STRUCTURE YOUR CHURCH
(Differently)

by Daniel A. Brown PhD

CHAPTER ONE:

TAKE ACTION AND STRUCTURE YOUR CHURCH

Sometimes the most obvious truths escape our attention until we find ourselves in a new setting. For instance, even though I had been taught the truth of God's word from boyhood, it was not until after I began attending a Pentecostal church during my college years that I realized how often the Bible exhorted me to "Praise the Lord." The non-charismatic church culture from which I came made me inherently suspicious of borderline danger points that might carry me away into emotionalism—like lifted hands, spoken praise, and hymnal-less worship.

I still do not know how I had missed such an obvious theme in Scripture, but "Praise God" suddenly made sense to me as a personal encouragement, rather than as mere words or an emphatic (verbal) punctuation mark.

Perhaps that is why I'm always on the lookout for obvious truths that unobtrusively remain hidden behind well-meaning spiritual attitudes and clichés. Take for example our earnest prayers for God to "do something" in, at, or with our church; as Pentecostals, we celebrate spontaneous interventions, miraculous and sovereign activities of the Spirit. And well we should. But a simple reading of the Bible reveals that what God does on earth almost always happens through the agency of individual human beings; He does almost nothing all on His own without using some person's staff, hands, lips, etc. People are God's tool of choice, and that is why Jesus told us to pray for laborers, rather than for the harvest (Matthew 9:37-38).

I'm not suggesting that it is wrong to pray for revival—just that it is an incomplete understanding of how God *moves*; that is unless we have a corresponding passion to mobilize workers for the Harvest. A balanced spiritual approach ought to include both intercession and discipleship— seeking God and sending people. As leaders, we want to remember why God employs such fallible

creatures: He wants us to share His excitement by involving us in the very process of rescuing and transforming others.

STRUCTURE IS NOT UNSPIRITUAL

In the same way that an overly spiritualized view of God's activity on our planet can cloud a complete picture of how He actually does things among us, so too can our feelings about administration and structure in our churches. We who rely on fresh leadings of the Lord in our personal lives and ministry are suspicious of any potential hindrance to God having His way. The very mention of structure frightens many Pentecostal leaders—usually because they fear it will unduly "quench" or interrupt the free flow the Spirit.

But God is not constrained by order; a river with a narrower passage flows faster than one that is wide open, and a river that spills over its banks in a swelling frenzy of unusual rainfall is called a flood. Just as God uses flesh and blood people as vessels for His activity (subjecting the spirit of a prophet to the prophet), He often uses natural, physical arrangements to sustain spiritual breakthroughs.

> *"…God is not a God of confusion." ~1 Corinthians 14:32-33*

From the outset of Creation, we see God bringing order to chaos, setting up boundaries to distinguish night from day, developing (eco) systems, job descriptions ("Be fruitful and fill…") and arenas of responsibility (caretakers of the planet).

The Book of Numbers is essentially an administrative handbook on duties and arrangements for God's people. Throughout the Old Testament, we find series after series of *record-keeping*, *boundary-defining*, *tribe-distinguishing*, *people-deploying* and *assignment-giving*. Whatever their spiritual meaning or implication, these are administrative activities—the stuff of structure and logistics.

Organic Implications

What often escapes our Pentecostal Bible reading is that spiritual matters usually have some sort of organic (logistical "flesh and blood") implications. In fact, the physical arrangements are pivotal in many cases. One excellent example of this is the well-known story of Moses' battle with the Amalekites (Exodus 17). When Moses' hands were extended, Israel prevailed. That will preach! And many a preacher has exhorted congregations to more faith and spiritual activity on the basis of that text. The spiritual implications are huge—spiritual warfare brings victory. Amen.

But notice other details in the episode: Moses' arms needed support to remain aloft (Aaron and Hur were employed as arm-lifters); Joshua and others fought an actual physical battle with swords

while Moses battled on the mountain. Without the spiritual power activated by Moses' simple obedience, no victory was possible, but only with physical arrangements could spiritual victory be sustained.

We see this same picture on the exodus from Egypt, just after Moses meets his father-in-law who is bringing back Moses' wife after their lengthy separation (Chapter 18). Moses tells Jethro about all the miracles God performed, and they have quite a celebration service. "Hallelujah!" That, too, will preach. Ah, but then we come to these telling words:

> *"It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening." ~Exodus 18:13*

Jethro observed the lack of intentional structure in Moses' approach to ministry, and that every dispute or issue bottlenecked at Moses' feet. Jethro concluded that Moses needed an arrangement of people and responsibilities to adequately deal with the ongoing lives of people in the nation. Revival services are exciting and fantastic, but they will inevitably be followed by "next days" just like the one Jethro observed. To continue ministering to people between miraculous interventions, church leaders need church structures designed for those days—not for the services. We need structures that wait on people throughout all of their days, not structures that wait for the few, and that are far between days of revival.

Waiting Tables

One New Testament episode highlights the synergy between logistical planning and spiritual breakthrough. When the revival in Jerusalem spread so rapidly, the Hellenistic widows were getting overlooked in the food distribution. (Have you noticed how spiritual growth causes problems?") The solution was to delegate and make arrangements for physical needs.

Overly spiritualized interpretations of this text mistakenly assume that Peter considered "waiting on tables" less important than the spiritual tasks of prayer and preaching. Actually, since he and the other disciples had already received their "waiter and busboy" training in the feeding of the multitudes some years earlier (see Matthew 14 and 15), Peter understood that such work would be excellent experience for others who were rising to significant leadership roles. And it was. Stephen's heavenly vision and Phillip's conversion of the Ethiopian flow seamlessly from their structural assignments in the food pantry ministry.

They lost nothing by leading such mundane ministries because when each occasion arose, they knew when to administrate and when to minister.

CHAPTER TWO:

STRUCTURE HAS A PURPOSE

Does structure and over-planning sometimes get in the way of what the Lord wants to do? Of course, I am certainly not saying that we ought to put our trust in well-oiled plans, or rely on administrative structures to accomplish Kingdom enterprise on Earth. All plans must be brought under Jesus' Lordship with the simple belief that a God who gave such detailed instructions about the dimensions and materials and furnishings of His Temple, surely has thoughts for arranging the living church in each of its local expressions.

What practical ways can we think about combining structural arrangements—administration, staff positions, etc.—with spiritual pursuits? More specifically, how can we develop and improve our church structures? Let me offer these suggestions for your consideration, recognizing that they must be adapted to fit with your particular situation:

1. Most importantly, **think of structure as a verb** (an action or process) rather than as a noun (a thing or product). Structure is something to do—arranging stuff where it belongs now, moving things around, getting things to fit together to accomplish a goal—not something to have. Even if you are able to draw a flow chart with boxes and names and lines of accountability for your church, I can tell you that it is already out-dated. People, things and needs have changed. The change or need may be as simple as drivers for the Junior High event or as complex as someone to oversee various care ministries in the church.

"I like the analogy of thinking of structure as a verb rather than a noun. The mental picture I got was not in reference to grammar; however, I do think it illustrates your point. Your point is to think of structure as part of the whole and not something to stand, alone. The mental picture I got was of a DNA molecule. Each chain is vital for the remaining chains. Without any one chain, the whole would be lost. Healthy organizational structure operates in much the same way. It is there to assist and help the different parts to function as a whole. The structure should not loom over its participants, but rather act as the glue, and tie it all together. I earnestly desire to help foster this type of atmosphere and structure in our staff." L.S.

"This point struck me the most out of all nine tips in the article. Thinking of structure in terms of something to do requires ongoing alertness to what is happening, what has changed, what fits and what doesn't. The temptation for me is to give in to mental/spiritual laziness. It is a challenge to continuously think about all these things, and up until I came on staff, I was never willing to work that hard in the arena of ACTIVE THINKING. It seemed exhausting and too much work.

I am repenting of this laziness even as we speak. I desperately want the fruit that comes from a lifestyle of ongoing, active, alert thinking. I have made some progress, but also recognize that this is one of the biggest battles I have faced in my life. I am hopeful it is a battle that God is helping me to win." M.H.

"One of the trickier things for me is to continually invent ways to orchestrate and organize people for the different opportunities in which I'm involved. As much as I want to invite the same person to do the same type of thing from one activity to the next, I know that I don't want them to ever get "stuck" in the same thing or feel like they're "only" good for that thing. I want to "force" them to pass along to someone else what piece of the puzzle they have, so that person can do the job better and then pass along their piece of the puzzle...

Being involved in many things right now, I feel an even stronger urge to use the same people—thinking of a whole new set of people is hard. But every time I do invite one more person to be involved in something, I feel much better. I am more rewarded. I've even just started my first true trickle-down experiment—asking someone to really pass along the way that they think and live. Now, I'm not only getting the benefit of how they are, I'm also giving them the benefit of being the teacher." H.M.

"This suggestion intrigued me the most. I have found myself increasingly guilty of promoting a plan, a thing, with an end goal! 'If only I could have somehow, someway accomplish the necessary tasks to reach my end goal, only then would I feel fulfilled and satisfied.' As I was getting closer to accomplishing my goal, of having everything in place, I was also getting more agitated when things would get moved around. Koast Kids is ever changing, so you can imagine how hard I had to work to force things into 'my' place.

Well, I already know many things very wrong with these statements I just made!!! My plan had become a program! YIKES! Wanting to have a program in place, rather than a PLAN in place, made more room for structure and less room for people. It sounds odd even saying that, since I am such a lover of people. I love being with people and forming deep relationships with them. I realize I have been like a puppy, going in circles, chasing its tail and not reaching what it really wants. God intends for me to evangelize and reach many people and I don't want to forfeit that all for a program!" M.K.

Good administration asks the question: "**Who** or **what**, *needs who or what to accomplish what we're trying to do*?"

2. That is why good structure is fluid and flexible, adapting to "daily bread" needs. Rigid, bureaucratic models, like in the military or industries where workers do the same basic set of things day after day, do not function very well in the church. To begin with, we

utilize lots of volunteers who will get left off such flow charts precisely because they are not "consistent." Churches do so many different kinds of things each week—CM, crisis counseling, bulletins and worship practice, and, such a variety of things each year—Harvest Festivals, jail outreaches, mission teams, etc.

It simply isn't possible that the same few people are the best ones for all those jobs!

3. **Good structure recognizes that position is not as meaningful as involvement.** A titled position does not mean that the person holding the title can or should be that involved in the actual work that must be done. Going back to the example of a Junior High event, the ideal scenario would be for the Youth Pastor to arrange things (time, information, etc.) to find and involve someone else in finding the drivers. Without intentional arrangements, pastors fall into the same trap as Moses, assuming there is no alternative to doing everything themselves.

"Recognize that position is not as meaningful as involvement because of the question that you posed, "Who else and how else can I get other people involved in this project?" I think that I have gotten stuck on, "Who is it all right for me to ask to help me because of the nature of my position." I have gotten so stuck on that that I can't even think of anyone, or if I do think of someone, they are already really involved helping someone else on staff. I think I need to instead figure out the things that it doesn't matter who does it and ask someone that has been on my heart regardless on if they would necessarily be the "right" person to help me because of the nature of my job." J.B.

"I remember absolutely loving organizing events and programs and saw it my "duty" to also be the main man running around after everyone and everything. I know that for many years I struggled with proving myself to others and to the Lord, and that by doing these things some how brought self-satisfaction, but at the same time it was choking me. I loved doing the behind scenes stuff but thought it belittling to ask of someone else to vacuum, take down signs or empty the trashes, etc.

After a few months of doing everything on my own, one of my key leaders expressed to me that on many occasions, they had offered to assist me and I had kept saying "no thanks" I'm fine. I was shocked, literally shocked at how "job" focused I had become and not people focused. From that point on, everything I had to oversee and organize had a TEAM of people to go with it. Whether it was a large event or a cleanup team I was able to see people rise up and take lead.

I found that I had more time to meet with people, laugh and joke with them, all whilst getting ready for an event. This also enabled me to come back here, because I had a solid

team of people that could lead the department and my "right hand man" stepped smoothly into my position as the new Children's Pastor." A.S.

"While I find a lot of this article interesting and refreshing, the point that is the most intriguing to me is the sentence under point #3 that says, 'Who else and how else can I get other people involved in this project? This is a question that will make you a better administrator.' It's compelling to me because it goes against the way I naturally think, or rather, the way I was taught to think.

The way I was taught has been to get the job done with the highest quality, in the most effective way, and that rarely involves 'volunteers' or other people helping me. I'm not sure if this stems from being in the hyper-corporate world, or just the intensity of high-tech (read: high-stress) public relations, where bottom line is king, and you advance based on how well you do in comparison to others. It's structured completely opposite to the 'how can I get people involved' way of thinking. People are there to maximize output, even if it means working your employees/colleagues into the ground. And the ends (in that world) definitely justify the means.

And because (in that life) that is the mindset that everyone has, it doesn't even cross your mind that there could be another way. I think the hardest transition for me working here, is to remember that I need to be thinking that way, instead of the 'bottom-line, corporate' way. And also, to remember not to think that way about myself, i.e., I don't need to kill myself or sacrifice myself and/or my family on the altar of productivity, or 'getting the job done.' [Pastor] has to remind me this all the time.

It's really refreshing to know (and to remember) that the goal here is to get the people done, and not the work. And while the work is certainly important, to remember the bottom line here is not money, the bottom line are heart issues." K.M.

You will become a better administrator by constantly asking the question: "*Who else, and how else can I get other people involved in this project?*"

4. Since churches' programs are mostly short-lived activities, **good structure maximizes the use of small workgroups**; differing combinations of personnel, with changed roles from the last project. For instance, the Youth Pastor and the dad who organized the drivers for the Junior High event might both be part of a team planning the Father/Son fishing derby; as a married man with a son, the dad probably knows more about what and how to plan than the single youth pastor does for this event. And if they're smart, they will invite a mom or two to get in on the planning, too.

"On the one hand, I really do believe (because I've experienced and seen it!) it is more fruitful to never do alone what I can do with someone else, and invite people to come along with me in what I get to be a part of. But, on the other hand, I find that I have to constantly remember and be reminded that the goal is always to prosper and benefit the 'who' through and with the 'what.'

So when it comes to the structure of things, my tendency is to try to cram the people into the structure, rather than making the structure fit the people. For example, Spring Break is coming up and the goal is to provide a fun-filled, jam-packed, God-led experience for the youth to build relationship with one another and their un-churched friends. My tendency thus far has been to just plan a program and "slot" the people in where necessary to get it done. It is just this year that I am realizing how much more I can be building teams of people to accomplish the common goal.

I have had a lot of volunteers overseeing individual aspects of events (driving, phone calls, food prep, etc.) like the event for Spring Break, but I have not discipled them in building a team and working together with that team. I also know that I have struggled with making the time in my schedule to plan ahead more so that I can have job descriptions, meetings, etc. that would be helpful in "handing off" areas of ministry to others, making a place for them to build a team of people to share in and be a part of ministry activity. I want to move from just involving people to giving them more significance in overseeing the different areas of the Youth Department, Café Coastlands, etc.

So, the questions I want to be asking myself a lot more are, 'what are the people who are volunteering with me interested and gifted in' and 'how can I make a place for a person who has been volunteering with me to step into a role of more significance for their life?' And, personally, I want to arrange my time so that I am faithful in planning ahead with purpose in mind for the people I am involving." R.S.

"This is very rarely the way that my mind normally goes. I have a tendency to go in one of two directions:

Federalization: I tend to think of 'centralized' and 'efficient' solutions rather than thinking of how I can use this 'problem' as an opportunity to mobilize a bunch more people.

Bureaucratization: Often, my first thought is to try to figure out which staff member is 'responsible' for each area, rather than creatively branching out and including more people.

Since the goal is to get ministry into the hands of as many people as possible, neither of these responses is helpful. The idea I have off the top of my head is for the Breakfast Bar. I've talked with one person (Woman) about helping me brainstorm how to make it easier for people to find their way into the foyer. I've asked her to talk with her friends to come up

with some thoughts, but I've never really thought of them as a workgroup or given them any authority or responsibility. So, I need to coordinate with (Women) and take the next step towards mobilizing these folks." T.M.

Who can think about this project better than I can, and who has knowledge that I lack?

5. **Good structure pushes the decision-making power to the front-most positions in the organization.** Bad and backwards administrative structures restrict that power to a few individuals at the top. You've heard the saying, "Doing things right is not as important as doing right things." I do not think it has to be an either/or choice, but if we grasp the priority expressed by the statement, I would put it this way: "Avoiding mistakes is not as important as empowering people enough to make mistakes." The whole point of having designated areas of responsibility is to release people to maximize their decision-making and minimize their '*permission asking.'*

"In reading the article on structure, I was faced with a common theme that constantly dilutes my thinking—I will let it reveal itself.

This point stuck out to me the most. Learning to push decision making up to the front lines. While I believe whole-heartedly in this philosophy, I have much trouble putting this into action. Because of an ongoing fear to make sure things "go right," I have often felt I have to be there or do it myself. To fight that fear, I can see that just the action of delegation runs "counter" to it. But the action of wisely putting something together to delegate out, usually requires more energy than doing it myself. Thus, the phrase, 'Ready, fire, aim,' come to mind." M.H.

"For months, this has be the lesson I have been trying to learn. I have been trying to become a decision-maker. I had for a long time struggled with a fear of being wrong. The Lord has graciously freed me from that, but I still have patterns that I tend to fall into. Being the decision-maker is walking in the opposite of all that I had ever done. It is very freeing.

I can see the Lord really giving me boldness and a voice in areas where I would have in the past waited for someone else's direction or decision. Being pushed to make decisions has in essence pushed me to believe that the world won't fall apart if I am wrong, and that the mistakes is how I am to learn. I love the line, 'empowering people enough to make mistakes.'

That's me. I have been given the power to make mistakes, but also to learn and receive wisdom from those mistakes. I can see in my own life the freedom this gives. I want to be a person to give that to someone else. I want the people that come in and work with me to feel like they too can make decisions. I want them to feel that they are capable to make

decisions, and that God is so gracious that when we make a mistake, the world will not end, we won't be excommunicated, but that we will learn and be better for it." S.B.

"This sort of thinking is the opposite of what I've known in my life. It has been one of the hardest concepts to breakdown in my mind and to apply in a practical way with myself, and people I am in charge of. I think my upbringing was about reaching for perfection, avoiding mistakes and using approval as my gauge for success. I can't remember of being given permission to think 'outside of the box' or ultimately think for myself. Most of my efforts were spent guessing what I thought the 'right thing' might be to do for those I was under. I was very stifled, bored, unchallenged, unexcited and unhappy with most things I had done—for this very reason.

I'm beginning to realize that I gained most affirmation by overachieving. The challenge of 'outdoing other's expectations of me' possibly made life more exciting. It took me a very long time to trust and believe that 'thinking for myself' was not only acceptable but also expected from me in my job here at The Coastlands. To be responsible for my decisions actually felt overwhelming for a long time because there was no format to follow.

Thank you Daniel for teaching me to not spend my waking hours trying to please you but really learning to listen to the Lord, knowing that He is ultimately pleased with my responding to His voice with my actions. The more I understand, the more I realize how simple and practical the Lord's ways are. This has been very profound for me to have this understanding and to see how it can become part of my spiritual DNA." T.M.

"In response to your article on structure, I found it to be quite helpful to the way I think. What really stuck out to me was point 5, 'Push decision-making power to the individuals on the front lines instead of a few individuals at the top.' I had always looked at giving people the opportunity to make mistakes as setting them up for failure. I had tried not to make someone fell like they weren't a screw-up or make them feel like they had nothing good to contribute, which in turn limited them from moving forward.

If it weren't for someone giving me a place to make decisions and take the risk of making mistakes then I would not be where I am now. Plus, by giving other people a place to make decisions, it allows opportunity for new things to happen that I wouldn't come up with on my own." J.Y.

"As I read through the 'Practical Tips' section, I realized that I am very much still in process when it comes to the part that speaks of letting those on the front line make mistakes in the decision-making process. I am continually feeling pressed (lovingly, of course) into new

areas of leadership. It is very difficult for me to think that I may, and probably will make mistakes along the way.

I do, truly feel so loved and covered where I am, that this is becoming a bit easier for me, but I must painfully admit that even doing this assignment was a bit torturous because I was not certain if I had received adequate instructions on how to do it or not. It is a good reminder for me that as I take further steps into the realm of serving/leading, that I am being empowered to do things that are unfamiliar to me, and am so loved and esteemed in the process.

I love all that I am learning, which makes it so good for me to think of passing along what I know to others who might be inexperienced or afraid in the areas that I have, through time, grown into." K.D.

As I told a staff person last week, *"I'd rather have you pray/think about and then make a decision—even if it turns out to be the wrong one—rather than await my decision about things for which you are responsible."*

6. As obvious as it sounds, **the whole point of structure is to accomplish church purposes in/with the lives of its people.** Thus, the structure must match the goals of the church. Let's take cell groups. We emphasize cell groups in our church because one of our goals is to keep encouraging people toward ministry leadership roles. That is also why our cell groups are structured to have apprentice leaders, and why we have lay leaders overseeing clusters of cell groups, and yet another layer of lay leaders (two couples) who minister to those cluster leaders. If your church's main assignment were to gather the flock to listen to teaching, cell groups would be counter-productive. Have you noticed that people watch what we do much more than they listen to what we say?

Thus, good administrators ask the question: *"**What does our planned-for structure communicate to people**?"*

7. Here's another obvious thought: structure ought to enable the church to carry out lots of ministry activity without the leader's direct oversight or involvement. The amount that even a "gifted" leader can do on his/her own is small compared to what he/she and three key program-staff members can do, and that pales in comparison to what he/she, those staff, and the nine additional volunteers can accomplish. A church does not have to be big to have great people doing amazing things by partnering with other great people.

"This model of church that you describe has been the most life-giving element to each and every one who calls this home. You have purposefully arranged things so that first and foremost, we can begin to (or begin again) know, that we are loved by God. Not only have you personally demonstrated and modeled this in every area of life, but have given us the tools and opportunities to do this for others—not just in thought, but in word and deed.

To actually be reminded again and again that there is a particular assignment and call on each of our lives, and then to come alongside each other to see that fulfilled is an absolute blessing. I am actually thanking God more and more these days for any lack, because it is the actual catalyst the serves to remind me to include others, for their good and ultimately for the sake of the Kingdom." M.B.

But to be great, a church of any size must have a leader who arranges things in such a way as to make such partnership ***the norm rather than the exception***.

8. As Pentecostals we thrill with the understanding that Jesus gave ministry gifts to His church. The Lord, and the Spirit, uniquely capacitates us to be particular parts of the Body. Good church structures recognize, celebrate and promote gift-mix diversity. Some are prophets, others are exhorters; teachers, mercy-showers and givers sit alongside evangelists, servers and pastors. Paul explained that a church body builds itself up in love when each part is actively and efficiently working the way it is supposed to work. Most likely, an exhorter will be more relational and less organized than a teacher if asked to head up the coffee ministry. And if one is passing the coffee baton to the other, some of the job is bound to get lost in the transition. The neat thing is that something new will grow back in its place.

"As many times as I have taught young people about spiritual gift-mixes, I still have a lot to learn with respect to identifying those ministries in people I meet/know. I realize that when it comes to serving, anyone who has a willingness and eagerness to serve will agree to do just about anything. This was the posture of my heart when I first came to The Coastlands, so whether helping [Pastor] by making phone calls to parents I didn't know, or separating soda-soaked garbage from prized recyclable cans, I was happy doing whatever.

However, I also understand that eventually 'promoting' people (volunteers), according to their giftings, talents and likes, who have been faithfully 'doing whatever' behind the scenes, is crucial. Similarly, I also know that having the same people do the same things for a long period of time can result in their resentment and frustration, and can send a message to others outside that only just a few people are needed/wanted for the tasks.

Herein then, lie two weaknesses of mine: 1) a difficulty in matching appropriate jobs to particular giftings; 2) a tendency towards inviting the same people to do most of the stuff. With regards to the first, I believe that my lack of understanding will decrease partly as a

result of simply learning how to ask the right questions of people when I'm with them. For example, I can utilize my meal times to ask what people do for a living, and what they enjoy doing on the side.

It has been a challenge to me to pinpoint in people what their gifts are. I also realize how crucial this is though because it will help make your volunteers be successful if they are established in an area that they are already gifted in. I always want to ask myself 'What will set this person up for success, rather than set them up for failure?' Knowing a person's giftings is a natural beginning to that. I want to have a mind-set that notices the little things about people, the subtleties that can give you a better insight as to how someone functions, and who the Lord intends for them to be." J.E.

"Something I realized in the last 7/12 years is that sometimes the Lord puts us in places we wouldn't choose or, that are not our gifting or desire. But these are the times He is working in us and preparing us for to grow in His calling and in our gifting. I think, if everybody in the church finds out what their gifting is, and if they live them, it can be very powerful and the church can grow, get stronger and get ready for the next revival for all the new saved people who would come! I want to pray the Lord might show me the giftings of my volunteers so I can encourage them." B.S.

People are far more that mere bodies and one-size-fits-all workers. In a truly spiritual structure, ***the unique Gift-Mixes of each person are considered and celebrated—and given opportunity to develop***.

Lastly, remember that structure has no actual spiritual life in it at all. Little of eternity is affected by shifting service times a half hour backward, or by changing someone's title from assistant to associate. The implications of that can sound almost the opposite of what I've been saying thus far. But I'm actually making my main point. **Structure is disposable. It is meant to be used, rather than preserved**; like an umbrella, it works until it breaks or until the sun comes out. Like a pair of shoes, it wears out, or we outgrow it. As fresh as our systems and structures begin, they all eventually require significant readjustment, and sometimes it's best just to trash them and start over with new structures for new seasons.

The Bible tells us that David *"shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them* [spiritually and] *with his skillful hands" (*Psalm 78:72*).*

"Fear drives my mind to think within the boundaries of a box. Believing that if I don't stick to my schedule of keeping appointments, tasks and chores, I will disappoint my superiors or overseers. If I do not complete a task on time or rearrange an appointment, there will be too

much for me to do later. It is easy to think things will become skewed and will heavy lay on my shoulders. And what if it brings difficulty to someone else? Is it asking too much of them to reschedule for me?

The Lord has identified a fear in me that affects the way I think and structure my work. It has brought me to cover up, rely on my own strength and choose not to seek the support around me. It really goes into so much more. It was hard to confess this vulnerability in the open, but once I did, the truth of disposable structure made sense as something that was OK and helpful.

It is fine to ask the question, 'Can we reschedule our regular meeting so that I can attend a scouting trip with this department? I would love to see if you're available a.s.a.p. to continue our time together.' If they say no then no big deal, at least I tried. Things can be adjusted at random times to accommodate special needs, projects, or time with people. I'm still trying to fight the fear of asking, and perceiving the question as a huge burden on the person I'm asking. Things can be adjusted and rearranged. It may even mean my methods in prioritizing work needs to change all together and that's fine." D.C.

"It makes a lot of sense to me when I read that structure is meant to be used, rather than preserved. Well is makes sense now after having lived and learned to be around so much change these last few years. However, it doesn't always feel right and natural; my tendency is to want to build something that lasts or design something that will 'stand the test of time,' so to speak. I do notice sometimes that having this way of thinking can cause me to focus more on making sure my project is done a certain way than making sure I focus on 'my people' in a great way. This is a tip that is good for me to remind myself of often." C.R.

STAFFING SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR CHURCH

"It is to your advantage that I go away..." ~Jesus, the Savior of the world

When we left our home church in late 1984 to plant The Coastlands, this scripture kept coming to my heart again and again—along with a simple prophetic understanding: I was to structure this new church in such a way that it functioned as well without me (in its daily operations) as it did with me. In other words, disciple people develop systems and delegate significant responsibilities within those systems to those people. If Jesus left the world in the keeping of humans, it is hard to justify a leadership attitude that struggles with entrusting church work to those same humans.

Not that it has been a smooth journey, but between the bumps and potholes (sometimes through them), I have learned a few things that might help you in staffing your ministry so that more people (volunteers and paid workers) can be involved meaningfully in the process:

1. ***The work of church is not primarily the programs and services it puts on***, but the transformation in the lives of the congregation; therefore, *do not use the people to get the jobs done, use the jobs to help complete the people.*

"I have heard this more times than I can count, but, it is something that I always have to remind myself of. With all of the events that I oversee, I am constantly asking people to join me in various ventures. I want to remind myself not to include the same people, and not just to think about who would be good at a certain thing or know how to do it. I want to think more along the lines of 'who would benefit and feel so included to get to learn how to do this?" and "who would this give life and healing to?"' J.E.

"From everything stated above, obviously, there are many ways that God is still trying to change my thinking. Daniel, I'm grateful to have your help! I honestly thought I was getting the people done and not the job. I was wrong. My focus had become so tuned into the needs of the children in Koast Kids, I was ignoring the needs of the adults who brought them. A big desire of mine is to provide a formal type of preschool for the kids, and not just provide babysitting. I still think this desire is OK, as long as it is in balance." M.K.

"This continues to be one of the most refreshing and renewing aspects of what I have experienced and continuing experiencing here. The time spent with and invested in people is priceless. The return of any investment we make is always more than we initially invest— much like the loaves and fishes! It gets each of us done!! Our work here is a wonderful vehicle that ushers us into that reality. I absolutely love the ongoing conversations that become a history that I can develop with someone over time. I am always amazed at how much more than meets the eye there is to know of someone. I learned from you and Pamela many years ago to think about each encounter; however brief or long our time together, it is valuable. I want to continue to be alert and sensitive to what God will say to us as we spend time together. That is where the fulfillment truly is." M.B.

"Don't use people to get the job done, but use the job to get the people done. This phrase runs through my head all the time. This is how I want to think. And honestly, it's not how I tend to think. I like to complete jobs and move on, and I can tend to not think about the people. The only thing that this helps is checking off a 'to do' list. I know that lives are changed when we use the job to get the people done. I am a walking example of that. Someone asked me time and time again to volunteer for them and the Lord did so much in my life during that time. I know that this works. But knowing and thinking don't seem to be the same thing for me. But I am trying to change that.

There is such purpose in this mentality. I want to be a purposeful person. I don't want to be a task person. I can see now that I rob someone of the same opportunity I was given when I don't invite them to volunteer with me. With the few people, I have coming in to help me, I am now seeing what the Lord is doing in their lives by being given a place. It's all coming together for me, and it makes my longing to live a purposeful life even greater. I want to be someone who thinks through how I can be purposeful in all that I do. How I can use my job as a catalyst for the Lord to do something in someone's life." S.B.

"In the beginning, I got told which responsibilities I will have. I thought, 'I'm gonna die!' It was not so much about these jobs, but about how to find volunteers for all this places. I started to pray about it and asked the Lord if He would show me the people I should bring in. It was more important for me to think about people that are not really involved yet in the church then to think about the jobs that have to be done. But with Costco I was totally stressed out, because I never could do that by my own. So, I was first always afraid people would feel use, because I needed their help. So I asked a lot to the Lord, who I should ask. For the very first time I was with [Woman].

She comes with me every time now. With her I had the vision, the goal, to give her a place here at the church and the feeling of being important and needed in a good way. I also hoped she says goodbye to her stuff in her life, which always wanted keep her back and to give herself to the Lord. Now I see, she feels totally as a part here and she gives herself more and more to the Lord!

Also another woman helps me out from time to time with the classrooms. She also came on my heart and she is new in the church. The good thing in that is, she can meet all different kinds of people here. It gives her also a place here and we can have fun working together." B.S.

"The work of the church is not primarily the programs and services it puts on, but the transformation in the lives of the congregation." This basically goes back to what I was saying. Because I was taught and/or learned that the bottom line is what was most important to remember,r and keep reminding myself that people are really what matter here—and not completing the job in the quickest and most efficient way.

This really is a good reminder, especially as I'm beginning to train [Woman] to take over my position while I'm on leave. That, yes, she does need to learn all the nuts and bolts and details to creating a bulletin every week, but God has such a bigger plan for her by being here. And to that end, I need to keep that in mind so I don't bog her down in so much detail, training, nit-picky points, that she isn't left with any time to actually enjoy herself and be

blessed by being here—and to keep in mind the goals of transformation and godly-change, and not just 'get the job done'." K.M.

"I just had a phone call with one of my volunteers this morning and she was asking me if I had a lot for her to do this week when she came in. I had not yet even read this article, and since I was unable to attend staff lunch yesterday, was at this point unaware of the assignment. I was sharing with her the freedom that I, myself, have experienced in this area.

When I first began volunteering I would report for duty ready to 'work.' Usually what would happen was a lot of visiting, some 'closed door' discussions about my life and situational things happening around me, etc. Sometimes I would file a couple of papers, make a couple of phone calls and go home, and that was the extent of my work for the day. However, that, mixed with all of the other wonderful stuff, would make me want to come back. Still, I was plagued with the thought, 'I really didn't DO much today.'

It wasn't until much later and many more hours of relationship/work that I heard someone say that was the way that it was supposed to be! I told [Woman] this morning that we were freed up, as a staff not to be such 'task do-ers' and to take the wonderful opportunity to be with and enjoy those around us as we work. It is far more than getting the job done...it truly is about getting the people done. I think when she comes in on Friday, I will make sure that she has a relaxing cup of coffee before giving her any tasks. ☺" K.D.

"This is another one of those mottos that floats around here (in a good way) that I have memorized, but am still learning. I understand that concept of it, yet I still struggle with the reality of putting it in to practice. I'm happy to say that this concept is more real to me now in my head and heart more than it was two years ago. I'm still learning, and the Lord is teaching me to focus always on loving people first." C.R.

Inspire people by believing in them more than they believe in themselves. They tend to perform to the level expected of them. When their job is "to do what they're told to do," do not be surprised if they fail to take much initiative.

"The particular sentence that really struck me was, "They tend to perform to the level expected of them." I think that often I make the mistake of deciding for people what is 'asking too much' of them. If my expectation is that people only will serve so much and anything beyond that is 'pushing it,' then people feel that and respond that way. I can think too little of people by only asking for 'the bare minimum,' when there really are lots of people who are willing and able to give themselves completely.

I want to think more highly of people than that and not live in fear of making people feel that I am asking too much. That makes it about me. I want to exchange my way of thinking and ask, 'Who can benefit from doing this?'—Instead of, 'Who wouldn't mind too much doing this?' There is a world of difference. I also am reminded that in my own journey, I often turned down serving opportunities because of my own bondage to fear and reluctance. But people did not give up on me... the opportunity was offered again and again. The day finally came when I decided to face my fear. I can offer the same to others." M.H.

"This one struck me, and I think it could be because I am feeling freshly convicted about not allowing people the freedom to take initiative. I have to work at not allowing the 'checklist' to determine the goal(s). For instance, quite often I hand out a checklist of things to do, rather than describing what a person's role is in a project or activity. I have not said, or at least have not said enough, that I want them to feel the freedom to come up with their own ideas—I haven't released them to be creative and take initiative. Again, I am realizing that planning ahead is something I can do to make a place for someone to have the time to inspire inventiveness and come up with a plan. I want to create a safe structure that people feel free to move around in and explore possibilities." R.S.

"I am constantly amazed at how many people believe in me more than I believe in myself! Not in an 'I'm not worthy' kind of way, but hearing someone share with me where they think the Lord is taking me, and in not seeing that far ahead for myself is mind blowing to me. When I was asked to come back here to the Coastlands I was so excited and honored.

People have invested in me over the years and I am only where I am because people believed in me, but also because I have been asked and been shown how to rise up on many occasions. When I thought I couldn't or got scared, my leaders released me to give it a try. I have made numerous mistakes whilst leading but it has definitely not killed me. If anything, it has stretched and grown me and even given me confidence!

In my position here, I am noticing that I have been 'expecting' too much from people. I have been telling people what to do in a way that I thought was clear and understandable. I thought wrong! I must, must, must get along side them and explain, show, give an example of the expectation rather than assume they know. This has been VERY helpful to me and I'm sure a lot of people here on campus." A.S.

"Point 2 really hit me where you wrote about how there may not be much initiative when a volunteers job is 'to do what they're told to do.' If we what to see people grow we have to give them room to grow and not confine them to the exact way that we do things. If we want to

teach others—to teach others how to think—we must allow them to think, and show that this is a safe place to make mistakes." J.R.Y.

Adapt the particulars of a job to the uniqueness of the person doing it, not the other way around. Define the core tasks of the assignment, but let the new person accomplish those tasks their own way; and, encourage that person to branch out into new areas of interest.

"These are at least partly tied into both of the points above. I realize that when I come up with an idea for a particular project, I have a particular me-centered perspective/idea of how that project ought to be done. Instead, I want to have, for example, [Pastor's]-centered perspectives of how a project can be done. Again, I want to be strengthened in the area of being aware of and understanding individual, unique people's individual and unique giftings.

I also want to be reminded again and again that the whole point of the project really is the people, not the project itself. The goal really is the most important aspect of the job that 1) I need to understand, and 2) I need to communicate to the person to whom I am releasing the job. How it gets done is not nearly so important as how free the person feels to make it his or her own thing—i.e., whether or not they believe and feel that they have been given the green light to confidently and 'proudly' put their signature to what they are doing.

A clearly defined goal allows a volunteer to be creative with how he or she works towards that goal. Without such a goal, any given project I delegate to a volunteer becomes nothing more than a set of ideas of how I think it should be done, and can leave the volunteer feeling used." J.E.

"I find this to be the most refreshing suggestion for several reasons. One is that I am a true beneficiary of this principle. I have many attributes that lend me to being an administrator and many (more) that don't. However, I love my position and feel that I am able to do many aspects of it well and rely on others to fill in my areas of weakness.

Secondly, in a world that requires years of training prior to fulfilling many positions and also requires that the individual knows exactly what they want to do for a job, adapting job assignments to the individuals gifting gives opportunity for people to end up doing meaningful and rewarding work in a non-traditional way. It keeps the focus on the individual and those they serve rather than on the task." L.S.

Several part-time workers will usually be a better use of limited salary funds than one full-time worker. With rare exceptions (finances, graphics, scheduling, etc.), the main assignment of staff is to mobilize more people to do the jobs assigned to the staff. Once staff and volunteers understand

and agree to what you are ultimately trying to accomplish, the greater freedom and authority they can be allowed to fulfill their assignments. The clearer you are about the goal, the less detailed you have to be with instructions.

"Finally, if there are a few particular instructions/guidelines that are important to me, and which will help the volunteer work towards the goal, it is essential that I communicate them in a clear and concise manner. I also understand the importance of either 1) taking time to personally train a person how to do something that will help them with the goal (for instance, teaching [Woman] how to use a particular computer program, or how to locate files on the network, or 2) linking them up with someone else who can do this." J.E.

"It is exciting to create and modify a team for a new job or assignment. You get to hand pick them for their expertise and desire to give them a place to be involved. I now have a team of 10 graphic savvy youth who are already doing great things in design for the Youth Dept. It is very easy to hold on to the way I think something should be designed or presented. Especially with art being my expertise. I want to give greater authority and freedom to the leaders in that group to feel comfortable with their ideas and production. Simple directions seem very broad in the scope of knowing exactly how you want something to look. I am no longer the designer. I am little of a leader anymore. I'm the one to offer support and answer questions.

If I can continually approach the team with simple goals and let them produce a project in their way, the more confidant they will become in their ability to run with an idea. They can begin to plan new methods and experiment. This approach is helpful to me because it accomplishes what is still needed, but done so completely by another's hand and not my own. It is truly making a place for people and giving confidence in what they are doing. The more I am learning to let go, the faster they are going to take off." D.C.

"I am pretty good at keeping people on task, but I think sometimes I lose sight of the goal along the way. My main job should be to remind people of what the goal is, and help them discover how what they are doing is (or isn't) lining up with that goal. Too often I'm stuck on making sure that they are proceeding forward with the task at hand.

In my meetings with one worker, I am too focused on helping him with <u>what</u> he is doing, and not enough on the <u>why</u>. Calls to significant people who could be helping him on an ongoing basis are only made when there is a panic situation that he needs their help. There is no ongoing intentional outreach or inclusion of this type of person in [Man's] job. Yet this is the <u>goal</u>. The bulk of my emphasis has been misplaced." T.M.

Trust people—not to be mistake-free, but to truly do their best with the understanding and tools they have. Trust is the single most significant factor predicting people's satisfaction with (and willingness to get involved with) an organization.

"This is both an easy AND a hard thing for me to keep in mind. I feel quick to hand things off to people. I am eager to build them up and believe more in them than they believe in themselves. And yet, I find myself carrying the burden of whatever they are doing—almost like I'm prepared for if they don't carry it all the way. I'm quick to receive people, but almost quicker to receive the burden back. I do want to be wise as a serpent and leave room for people to not carry something the whole way if they don't want to. But I don't want to live as though they never will.

Perhaps I need to get better at explaining the goal. Perhaps I need to get better at explaining what I'm looking for. Perhaps I need to better fit the job to the person. Whatever it is that I need to do, I'm ready to know it." H.M.

"I think that you do such a good job at this. I am always amazed at the things you give to people and then just tell them to go for it. This is probably why you are able to leave so often and, no offense, no one even knows that you are gone. I have a harder time with this, not necessarily because I feel that they will do a bad job at a certain project, but because I just think I should get it done myself." J.B.

For real estate, it is "Location, Location, Location." For church staff, it's, "Attitude, Attitude, Attitude." There is a world of difference between character, heart issues (pride, selfishness, resentment, fear, jealousy, etc.) and plain old mistakes and miscalculations. We all have both varieties. Address them differently in your workers' lives.

"When I was your assistant, I remember of you saying, 'There's no problem when someone does not understand something and needs help, as opposed to the one who is given instruction and just doesn't do it.' It never seemed acceptable growing up to 'not know how to do something.' I would spend vast amounts of time teaching myself things I ended up hating because it was such a headache trying to prove I could do it.

I've been able to see how it is 'my view' that has had to change in order to empower others to honestly make mistakes and for me to see that that they may need help. It doesn't make someone lazy 'because they haven't figured out how to do what they don't understand.' I would tend to consider that if someone had a bad attitude, wasn't a hard worker or just wanted others to do their work—they weren't pulling their weight.

I'm grateful to say it's been many years, but there have been times I ended up not asking this type of person to help me again and would look for others who had "my way" of thinking. I had error in my judgment; confusing honest mistakes with a bad attitude." T.M.

Staffing needs change often—*in response to new seasons and priorities* in your church.

"In section two, point eight of realizing need changes in response to new seasons, brings up the very same issue. Because of what appears to be lack of time, just when things seem to be moving toward being smooth, I will have volunteer changes, schedules conflicts, people no shows, etc. While understanding that all of this is normal, I never give myself over to the fact that it is God working in the lives of people, not me. Therefore, when things like that happen, I fail to trust and move to worry very fast. In my worry, I control." M.H.

"During staff lunch, I was reminded that it's a good time for [Woman] and I look at our volunteer overview. We planned strategically for the school year in terms of specific jobs that make CM run and the team of volunteers we have. However, I think it's a good time for us to look at who has been doing what, where we can bring in fresh people, an, where can we increase the level of what our current volunteers do. Because my role on staff has shifted, [Woman's] has, too. To look with new eyes and make space for the new people we believe will come our way, seems timely to do." A.P.