

EMPOWERING YOUR CORE FOR MINISTRY
Purpose Driven Church Conference
Rick Warren

GALLUP SURVEY: Only _____% of all laymen are active in a ministry.
An additional 50% have no interest at all.
BUT
_____ % said they'd like to be involved but have never been asked or
don't know how.

I. TEACH THE _____ FOR LAY MINISTRY.

4 Pillars of Lay Ministry: Romans 12:1-8

1. Every believer is
2. Every ministry is
3. We are dependant
4. Ministry is the expression of my S.H.A.P.E.

S _____ (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 8; Eph. 4)

H _____ (Matt. 12:34; Prov. 4:23; Ps. 37:4)

A _____ (Ex. 31:3; 1 Cor. 12:5)

P _____ (1 Cor. 2:11 LB)

E _____ (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 1)

Sermon Series: "You Are SHAPED For Significance:
www.pastors.com

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II. ESTABLISH A MINISTRY PLACEMENT _____

SADDLEBACK'S PROCESS

STEP 1:

Attend "Discovering My Ministry" Class 301
and learn how God shaped me for ministry

Spiritual Gifts

Hear

Abilities

Personality

Experience

STEP 2:

Complete Your Personal Profile

STEP 3:

Commit to the Ministry Covenant

STEP 4:

Meet with a ministry guide
for your S.H.A.P.E. interview
and identify 3 or 4 possible ministries

STEP 5

Meet with the staff who supervise
the ministries you're considering.

STEP 6:

Begin my ministry
and attend the S.A.L.T. meeting

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**III. STREAMLINE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TO MAXIMIZE
MINISTRY AND MINIMIZE _____**

Roper Survey of American's leisure time:

In 1973 we averaged 26.2 hours a week of leisure time but in 1987 our leisure time had been reduced to an average of 16.6 hours a week.

The most valuable thing people give you is their time.

IV. PROVIDE _____ TRAINING

“S.A.L.T.” – A two hour training rally for the CORE.

Warning: Don't wear people out with _____ training!

V. NEVER START A MINISTRY WITHOUT A _____

The most critical factor in a new ministry start-up is not the idea but the _____.

Everything rises or falls on leadership !

Trust God's timing! Never force a ministry!

VI. ESTABLISH MINIMUM _____ .

But don't bury them with procedures or committees.

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At Saddleback, any member who has completed Class 301 may begin a new ministry as long as they follow four guidelines:

1. You don't expect _____
2. The ministry is compatible with our church's _____
3. The ministry will not harm _____ of the church.
4. You don't do any _____ .

**VII. ALLOW PEOPLE TO _____ MINISTRIES GRACEFULLY,
WITHOUT GUILT!**

Give them freedom to do 3 things:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

VII. PROVIDE THE _____ NEEDED.

1. Material Support
Access to copy machines, fax, phones, space to meet.
2. Communications Support
Develop multiple communication channels to stay in touch with your core of lay leaders and ministers
 - Voice Mailboxes for events
 - Internet Web Page: <http://www.saddleback.com>
 - Core Newsletter: "The Flock"
 - Lay Pastor Reports
3. Promotional Support: Keep your ministries visible!
 - Set up ministry tables outside your building
 - Give every minister a nametag
 - Hold a ministry fair at least twice a year
 - Print a brochure for each ministry
 - Refer to ministries publicly from the pulpit
 - Plan special events to honor your lay ministers
4. Moral Support

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IX. DELEGATE _____ WITH RESPONSIBILITY
Trust your people!

The key to motivation:

How to Bring Out the Best in Others:

- Give them a
- Give them
- Give them

People will be as creative as the structures allow them to be!

X. ALWAYS KEEP _____ BEFORE THEM.

The Nehemiah Principle: Vision must be renewed every _____

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One day Napoleon pointed to a map of China and he said, “There lies a sleeping giant. If it ever wakes up it will shake the world.”

I believe that the church is a sleeping giant. And if we can ever wake up the vast amount of talent, resources and ability that sit in chairs and pews every weekend and mobilize members for ministry it would rock the world.

Most churches believe in the concept of every Christian, every member, is a minister. We teach it, we preach it, we talk about it. But still most members do nothing outside of the four walls of the church. How do you turn an audience into an army? How do you turn consumers into contributors? Spectators into participators? Members into ministers? The greatest single need in the church today is the release of lay ministry, mobilizing members into action. Because our most important resource is people.

I believe in church growth. I believe in growing large churches, obviously. But there’s one thing I do not like about big churches. It scares me. One of the things that scares me is the vast accumulation of talent that goes unrecognized and untapped in large churches. The larger the church is the easier it is for you to hide in the crowd. I find talent all the time that I didn’t know was there.

I was on the patio a while back and said, “We need to get somebody to videotape ‘that’.” Somebody said, “Why don’t you get her?” And I turned around and said, “Who are you?” She told me her name and I asked her how long she’d been coming to Saddleback. She said several years. I asked her what she did. She said, “I do all the videos for Disney.”

We were getting ready to do this Summer’s End last year and were going to throw a big party. Somebody said let’s get So and So. I said, “What did they do?” They said, “They were the ones who decorated Times Square last year for New Year’s Eve.”

You never know who is sitting in your services. The problem with that is that the talent that sits on the shelf rots. If you don’t use it you lose it.

George Gallup did a survey a few years back and discovered that only ten percent of all laymen are active in a ministry. One out of ten believers are actively involved in some kind of ministry. He also discovered that an additional fifty percent of members in a typical church have no interest at all in getting involved in ministry in their church. They will remain spectators no matter what you do – preach, teach, pull, motivate – they’re still not going to get involved. They’re the kind of people when you go to talk to and ask “Why don’t you do ‘this’?” they say, “I just don’t feel led...” When they say that I want to say, “You feel led all right. You feel led in the seat of your pants. I’ll help you get it out. Let me kick it out!” But fifty percent of the people in your church are basically going to say I’m never getting involved no matter what. I’m just too busy or whatever...

But George Gallup discovered that forty percent of members in the typical church said they’d like to be involved in ministry but they’ve never been asked or they don’t know how.

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Now would you be interested if I told you a way you could get that forty- percent to join the ten percent that are involved in your church so that you would have fifty percent? If you had half of your members involved in ministry, would you be interested in that? I would think I'd died and gone to heaven if I could get fifty percent of all Christians involved in ministry. How do you do that? Let's talk about some practical steps. These are the things we're doing to turn an audience into an army here at Saddleback.

1. TEACH THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR LAY MINISTRY.

We teach this in detail in Class 301 and you can get the curriculum. But we also introduce it in every New Members' class 101. We have built it on four pillars that we say are the four pillars of lay ministry from Romans 12:1-8. Those truths are taught over and over at Saddleback and are deeply ingrained in everybody's life.

1. We believe that every believer is a minister. Not a pastor, but a minister. We teach that service for Christ is not optional. You don't volunteer for service. You enlist. The call to salvation and the call to ministry are one in the same. I like what my wife Kay says, "When you give your life to Christ, you put on an apron because you begin to serve from that moment forward." To be a Christian means to serve and to be like Jesus means to be a servant. Jesus said I came to serve and give. Those two words define the Christian life, "serving" and "giving". Marshall McCluen used to say, "On planet earth there are no passengers, only crew members." That's true in the church too. If you're a Christian, you're called to minister. In God's army there are no volunteers. It's part of the deal when you sign up.

2. We teach that every ministry is important. We all have a different function but we're all important. Francis Schaeffer once wrote a book called No Little People. He said they're all significant. The Bible says, "*The hand cannot say to the foot, I don't need you. And the ear can't say to the eye, I don't need you.*" We're all important. And there are no small, no insignificant ministries. The most important light in my house is not the big chandelier in the dining room. It's that little night light I turn on at night that keeps me from stubbing my toe when I get up to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. That's the most important light in my house. Tom would say, "No, that's not true. For Rick the most important light is the one that comes on when he opens the refrigerator door." But either way – small but significant.

3. We are dependent upon each other. We must cooperate to get the job done. It's kind of like a jig saw puzzle. If you have one piece missing, what's the piece you notice? The one missing. Because they're all needed to complete the picture. In a body, if one part of the body malfunctions all the rest of the parts of the body hurt. And the same is true in the body of Christ. I have been given some gifts. They happen to be in the area of teaching and leadership and faith. If I don't use my gifts, you get hurt. But if you don't use your gifts, I get hurt. If we don't each use the gifts and talents and abilities that God has given us, we all get cheated. So we're dependent upon each other. Nobody gets all the gifts because God meant for us to be dependent upon each other. We need each other.

4. We teach (and this is a unique teaching here at Saddleback) that ministry is the expression of my shape. In architecture they talk about form follows function, but in ministry

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function follows form. In other words, how God has gifted you, shaped you and molded you determines what you ought to be and what you ought to do in the body of Christ. Many years ago I came up with a little acrostic, SHAPE, to explain the five different ways that God shapes us for ministry. In the book of Job he says “*You hands formed me and shaped me.*” The Bible uses the analogy of the potter and the clay, that we are all uniquely fashioned and formed by God. David said in Psalm 139 in my mother’s womb, You knit me together. You shaped me. There are five things that make you, *you*. When you discover what these five things are and identify them, you know what ministry you should have in this world.

S – Spiritual gifts. We’re all familiar with this. The moment you become a believer, God gives you unique spiritual gifts. There are four lists of them in the Scripture. I don’t happen to believe that these are exclusive, but I do believe that God gives every Christian at least one spiritual gift. We’ve defined success here at Saddleback as “Using the spiritual gifts that God has given me/Developing the gifts that God has given you.” Gifts are important but sometimes I think we so over emphasize gifts to the neglect of the other four things that shape your life. Yes, gifts are important but that’s not all that determines your ministry.

H stands for Heart. That is what you love to do. Gifts are what I’m gifted to do and Heart is what do I love to do. People rarely succeed at anything unless they love doing it. It’s very interesting that each of us have a unique physical heartbeat. Every one of us has a heartbeat that’s just as different as our thumbprint or our footprint or eye print. Your heart beats in a very unique pattern that only you have. The same is true emotionally. There are some things that turn you on and there are some things you couldn’t care less about. There are some things that just ring your chimes! They crank you up! And other things you’re bored stiff with. Why is that? God wired you up with not just gifts but also with passions or heart, emotional makeup that determines what you like to do and what you don’t like to do. I’m grateful that we all don’t like to do the same thing. If we did, there would be a lot of things in the world that would be left undone.

God in His great wisdom gave us each a different emotional heartbeat just like a physical heartbeat. So that some people are very passionate about, for instance, fighting abortion. And for other people know, it’s important but they’re passionate about saving the environment. And others are saying, that’s good, they know it’s important but they’re passionate about winning people to Christ. And other people say they know evangelism is important but they’re passionate about helping believers grow. Who’s right? The answer is they’re all right. And God puts all of us together in the body and brings people of different heart together so that everything gets emphasized.

Don’t try to do this Heart projection of “What I feel passionate about I think everybody else should feel passionate about or you’re a second class Christian.” That happens all the time, doesn’t it? We do this projection of what God has made me passionate about, I feel everybody else should and I try to make you feel guilty if you don’t. Some things are just going to turn you on and when you look at those things you have a pretty good indication of what God wants you to do. Why would God give you certain interests in certain areas and then say, “Your life message and your life mission and your life ministry has nothing to do with the interests I gave you.” Where do you think you got that interest? You got it from God.

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So you have spiritual gifts that are unique, a heartbeat that is unique.

A – Abilities. These are your natural abilities. Natural abilities are different than spiritual gifts but they're just as important. Sometimes I think we over-emphasize gifts and make natural abilities as if those are the carnal things. Some people are really good with numbers and others of you can't add two plus two! Some of you are good with words, others of you aren't. Some of you are good with mechanical things, others are good with working with people. There are some who are good with working with animals. Some are good at working with thinking out theoretical theories and processes and abstracts and others need to work with concrete things. Some of you have artistic abilities. Some of you have music abilities. Some of you don't have music abilities, you couldn't carry a tune in a baggie! You're one of those prison singers, always behind a few bars and never have the right key. Your voice needs to be cultivated – plowed under! It's interesting when I started out in ministry, I started out as a worship leader, not as a pastor or teacher. I love to sing. The only problem was nobody loved listening to me. The Bible says, "*Make a joyful noise.*" Even pigs can do that when they're eating.

Your heart will influence your gift. For instance, let's say you're gifted at teaching but whether you have a heart for working with children or a heart with working with the poor or a heart with working with business executives, that's going to make a difference in how you use your gifts. It becomes a filter. It's not just your giftedness, it's also your passion, your heart. God gives us all those different kinds of heartbeats. Then He gives us abilities. Those Abilities are just as spiritual. There's no such thing as a spiritual gift of computers. But does the church need people who know how to do computers? Yes. And there's no such thing as a spiritual gift of accounting. But does God need people to do accounting in ministry? Yes. So God uses the natural abilities. Music is not a spiritual gift; it's not listed in any of the gifts. It is an ability that God uses in the church in a ministry.

P stands for Personality. Your personality was given to you by God for a definite specific reason for ministry. Some of you are extroverted and some of you are introverted. Some of you like routine and others of you hate routine; you like variety. Some of you like working with a team of people. Others of you hate working with a team, you like working on your own. This is not an accident. God gave you your personality for a reason. Some of you are morning people – it's "Up! Up! Into the pool! Let's take on the world!" Others of you don't believe in God before 11:00 a.m.! But at 1:00 in the morning you're still going. God has a sense of humor. He almost always puts opposites together. When two people agree on everything, one of them isn't necessary. God gives opposites and puts us together. My wife and I are exact opposites in every single area of life except our commitment to Jesus Christ. Sometimes we look at each other and think, "What planet did you get off of?" Yet I have found in counseling many years that couples that have the greatest potential for growth are those that have the greatest differences. People who are very similar to each other get bored with each other pretty quick. And they don't have a whole lot to learn from each other because they have the same strengths and the same weaknesses. On the other hand, when God puts you with somebody totally different from you it's called an education! You need to learn. Don't get frustrated about it. Just remember that you married a sinner and she married a bigger one. But personalities do play into your role in ministry.

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E - The fifth thing that God uses to shape you are your Experiences. God uses all kinds of experiences to prepare us and shape us for the ministry He has us prepared for. There are four kinds of experiences that God uses to shape us. Educational Experiences, things that you learn not just in school but things you learn on the street, from friends, parents, relatives. God uses Vocational Experiences to prepare us for ministry. We can often learn things on our job, our careers that we can use to further His kingdom. God uses Spiritual experiences, times with the Lord, quiet times, times of revival, renewal, maybe a camp, conference, a Bible seminar. Something that is a life changing or hinge point in your life.

And then very most important of all, God uses painful experiences to shape us. In fact, I've come to the conclusion that He uses those more than any other thing to shape you for ministry. There are things you learn in pain you will never learn any other way. The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 1 that *"God often allows us to go through painful experiences and He comforts us so that we in turn may comfort others with the comfort we have received."* Who can better help someone who is going through the pain of a divorce than somebody who went through the pain of divorce? Who can comfort parents of a Downs syndrome child than parents of another Downs Syndrome child? Who can better help someone struggling with alcoholism or cocaine abuse (or food abuse for that matter) than someone who dealt with alcoholism or drug or food or whatever other kind of abuse? Some one who has been sexually abused, God wants to use that pain as a ministry to help other people who are sexually abused.

The very thing that you are most ashamed of in your life, the very thing that you want to hide the most, may be the very thing that God intends for you to minister to the world with. If you'll be honest and open and begin to share and get some help, some healing in your own life, you have no idea what God can do through your pain. God never wastes a hurt. He brings good out of bad. He brings resurrections out of crucifixions. He brings light out of darkness. He brings good out of evil. He turns it around and all things do work together for good for those who love God. Not for everybody – that's not a promise for everybody – but for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Part of the purposes of God in your life is to learn from your painful experiences so that then you will be able to help others with the very thing you've gone through. If you keep that a big dark secret, you will never be able to help anybody else with it.

My prayer is that some of you who've held on to pain for many, many years will get some help, get it out in the open – the Bible says *"Confess your faults, your sin, to one another that you may be healed."* Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. When you begin to share it, then it's not a secret anymore and you're only as sick as your secrets.

God uses all five of these things, including painful experiences, to shape you for ministry.

We could go a lot more into this. It's covered in a lot more detail in Class 301. For those of you who are pastors, I did a series called "You're Shaped for Significance", you might be interested in that. When people begin to do what they're shaped to do, you don't have to motivate them. They're eager to serve because they enjoy it and they feel fulfilled. When you figure out what your shape is and you're beginning to serve and express that shape that God gave you, you go "This is it! This is what I was made to be! This is my niche. Now life makes sense. It feels good." People would have to keep you from doing it because you're going to do what you're

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shaped to do once you understand it. You as a pastor and church leader, part of your responsibility is to help people discover their spiritual shape for ministry.

2. ESTABLISH A MINISTRY PLACEMENT PROCESS

At Saddleback, the first step is to attend Discovering My Ministry Class 301. You learn how God shaped you for ministry. This is a monthly class. It's taught once a month for four hours. We teach it on Sunday afternoons from 3-7 with dinner included. We give this class very high visibility. We explain SHAPE, we explain ministry in this class.

But the class is just the first step. It's just for orientation. It's not enough just to take a class. Step two is to complete a personal shape profile which you write down your spiritual gifts, your heart, your abilities, your personality, your experiences and you begin to fill out a SHAPE profile.

Then Step 3 is you commit to the ministry covenant that's part of CLASS 301, committing yourself to being involved in ministry, using your shape.

Step 4 is to meet with a ministry guide for your shape interview. What we do is once you've taken the class, you've filled out the profile, you sit down with somebody who's been trained from our church – lay people – who do the interviewing. On one hand they have the job descriptions of about 250 jobs in our church and ministries. And on the other hand they have the SHAPE profile that you've filled out. You try to match and find three or four things you'd be good at in the church.

What happens if your shape doesn't match anything that we're doing? Simple. We start a new ministry. It means that God brought you here for a reason and whatever you're good at, that should be started in this church. So it's an individualized approach, not an institutionalized approach. It's not what slots can be filled. It's where can we make you maximize the gifts and abilities and talents that God gave you.

This ministry guide is in a crucial position. It's the gateway to ministry. You need to get people who enjoy interviewing, who are competent to do it. Everybody deserves personalized attention. In fact, there's now even a kit you can get in the resource center that shows how to train ministry guides.

Step 5 is meet with the staff who supervise the ministries you're considering. You're chosen three or four possible ones.

Step 6 is after you choose one of them you begin your ministry and start attending SALT meetings. SALT stands for Saddleback Advanced Leadership Training and it is an ongoing meeting we have every month or every other month where the pastors (myself and other pastors) will meet with everybody involved in ministry. It's the meeting for the CORE.

3. STREAMLINE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TO MAXIMIZE MINISTRY AND MINIMIZE MAINTENANCE.

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Tomorrow, we're going to talk about how to structure your church on purpose so I don't need to go into all the details. You want to make your structure as simple as possible because the more organized, the more structure you have in your church, the more you have to maintain it, the more you have to grease it, the more meetings you have. Ministry is meeting the needs of people in the church and in the community. Maintenance is maintaining the organization. One of the reasons why we don't have more people involved in ministry today is because they're too busy. We've got them wrapped up in church maintenance. They're going to business meetings and committee meetings all the time.

We don't have any committees in this church. Not one. We do have 150 different ministries. But there's a difference between a committee and a ministry. Ministries act, committees talk about what they want other people to do. We want to streamline it.

The fact is your members only have a certain amount of time to give. We all have the same amount of time – 168 hours a week. Roper organization did a survey of American leisure time and discovered that in 1973 we averaged 26 hours a week in leisure time but by the mid 80's we'd dropped to only 16 hours a week leisure time. Today it's even less than that.

The most valuable thing that people give you is not their money; it's their time. You can always get more money. There's lots of ways to make more money. But you can't get more time. We're all allotted a certain amount of time in our life. The Bible says, "*It's appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment.*" God already knows how many minutes, seconds, hours you're going to live. Your time is far more valuable than money. You'd better make the best use of it. You'd better decide what's most important.

Next to that, you'd better decide what's most important to use your people's time. If a layman comes to me and says, "Pastor, I've got four hours a week to give to my church. How do you want to use me?" the last thing I want to do is put him on some committee and turn him into some bureaucrat. A flower committee or something! What I want to do is get him actually out doing something in ministry. Not discussing. I want him doing. Meetings take up a lot of time. One of the most common mistakes I see in churches today is we take the brightest and best people in our church and turn them into bureaucrats. We find a guy who's a good manager, an executive, a business owner, and we immediately put him on some board when really he might be more effective just doing ministry in one of the many different ministries of your church.

One of the ways you can minimize maintenance so you can maximize ministry is reduce the number of meetings you have in your church. Would you agree that you can drain the life out of people getting them to attend meetings? We don't expect everybody to be at every meeting at Saddleback. I don't go to every meeting at Saddleback! Jesus did not say, "I have come that you might have meetings." It's interesting that in today's church we often rate our spirituality on how many meetings we attend. If you go every Sunday morning you're a good Christian. If you go Sunday night, you're a great Christian. If you come back to Midweek Service, you're a spiritual giant. I've often wondered what would happen in Christianity if we cut out all the meetings? What would be left? Jesus said, "*I came that you might have life.*" That means it must be lived where you live most of your life – at home and at work. Yet one of the reasons that people don't witness, don't minister, is that they're in meetings all the time, going from one meeting to the next. I think you could probably cut out maybe half of your meetings and you'd

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be happier and healthier and more harmonious. In a war, the teamwork and the harmony is always found on the front line. There's great camaraderie when people are fighting the battle. But you go five miles back to the rear echelon and they're griping over the weather and what the food is in the mess hall.

If you want trouble, just put people on a committee and don't give them anything to do. They'll make up something. That's called complaining. The biggest complainers are committee members with nothing to do. When you're rowing the boat you don't have time to rock it.

Tom:

4. PROVIDE ON THE JOB TRAINING

Talking about committees and ministries, I was in a traditional church (before I came to Saddleback) as a pastor for about ten years. We in one day did away with all the committees in that church. And I survived.

Here's how we did it: We just changed the name to ministry. We had two ladies who came in and did flowers every week for the service. They were called the Flower Committee. They never discussed it, they never voted on anything. They just did it. We just changed the name to "ministry". Even though these people had been on committees for years, by far the majority came back saying, "I feel so much more valuable doing this as a ministry rather than in a committee." So start there. Value people and the ministries they're in.

As they do these ministries, you want to involve on the job training. We call this SALT for our leadership community. It's a time when we get together as Saddleback leaders and recognize what God's doing in God's people. It's an incredible time. We used to do it every month. Now we do it a little less often. It's time where we do about half an hour of serious worship for those who are committed to ministry. It's a time where we recognize all the ministries and the significance and the impact that they're making. We have people stand up and recognize them, for what they do may be small but it's large to them. Skip on and you'll find out how large it is to them! We do something called the Giant Killer award. We put a slingshot and five smooth stones on a little plaque and give it out to the person who has tackled the greatest problem. They may not have solved the problem but they at least had the courage to tackle it. Testimonies and reports from people are important part of this. Inside church info and a vision casting message from Rick. All of these things are important.

But to me one of the most significant things that happen is the opportunity to include new people in ministry. To have people who have just finished Class 301 and are beginning to get involved in a ministry. We have them stand up and down the aisles and we say, "We're going to have people gather around you, lay hands on you and pray for you as you begin this new ministry." There's tears almost every time. Again and again the comment is, "I've never had people pray for me like that." To include them, and welcome them into the ministry community in that kind of a way is an incredible moment to celebrate what they're doing.

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But there is a warning in this thing about training. You don't want to wear people out with pre-service training. Do on-the-job training but don't wear them out with pre-service training. We often put out the fire in people's lives by over-training them. They come in, they're excited, they've got a vision, they're ready to go and we say, "Great! Here's your thirty-week training course. Go get 'em!" The truth is, we don't want somebody who's willing to go through thirty weeks of training before they're ready to get involved in ministry. We want people who have a heart for ministry and they want to get involved right now. We don't want professional students. We want people in ministry. We believe in lots of on-the-job training with a minimum of pre-service training, which you need for different kinds of different jobs. But getting people involved quickly is a vital part of what we do. That takes the excitement that they have. The truth is, until you get involved in ministry, you don't know the questions to ask anyway. You don't know what you need to learn anyway. There's something about getting involved that enables you to learn in a greater way.

5. NEVER START A MINISTRY WITHOUT A MINISTER

This may sound simple but we break this rule all the time. The most critical factor in a new ministry start up is not the idea. It is the minister, the leadership. Because without the right leader it is not going to happen, it's not going to fly. Many times it can do more harm than good. Everything does rise or fall on leadership. That means there are many times when you have to trust God's timing. Never force or push a ministry. Wait on God to bring the right person at the right time. Don't get in a hurry. If you have to push someone into a ministry, you have a motivational problem with that person the rest of their ministry lives. You've got to keep pushing and that's dumb.

We all know that old story about the pastor who used to drive to the edge of town every day and sit there and watch the train go by. Every single day. Finally his deacons said, "What are you doing that for, Pastor." He said, "At least once every day I have to see something move without me having to push it."

If you feel like you've got a big train you're having to push, it's a motivational problem. You wait for God to bring the right person along at the right time. Look at the book of Acts. The organization of the church was always playing catch up with what the Holy Spirit was doing, how He was at work. The fact about this is, most churches, especially many smaller churches, try to do too much and too soon. We get so overwhelmed with the opportunities that we can't focus on the ministry opportunities that God has given to us. Rome wasn't built in a day and neither are healthy churches.

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6. ESTABLISH MINIMUM STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES.

There are some ministry standards you have to think through, some simple guidelines. The truth is, best intentions are not always good enough when you're working with people. So at Saddleback we have a ministry profile manual that lays out for people what the ministries are. People want to know how much time that ministry is going to take. That's vital for them. What are they committing themselves to? There are some areas that they're going to be needing trained in advance for that ministry. It gives them a job description.

Peter Drucker said, "You have to think through the minimum results expected so there can be a legitimate review of them." So you help them with that. But in doing this, you don't want to bury them with procedures and committees. So when people are called to a ministry we want to establish standards and guidelines that help them to do their ministry that won't bury them and cause a lot of interference in their lives.

Rick:

At Saddleback, any member who's completed Class 301 may begin a new ministry as long as they follow these four guidelines.

1. You don't expect the staff to run it. When people come to me with ministry ideas and say, "I think we need to start this ministry," I say, "What do you mean we? I've got plenty to do. I've got my ministry. What about you?" So don't come up with an idea and expect the staff to run it.

2. The ministry is compatible with our church's strategy and philosophy. It must be compatible. If it's not we don't do it.

3. Any member who has completed 301 may start a ministry if the ministry will not harm the testimony of the church. In other words, failure is one thing but failure that damages the church is another thing. We're not going to do nude beech evangelism. I can't see that in the headlines.

4. Anyone can start a new ministry as long as you don't do any fundraising. If you need money, you need to submit it to the staff for budget consideration because you can't have a unified church without a unified budget. If you allow every ministry in your church to raise their own funds, they're going to turn the patio into a bazaar and the mailing list into a direct mail campaign. You'll have ministries competing with each other to raise funds in the church for different ministries. We won't allow that. We say if you need money for your ministry, we'll put it in the unified budget of the church and that way members aren't getting 14, 15 appeal letters a month saying, Why don't you support this or that. We don't do the cake sales and the bake sales. Otherwise we'd have a sale a minute with 150 ministries.

If a new ministry idea meets all four of these guidelines then we assign a new ministry guide who walks them through a twelve step planning process. That is available to you.

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Here is the fundamental decision you have to make. Are we going to structure the church for control or for growth? You can't do both. You will structure the church either for control or for growth and we have decided to loosen up the control in order for the church to grow and that's what gives us the fast growth rate we have. You can't have both.

One of the secrets of Saddleback's growth is that we allow people to creatively invent new ministries on a moment's notice. One time I had a woman come to me and say, "We need a prayer ministry." This was many years ago. I said, "Great! You're it! You thought it up, you're it." She said, "Don't we have to vote on it? Put it through some board? Have a bunch of bureaucratic red tape?" No, just start it. We'll put it in the bulletin and if anybody shows up we start the prayer ministry. If nobody shows up, we don't start it right now. It's not the right time. That's how our prayer ministry got started.

One time a woman said, "We need a small group ministry for terminally ill cancer patients. A support group." I said, "What a great idea. You're it!" She said, "I'm not a leader." I said, "Here's what you do. We'll put it in the bulletin and announce the first meeting and you pray real hard that a leader shows up. If no leader shows up, you're it."

A guy came and said, "I'm not good at singing or teaching. I'm not a speaker. But I'm pretty good with my hands. I do carpentry work. I'd like to start a ministry called Home Helps. [It's now called People Helping People.] We'll do free home repairs for people who are out of work in our church at no cost and for widows and single women of our church so that they don't get ripped off." That's how we started People Helping People.

Another guy came and said, "I want to do car repairs for people in our church. This is not a business. We'll do it for free for people in the church just for the cost of the parts. So when people are out of work and their car goes down we can help them out. The body helping each other."

A guy came, "I want to start a backpacking ministry. We'll hike up mountains, take out Bible and have a Bible study and sit around the campfire and sing Christian songs and take non-Christians with us and witness to them." Today there are over 100 people in the backpacking ministry. It's great!

Many years ago some computer experts came and said, "We need to have a web page on the Internet." It was just a simple page. Saddleback was on the Internet probably before any of you even heard of the Internet. Years and years ago. We may have been the first church on the Internet. It wasn't a whole lot but we were there. Why? Because a few people felt it was important. And they used their gifts and talents.

One day a guy came who had been a former drunk and had gone through a recovery program. He came to church and accepted Christ and began to grow. One day he wrote me an eleven-page letter for his vision for starting a Christian recovery program. His name is John Baker. Today he's on our staff as a pastor. Today over 2500 people have gone through Celebrate Recovery at Saddleback. It's a biblical 12-step program, not based on the 12-steps but based on the 8 steps of the beatitudes. I did an entire series called "The Road to Recovery" to kick it off. It's a huge

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program and it's starting in churches all over the world. How did it start? Simply a layman came up with the idea.

People will be as creative as you allow them to be. Allow them to do it as long as they stay within certain parameters. And you make those parameters pretty wide.

7. YOU MUST ALLOW PEOPLE TO QUIT OR CHANGE MINISTRIES WITHOUT GUILT.

In the average church to resign from a ministry you either have to die or quit and feel guilty or leave the church and go somewhere else. Because people just won't let you leave. Sometimes people just need time off. They need a little rest, a little vacation, so you need to have a replacement ready.

A woman who has given ten years to junior high ministry and needs to leave should not be criticized. She should be idolized if she lasted there ten years. So we don't lock people in permanently to any particular ministry. We allow them to change ministries without fear or embarrassment. The only way you know what you're good at is to experiment. We allow people to try different things.

You give your people freedom to do three things:

1. Give them the freedom to examine. They can consider all the different options of ministry and they do that with an interviewer.
2. Give them the freedom to experiment. That is to try out some ministries on a temporary basis. If somebody fails at a task, we never, never call it a failure. We call it an experiment. Try working with children. If that doesn't work, try working with senior citizens. If that doesn't work, try singing in the choir. You're going to find your niche but you've got to experiment.
3. We always ask for a one-year commitment when people sign up for a ministry. But we never, ever enforce it. We don't lay a guilt trip on people if they want to change. Every year, at least twice a year, we have a lay ministry month where all the ministries are up for grabs. We have a lay ministry fare like we'll have after this session tonight. So people can just try it out.

What I'm saying is a little bit different because we approach spiritual gifts in a very nontraditional way. Most books on spiritual gifts teach you discover your ministry through your gift. At Saddleback, we teach the exact opposite. You discover your gift by getting involved in ministry. The only way you're going to know what you're good at is just get out there and start trying stuff. Not by reading a book, not by taking a test. Honestly, there are lot of these spiritual gifts tests today and analyses, I don't put much stock in them. The reason why is they're too standardized and nobody's standard. We're all substandard. We're all unique. It doesn't take into account our own unique shape. If somebody has the gift of faith, there's big difference between your faith and my faith and somebody else's faith and Billy Graham's faith. It's all different expressions of it. You just can't put people in a box or on a conveyor belt.

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I remember when I was a teenager I took one of these spiritual gifts analysis tests and it came up that the only gift that I had was the spiritual gift of martyrdom. I thought “Great. That’s the gift you get to use one time and it’s over!” I could have taken a hundred spiritual gifts tests and never would have known that I was gifted at preaching. Because I’d never done it. I could have read all the books in the world and taken all the tests and never done it. That’s why I was talking earlier about rotating the leadership in small groups because that way you find out who’s good at leading, who’s good at teaching, who’s gifted at caring and sharing. It wasn’t until I actually started speaking that people would come and say, “When you speak, God blesses it. People’s lives are changed. God’s anointed it. You must be gifted at that.” I would never have learned it through a test.

So we say you learn your gift through ministry and not vice versa.

The other problem with those gift tests is that the more mature you become, the more difficult it is to recognize your spiritual gifts. Because as Christians, we’re called to manifest a number of things that look like gifts. For instance, we’re all called to be givers. There is a spiritual gift of giving. But the more I grow in Christ, the more generous I become. So it would be very easy to be confused and think I’m gifted in that area. Not necessarily. I’m just growing in maturity.

You may not have the gift of service, but as you mature as a believer you’re certainly going to develop a servant’s heart and you’re going to serve more. So it’s sometimes confusing that way.

8. PROVIDE THE SUPPORT NEEDED.

You can’t expect people to serve without giving them support. This is the primary job of staff and pastors. If you’re on staff at a church, your number one job is to provide support for lay people doing their ministry. All of the job descriptions of staff could be summarized in one sentence. Your job is to equip, support, encourage, train, educate, motivate, help, assist lay people for their ministry. It is not the job of the staff to do ministry. It is the job of the staff to assist, support, promote, provide, secure – do all those things for the people who are doing the ministry.

There are four different kinds of support you want to give.

1. Material Support. That’s like access to copy machines, faxes, phones, Internet, space to meet. Currently you can see that at the front of our property we’re building a very large two story ministry center which will have within it some places we’re calling ministry incubators so people will have a place to do their ministry – make phone calls, get faxes, to do copying. Archimedes said, “Give me a place to stand and I can move the world.” We have about 200 plus staff members at Saddleback, but we have 3600 people involved in lay ministry. Those people are staff too. We have paid staff and unpaid staff. We’re paid to be good; they’re good for nothing. Actually I think that’s reversed a lot of the time.

2. Communication Support. You need to develop multiple communication channels and stay in touch with the core of your lay leaders and ministers. You can do it voice mail boxes, Internet web pages, core newsletter, lay ministry report, email, things like that.

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Great communication is always two ways. Feedback is the breakfast of champions. There are three tools that I use to keep my finger on the pulse of people involved in ministry: One is the registration card that people turn in. Second is Care Callers who call through the church directory and find out what's happening in people's lives. Then small groups reports.

3. You need to give promotional support to keep your ministries visible. Set up tables outside your buildings where people can have their ministries and recruit. You want to give every minister a nametag. Hold a ministry fair at least twice a year. You can print a brochure for each ministry. You can refer to these ministries publicly in sermons. That's the power of pastoral praise. You can plan special events to honor your lay leaders – a lay leadership retreat or an appreciation banquet. We do a thing here called a Giant Killer award. A few years ago I went to Israel and we were down at the brook where David got his five smooth stones to kill Goliath. I picked up five smooth stones from the brook. I bought a little sling shot from an Arab boy and had them mounted on a Giant Killer plaque. We give it to the staff and now we have one we've give to lay people of years. We give it to the outstanding lay person of the month who has tackled the biggest problem. Not necessarily overcome it but they took it on. It's one way of affirming and appreciating the people and what they give.

4. You need to give moral support. That's like ongoing training. We're very big into training at Saddleback. This year Saddleback is investing about two million dollars in Internet and simulcast training to assist Purpose Driven Church leaders like yourself in training needs. We hope to be able to help you. We're going to do another Simulcast to 100 cities in November. We did one in April where I taught the seminar in a one day version at Max Lucado's church in Texas and we simulcast it to 75 cities around America and 32,000 people were trained on that day. We're going to do it again in November.

9. DELEGATE AUTHORITY WITH RESPONSIBILITY.

A word to those of you who are deacons and elders and church council members and pastors and staff. If you really want your church to grow, you've got to trust people. Pastors, let your people make some of the mistakes. Don't hog them all to yourself. Spread the blame around a little bit. Let other people make some of the mistakes. I don't want all the blame so I want to share and the only I learn is by making mistakes. That's the only way your people learn is by making mistakes. You find out what doesn't work. You don't call it a mistake. You call it an education.

Some pastors are so afraid of wildfire they run around stomping out every campfire that will warm the church up. If we would just trust people and turn them loose to minister without a whole lot of policies and procedures and committees we'd really see some action.

What do these words have in common: election, voting, parliamentary procedure, committees, boards, board meetings, majority rule, voting. What do those words have in common? Politics, bureaucracy, problems, boring. None of them are in the Bible. Yet how many churches do you know are organized around voting and elections and committees and boards and parliamentary procedures and majority rule and things like that.

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None of that's in the Bible. There's not one example in the New Testament of people voting. Not one. In fact, voting is so foreign to the New Testament model that when they got ready to choose Judas' replacement, you'd figure if they were going to vote on anything they'd vote on that. What did they do? They drew straws. They cast lots, the Bible says. Because voting was so inconceivable to the New Testament mind.

What we've done in America is take an American form of government and imposed it upon the church and as a result the church is about as effective as the government is. That isn't saying a whole lot. You know how long it takes to get a bill past in congress? Sometimes years with all the checks and balances. You need to delegate authority with responsibility. The key to motivating members over the long haul in ministry is ownership. Let people have control of the ministry they are developing. At Saddleback as much as possible each ministry makes its own decisions. The implementers are the decision-makers. If you're in the children's ministry you decide if you need to buy more cribs. If you're in the youth ministry, you decide where you're going to take the kids to camp. If you're in the music ministry, you decide where they're going to sing at Christmas time. We don't have any big board that controls it all to pull all the strings. When a church gets this size, nobody can know everything that's going on. I don't even know everything that's going on. How do I control it? I don't. It's not my job to control the church. That's the Holy Spirit's job. It's my job to lead and feed. I stopped trying to control a long time ago. If I tried to control, this church would have stopped at about 200 people because that's what the average pastor can handle. So you must release people for ministry and the way you do that is trust them and let them go. And let the implementers, the people that are doing the work, have the decision making power for their own work.

Years ago at the beginning of the 80's there was a book came out In Search of Excellence. It said one of the characteristics of excellent companies is what's called loose type properties. There is a strong central control that keeps the organization committed to its vision and values but all the day to day decisions in excellent companies are made by the actual people doing the work. The implementers.

I believe that was the way God meant for the church to act. In this church, the pastors who serve as full time elders in this church are responsible to keep the church on track – factually, philosophically, theologically we keep the church committed to the five purposes. But we don't make all the decisions. Heaven forbid! They're made by the people that know more about that ministry than we do. As a result the church is able to grow. As much as possible the staff stays out of the decision making in each of the lay ministries.

People respond to responsibility. But if you treat people like babies, you're going to have to diaper them until they die.

One of the problems in many churches is that the pastor or the board members become a bottleneck. Everything has to be passed by the board. And that slows things down. I try to make as my initial response when somebody comes to me with an idea, "Why not?" My initial reaction is not, "Oh, no. I've seen that before." People say, "I've got a great idea. What do you think?" I don't want to be a dream buster, "I've seen fifteen people try that before but go ahead anyway!" If you take that attitude toward lay ministry, pretty soon people quit trying. They get their balloon popped enough, one too many times, they quit trying. It's no wonder that

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enthusiasm is at a low ebb in many churches. We keep trying to control everything. I'm very hesitant to tell somebody it's not going to work. Even if I've seen it fail five times, they may be just the person to pull it off and I may be surprised.

Sometimes somebody will come up with a ministry idea and they'll come to you and tell you about it and you think, "There's no way in the world that this person can pull that idea off!" So what do you do? You pray that in that first meeting that the leadership will be passed from the originator to somebody who's more competent to lead it. If that happens (and sometimes it does) you see a great idea but they can't do it but in the organizational meeting it passes to a leader and when you find that you go, "Thank You, God!"

How do you bring out the best in people? Three things:

1. You give them a challenge.
2. You give them control.
3. You give them the credit.

And people will soar beyond your wildest dreams. I have seen in thousands of churches, this principle, that people will be as creative as the structure allows them to be. When you don't have a lot of money, which is where most churches are, you need a lot of creativity. So you need to let the structure be simple and open so the creativity can flow to the top.

I had to learn this the hard way. The church was just four or five years old. I was burning out, emotionally, spiritually, physically. I was still trying to do all the preaching, all the teaching, all the praying, all the baptizing, most of the counseling, most of (or at least half) the hospital visitation. I had a couple of other staff members. I was basically trying to do the whole thing myself. I ran out of energy.

One night I went to our people at a midweek service and I said, "Folks, I can't do this anymore. I'm running out of energy. This church is growing too fast. I can't keep up with it. I cannot personally meet everybody's need. But as I read the Bible in Ephesians 4 I'm not supposed to meet everybody's needs. I'm not supposed to do the ministry. My job is to equip and train you for your ministry. You are to do the ministry of the church. I'll make you a deal. If you will do the ministry of this church, I will make sure you're well fed." The people said, "Pastor Rick, you've got a deal!" We prayed that night, held hands, signed a covenant and it was right after that Saddleback exploded with growth. Why? I was no longer the bottleneck. As long as I was trying to do it all and people were expecting me to do it all, it wasn't going to happen. I needed to let go. I needed a release.

For growth to happen in your church two things must happen. The pastor must give up control and the people must give up control. The pastor must give up control of the ministry and the people must give up control of the leadership. This idea of involving everybody in every decision works great when you've got 50 people but it doesn't work when you've got 500 or 1500 or 5000. As the church grows, you have to allow more and more full time thinkers on your staff to be decisions makers. And you have to allow more and more people to do all of the ministry of the church.

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At Saddleback we say the people are the ministers and the pastors are the administrators. We are to administer the people for ministry.

Example: Probably ten years ago I did something I haven't done for many, many years and that was make a hospital visit. I don't go visit sick people in the hospital. How could I in a church this size? We could easily have – with 46,000 names of occasional attenders – we could easily have 200 people in the hospital in a given week. I could spend my entire life just making hospital visits. I could spend my entire life just doing weddings. Funerals. So a number of years ago I had to stop doing them. Why? How could I be fair? (I'll do your wedding but I won't do 'yours'. I'll come see 'you' in the hospital but I won't come see 'you') So I just stopped. I said I'm going to focus on training other people to do these things and we'll let it multiply. So we added staff and other lay volunteers and more and more and entire ministries now do these things. I don't do any counseling in this church because we have a lay counseling ministry that this month did over 800 hours of counseling. Lay people. Unpaid. It's a phenomenal program.

But I heard about this guy Walt who had a heart attack. He was a charter member, been in the church since the very beginning. I said I'll go see Walt. So Sunday after church I went over to Saddleback Hospital and went up to the intensive care floor and walked up to the head nurse and said, "I'm Pastor Rick and I'm here to see Walt." This woman looked at me and she said, "How many pastors does this church have?" I started laughing and said, "Are you talking about full time ordained?" At that time we had six or seven. "If you're talking about lay pastors, we've got over 100." She said, "I'm sorry you can't see him. Too many pastors have already seen him." I said, "Ma'am, you don't understand. I'm the pastor, the founding pastor." She said, "I don't care who you are, you still can't see him." I think this is funny. She won't let me in. I'm not impressing her at all. So she walked away and I snuck in anyway! I always say it's easier to get forgiveness than permission. (My wife hates it when I use that term because I have three teenagers now that are always borrowing cars and stuff and go, "Sorry, remember it's easier to get forgiveness than permission!" So she doesn't like me to say that.)

I walked into Walt's room and he's got all these IV's in his arm. He sits up in bed and goes, "Pastor Rick! What are *you* doing here?" Like "I must be really sick. The big guy's here."

My friend John Bisago at First Baptist Church Houston (10,000-15,000 members) said a little old lady asked him one time, "Pastor John, when are you going to come visit me?" He said, "Ma'am you don't want to be that ill."

I walked in and prayed for him and talked to him and read a little scripture. But he didn't need to see me. He didn't need me at all. Five lay pastors had been to see him in the previous 24-hours. I walked out of there and tears just started coming down my cheeks. I thought, That is it! That's the way God meant the church to act. God never meant for the church to be a one-man superstar show who meets everybody's needs who's omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. And personally cares for everybody's needs.

This is what we think: Superpastor flies into the hospital room and sprinkles pixie dust around the bed. Here a prayer, there a prayer, everywhere a prayer, prayer. Blesses them, makes the sign of the cross, and flies off into the sunset. The guy in the bed's going, "Who was that man?"

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I didn't even get a chance to thank him." And of course we're wearing a mask but we really want people to know who we are. We want to pull back our chest and show the big "S" on our chest, which stands for "Stupid!" It's a quick way to a grave.

Would you like for your church to be stronger and healthier and grow? One of the biggest barriers to growth in a church is the misunderstanding that we're talking about right here of the role of the pastor by both the members and the pastor. There is no way that your pastor can personally meet all your needs. No way. And God never meant for it to happen. So it all boils down to two questions: Pastors, will you release your people to do the ministry? Lay leaders, will you release your pastor from ministry in order to lead and to feed?

That is the formula for the spontaneous expansion of the church. We saw it earlier in Acts 6. What will happen if you do this? Growth beyond your wildest dreams. The people must release the pastor to be the leader and the pastor must release the people to do the ministry.

10. YOU MUST ALWAYS KEEP THE VISION BEFORE THEM

In turning an audience into an army, keep the vision before them. Help people to see that they are investing in eternity, that there is no greater cause than the kingdom of God. There is nothing more important than what we're talking about right now. I say this in every 101 class. I make no apology in saying to you, the most important thing you may do with your life is get involved at Saddleback church, get involved in ministry, use your shape for the advancements of God's kingdom and the building of His church. I don't know a more important thing for you to do with your life. We're talking about eternity in the balance here. Heaven and hell. Thousands of lives are in the balance. If I knew a more significant thing to do with my life, I'd be doing it. I decided a long time ago, I'm not going to waste my life. No way! If I knew something more important than what we're talking about right now, I'd be doing it. Giving your life in ministry for the church of God to build the kingdom of God there's nothing greater than that. Nothing's going to last longer than that. It's going to outlast your family. It's going to outlast your career. It's going to outlast any hobby you have. If you know something more important to do with your life than tell people about Jesus Christ, bring them into membership, build them up to maturity, train them for ministry and send them out in life mission that they would live purpose driven lives, if you know something more important than that, stand up right now and tell us what it is. There is nothing. There is nothing more important than what we're talking about in this conference. Changed lives for the glory of God and the growth of His kingdom. It is the greatest cause in the world. You should never apologize for challenging people to give all they've got, all their time, all their money, all their effort, all their energy for something that is going to far outlast any other thing than we could think of.

Everybody is hungry for significance. Everybody wants to have a sense of destiny in their life, wants to feel that they're making a difference, that they matter, that their life counts, that what they're doing is going to leave a mark. There is nothing that's going to leave a greater mark than using your shape in ministry in a local church that leaves a legacy in your area. Can you imagine dying and 75 years from today up in heaven, somebody walks up to you and says, "I want to thank you." "Thank me? I don't even know you." "No, you don't know me but you were one of the pioneers that built such and such church and you prayed and you gave and you served and

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you sacrificed and you used your shape in ministry and you built that church and built those buildings and then you died. And 50 years after you died that church reached me for Jesus Christ and I'm in heaven because of you.”

Do you know anything more significant than that? People are giving their lives to the wrong things today. They're giving first class allegiance to second class causes and those causes are betraying them and leaving them empty on the inside while we have the greatest cause in the world. Nothing matters more than God's people fulfilling God's purpose in God's world through God's church.

The importance of this truth must be reinforced over and over and over. We get distracted and we forget what really matters most in life. You have to always keep the vision before them and remember the Nehemiah principle. God gave Nehemiah the vision of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. The Bible tells us it took them 52 days to rebuild the wall. They got everybody involved. But it also tells us in Nehemiah 4 that halfway through the project, the people got discouraged. Isn't that typical. Discouragement always comes at the halfway point, in ministry, in life. Have you ever started painting a room and get halfway through and realize “I've got to finish painting and then I've got to clean up!” or you climb halfway up a mountain and you think, “I'm only halfway there. I've got to get to the top and then I've got to go back.” We always get discouraged at the halfway point.

In Nehemiah 4 it doesn't say, “Ok, you're all discouraged. Lets just quit. Let's give up. We're half way through. We tried. Let's pack it in.” No, it says he reorganized, he recast the vision. He got them encouraged again. He said, “You build the wall here in front of your house. You build the wall in front of your house...” That's the ownership principle I was just telling you about. Letting people be involved in their little niche. As a result the wall was finished.

Here's the Nehemiah principle. The vision must be repeated – remember it's halfway through the 52-day project – every 26 days. Or once a month. You have to come back and recast the vision to you people once a month and this principle of “Every member is a minister” is one of the keys to growing a healthy church. My prayer is that you will accept this challenge.

If you go into a computer store, you're going to find all different kinds of computers. They're all different sizes and shapes, different bells and whistles, different programs, different brand names. One will say Micro, AST, Compaq, Dell, Hewlett Packard, all these different kinds of computers. They're all different sizes and shapes, different colors. They run different programs. But inside every personal computer is a little chip, like an Intel chip and that is called a processor. It is the processor on which the entire computer runs and without the processor, the programs are worthless.

I don't make any apology in saying to you, I believe that the Purpose Driven Process, that little diamond is the Intel chip of the 21st century church. It's biblical. It's based on the great commandment and the great commission. It's simple and we have found it to work in 42 different countries. We have thousands of case studies of churches that have grown from zero to 4000 even with this. This year we gave awards to the five or six different churches – we're doing an annual award now to purpose driven churches. We're doing these awards to highlight churches that are building healthy, balanced, growing churches. It has nothing to do with size.

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But it has to do with are they healthy. One of the guys stood on the stage and when we gave him the award he said, "I have no college education and I have no seminary education. My only education is reading The Purpose Driven Church book." He took a church and built it from 50 to 850. But here's the catch: He did it in a town in Indiana of 1500. Average people doing average things can see extraordinary results because it is biblical.

I believe that the purpose driven chip is the Intel chip of the 21st century church. You are now authorized as Purpose Driven Chip installers. What we need are lots of models of lay ministries like we've talked about. We need purpose driven churches of all sizes. We did an audit a while back and discovered that we were getting 4000 phone calls a day. About 2000 a day from other churches asking for help. We get this frequently, "Can you give me a Methodist Purpose Driven church of about 200? Can you show me a Mennonite church of 50?" We need purpose driven churches of 75 to model for churches of 50. We need purpose driven churches of 100 to model for churches of 75. We need purpose driven churches of 200 to model for 100. And purpose driven churches of 500 to model for 200.

I don't care what's on the cover of your computer. I don't care whether it says First Nazarene or Second Methodist, Third Baptist, Praise God Episcopal, whatever. I don't care what programs you run. What I want to know is do you have a process by which you bring people into membership, build them up to maturity, train them for ministry, send them out on their life mission all to the glory of God? You get that, your church is going to grow.

Recently I met with a group of churches that were running in the 4000-5000 level. These guys came to me and said, "We want to know how to go to the next step. How do we go to 10,000?" I told these guys, "I'll share with you how if you will make the commitment to churches that are running 1000 to help them get to where you are. And those of 1000 to help guys of 500 to get to where they are. And on down."

There is no correlation between the size and the strength of a church. A church can be big and strong or it can be big and flabby. It can be small and strong or it can be small and wimpy. Big is not necessarily better. Small is not necessarily better. Better is better. Healthy is better. When you do what we've just talked about in this seminar, moving people around the bases from membership, to maturity, to ministry, like we've talked about today, you are going to build health and strength that will far outlast you and far outlast the other people in your church so that the kingdom of God may go and grow. And all may know that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I look out on these people and believe that you have called many of them today to a new awareness of what You want to do in their lives. Help us each to discover how You have uniquely shaped us, that You don't want us to be anybody else. You want us to be who You made us to be. And that You will use that shape with the right target, with the right people, with the right purpose, to reach people for You. I pray that we would release our pastors to lead and feed. And I pray that we would release our lay leaders to do the ministry that the body of Christ may be built up and that God's people may grow in God's world and reach the people that Jesus died for. For we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.