

Pastor-Intern Pathway

DISCUSSION STARTERS

For pastoral internship mentoring discussions

Produced for the GCI Pastoral Internship Program
By the CAD Ministry Development Team



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MINISTERING IN THE REALM OF JESUS

The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1-10 that we have been restored to God's presence, made alive with Christ, raised up with Christ, and given a present seat with Christ in the heavenly places. Our hearts embrace this truth, though our heads continue to wrestle with the depth of its meaning, while our hands and feet struggle to figure out how to engage.

In Adam, humanity fell; in Christ, humanity was picked up and restored to God. We still grapple with these two realities as we witness so much evidence of the fall, and yet we are personally transformed by the restorative work of Jesus.

Enter the Holy Spirit

The climax of Peter's sermon on Pentecost attested to the fact that Christ had ascended to Israel's throne and God's right hand and the result was the pouring out of the promised Holy Spirit. It is through the power of the Spirit that Peter, Paul, John, you and I are enabled to participate in Christ's history of restoration and to identify it as our own. It is by the descending and indwelling of the Spirit that we are drawn into relational solidarity with Christ as co-heirs in his Sonship, co-participants in his death and resurrection, and co-laborers in his ministry to humanity.

This ministry is not "person-person," but "person-God-person." If God the Holy Spirit is not the middle person in relationship, we fall back to our normal patterns of defensive self-preservation or self-aggrandizement, either fearing or dominating the other. However, when our relationships are mediated through the Holy Spirit we no longer have to coerce or control, instead we are free to delight in their present "otherness." This is the powerful effect of the ascension of Jesus to the Father and the sending of the Holy Spirit to the church.

Because of Jesus and the presence of the Spirit we are able to forgive enemies, love the unknown neighbor, offer conversation that builds up, correct with grace and truth, and join the common mission to see people live into the reconciliation of all people to God in Jesus. It is in this place where Jesus has "humanized humanity" that we authentically reflect the image of the triune God of grace.

It is comforting to know that Jesus means what he says. When he promises to be with us to the end of the age, he means it. When he says he will ask the Father to give us another Counselor, he follows through and sends the dynamic Spirit of Truth.

Conclusion

Our calling to minister with Jesus is much more than fulfilling isolated scriptures, or reacting to present circumstances, or, God forbid, operating under our own power. Rather, our calling is to Jesus himself—to share in what he is now doing in our world in the Holy Spirit. In this lifestyle, we are particularly alert to what the Spirit is saying and doing within the context of relationships; indeed, this is where the relational God meets us.

Reflection

In what ways do you struggle to believe the reality of the accomplished work of Jesus?

In what ways do you experience the work of the Holy Spirit in leading you into ministry with Jesus?

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SPIRITUAL FORMATION

In what ways do you struggle to participate with Jesus in his ministry to humanity?

How might someone prepare for service to the church? This is the big question faced in the current journey of the intern. The response of GCI is to encourage life-long learning and to offer this intensive experience called the Pastoral Internship Program.

GCI believes pastoral ministry is first a calling from God and then a craft to be learned from other skilled practitioners. The intern can learn much from the more experienced pastor who is practiced in the art of ministry.

Place and Space

The student-pastor is given *place* in the life of the host congregation. He or she is included in the ongoing ministry of the church and finds existing places to participate and experiment. The student-pastor experiences community as relationships are built with the pastor, pastoral leaders and extended church family.

The experience of “place” can be helpful, but too general without the accompanying role of *space* that is provided in relationship with the more seasoned mentor. Space is needed for the intern to be able to reflect, converse, and deliberate alongside the tutelage of the mentor. It is within the space of this supervised internship that looking back and looking forward come together. It is also within this space that truth-telling, meaningful strategizing and qualitative growth occur.

Spiritual Formation

This combined experience of place in the community of church and space shared with a caring mentor is of little value unless spiritual formation is also occurring in the life of the student-pastor. The previous discussion called our

attention to the fact that the ministry we enter is the ministry of Jesus; our dependence is constantly upon the Holy Spirit’s urging and guidance; and the glory and praise is returned to the Father. We are junior, co-laborers with Christ always under His Lordship.

Immersing oneself into pastoral ministry is a heady thing. It is more than human will, conversion, graduation or ordination. Preparation for pastoral ministry is more than learning the skills to exegete scripture, construct and deliver a sermon, or organize a worship service. At the very core, pastoral ministry is about calling and formation. It is the being and abiding in Jesus that transforms the heart and confirms the calling to act on His behalf.

A supervised pastoral internship can easily become an experience of “doing” and spiral into an impossible schedule with diminishing returns. There is the ever-present challenge of balancing the “Being-Knowing-Doing.” *Being* is about the personal relationship with Jesus and the disciplines employed to nurture that relationship and guarding your heart. *Knowing* is related to the ongoing educational pursuits that inform your head. *Doing* is about engaged ministry where you are actually executing ministry with your hands and feet.

Reflection

How are you doing in juggling the “Being-Knowing- Doing?” Discuss how your quiet time, prayer time, and thinking time are bonding you more closely with the heart and mind of Jesus. What is being learned and experienced in the community of the church? Discuss the meaningful exchanges between other pastoral leaders and members. How honest are you the mentor and you the intern being with each other? What specific ministry strategies are emerging and developing?

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Mission Focus (part 1) Missional Pastors

The Holy Spirit calls the church to share with Jesus in the ministry he is now doing to fulfill the Father's mission to the world. In short, the church is to be *missional*. For that to happen, it needs missional *pastors* who lead *missional congregations*. In this discussion, we will focus on pastors. Next time we will look at churches. In both cases, we will emphasize the way these characteristics play out in the emerging post-modern cultural setting in North America.

Missional Pastors

Missional pastors tend to express the following ten characteristics. Our goal in the Pastoral Internship Program is to see these characteristics emerging in both mentors and apprentices.

1. Clear Sense of God's Call

Missional pastors have a clear sense of God's calling. That sense comes out of a "being" that is deeply rooted in Christ. This sense of calling is expressed in small things: being prepared, being all there, being open to opportunities, being on a journey, being other-centered, being legacy-minded, being a Kingdom influencer, being in step with God every day, being in God's timing, and most of all being in Christ. This sense of calling is confirmed by fruitfulness in specific areas of ministry (see below), as affirmed by the testimony of others in the church.

2. Godly Character

Missional pastors grow in Christ-likeness, bearing the fruit of the Spirit in personal, family and public life. They live the life of a servant-leader.

3. Visioning Capacity

Missional pastors have the ability to envision a preferred future and then trust God to bring it about. They have a strong mental picture concerning what the church will "look like" in the future. They also have the ability to communicate that picture in ways that inspire others to join in.

4. Gathering and Team Building Skills

Missional pastors have the ability to recruit and lead a diverse group to join with them in accomplishing the vision. They are able to recruit and build leadership teams comprised of people with complementary gifts and abilities. They are able to empower others.

5. Planning and Execution Skills

Missional pastors are good, logical thinkers who are able to mobilize their congregation's leaders and members to participate in a balanced mix of seeking, nurturing, equipping and multiplying ministries. They are self-starters willing to work long hours with a high level of energy and physical stamina.

6. Evangelistic Skills

Missional pastors relate well with non-Christians. They are able to communicate in a style that is understood by the unchurched. They can break through barriers and function comfortably in the culture of unchurched people. They have no reservations about sharing the gospel with non-Christians in appropriate ways. They model for the congregation how to be involved in relationships outside the church, continually cheerleading for relational outreach, and leading the charge for seeking the lost.

7. Communication Skills

Missional pastors have the ability to communicate the Word of God in relevant and compelling ways through preaching and teaching that yields spiritual growth.

8. Multiplication Skills

Missional pastors are able to recruit, equip and release other leaders so that ministries are multiplied. They are able to discern where the most urgent developmental needs are and then prioritize budgets and training opportunities for growth.

9. Family “Fit”

Missional pastors “fit” within the larger GCI family. This means agreement with GCI doctrine, a willingness to function within the GCI accountability structure, agreement with the GCI vision for renewing existing churches for the mission of Jesus, and agreement to help start new churches that grow and reproduce more churches.

10. Effective Style

Missional pastors are not yellow pencils—they express their leadership in a number of different leadership styles. They then look for others to lead with them so that several styles are present on the team. Here are several styles. Which are you?

- **Team Leaders.** Those who know they will need the right people around them to do the right jobs in order to get the right results. They share responsibility and build high trust, which is a high motivational influence.
- **Visionary Leaders.** Future-oriented leaders who have definite ideas of a preferred destination and a strong desire to communicate that vision. They get people out of a rut and stir them into action.
- **Directional Leaders.** Those who have an uncanny sense of what to do at crossroads and are insightful planners.
- **Strategic Leaders.** Those who know how people think and function, and have an excellent sense of timing, of direction and of planning.
- **Managerial Leaders.** Those who specialize in doing things right; they chart things in an orderly fashion, set up workable systems, evaluate performance, oversee direction, and make wise use of resources, manpower and finances.
- **Motivational Leaders.** Those who know how to “read” people; inspire them and lift morale. They skillfully discern people’s needs and expectations then encourage them on to bigger challenges.

- **Shepherding Leaders.** Those who capture their followers’ hearts by nurturing and loving them. They are pastoral in outlook and can develop a loving, successful fellowship.

SPECIAL DEMANDS OF POST-MODERN LEADERS

Post-modern Leaders ask and answer the following questions:

- What time is it now? Am I living and operating in the current age?
- Where am I? What is the reality of my nation, my community, my church?
- What am I doing here? What has God called me to do? Am I serving an institutional need or operating out of my spiritual-giftedness?

Post-modern Leaders display the ability to maintain a healthy distance from the negative issues happening in the system while yet being emotionally invested and present to people – a “non-anxious presence” that comprehends the reality of the now, but progressively works toward the desired future.

Rapid societal change demands that Post-modern Leaders operate in each of the following leadership capacities (or effectively recruit team members to offset a weakness)

- Vision-caster
- Planner, Organizer
- Executor, Manager

Richard Hamm, *Recreating the Church*

REFLECTION

- What are the top 2-3 ministry traits that you struggle with the most? How do you compensate?
- Based on the Leadership Styles described what is your dominate style or combination of styles?
- Richard Hamm projects some high demands on “Post-Modern Leaders.” Where do you fit in his description?
- What is your attitude toward being a mission-minded pastor who leads a missional church?

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Mission Focus (part 2)

Missional Churches

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Last time we examined ten defining characteristics of *missional pastors*. Now we look at ten defining characteristics of *missional churches*. Our focus is on the characteristics that are relevant to missional connection with unchurched people in an increasingly postmodern culture.

1. Holistic Faith

Missional churches embrace a faith that speaks to all of life—not just to one hour on Sundays. Postmoderns are on a “spiritual search and not an intellectual quest.” They are willing to enter this search along with Christians who are living out their faith holistically.

2. Incarnational Ministry

Missional churches live with Christ in and for the world. In short, missional churches are engaged with the world as Christ’s ambassadors—sharing in what Jesus is doing to love and relate with the world. The love of Jesus compels such churches to go where people are, hanging out with them in their neighborhoods, eating with them in their restaurants, and drinking at their coffee shops. This emphasis on being present in the world, allows contact with new people and the possibility of establishing meaningful relationships. It is in this context that Jesus is working. Missional churches never treat people like projects—all people are valued as created in God’s image and redeemed by God’s love.

3. Engaged in Service

People are looking for hands-on, active ways to make a difference in the world. Missional churches provide outreach and mission projects that intentionally include unchurched people, thus providing a “matrix” in which Jesus’ love for the community is lived out together and relationships are built.

4. Relevant Worship

The worship in missional churches is relevant to the culture it seeks to embrace. It provides music that is meaningful to that culture, while introducing some of the ancient hymns of the faith that are expressive of a rich theology. Worship engages all the senses, and often includes public reading of Scripture, prayer and recitation of creeds.

5. Narrative Expository Preaching

Preaching in Missional Churches brings Scripture to life. A narrative style is typically utilized to draw all age groups into the story told by the Bible. Expository preaching is the norm so that the story is told the way Scripture tells it, thus faithfully conveying its meaning, which is found in the work and person of the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ.

6. Using Ancient Patterns

Liturgical patterns of worship are often used in order to connect contemporary practice with the church’s ancient forms. The approach also helps attendees to understand the flow of worship as the story of Jesus is enacted each week.

7. Experiential Worship

Worship in missional churches typically engages all the senses, including illustrating the story of Scripture using the visual arts. Options include the use of videos, drama, sculpting, dance, etc. The goal is to deep, experiential worship, not mere entertainment.

8. Connected Technologically

Mission churches tend to use advanced technologies as tools for creatively engaging people in the worship and outreach of the church. For example, websites can be used to connect with particular groups in the community. Light gels can be used to project stained glass on plain walls.

9. Living in Community

Missional church understands that people are searching for the security that is provided by relationships with like-minded people. They are looking for family-like bonds of friendship, not mere kinship. For this reason, missional churches emphasize lifestyle over strategy. Church growth is not about slick sales techniques, but a fruit of loving relationships. It is in the matrix of such relationships that the love and life of Jesus are experienced.

10. Transparent, Team Leadership

In missional churches, the leaders are *real* people, who have real struggles and real victories. And they are open about it. The particular style of each leader will vary, but in all cases, there is an emphasis on “we”—on team and on participation, rather than on leadership as hierarchy, power and control. Being participatory means giving people opportunity to make decisions. It means empowering others to lead. It means individuals sacrificing for the benefit of the whole. Leadership systems in these churches tend to be flexible and self-organizing, with established leaders providing coaching to emerging leaders. There is a strong element of trust in such transparent, team-based leadership systems.

DEFINING CORE VALUES

Undergirding these characteristics of missional churches are non-negotiable core values—the ‘genetic code’ of these churches, out of which springs their missional life.

1. Dependence upon God

Not deterred by personal frailty, cultural or economic challenges.

2. Devoted to discipling

Focused on seeing lives transformed, not merely getting “converts” or seeing larger numbers of people in church services. Emphasis is on seeking the lost, nurturing believers, equipping workers and multiplying leaders (who multiply ministries and churches).

3. Emphasis on empowerment

Rather than seeing people as tools for advancing the leaders’ agenda, leaders seek to join Jesus in empowering people. They are serious about helping people grow as followers of Jesus.

4. Reliance on God’s will, not popular opinion

Emphasis is placed on discerning and then following the will of God, despite the pressure of popular opinion (including one’s own!).

REFLECTION

- How do the ten defining characteristics of missional churches affect your vision of the church where you presently serve? How about the church you may serve in the future?
- Are there other characteristics you would add to the list?
- Do you notice a pattern of positive responses over negative attitudes in the list of core values? Can this proactive approach serve you well in ministry?
- Would you add to the list of core values?

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Leadership of the Jesus kind

In *The Ministry of Leadership: Empowering People*, an essay in the book "Incarnational Ministry," Walter C. Wright, Jr. defines Christian leadership as a relationship by which the leader works to empower, nurture and increase the maturity of the follower as a person loved by God (p207). This is leadership of the "Jesus kind"—*servant-leadership that transforms*.

Whereas current literature tends to define leadership as a *process* by which individuals or groups are *influenced* toward an outcome or goal (p207), Jesus' way of leading is fundamentally about *relationship*. Of course, relationships involve influence, but the primary focus of Jesus' leadership is not influencing toward an external objective or goal (no matter how lofty), but loving and serving the follower with an eye toward seeing them empowered and their lives transformed. Jesus demonstrated this radical approach to leadership at the Last Supper, where he washed his disciple's feet (John 13:3-5), then later proclaimed, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27).

With this in mind, Wright defines Christian leadership in an organizational setting:

"[It is] a relationship between two persons engaged in a process of influence in which the leader seeks to: articulate the vision and mission of the organization for the follower; shape and reinforce the culture, values, or beliefs of the organization, as well as the character of people within the organization; contextualize the follower's contribution to the organization, showing how it fits and why is it important to the mission; provide the resources and the power to make the contribution possible; express thanks on behalf of the organization, affirming the follower's value as a member and conveying appreciation for the follower's contribution" (p208).

The Gospels show Jesus doing just these things with those in his "organization" - his group of disciples. He imparted to them kingdom vision, he challenged them, he equipped them, and he gave them opportunities to learn by serving. He then debriefed them, corrected them when needed, and gave them lots of feedback, including encouragement. Most importantly, he valued and deeply loved them. And they knew it, and their lives were transformed.

Wright notes that the Apostle Paul also practiced the same empowering - transforming approach toward leadership, with a view toward...

"...seeing each person mature in Christ and coaching the person on how to live up to that maturity (Eph 4:1, Col 1:10). Transforming leadership is believing in the potential of a person to be more than what you use today and committing yourself to work toward the development of that person" (p209).

When we share with Jesus in his servant-leadership, our focus is on the follower rather than on ourselves as leader (p210). Our effort is focused on seeking the follower's transformation - seeing them move "up the maturity scale, to *increase* their competence and their confidence" (p211).

Of course, several leadership styles or approaches fit this focus. However, the choice of style is dictated not by our preference as a leader, but by the need of the follower at a particular place on their journey with Jesus.

At times, a directive style will be best; at other times, a consulting or coaching style is called for. In that regard, note that Jesus changed styles with his followers as they matured (or went backward!). Wright comments:

“Empowering leadership accepts followers where they are but sees in them the potential to grow in maturity. It adapts leadership style in order to transform their ability to do the task, their confidence in accepting ownership of the task, and their perceptions of themselves. The goal of empowering leadership is to help every follower grow into an empowered leader who will in turn exercise this kind of leadership with each person for whom he or she is responsible” (p214).

Jesus is alive, and through the Spirit leading his followers on earth. He is sharing his life and love with them, and in doing so serving them in ways that help them grow. Let us with Jesus be transforming, servant-leaders.

REFLECTION

- Give some examples of servant-leadership that transforms—both from your experience and from the life of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.
- What is your “default” leadership style? How is it helpful in empowering others? How is it an obstacle? What style would align best with the people you currently serve through your leadership?