galatia (Acts 14:23), the implication of the language is that the churches were there before elders were appointed in them (cf. Titus 1:5f.). Even though elders may be viewed as a "mark" of the church, we must not confuse such a "mark" with the essence: "Apart from the eternal high priesthood of Christ, no ministry is essential to the Church in the sense that the Church could not exist without it. On the other hand, in an imperfect world of sinful and fallible men and women, some ministry is necessary in the sense that the Church cannot be fully effective for its task without it" (T.W. Manson, Ministry and Priesthood, p. 72).

7. We cannot say that the New Testament presents communities which were hierarchical in structure. The Church is neither a business with CEOs nor an army with officers. Moreover, the Church of the New Testament is not modeled after our American form of government, with elders functioning like senators and deacons functioning like representatives, with both serving as decision-makers and legislators. Authority (the influence of behavior, thought and opinion) is not vested in one person or a group of persons over the remaining members. Why is there no hierarchical form of leadership? What is new in the Christian community is the absolute authority of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, leading as elders flows out of an awareness that all Christians are called to serve and some are called to serve in ways which impact the community as a whole in more far-reaching ways than others. Such differentiation does not suggest
inferiority or superiority. Within the Christian community equality and
differentiation live together side-by-side (Rom. 12:1f.; I Cor. 12:12f.; I Pet. 4:10f.).

IV. Reflections on the Family Life of Elders (With Special Focus on Marital Status and the
Children).

The meaning of the phrases "one woman man" (frequently translated "the husband{s} of one
wife" or "married only once") in I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6 and "one man woman" (frequently
translated "the wife of one husband" or "married only once") in I Tim. 5:9 have been debated
from the second century to the present. Through the centuries the focus has been on those
texts which address the issue of the marital status of church leaders (I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus
1:6). (It has been my experience that little attention has been paid to I Tim. 5:9, a text which
emphasizes the qualities of widows who should be helped either by members of the family or
by the local congregation. Certainly this is an issue which should be addressed by all
congregations {cf. James 1:26-27}. We need to be reminded that even though we are
concerned about the marital status of elders and deacons in this study, the conclusions
reached about the meaning of the phrases in those texts dealing with leaders will have
implications for our understanding of the role the church has in caring for widows who
reflect the qualities presented by Paul in I Timothy 5.)

A. A Look at the Structure of I Timothy 3:2, 12, Titus 1:6 and I Timothy 5:9.

Far too often we do not carefully examine the structure of verses. It is always instructive
to do so, and the texts under consideration are no exception. We need to be reminded
that Paul did not write in English but in Greek and Greek sentences are not organized the
way we organize English sentences. Moreover, an analysis of vocabulary is helpful as
well. For example, the words "divorce" or "remarry" do not appear in any of the key
phrases. We need to keep this in mind, because it underscores the difficulty in properly
interpreting the verses.

Putting the Greek into English characters in the order in which the words appear in the
Greek text reveals parallelism that is not so apparent in our English translations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Timothy 3:2</td>
<td>mias gunaikos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>andra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>one woman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>man/husband</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Timothy 3:12</td>
<td>mias gunaikos</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>one woman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>men/husbands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Titus 1:6</td>
<td>mias gunaikos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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I Timothy 5:9

one woman  man

henos  andros  gune

one  man  woman

B. A Look at the Key Questions.

Is Paul teaching that an elder or a deacon may have only one wife in a lifetime, thus not permitting individuals to remarry after the death of a spouse or a divorce? Or is he referring only to divorced persons, since the death of a spouse has no moral implications? Or is he stressing marital faithfulness?

Some translations propagate these positions. For example, *The New Revised Standard Version* reads "married only once." On the other hand, *The New International Version* reads "husband of one wife" (assuming that Paul cannot mean "neither more nor less than one"). What about the accuracy of *The New English Bible*: "faithful to his one wife"?

C. A Look at Some Possible Answers.

But what were the options for interpreting the phrases in ancient times? There have been many suggestions (e.g., concubinage), and I have decided to review the major suggestions. The possibilities will be presented in order from least likely to most likely from my perspective.

1. Paul is forbidding a man to be engaged in polygamy. Quite frankly, there is not much support for this position. Polygamy was not practiced in the Roman world outside Palestine, though illegal bigamy and certainly adultery were. Indeed, polygamy was against Roman law, and even in Palestine it was not common but rather monogamy was the norm. Also Jewish people outside Palestine followed the Greek practice of avoiding polygamous unions. We need to remember that in I Timothy and Titus Paul is not addressing Christians living in Palestine but Christians living in Roman Asia and on Crete, respectively. He had no reason whatsoever to address the issue of polygamy to people living in the part of the world where polygamy was forbidden by Roman law. (Note: Women could not practice polygamy even in Palestine.)

2. Paul is forbidding a man to serve as an elder or deacon if he has been divorced, regardless of the reason. A major problem with this view is that the Greek word for "divorce" is not found in I Timothy or Titus. On the other hand, in I Cor. 7:12f. Paul uses the word for divorce, a word he certainly could have used in the letters to Timothy and Titus. When I used to teach Greek, I had students translate the
following English statements into Greek: "An elder must not be a divorced person" and "An elder must have been married only once in his life." The Greek language has both the vocabulary and the grammatical capacity to construct such clear statements. But Paul does not do so here. Why not? If he is not talking about divorce, what is he emphasizing?

Special Note: Paul is especially concerned with the way church leaders are viewed by those outside the church. Notice how the section on elders begins with an emphasis on being above reproach (v. 2) and ends with the emphasis on having a good reputation with outsiders (v. 7). If Paul is concerned about the church's witness to "those outside," it is next to impossible that he is addressing the remarriage of divorced men, because no one in antiquity, whether Jewish or Greco-Roman, would have looked down on the remarriage of men. What was ridiculed in the first century was successive divorce, bigamy, and marital infidelity.

3. Paul is stressing a husband's faithfulness to his current wife, that is, one-spouse faithfulness. This is the view that I think is most acceptable and likely. In particular, Paul gives a positive statement rather than a negative one. "Husband of one wife" means a faithful husband and presupposes marriage. The emphasis is on commitment and fidelity: a husband (or wife) is physically, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically committed to the spouse. (Some scholars, for example J.D. Quinn in Titus, p. 85, maintain that the focus is especially on sexual control, something lacking in the lives of many men in the first century.)

Note i: It is true that Paul could have used the word "faithful" in describing the relationship but does not. Some would suggest that the argument presented above which noted that Paul does not use the word "divorce" applies here as well. But the various layers of context suggest otherwise. For example, see 4.c and d.

Note ii: The belief that only married men may serve as elders comes into conflict with I Cor. 7:7. 25f. where Paul writes about the advantages of singleness: a person is able to devote more time in service of Christ (cf. Matt. 19:10-11). To insist that Paul is excluding those who have never married is an inference at best and one must be extremely cautious about inferences which clash with other relevant teachings (I Cor. 7 and Matt. 19). Certainly Paul assumes that elders will normally be married, and without doubt the experience of marriage and family life is an asset in their ministry. Nevertheless, Paul is not intending to disqualify those who are single (or indeed married but childless or only have one child).

G.W. Knight III (Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, p. 157) rejects the notion that an elder must be married and must have two or more children (if we are going to assume the first, then we must accept the latter since the plural word "children" is
used): "... it is exceedingly doubtful that these words and the words about 'children' (plural, vv. 4, 12) be understood as mandating that only a married man with at least two children could be an officer in the church. Probably he wrote in terms of the common situation, i.e., of being married and having children, and then spoke of what should be the case when this most common situation exists in an officer's life. Paul, like Peter (cf. I Pet. 5:1) regarded himself as a fellow-elder or bishop and wrote of his singleness and his apostolic ministry without regarding them as mutually exclusive (cf. I Cor. 9:1ff., especially v. 5; see also 7:7, 8). In fact, he commended singleness, using himself as an example, as a state where one would have more freedom to serve the Lord (I Cor. 7:32f.). {I do not know of a passage where Paul considered himself an elder, contrary to Knight, but I can hardly imagine a congregation rejecting Paul as an elder because he was not married and did not have two or more children!}

Note iii: If Paul is talking about one's current marital status and behavior, this is in line with the other qualities Paul presents. That is, he is addressing their current demonstration of gentleness, caring, etc.

Note iv: Validly divorced people who remarried were considered married to one spouse, the second one, not two spouses. Hence, the functional stress of the phrase is on the husband's (or wife-now-widow in I Tim. 5:9) faithfulness as a good husband (or wife) through the duration of the marriage.

Note v: Because the phrase "husband of one wife" (or "wife of one husband") is not found in any other Greek writing, the importance of interpreting the phrase in light of the various contexts cannot be over-emphasized.

4. Additional issues to consider include the following.

   a. The marriage relationship is not the one quality or characteristic that is singled out as "the umbrella" for all the other qualities stressed by Paul. Indeed, the word "blameless" is used in both I Timothy and Titus as "the umbrella" term for all the other qualities (see I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6, 7). The word "blameless" does not mean "sinless" or "perfect" but rather refers to the observable conduct which results in a man being considered as a person of integrity and genuineness. He is not perfect but he is striving to do God's will and no one (within the church or outside the church) can accuse him of hypocrisy. The qualities Paul emphasizes shows how the man is to be blameless in domestic, personal, and community areas. Neither
those within the church nor those outside the church should be able to level the charge of hypocrisy at a church leader (or any Christian, for that matter).

b. The meaning assigned ("a faithful and loyal spouse who is a good current marital partner") fits the emphasis quite well, matching the stress on caring for the children properly (I Tim. 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6) and the concern about false teachers who were ruining whole "households" (Titus 1:11) and forbidding marriage (I Timothy 4:1-3).

c. That this phrase would bar from leadership an otherwise godly man because of a bad marriage years ago, often before his conversion, is an assumption that has to be read into the text. Moreover, a valid divorce does not leave one still married to the preceding wife, and one who remarries after such a divorce is thus not the husband of both wives, but only of one, the second one.

d. Marriage to one partner in a lifetime is never applied as a qualification for leaders in the ancient world. The ideal of marital fidelity, however, is often required of leaders, even outside the Bible. Indeed, having one's current household in order was a frequent ancient standard for leadership. For example, the Roman author Plutarch (46-120 A.D.) addressed family issues in "Advice on Marriage" (see his Moral Essays), viewing marriage as "a lifelong partnership together" yet "while every activity is carried on by husband and wife in agreement with each other, it will still be evident that it is the husband who leads and makes the final choice... . So, as ropes twined together gain strength from one another, the two of them will each contribute his or her share of good will and by their joint action the partnership will be preserved." Near the end, Plutarch writes: "So a man who is going to bring harmony into politics, business and his personal relations ought to see that there is real harmony in his own household."

e. The passages indicate the importance of a stable family life. It implicitly excludes from ministry those who take marriage lightly, whether by seeking a divorce or by neglecting their families in the name of Christ and service. Indeed, the principle presented by Paul more readily excludes a church leader who spends all his time away from his family, neglecting them because of the demands of leadership.

f. As noted above, it is necessary for elders to be "above reproach" for the sake of the church's witness in the world. A question we need to wrestle with is the following: What happens when the world calls us on the carpet for having
"standards" that reflect a Pharisaic legalism rather than the belief that the Cross of Christ really cancels our past?

g. Even though I do not believe this passage automatically excludes any divorced man from serving as either an elder or a deacon, I believe it is important for there to be a thorough discussion of any person's past marital status as well as assessment of the current marriage. Such an assessment should focus on such issues as the reason or reasons for the divorce, the person's responsibility in the failure of the marriage, etc.

h. I believe it is important for us to acknowledge that the qualities Paul presents in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are not nearly compartmentalized. If there is a weakness in one, there will likely be weaknesses in other areas as well.

D. A Special Note on the Children of Elders and Deacons.

In I Timothy 3:4-5, 12 and Titus 1:6 Paul talks about the care an elder (or deacon) demonstrates for his children as well as a concern for the behavior of those children. In particular, what does it mean that "his children obey him with proper respect" (I Tim. 3:4) and that he is "a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient" (Titus 1:6)? There is not a problem with the translation or meaning of I Tim. 3:4: children are to be submissive and obedient.

The meaning of the phrase as translated in the NIV, "a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient," is not so easy to understand for at least one reason. The Greek word (pista) can be translated as "believing" in the sense of children who have become Christians (e.g., baptized believers). But on the other hand, the word can also mean "faithful," with that quality being clarified in the following clause: "are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient." In other words, faithful children are not wild and disobedient.

In his commentary, I-2 Timothy and Titus, Philip Towner provides what I think is a detailed helpful discussion:

"The problem lies in the meaning of the Greek word pista in the phrase 'having believing [or faithful] children.' One view understands Paul to be limiting membership . . . to those whose family members all believe; pista can certainly bear this meaning. Another view is that the term means, more generally, 'faithful' or 'trustworthy' (1:9; 3:8; I Tim. 3:11; compare I Tim. 1:15; 3:1), which quality is then delineated in the phrase that follows. While the first view is possible, it seems to place more stringent requirements on the elder than does I Timothy 3:4. Moreover, in view of this parallel, Paul
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probably means that the elder's children are to be faithful in obeying the head of the house. In fact, the rest of the verse contrasts 'faithful' with 'the charge of being wild and disobedient,' which suggest a more general kind of faithfulness. The code asks that candidates for the office of elder not be those whose children will attract accusations of dissipation and rebellion (compare v. 10). This is very much in accord with I Timothy 3:4."

Hence, rather than translate the word *pista* in Titus 1:6 "believing," it appears that it is best translated "faithful," referring to the need for the children to be submissive or obedient.

Note: Some argue that an elder must have children. Indeed, some go so far as to suggest that since Paul uses the plural form of the noun, an elder must have two or more children. Still further, some have argued that a man must have children living at home during his tenure as an elder. Such hairsplitting needs little, if any, comment.

V. Serving as Servant-Leaders—The Ministry of Deacons.

It is unnecessary to prepare a chart like the one presented above for the elders since there are so few passages in the New Testament concerning deacons. Indeed, what in the world are we to do with those individuals designated as "deacons?" The answer to this question continues to escape many congregations. When compared with the nearly two dozen references to elders in the New Testament, it is interesting to note that we simply do not have much information about deacons. In general, perhaps we can consider them as assistants in ministry, serving in accordance with their character and gifts and in consultation with and with the encouragement of elders who have ultimate accountability for the welfare of the flock.

This section of the study guide is broken into two parts, the first examining the Scriptures properly (or improperly) associated with deacons and the second offering some reflections.

A. Key Scriptures.


   a. The word "deacon" does not appear in Acts 6 (or anywhere else in Acts for that matter).

   b. The phrase "to wait on tables" in verse 2 refers to financial transactions and/or the distribution of foodstuffs, not serving at the Lord's Table.
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c. The task of the seven men is given no formal name; neither are they given
designations (although Philip is later called an "evangelist" in Acts 21:8 and
Stephen's ministry involves performing wonders and proclaiming the Word in
Acts 6:8-7:60).

d. The choice of seven men corresponds with the Jewish practice of recognizing a
group of seven men who would perform particular duties in Jewish villages,
specifically focusing on caring for the widows and orphans.

e. Simply put, Acts 6:1f. does not refer to the first deacons.

2. Philippians 1:1

  a. The deacons are linked with the care-givers; perhaps they are to be viewed as
     assistants to the elders.

  b. Nothing is said about the particular duties of deacons and we do not know why
     Paul referred to them in the opening of the letter.


  a. It is unclear if Phoebe is a person recognized as performing the functions of a
     deacon; Paul may simply be describing her ministry as a Christian.

  b. Phoebe is commended for providing help to people, including Paul himself (cf.
     Rom. 12:8).


  a. A key issue is if Paul is referring to both men and women who serve as deacons or
to men who serve as deacons with their wives being singled out for special
mention in v. 11.

  b. Notice the structure of the following verses:

      3:2 "Now the care-giver must be . . ."

      3:8 "Deacons, likewise (hosautos = similarly) are to be men worthy of
             respect . . ."

      3:11 "Women (or women who serve as deacons) likewise (hosautos = similarly)
             must be respectable . . ."
The following observations are in order:

1. Some suggest that Paul is referring to the wives ofdeacons and present two arguments in support: (i) the reference to wives is surrounded by references to deacons and (ii) the word "women" is too general a term for "deacon" and thus should be translated "wives."

2. The parallel structure presented in section "b" suggests that Paul is referring to three groups of leaders and their qualities. Specifically, the word "likewise" (or "similarly") seems to indicate that Paul is referring to three distinct groups: care-givers/elders, deacons who are men and deacons who are women.

3. The NIV translates the word "woman" as "wife" and inserts a word that is not found in the Greek text, "their." There is another Greek word for "wife" (gune) and it is not used in this verse. The more general word "woman" is used. I believe the context suggests that Paul is referring to women who serve, specifically assisting the elders, like their male counterparts.

4. In returning to men who serve as deacons in 3:12, perhaps we have Paul digressing, first focusing on men who serve, then referring to women who serve, and then returning to men who serve as deacons, focusing on their responsibilities to their families.

B. Additional Observations.

1. Both men who serve as deacons and women who serve as deacons must demonstrate certain qualities (e.g., respectable, sincere, etc.) as well as giftedness as they carry out their respective ministries, assisting the elders in caring for the flock.

2. Indeed, there are certain ministries that it is best for men (elders or deacons) not to carry out and that are appropriate for women.

3. There appears to be no justification in Scripture for suggesting that elders deal with the "spiritual" and that the deacons deal with the "physical." The word diakonos (sometimes referring to all Christians and sometimes referring to specific Christians,
male and female, with specific ministries in association with the elders) was used to describe a variety of ministries.

4. Accordingly, it seems likely that the deacons undertook various kinds of ministry in local congregations, in accordance with their gifts. Furthermore, perhaps elders delegated many duties to competent servant-leaders who are called deacons, thus freeing the elders to do the work of shepherding, teaching, and equipping (among other responsibilities), a principle found in Acts 6:1f.

5. Nowhere does the New Testament entertain the idea that deacons are apprentice-elders (or "elders-in-the-making"). I have wondered if we have not been reluctant to recognize women as deacons because of our fear that they will be viewed as potential elders.

6. Nowhere is there any suggestion that a major responsibilities of deacons was "to serve the Lord's Table."

7. Finally, there is no more support for deacons (male or both male or female) serving on a church board than there is for elders doing so!

VI. The Relationship Between the Qualities Expected of Elders and Deacons and All Christians.

Most of the qualities expected of elders and deacons are expected of all Christians. This often comes as a surprise to believers, but a concordance search confirms this quite easily.

A. Qualities of all Christians.

1. All Christians are expected to be blameless (I Cor. 1:8; Col. 1:22; cf. I Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6,7).

2. All Christians are expected to be hospitable (I Pet. 4:9; cf. I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8).

3. All Christians are expected to be teachers (Heb. 5:12; cf. I Tim. 3:2).

4. All Christians are expected to be gentle (Phil. 4:5; James 3:17; I Pet. 2:18).

5. All Christians are expected to not be lovers of money (Heb. 13:5; cf. I Tim. 3:3).
6. All Christians are expected to be submissive (I Tim. 2:2; Eph. 5:21).

7. All Christians are to be non-rebellious and reject debauchery (Eph. 5:18; I Pet. 4:4; cf. Titus 1:6).

8. All Christians are to be stewards (I Pet. 4:10; cf. Titus 1:7).

9. All Christians are expected to be just (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Phil. 4:8; Heb. 10:38; James 5:16; I Pet. 4:18; cf. Titus 1:8).

10. All Christians are expected to be holy (I Tim. 2:8; cf. Titus 1:8).

11. All Christians are expected to be self-controlled (Gal. 5:23; II Pet. 1:6; cf. Titus 1:8).

12. All Christians are expected to be respectful (I Tim. 2:2).

13. All Christians are expected to have a grasp of the word of truth so that they can teach and preach truth and confront evil (I Thess. 5:19f.; cf. Titus 1:9).

14. Numerous passages speak about Christians not being drunkards, not being violent, not being quick-tempered, not being fond of sordid gain, not conceited, not arrogant, etc.

B. Other Relevant Passages.

1. Timothy and widows are expected to be above reproach (I Tim. 5:7; 6:14; cf. I Tim. 3:2).

2. Married Christians are expected to be faithful to their spouses (Eph. 5:21f.; I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6).

3. Older Christian men are to be temperate (Titus 2:2; cf. I Tim. 3:2).

4. Younger Christian women and older Christian men are to be sensible (Titus 2:5,2; cf. Titus 1:8).

5. Married Christians are expected to care for members of their families (Titus 3:8, 14; cf. I Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17).

6. All Christian children are to be respectful of their parents (Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 4:20; cf. I Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6).
Making a Difference: Serving as Christian Leaders
Page 22

VII. Some Important Questions to Consider.

A. How can a Biblical understanding of elders and deacons be shared with the congregation as a whole?

B. Each elder and deacon needs to consider the following questions:

1. What must I continue doing as an elder or deacon?

2. What must I do better as an elder or deacon?

3. What must I begin doing as an elder or deacon?

4. What must I cease doing as an elder or deacon?

C. What are the differences between an elder who is paid (I Tim. 5:17f.) and elders who do not receive financial compensation? Does the teaching by Paul aid us in understanding the role of many preaching-ministers serving in congregations today?

D. What is an appropriate way to describe and express the relationship of elders and deacons?
Becoming A Healthy Leadership Community

1. Why a Leadership Community? (benefits of principle-based governance)
   • The posture is proactive (future orientation) rather than reactive (past orientation).
   • The volume of information is manageable rather than overwhelming.
   • Attention is leveraged and focused on the important and ultimate rather than the immediate and urgent.
   • Vision is cradled rather than ignored.
   • Priorities reflect a long-term bias (eternal) rather than a short-term bias (trivial).
   • The governance role is clear rather than cloudy.
   • The staff is empowered with agility rather than being frustrated with inflexibility.

   • A team without a captain
     Instead it is a team of gifted players led by a player coach.
   • A therapy unit for wounded leaders
     Instead it is an action unit that finds fulfillment in its fruitfulness.
   • A legislature for power and control
     Instead it is a support system for an equipped and trusted Lead Minister to equip and empower the people of the church.

   • A leadership community is
     ✓ a fellowship of leaders
     ✓ committed to one mission for the church and
     ✓ accountable for distinctive roles in fulfilling it.
   • A healthy leadership community combines
     ✓ oversight (governance) by the elders,
     ✓ leadership through the Lead Minister, and
     ✓ management by the ministry staff (paid and volunteer).

4. Components of A Leadership Community
   An Eldership that Oversees
   The eldership oversees (governs) the church by stating and leading with guiding principles that authorize the Lead Minister or a gifted designee to lead the church to fulfill its mission.

   A Lead Minister that Leads
   The Lead Minister or gifted designee—empowered by the elders with clear responsibility, ample authority, and precise accountability—leads the church by visioning with the elders, communicating the vision to the congregation, and coaching the staff toward the vision.

   A Ministry Staff and Ministry Team Leaders that Manage
   The ministry staff (paid and volunteer)—empowered by the Lead Minister or gifted designee within the oversight of the elders—manage the ministries of the church within their own responsibility, authority, and accountability.

5. A Healthy Eldership: overseeing (governing) through principles to accomplish the mission
   The eldership oversees (governs) through principles that . . .
   --define responsibility
   --delegate authority, and
   --demand accountability
   The eldership oversees (governs); it does not . . . lead the organization effectively except through the Lead Minister or gifted designee nor
manage the organization efficiently except through the Ministry Staff and Ministry Teams. Rather than approve activities, the eldership formulates principles and monitors the performance of the Lead Minister.

**Proposed Purpose**
The purpose of the **Leadership Team** of First Christian Church, on behalf of Christ, His Church, and those to be reached through the ministry of this church, is to see to it (Accountability Principles) that First Christian Church achieves (Responsibility Principles) what God desires and avoids (Authority Principles) what is unacceptable.

6. **A Healthy Lead Minister: leading the church to accomplish the mission**
   - **Responsibility** means that the Lead Minister and the eldership agree together on WHAT the vision and mission of the church is and WHO is charged with leading the church to fulfill it.
   - **Authority** means that the Lead Minister and the eldership agree together on WHERE the boundaries lie that create freedom of movement for the Lead Minister and ministry staff and WHY functioning within those boundaries is consistent with core values and guiding principles.
   - **Accountability** means that the Lead Minister and the eldership agree together on HOW progress will be measured and what will happen WHEN the Lead Minister and/or ministry staff prove fruitful or unfruitful in fulfillment of the vision and mission.

7. **A Healthy Ministry Staff: managing the ministries to accomplish the mission**
   - The ministry staff manage the ministries of the church.
   - The ministry staff report to the Lead Minister, not the eldership or the congregation.
   - Each staff person has his or her own area of responsibility, authority, and accountability.

8. **A Healthy Leadership Strategy: a community working together in unity and diversity to accomplish the mission**
   - The fulfillment of the mission depends on leadership: effective leaders and supportive followers in a healthy community.
   - Governing Boards do not lead; they establish the goals, boundaries, and measurements for the leader.
   - Guiding Principles do not lead; they define the goals, boundaries, and measurements for the leader.
   - Only the leaders can lead; boards and documents either help or hinder a leader. They help or hinder through goals (responsibility), boundaries (authority), and measurements (accountability).

**Resources**
John Carver, *Boards that Make a Difference*
John Carver and Miriam Carver, *Reinventing Your Board*
Larry Osborne, *The Unity Factor*
Randy Richards, *How to Build an Effective Board*
Alexander Strauch, *Meetings that Work*

Don Green
Lincoln Christian College and Seminary
100 Campus View Drive
Lincoln, IL 62656
217-732-3168
dgreen@lccs.edu
PRINCIPLE # 3: BEING HONEST ABOUT WHERE YOUR CHURCH IS
(“CONFRONT THE BRUTAL FACTS”)

Biblical Principle—Ephesians 4:14-16; Revelation 2-3

“Yes, leadership is about vision. But leadership is equally about creating a climate where the truth is heard and the brutal facts confronted. There’s a huge difference between the opportunity to ‘have your say’ and the opportunity to be heard. The good-to-great leaders understood the distinction, creating a culture wherein people had a tremendous opportunity to be heard and, ultimately for the truth to be heard.”

--Jim Collins, Good to Great, p. 74

“I never lost faith in the end of the story . . . I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade. . . This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

--Admiral Jim Stockdale, the highest-ranking US military officer in the “Hanoi Hilton” prisoner-of-war camp during the height of the Vietnam War, from a conversation with Jim Collins, Good to Great, p. 85

For Reflection and Discussion:

- Is your church open (accepting of new people) or closed (comfortable with the number and kind of people we have now)?
- Does your church demonstrate a dependency upon God?
- Is your church committed to discipling people for true spiritual transformation?
- Is your church stuck in tradition, bureaucracy, and red tape?
- Does your church demonstrate a heart for lost people?
- Does your church confront sin by speaking the truth in love?
- Does your church have leaders who are willing and able to lead?

Action Steps:

- Identify with an X where your church is on the chart, “Life Cycle—Church Characteristics” and plot your church’s health on the cart, “Five Stages in the Life Cycle of Churches.”

- Confront the brutal facts—Is your church in crisis? If so, what are the reasons and possible solutions? If not, how can you avoid such a situation?
Life Cycle - Church Characteristics

MATURITY
- Outside-In Focus
- Pioneers
- Risks
- Creative Plans
- Refine Structures
- Can Do
- Experiment

STABILITY
- Inside-Out Focus
- Settlers
- Guarantees
- Allocative Plans
- Guard Structures
- Might Do
- Refinement

GROWTH
- Flexibility
- Teamwork
- Outward Focus
- Solution Oriented
- Results Oriented
- Concern - Growth
- Clarified Purpose
- Functions=Forms

DECLINE
- Rigidity
- Lone Rangers
- Inward Focus
- Problem Oriented
- Means Oriented
- Concern - Survival
- Cloudy Purpose
- Form is Function

BIRTH
- Courtship
- High Tolerance
- Hope
- Enthusiasm
- Activity
- Commitment
- Vision

DEATH
- Divorce
- Low Tolerance
- No Hope
- Boredom
- Passivity
- Containment
- Disillusion

Joyful & Happy

Sullen & Angry

Robert A. Humphrey © LEAD Programs 5/29/2001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Understanding of Purpose</th>
<th>Goals and Programs</th>
<th>Communication and Organizational Structures</th>
<th>Membership Implementation</th>
<th>Attitude Toward Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Structuring Stage</td>
<td>Everyone understands clearly.</td>
<td>Not yet developed.</td>
<td>Well established and coordinated.</td>
<td>No one.</td>
<td>People accept leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Organization Stage</td>
<td>Large majority understand clearly.</td>
<td>Developed and carried out.</td>
<td>New ideas are accepted.</td>
<td>Over 60% involved.</td>
<td>Very little opposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Efficiency Stage</td>
<td>Purpose is obvious or understood.</td>
<td>Clearly seen and carried.</td>
<td>Members most receptive.</td>
<td>High enthusiasm for the board.</td>
<td>Change is quick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalization Stage</td>
<td>Faith is high.</td>
<td>Major focus in church.</td>
<td>Members mostly receptive.</td>
<td>Almost loose cannon.</td>
<td>Change in board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disintegration Stage</td>
<td>Morale is high.</td>
<td>People volunteer to survive.</td>
<td>Members not receptive.</td>
<td>Many changes proposed.</td>
<td>Can’t be done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Five Stages in the Life Cycle of Churches**
PRINCIPLE # 4: KEEPING THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING ("THE HEDGEHOG CONCEPT")

Biblical Principle—Matthew 28:18-20

“Are you a hedgehog or a fox? In his famous essay, ‘The Hedgehog and the Fox,’ Isaiah Berlin divided the world into hedgehogs and foxes, based upon an ancient Greek parable: ‘The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.’ . . . Foxes pursue many ends at the same time and see the world in all its complexity. They are ‘scattered or diffused, moving on many levels’ says Berlin, never integrating their thinking into one overall concept or unifying vision. Hedgehogs, on the other hand, simplify a complex world into a single organizing idea, a basic principle or concept that unifies and guides everything. It doesn’t matter how complex the world, a hedgehog reduces all challenges and dilemmas to simple—indeed almost simplistic—hedgehog ideas. For a hedgehog, anything that does not somehow relate to the hedgehog idea holds no relevance. . . hedgehogs aren’t simpletons; they have a piercing insight that allows them to see through the complexity and discern underlying patterns. Hedgehogs see the essential, and ignore the rest.”

--Jim Collins, Good to Great, p. 91

For Reflection and Discussion:

- What is the one thing that your church is better at doing than anything else?
- What is the one thing that your church should be better at doing than anything else?

“The church must define—or redefine its mission. The specific focus of local churches will vary, of course, according to their context and environment, but I believe two overriding tasks will move to the forefront of the redefined church mission:

1. producing more Christians
2. building better Christians.

The two tasks obviously go together but in which order? Some may argue that the one listed second should come first. . . Of course, the reverse could also be argued: that the task of improving existing Christians (crotchety and stubborn as we are) is more daunting than the task of building a new generation of better Christians from scratch. Thus the fastest way to better is by focusing on the more. . . Or perhaps there aren’t really two tasks at all. Or perhaps it’s wrongheaded to have the two compete for priority, as if pulse and brainwaves were competitors for survival. . . So perhaps we would do better, on the other side, to take both tasks and subsume them under the single heading ‘Disciple Making.’ Whatever terminology we use, we need to face the fact that we are not doing well enough on either account at present.”

--Brian McLaren, Reinventing Your Church, p. 28-29

Action Steps:

- Circle what words on the “Holistic Disciplemaking” chart best describe your church’s strengths in fulfilling the Great Commission.

- Identify where your church is on the “Intentional Disciplemaking” chart.
HOLISTIC DISCIPLEMAKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matt 28:18-20 “make disciples”</th>
<th>“going”</th>
<th>“baptizing”</th>
<th>“teaching”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theologically</td>
<td>Seeking</td>
<td>Saving</td>
<td>Sanctifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatically</td>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularly</td>
<td>Finding</td>
<td>Keeping</td>
<td>Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally</td>
<td>Believing</td>
<td>Bonding</td>
<td>Growing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Gary McIntosh, "How to Grow A Church"
### Growth Stages of an Intentional DiscipleMaking Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Leadership Development</th>
<th>Spiritual Maturity</th>
<th>Small Groups</th>
<th>Mentoring Mindset</th>
<th>Outreach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DM vision is influencing other churches and ministries w/ potential world impact</td>
<td>Generations of leaders are using their gifting in leading and equipping the church</td>
<td>People are being transformed into Christ-likeness and are growing as reproducing disciples</td>
<td>Personal and collective spiritual multiplication is occurring within the small groups</td>
<td>3rd and 4th generation laborers involved in mentoring</td>
<td>Primary growth of church is through conversions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The entire church is functioning around the vision of making disciples</td>
<td>Intentional process is in place for developing emerging leaders</td>
<td>The spiritual growth process is in place and working effectively</td>
<td>The bulk of the Body is involved in meaningful relationships</td>
<td>2nd generation laborers are involved in mentoring</td>
<td>Intentional evangelism strategies are beginning to bear fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strategic planning for integration of infrastructure systems has been accomplished</td>
<td>All member of key leadership team are personally committed to the church’s mission and vision</td>
<td>A progressive process for spiritual growth has been defined</td>
<td>Leaders trained in discipleMaking are leading small groups</td>
<td>Mentoring is becoming an integral part of the church’s ministries</td>
<td>Outreach taskforce has been formed and comprehensive strategies are being developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Church-wide mission &amp; vision for DM has crystallized</td>
<td>Discipling is being modeled via a DM prototype and reproducing DM leaders are being developed</td>
<td>Several members of the Body have an obvious heart to grow spiritually</td>
<td>Discipling leaders are being trained</td>
<td>The Body is beginning to understand the concept of one person spiritually helping another</td>
<td>Some people evidence a heart for the Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Senior Pastor is primary advocate for discipleMaking (DM) and a practicing discipleMaker</td>
<td>Critical mass of key leaders embrace and practice a philosophy of DM</td>
<td>Key leaders are focusing on spiritual matters</td>
<td>Leaders recognize need for small groups in making disciples</td>
<td>Some leaders are mentoring others</td>
<td>Some leaders are modeling intentional outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mission and vision are unclear</td>
<td>Key leaders are focused primarily on administrative matters</td>
<td>Discipleship is undefined and haphazard</td>
<td>Some small group activity is taking place but not resulting in transformation</td>
<td>Mentoring is poorly understood</td>
<td>Emphasis on outreach is minimal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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[Diagram showing the stages and corresponding descriptions]
Principle # 5: Being a High Commitment Church in a Low Commitment World
(“A Culture of Discipline”)

Biblical Principle—Hebrews 12:1-29

“In a sense, much of this book is about creating a culture of discipline. It all starts with disciplined people [the right people on the bus]. . . Next we have disciplined thought [confronting brutal facts and persisting in your one mission]. . . Finally we have disciplined action. . . But disciplined action without self-disciplined people is impossible to sustain, and disciplined action without disciplined thought is a recipe for disaster. . . Most of us lead busy but undisciplined lives. We have ever-expanding ‘to do’ lists, trying to build momentum by doing, doing, doing—and doing more. And it rarely works. Those who built good-to-great companies, however, made as much use of ‘stop doing’ lists as ‘to do’ lists. They displayed a remarkable discipline to unplug all sorts of extraneous junk.”

--Jim Collins, Good to Great, p. 126, 139

For Reflection and Discussion:

- After reading the September 18, 2002, New York Times article by Laurie Goodstein, “Conservative Churches Grew the Fastest in the 1990’s, Report Says” reflect on why high commitment churches are growing churches?

- Is your church a high commitment church? If not, how can you help your church become a high commitment church in a low commitment world?

Action Steps:

- Instead of investing more thought and energy into developing a longer “To Do List”, create a “Stop Doing List”.

“Freedom is only part of the story and half the truth. . . That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplanted by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast.”

--Victor E. Frankl, Man’s Search for Meaning, p. 134

- Evaluate your church’s budgeting process to be sure that you are not merely trying to decide how much each activity gets, but which activities best help you accomplish your mission; then evaluate your church’s budget to see what activities should be fully funded and what should not be funded at all.

- Use the Sample “Leadership Covenant” and Discussion Questions as a model for covenants for your church—a Leadership Covenant between the elders and ministry staff, a Membership Covenant for members, covenants between elders and staff, covenants between the Leadership Team (elders and staff) and Ministry Teams, covenants within Ministry Teams, etc.

“If you always do what you always did; you always get what you always got.”

--Leonard Sweet, SoulTsunami, p. 100
Conservative Churches Grew Fastest in 1990’s, Report Says

By LAURIE GOODSTEIN

Socially conservative churches that demand high commitment from their members grew faster than other religious denominations in the last decade, according to a study released yesterday by statisticians who count American religious affiliations every 10 years.

The study, “Religious Congregations and Membership: 2000,” found that the fastest-growing religious denomination in the last 10 years was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which enlists thousands of young Mormon missionaries to recruit door to door and boosted its membership in the United States by 19.3 percent to a total of 4.2 million since the last survey in 1990.

The denominations that recorded the next highest growth were the conservative Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, with 18.6 percent; the Assemblies of God, a major Pentecostal denomination, with 18.5 percent; and the Roman Catholic Church, with 16.2 percent.

Because the Census Bureau does not ask about religion, some scholars regard this study, first done in 1971, as the most comprehensive assessment available of the changes in American religious affiliation. The study is based on self-reporting by religious groups, a method that the study’s authors acknowledge is imprecise because religious groups can inflate their numbers. The study was conducted by Glenmary Research Center and sponsored by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.

I was astounded to see that by and large the growing churches are those that we ordinarily call conservative,” said Ken Sanchagrin, director of the Glenmary Research Center and a professor and chairman of the department of sociology at Mars Hill College in Mars I-Ell, N.C. “And when I looked at those that were declining, most were moderate or liberal churches. And the more liberal the denomination, by most people’s definition, the more they were losing.”

The churches that lost the highest percentages of members were the Presbyterian Church USA (11.6 percent) and the United Church of Christ (14.8 percent).

The Catholic Church is still the nation’s largest, with more than 62 million adherents, about a quarter of the population. Many Catholics have moved in the last decade from the Northeast and the Midwest to the South and Southwest, the survey found.
The next largest denomination is the Southern Baptists, with nearly 20 million members. Protestant churches all together reported 66 million members.

About half of Americans belong to one of the 149 religious groups included in the study. Utah, North Dakota and the District of Columbia, have the highest percentages of religious adherents, it found; Oregon and Washington have the lowest.

The 2000 study is the first to include information on religious groups other than Christians and Jews. But Mr. Sanchagrin acknowledged yesterday that the numbers of Muslims and Jews reported in the survey could be misleading. The estimate of Jews was 6.1 million, but the count included Jews who are unaffiliated with synagogues - the only group in the survey to use identity and not membership as its criteria in the count.

The estimate of Muslims was 1.5 million, derived by counting the members reported by a third of the nation’s 1,200 mosques, which often do not maintain membership rolls. Because some Muslims are new immigrants and others are recent converts, reliable estimates are difficult. The study’s number is far lower than the seven million claimed by most American Muslim groups.

New York Times
God has called the staff ministers and elders and their spouses of our congregation into a special relationship with each other. As leaders and spouses we realize that the Bible is the complete and sole authority for Christian behavior. Accordingly, we set forth the following covenant as a summary of appropriate behavior for church leaders set forth in Scripture. It is not intended to replace the Bible but to simply highlight what it says about behavior expected of Christian leaders.

Therefore, in view of our special relationship with each other we hereby agree and covenant to strive to do the following in our relationship both personally and corporately:

1. For my personal and spiritual life, I commit myself to do the following:
   a. To seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness as I pursue intimacy in my relationship with Christ (Matt. 6:33).
   b. To maintain a prayer and devotional life and a study of God’s Word that will equip me for the ministry God has called me to carry out (Acts 20:25-35).
   c. To live an exemplary life in my personal, family, and public life so that the name of Christ is honored (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
   d. To give my spouse and family the priority due them (Eph. 5:22-6:4).
   e. To seek help from a mature Christian when I perceive that my walk with Christ is slipping. This will keep me from pride and independence and give me strength in overcoming temptation (Gal. 6:1-5).
   f. To confront my brother or sister in love (first of all privately) when I am concerned about their attitudes or choices and their impact on the Kingdom (Gal. 6:1). I also agree to be open to hear the counsel of others when I am approached with concerns about my own life.

2. As leaders and spouses we commit ourselves to do the following in order to fulfill our responsibilities to Christ and his Church:
   a. To be guided by the Word of God as our standard for all matters of faith and practice (II Tim. 3:15-17).
   b. To pray for each other regularly regarding our roles and responsibilities as leaders and spouses of leaders (I Thess 5:16-18).
   c. To bear each other’s burdens and encourage our brothers and sisters (Gal. 6:2).
   d. To give a good report of staff and non-staff leaders and their spouses and others in the body of Christ. If this is not possible, we purpose to remain silent and/or go to the person in question according to the principles of reconciliation and restoration as described in Matthew 18:15-20. We also commit ourselves not to listen to bad reports concerning others in the body. This means if someone comes to us regarding a third person, we
will not discuss their grievances until they have made a good faith effort to be reconciled. Then if these efforts fail, we will be free to go with them or send someone as an impartial witness so that personal reconciliation can be achieved (cf. Matt. 5:23-24).

e. To not entertain an accusation against a leader and others unless the facts are corroborated by two or three witnesses (I Tim. 5:19) and the principles of Matt 18:15-20 are clearly applied.

f. To be kindly disposed toward one another with genuine concern for our brother’s or sister’s welfare (Phil. 2:1-4).

g. To spend time with each other in various settings so that we can get to know each other well, thereby building trust (Rom. 12:10; I Thess. 5:12-13.)

h. To be honest and open with each other concerning our true feelings and attitudes with regard to the decisions we make. We also agree to own the decisions that are made by the leaders so that we can display the unity that will empower God’s church (Acts 15).

i. To wait before the Lord on matters that affect the church until we can truly stand in unity and agreement on what the Lord is saying (Eph. 4:3).

j. To be an example to the flock by actively participating in four vital areas: Sunday worship service, an accountability or small group, the responsibilities of leaders and spouses, and the appropriate financial support of the Lord’s work (Eph. 4:11-16; I Pet. 5:1-5).

k. To study and grow together in the knowledge of the Word and in other relevant subjects (II Tim. 2:15).

l. To maintain confidences concerning sensitive issues and decisions that are made in regard to matters in the church (Prov. 6:16-19).

m. To not make relevant personal or church decisions that would impact the Body without first seeking the advice of fellow leaders (Acts 15; Prov. 15:22).

n. To approach the above responsibilities in a genuine spirit of humility and servant-leadership as described in I Pet. 5:1-5.

We agree to pursue the above in our roles as leaders and spouses. It is because of our desire to be faithful to Christ and His Church and glorify God that we pledge ourselves to honor this covenant to the best of our ability with God’s help.

Leader ________________________  Leader’s Spouse_________________________
Leader ________________________  Leader’s Spouse_________________________
Leader ________________________  Leader’s Spouse_________________________
Leader ________________________  Leader’s Spouse_________________________
Leader ________________________  Leader’s Spouse_________________________
Leader ________________________  Leader’s Spouse_________________________
Suggested Discussion Questions for Leadership Covenants

1. What is the value of having such a covenant? For example, does it set a standard for each person with regard to personal spiritual growth and healthy relationships with fellow leaders? Does it raise the standard of accountability sufficiently? Does it promote spiritual growth and maturity for present leaders? How does it clarify the expectations for future or potential leaders?

2. Should this be viewed as a "living document" in the sense that it states each person's intention to pursue the challenges set forth in accordance with Scripture? Should it also be open to annual review and revision in light of changing circumstances and the raising up by God of future leaders?

3. Would you agree that this covenant is not to be viewed legalistically but rather the spirit of the covenant is to be maintained?

4. What does it say about us if we are not willing to agree to such a covenant?

5. What is the value of having spouses commit themselves to the principles found in the covenant?

6. Are there other areas that need to be addressed?

7. If each leader and spouse commit themselves to carrying out the covenant, what will each person look like and what will one's conduct be like?

8. What influence would (or should) such a commitment have on the congregation as a whole?

9. How can this be shared with the congregation in a timely and effective way?

10. How could this covenant serve as a model for Ministry Team Covenants and Membership Covenants?