

TRANSFORMING CHURCH BOARDS

MAKING CHRIST'S MISSION THE CENTER

#3 in a series

INTERIM PASTOR MINISTRIES

**STRENGTHENING CHURCHES DURING PASTORAL TRANSITION FOR GREATER
EFFECTIVENESS**

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PREFACE

Once again, we want to thank Dennis Baker, David C. Fisher and John Vawter for their helpful work and research in the ministry of helping church boards be more Biblical and effective. This is the third manual in the series of writings they have done for Interim Pastor Ministries. We cannot thank them enough. This particular manual includes insightful conclusions from the survey they conducted with our trained interim pastors. Their research clearly informed us that most churches do not have an adequate recruiting and training program for their board members. Dennis, David and John not only discuss this challenging reality but give a terrific plan for recruiting and training Board members.

This manual will help the interim pastors who serve with Interim Pastor Ministries be more effective in their ministries with us. And, more importantly, the churches served by our ministry will be stronger and healthier.

Dr. Tom Harris, President
Interim Pastor Ministries

INTRODUCTION

Seventy interim pastors with varied experience in approximately 200 interim pastorates were gracious enough to give us their insights, wisdom and experience/stories in the context of a 20-question survey. The survey questions can be found in Section 2, page 31.

Their overall assessment is an interim pastorate is a very positive and faith-building journey. Respondents to the survey commented they find most board members open to change, want their churches to grow, want to grow personally, are humble, willing to learn and love God and His people.

It is not a pleasant subject but many respondents sadly mentioned church bosses, controlling board members and bullies. Respondents said this coincides with resistance to change, some members with personal agendas, pride, gossip and boards without purpose. The wise interim pastor will know how to deal with these issues—even though they are not easy issues.

Many of the respondents agreed on a number of key issues: interim pastors need to know who they are, their personality and leadership styles and how they deal or do not deal with conflict. Are they confrontational, do they work around the system, do they isolate and neutralize the bully, are they a crafty peacemaker or do they avoid conflict? These are important questions the interim pastor must ask himself and they cannot be minimized.

However, whether the experience is positive or negative the respondents agree overwhelmingly. Most churches they served or are serving have boards that do not have a cogent recruiting and training program, have boards that are not as effective as they could be. Also, they are unaware of the Biblical standards for boards and board members and are in need of training.

Furthermore, they told us boards and board transformations are absolutely central to the future of the church. Thus, board training is vital.

They also said listening is a necessary skill for transformational interim pastoral ministry. They added that the gift of discernment is not essential but that discernment only comes through listening. Discernment allows the interim pastor to accept the reality of the situation. If a board will not change the interim pastor must specifically identify what the board will not change. He will create limited objectives he wants to meet. He does what he can and sets up what is necessary for the full-time pastor when he arrives. To help the interim pastor in knowing how to transform the church board with which he is working, we have included a section below on listening.

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REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF MANUALS #1 AND #2

I. **Church Leadership: the Biblical Model – Ten Core Essentials (Manual #1, *Church Board Training Manual for Churches in Transition*)**

- A. The character and competence of lay leadership in the local church is foundational for healthy and growing congregations.
- B. The Ten Essentials of Biblical Leadership (See Manual #1, pp 6-22 for more details)
 - 1. Christlikeness
 - 2. Faith
 - 3. Honesty and Integrity
 - 4. Humility
 - 5. Unity of the Spirit
 - 6. Self-Awareness
 - 7. Kingdom Vision...Seeing the Big Picture
 - 8. Shepherd Leaders...Not Just Directors
 - 9. Clearly Defined Roles
 - 10. Communication, Communication, Communication
- C. Understanding and Teaching Biblical Leadership is Essential in Interim Pastor Ministry

II. **Unhealthy Church Boards: The Sad Reality (Manual #2, *Unhealthy Church Boards: Bringing Health to Unhealthy Churches*)**

- A. Working with the church board is central and essential in Interim pastor ministry.
 - 1. The Interim Pastor inherits the board of the church.
 - 2. Since interim ministry often takes place in divided, unhealthy congregations and the church board is often part of the problem, teaching, training and transforming the church board is vital to interim work.
 - 3. Unhealthy church boards come in a variety of shapes, sizes and dysfunctions.
 - 4. There at least twelve types of unhealthy church boards (See Manual #2, pp. 13-21 for more details). The twelve boards are:
 - a. The Board without Biblical Standards
 - b. The Dominating Pastor Board
 - c. The No Term Limits Board
 - d. The Untouchable Pastor Board
 - e. The Strong Teaching Pastor Board
 - f. The Passive and Ineffective Board
 - g. The Dominant Voice(s) Board
 - h. The No Unity Board
 - i. The Details Focused Board
 - j. The Post Conflict Board
 - k. The Disconnected Board
 - l. The Individualistic Board

- B. Knowing yourself and understanding the kind of board you are working with is critical in interim pastor ministry.

A CRITICAL NEXT STEP

This Manual (#3) is designed to assist an interim pastor move an unhealthy church board (and congregation) toward spiritual and corporate health. Such transformation is necessary interim pastoral work. Done in faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit, board transformation leads to dynamic and Spirit-led board work and increased congregational vitality.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH BOARD

The First Time with The Board After You Have Accepted the Position

Learn as much as you can about the board, its history and the individual members before you meet the board—but withhold all judgments until you meet the board.

Take the time to tell the board your ministerial experience, why you are an interim pastor, your life and ministerial experience and what you hope to accomplish and complete while you are with them.

Ask the board, “What things do you expect of me while I am with you?” And, ask, “What things do you think I expect of you while I am with you?”

Have each board member identify what they consider to be the #1 strength in the church.

Have each board member identify what they consider to be the #1 need in the church.

Explain that you will be leading a study on “God’s Way of Board Life.” The study grows out of the Bible and your ministerial experience. The board members will be studying and growing together.

Take the time to outline “God’s Way of Board Life” before you finish this first meeting. It would be good at this point to refer to Manual #1 and the “Ten Core Values” to give content to “God’s Way of Board Life.”

Have a concise summary of “God’s Way of Board Life” you can give to each person so they can read it on their own time. This becomes the accepted standard and board members will grow together as they learn the standard. They then begin to evaluate themselves and others against the standard.

Doing Board Ministry God’s Way Includes:

- a. a brotherhood
- b. growing together in spiritual maturity, humility and the unity of the Spirit
- c. helping one another grow in spiritual maturity
- d. having a shared vision for the church and its future
- e. having shared goals for the church
- f. mutual ministry
- g. discerning God's will for the church and its leadership. It is important that people not come to the board hoping to establish their will – instead of thinking about discerning God's will.

After the Meeting with the Entire Board

Meet privately with the chair to discuss “God’s Way of Board Life” and discern how much of it is being accepted and practiced at present.

Meet with each board member privately. Ask each member why they are on the board. This is a good way to get the perspective and understanding of board life from each member without being pushy, creating anxiety or having anyone sense they are being judged. Ask what their personal ministry is.

Determine, by asking, what training the church provided for them to be on this board. If it is insufficient be respectful and explain that the board needs more training. If there is good material in their previous training, then work it into your training.

Determine, by asking, if there is a cogent, compelling, faith-stretching vision for the church; do the board members understand it, agree with it and support it?

Meet weekly with the chair to assess how the training is going and important general matters of the church.

The Necessary Attitude for Interim Pastoral Ministry

Assume the best of each of the board members as you begin your interim pastoral ministry. The Apostle Paul wrote that “love hopes the best.” Assume people are on the board because they love Christ, love His church, want what is best for the church and want the church’s ministry to impact its Jerusalem.

Be realistic that some of the board members might have a solid amount of leadership experience on boards in industry and the community but might not understand and know how to conduct church board ministry God’s way.

Be aware of yourself as the interim pastor. Do you have discernment? Do you dislike conflict? Are you too quick to be critical? Are you too quick to make judgments on people? It is important to practice taking the log out of our own eye first. It is possible the interim pastor’s need for growth could color his perspective as he meets the board.

For example, we know of situations where the pastor did not like to confront; so, he did not confront when it was needed. This does untold damage to the church and the board as well as the ministry. Consider the Apostle Paul confronting Peter “to his face.” There is no misunderstanding here that Paul wanted things to be right and was insisting they be right.

It is important to accept the fact not all board members are motivated by the Spirit of God and do not seek the unity of the Spirit. Sadly, the interim pastor must deal with such people. Kevin DeYoung discusses this in a great but short article on pages 58-59 of Manual #2.

If you see a difficult person ascertain if he is a “problem or a project.” Most would be the latter. The interim pastor must be careful not to judge motives. The interim pastor cannot know the heart and motives of another person. The difficult person probably wants the very best for the church—it is just that he or she is going about it in the wrong way; they do not know how to do ministry God’s way. Just as the one who does not like to confront and will not

confront does damage to the church so the one who judges and confronts too quickly does damage as well.

Discernment is important. Know your “discernment quotient.” Jesus said we are to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”

The Commitment One Must Have as He Begins the Interim Pastoral Responsibilities

Determine what changes need to be made to the board during the time of interim ministry to prepare the way for the new pastor’s ministry. Share this vision with the chair first, then the entire board. Prioritize those changes and work on them in sequence.

Recognize that personality and leadership styles will affect how the training goes and how productive it is. Help the board members understand how their styles both help and hinder their living by faith. They also help and hinder the board and church relative to growth.

A Review of Thoughts Shared Here

“God’s Way of Board Life” is a necessity to do God’s will in His church. God’s design for board life requires spiritual maturity, training of the board and a humble, teachable attitude on the part of board members. Creating this type of environment can be challenging but it is most rewarding. And, it is necessary for the church to follow God’s mission into the future.

LEARNING THE VALUE OF LISTENING

“Be quick to listen and slow to speak...” the Apostle James writes in James 1:19. Proverbs 18:13 says, “If one gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.” Because listening is a Biblical commandment we should follow it without question. But, in reality, most, if not all, of us would admit we do not listen as well or as often as we should. Dr. Barry Campbell says we should “Listen to understand.” Paul Tillich’s words, “The first duty of love is to listen” are challenging and help us understand the importance of listening.

There are some solid reasons for listening well as it relates to board health. One long-time board member told us: “When others talk, I do not listen but am formulating my response. I have been asked later what I thought of what ‘Jack’ said and have had to confess that I had not listened and had no idea what ‘Jack’ said. I realize this is a real problem for me and a spiritual weakness I need to correct.” In spite of this man’s love for God and his love for the church, his lack of listening is not helping the board on which he serves hear God’s voice. As Steven Covey says, “Seek first to understand. Then to be understood.”

The ability to listen is a key component of helping train a board. Listening is not only a commandment (“Be quick to listen...” James 1:19) but it is an expression of love, servanthood and selflessness. Furthermore, listening allows the interim pastor to discern behaviors (Godly or ungodly) of board members. That discernment helps the interim pastor know how the board as a group will respond to training, growing and becoming more effective for the Kingdom of God. Specifically, the power of listening allows understanding of the situation which affords the interim pastor the insights of knowing how to proceed in training the board—especially when there are difficult and intractable people on the board.

And, boards that have members who know how and are willing to listen to one another function more smoothly, have more unity, have a clearer understanding of how God is speaking to them and they have more unity of the Spirit. Thus, listening is not only for the interim pastor but also the board with which he is serving.

The Wisdom of Listening

- *Listening reflects the Golden Rule.*
- *All healthy relationships require and are a consequence of listening.*
- *Discernment requires listening.*
- *Making a good decision requires listening.*
- *Board unity requires listening.*
- *Solid leadership requires listening.*
- *Listening requires slowing down and focusing on the other person.*
- *Expressing concern requires listening.*
- *Listening allows the interim pastor to understand the culture of the board and church he is serving.*

- *Listening to God as a board requires us to listen to one another.*
- *Listening is to “Prefer one another in love” and “consider others as more important than yourself.” (Romans 12:10 and Philippians 1:3)*

Review on the Value of Listening

“Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.”

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html> (More wisdom on listening from Dr. Robert Kelleman and Dr. James Kok is found in Section 2, Pages 35 and 36.)

EVALUATING PAST BOARD TRAINING

It is most important the interim pastor know as much as he can about the level of (or, lack of) training board members received before they joined the board and after they joined the board. This information will give the interim pastor insights into the level of maturity he sees on the board. Observing the interaction, deliberations, discussion and prayers in board meetings will also give insights. These insights will also help him know how much board training he must do during his interim pastor ministry.

Some simple and straightforward questions will help the interim pastor get many of these insights. The interim pastor will want to add his own questions but here are our suggestions. It is also suggested these questions be asked early in the process at a board meeting or retreat—either by written questions or open discussion. The written questions assure that all board members answer all questions. If the interim pastor chooses to ask the questions in a group setting, he must make certain every person has ample opportunity to respond to every question. Following are important questions to ask the board members:

1. Did you fill out an application or questionnaire before joining the board?
2. Was there a Biblical explanation of what a church board is and what it does?
3. Was there an explanation of how this board serves and helps lead your church?
4. Was there an explanation of how your board functions?
5. Was there an explanation of behavior that is expected from board members?
6. Since you became a board member has there been any board training? If yes, what did it entail?
7. Do you think board members in your church are adequately and effectively prepared for the task before they join the board? Please explain.
8. Do you think the ongoing training of board members—if there is such training—adequately prepares board members for the increasing demands of ministry and board life?

This information will give many insights to the interim pastor. It will explain why the board functions as it does. The information will help the interim pastor know how to prepare the church leadership for the church's next chapter of ministry.

A BIBLICAL MODEL OF BOARD LEADERSHIP

1. The Necessity of Church Leadership
 - a. From the beginning God has used leaders to accomplish His purpose in the world.
 - i. Abraham formed the people of God.
 - ii. Moses led the people of God in a movement that formed a nation: Israel.
 - iii. King David led the nation to be God's instrument in that world.
 - iv. Jesus' entire life was laser-focused on moving God's mission forward.
 - v. Jesus' Apostles led the early church to move God's mission forward.
 - vi. Paul moved God's mission from an ethnic minority to a worldwide movement.
 - b. The Church needs qualified, effective leaders to move God's mission forward. Two prominent church leaders from the past said:
 - i. "Everything rises or falls on leadership."
 - ii. "Leadership is the hope of the church."
2. The Reality of Church Leadership
 - a. The New Testament mandates qualified, effective leaders for church ministry.
 - i. Teams of qualified, effective leaders called by God and the congregation to move the mission of God forward (1 Tim. 5:17).
 - ii. Leaders of specific character (1 Tim. 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:13; 2 Tim. 2:23-25).
 - iii. Leaders of spiritual wisdom and discernment (Acts 6:3; 15:28).
 - iv. Leaders who work in unity, teamwork and integrity (Acts 15:28).
 - b. Aubrey Malphurs says in **Leading Leaders**:
 - i. Most churches are governed by lay leaders called to move God's people toward God's mission.
 - ii. However, most church boards are not effective in leading their congregation toward spiritual health or fulfilling God's call to mission.
 - iii. Most churches do not train board members to be effective leaders.
 - iv. Most churches do not have a Biblical leadership paradigm to which they aspire.
3. The Interim Period is an Excellent Opportunity for Board Transformation and Training
 - a. Teach the Biblical paradigm of leadership.
 - b. Study Biblical leaders and the pattern of leadership in the Bible.
 - c. Focus on Jesus as leader.
 - i. Note His laser-focus on God's mission He came to accomplish.
 - ii. Note His decision to invest in the next generation who would take up His cause (Matthew 28:18; Acts 1:8).
 - iii. Note His devotion to training His disciples to lead His mission (Luke 22:24-30; Matthew 18:15-20).

- iv. Note He trusted His disciples with God's mission and His message (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-23).
- d. Determine a list of leadership principles for the board to embrace.
 - i. Leadership begins by loving God, neighbor, Jesus and His Church.
 - ii. Leaders and boards focus on moving God's mission forward.
 - iii. Leaders and boards discern God's vision for their congregation to move God's mission forward.
 - iv. Leaders and boards lead with humble dependence on God and spiritual discernment (2 Tim. 2:23-26; Prov. 16:5, 18-19).
 - v. Leaders and boards commit to integrity by continuing evaluation and faithful accountability to God, each other and the congregation. Boards should continually ask:
 - 1. Are we moving God's mission forward?
 - 2. Are our meetings mission-driven?
 - 3. Are we faithfully loving and nurturing the congregation given to our care?
 - 4. Are we walking in the unity and the power of the Holy Spirit?
 - 5. Are we growing in our faith as individuals and as a board?

BIBLICAL GOVERNANCE AND CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Helpful resources: Dan Hotchkiss, **Governance and Ministry**; Aubrey Malphurs, **Leading Leaders**.

It is generally agreed that boards, whether secular or church, do not function well. Too often board members do not understand their role as leaders or the proper function of a board. It is also clear that many churches needing interim pastoral ministry do not have effective or efficient boards. In fact, boards lie at the center of dysfunctional church life encountered by interim pastors.

Hence, the interim period is a critical opportunity for board evaluation, transformation and training. Following is an outline for training and reform of a church board.

1. Effective leadership is essential for healthy and effective church life.
 - a. Leadership in the Old Testament: Moses and his team of leaders (Exodus 18:1-27)
 - b. Leadership in the New Testament and early church.
 - i. Acts 6:1-6; 15:6-35 – Discernment, oversight and strategy by apostolic leaders.
 - ii. 1 Timothy 5:17 – Leaders entrusted with oversight: leading and teaching the church.
 - c. Leadership in the contemporary church.
 - i. Effective churches are well-led churches.
 - ii. Churches without effective pastoral and board leadership wither and die.
 - iii. As was mentioned earlier, “Everything rises or falls on leadership.”
2. Leadership in the contemporary church lies primarily in boards.
 - a. Definition of a board (Malphurs) “two or more spiritually qualified leaders entrusted with and responsible for the life of a congregation.” (See Manual #1, pp. 6-24, “Ten Core Essentials”.)
 - b. The church board, with the pastoral staff, is given authority and tools to GOVERN GOVERN GOVERN the affairs of the church.
 - c. Congregations and board must delineate the board authority and clearly describe the responsibilities of board and church staff.
3. This governance function of the church board is Biblical, necessary and essential to healthy church life.
4. Unhealthy church boards do not function effectively and, therefore, frustrate the work of God (See Manual #2, pp. 13-22, “Twelve Board Scenarios and Specific Strategies....”).
5. Interim pastoral ministry is an opportunity for evaluating, transforming and training the church board.
6. Transformation begins by putting first things first.

- a. The church doesn't have a mission; the mission has a church. That mission must lie at the center of the life of the church and is the heart of board work.
 - b. At its most basic, the mission of the church is changed lives (Matthew 28:18, the Great Commission).
 - i. When the Holy Spirit touches a life, nothing remains the same.
 - ii. The work of the board is to ensure that nothing gets in the way of changed lives.
 - iii. The board must continually evaluate how it is moving the mission forward in order to focus their work and remove any obstacle that gets in the way of fulfilling God's mission. The board must always especially beware of "sacred cows" and/or traditions in the congregation and the board – and remove them.
 - c. A leadership board will discern how their congregation will move God's mission forward – their church vision – but the larger mission must always lie at the center of the church's life. The board and its vision for the church are accountable to and controlled by God's great mission for the church.
 - d. The basic job of the board is to hold in trust the assets of the church, persons and property, in order to accomplish God's mission in lives and the world. The board exists to move the mission forward.
 - e. Therefore, both the congregation and the board must be "owned" by the mission of the church.
7. The job of the board is to move the mission forward.
- a. Oversight of the work of the church in the service of the mission.
 - b. Strategy for mission. Programs, staff, initiatives that move the mission forward.
 - c. The board must consistently remind itself and the congregation what the primary mission of the church is.
8. Effective boards do not let unessential or non-missional issues distract from its central task. Effective boards consistently evaluate their work and are not afraid to ask hard questions. Every board should be committed to the following:
- a. Create a board covenant and be accountable to it. (See Manual #2, pp. 50-56 for sample Board Covenants.)
 - b. Delegate all work that keeps focus off the essential mission.
 - c. Hold all committee and programs accountable to the mission.
 - d. Develop "big picture" thinking: discernment, oversight and strategy in the service of God's mission in the church and the world.
 - e. Develop an organized process to recruit and train new board members.
 - f. Constantly review the proper role and function of the board.
 - g. Delegate non-missional issues to appropriate staff, volunteers, committees/task forces. Hold them accountable to serve the mission.
9. Board meetings are opportunities to focus, strategize, envision, and make decisions on behalf of God's mission in the church and the world. FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS.

BOARD TRAINING DURING THE INTERIM PASTORATE

1. Church leadership and board work in the church are different from the corporate world. Board members need to be “trained” in the art and skill of church board leadership, which among other things includes faith, hope and prayer. Perhaps the most important difference between corporate governance and church board leadership is the task of discernment. Boards exist to discern God’s will for the congregation and how the board will lead the church toward moving God’s mission for that church forward. Church board members must listen to Scripture, listen to the voices of other board members, listen to the voice of the congregation and, above all, listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. (See Manual #2, p. 41 for a larger discussion of discernment.)
2. All church boards need continual training:
 - a. Leaders are learners.
 - b. All leaders and church boards have room for improvement. No board or leader has ever reached their full potential.
 - c. Leaders and boards face the danger of lethargy, self-satisfaction, commitment to traditions and inward focus.
 - d. Church boards and leaders tend to lose sight of the mission and vision of the church.
 - e. Board meetings tend to degenerate into management details and members lose sight of the big picture.
3. Use the first 10-15 minutes of the board meeting for ongoing training and refocusing on the mission and vision. This training is essential interim pastor work. Plan an organized learning schedule of the following:
 - a. Evaluation
 - i. Consider the mission and vision of the church. How are we doing? For instance, is the youth or children’s ministry focused on and accomplishing the mission?
 - ii. Consider the board meetings: are we focused, productive and moving God’s mission forward?
 - iii. Consider the board members: are each of us growing, vital and walking in the unity of the Spirit?
 - b. Board Competencies (We are indebted to Aubrey Malphurs, **Leading Leaders**, Ch. 12, for much of the following material.)
 - i. The Character of the Christian Leader (soul work)
 1. The Content of Christian Character
 - a. Matthew 5:3-11 – The Beatitudes.
 - b. Galatians 5:22-23 – The Fruit of the Spirit.
 2. The Specific Character of a Church Leader
 - a. Elder qualifications – 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:2.

- b. Elder audit: how are you/we doing? Growing toward the mission or static?
 - 3. The Behavior of the Christian leader – 2 Timothy 2:2, esp. 2:23-24
 - ii. The Leader’s Knowledge (head work)
 - 1. Biblical knowledge about the church, ministry, role of leaders, and pastoral leadership.
 - 2. Contemporary knowledge about church trends, peer churches, and our church.
 - 3. Knowledge about the church’s founding documents, guiding documents, mission, vision and policies.
 - 4. Knowledge of the congregation’s Jerusalem and its culture.
 - iii. The Leader’s Skills (handwork)
 - 1. Vision casting, discernment, strategic planning, problem-solving.
 - 2. People skills, listening, empathy, conflict resolution, creative thinking.
 - iv. The Leader’s Emotions (heart work)
 - 1. See the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), especially self-control.
 - 2. The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11), especially peacemaking.
 - 3. Self-awareness and other awareness.
 - 4. The ability to intuit and interpret one’s environment and culture.
 - 5. Note: the leadership’s mood will permeate the congregation.
- 4. The interim pastor needs to build a training program that fits his personality, his leadership style and his teaching style. What follows is a brief and suggested outline that would cover the 12 monthly training sessions for the first year. Since most interim pastorates last 18-24 months it is important to see the first year of training as teaching Biblical and leadership principles and see the second year as a time of action and implementation.
 - Month 1: Lead a Bible study on Acts 6 and 15, 1 Timothy 3 and 5 and Titus 1. Call attention to the distribution of responsibilities and qualifications for membership on a church board.
 - Month 2: Study and discuss the Core Essentials 1-5 in Manual #1 (summarized on page 4 of this manual). Have the board members evaluate how they are doing and discuss where they can improve. Start developing a Board Covenant.
 - Month 3: Study and discuss the Core Essentials 6-10 in Manual #1 (summarized on page 4 of this Manual). Have the board members evaluate how they are doing and discuss where they can improve.
 - Month 4: Lead a study on the unity of the Spirit from Ephesians 4. Have the board members evaluate how they are doing and discuss areas where they can improve.

- Month 5: Lead a study and discussion on listening as outlined earlier in this manual. Have the board members evaluate themselves and each other relative to being good listeners. Ask for permission to stop the meeting and tell “Jack” that he did not listen well to what was just said. Ask the board members how they can become better listeners as individuals and as a group.
- Month 6: Discuss scenarios 1-6 of the Twelve Scenarios in Manual #2 (summarized on page 4 of this Manual). Ask the board members to be candid in evaluating if any of these scenarios are part of how they conduct their meetings and behave toward one another. If so, how can they improve?
- Month 7: Discuss scenarios 7-12 of the Twelve Scenarios in Manual #2 (summarized on page 4 of this Manual). Ask the board members to be candid in evaluating if any of these scenarios are part of how they conduct their meetings and behave toward one another. If so, how can they improve training of the board?
- Month 8: Do training in personality/leadership styles so the board members know who they are, their tendencies, weaknesses and strengths and know the same about the other board members. Be prepared to talk to other interim pastors to see what training tools they have developed and are using. (See Section 2 for one useful tool.)
- Month 9: Know the uniqueness of the size of church you are serving based on Lyle Schaller’s “Cats, Collies and Ranches” which is on Page 26. In this discussion be sure to include “The Life Cycle of Too Many Churches” which is on Page 23.
- Month 10: Describe and have the board members finalize the Board Covenant. Ask everyone to affirm and sign it. Agree that it will become part of board commitments going into the future.
- Month 11: Have a job description that explains the role and responsibilities of both staff and board members.
- Month 12: Build a “wrap up” teaching/study time of the highlights—in your mind—of the first 11 sessions. Teach and discuss your thoughts with the board members.

MOVING BOARDS TOWARD MISSIONAL THINKING

We distinguish between mission (Matthew 28) and vision (i.e., Paul's strategy to fulfill the mission to the world, including local churches and their involvement in their Jerusalem as part of the larger mission). To help clarify this important distinction one could say the mission is God's great mission and our vision is applying His mission to our setting. No matter how we express it there is only one mission and it precedes, controls and defines the many visions and ways of fulfilling the mission.

Big Picture Thinking is “Jesus Thinking”

In Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus was very clear about what the church is to be doing when He said, “Go and make disciples of all the nations.” Therefore, the central reason any church exists is this grand mission – God’s mission in the world. The church, by definition, is a people engaged in God’s mission.

In Acts 1:8 before He returned to the Father and as He talked about the role of the Holy Spirit in ministry, Jesus was very explicit about the extent of His mission— in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world. It is clear that each church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, must decide what its particular vision as part of God’s larger mission might be and apply that missional thinking to their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

We are not saying all churches will have the same vision--goals and strategies – in response to the larger mission. In other words, each church needs to ask, “What is our address?” and how does that affect our thinking about our mission in the world. When a church knows its “address” it understands its Jerusalem relative to population, people groups, etc. Too often we see churches that have no sense of their “address” because they have never allowed the Spirit to lead them in obedience to Jesus’ command. Interim pastors motivate and help churches to consider why the Holy Spirit planted them where they are and how they should move forward to evangelize and make disciples in that area. Dr. Yves Johnson in his doctoral dissertation research noted that if vision does not include faith and hope, it is not vision.

When churches have a very clear and cogent sense of mission – and an equally compelling local application of that mission (that church’s unique vision) – the church is an exciting place. Missional thinking is powerfully motivating. Board meetings are exciting. Staff meetings are exciting. Congregational meetings are exciting. This excitement happens because everyone senses they are honored to be part of something significant and eternal. In such a ministry there are no insignificant people because everyone has an essential role to play to help fulfill the vision. We encourage the interim pastor to lead the board in a study of Spiritual gifts (Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12) and Christ’s gifts (Ephesians 4). Spiritual gift inventories may be helpful for the church that does not have an understanding of how they function in a local church. (See Section 2, Page 38 for the information on one very good Spiritual gifts inventory.)

Furthermore, vision needs leadership. For example, a friend was asked to speak at the very first chapel service of the National Association of County Commissioners. The chair introduced Bill Hansell, who introduced the speaker. The chair said of Bill, “We have had the vision for this chapel service for many years. But until Bill joined us we did not have the leadership to establish the chapel services.” Thus, vision without leadership does not get accomplished.

The Board Has a Most Important Role in This Type of Exciting Ministry

As boards follow Jesus, they do not let unessential or non-missional issues detract from the church’s central task. This requires the board to develop the discipline of missional thinking. It is the responsibility of leaders in any organization (church or secular) to keep the focus on the purpose, goals, objectives and mission of the organization. As was written on page 15 in *Governance and Ministry*, “Effective boards do not let unessential or non-essential issues distract from its central task.”

In the church there are a number of reasons why the way is lost and the big picture of the mission is lost. In many cases it is good people bringing ideas and possibilities that distort the vision by distorting the focus on the agreed upon direction of the church. Thus, the key leaders must own and agree on the specifics of the vision and goals and say “no” to any idea—good or bad—that would move the church away from its Spirit-led purpose.

It is important to establish an orientation for new church attendees and members. This meeting would clearly spell out the church’s priorities in mission, vision and ministry. This is not a membership class. Rather, it helps people decide whether or not they want to be a part of where the church is headed. Board members should be involved in this presentation. As someone once said, “The bus driver knows the route the bus is going. We must decide if we are going to get on the bus or not get on the bus. But, no matter our decision we need to stay out of the way of the bus.”

Sam Rainer affirms this most important principle from a different point of view. He writes there are warning signs a church is drifting from God’s mission. These signs include talking about people and not Jesus, God’s mission is no longer celebrated as part of worship, church leaders do not talk about the lost and new believers are seen as disturbing the peace. (Sam Rainer, “8 Warning Signs Your Church Is Drifting from God’s Mission” November 4, 2020, in *Church Answers* by Thom Rainer). Being aware of such warning signs, recognizing them and knowing how to deal with them are facets of the responsibility of the board. The wise interim pastor will be training the board in this area.

Every Church Has a Level of Faith/Vision – The Interim Pastor Must Discover It

What is the level of faith/vision of the former pastor on a 1-10 scale? How compelling was his commitment to significant ministry? What is the level of faith/vision of the board as individuals and as a whole? Do people join the board with a faith/vision for the church’s ministry? Is

Christ's mission of the church and the local church's role in that mission understood by people before they join the board? What is the level of faith/vision of the interim pastor?

Sadly, churches often lose sight of the big picture – God's mission and their vision of how to do that mission – in the press of day-to-day church business. Mission and vision must be kept at the forefront of church leadership and church life or the church can wither and die. In fact, churches have a predictable "life cycle."

The Principle of Life Cycles of Church Ministry

Churches have life cycles. An important part of the interim pastor's ministry is to help the church board and the transition committee realize where the church is in that life cycle—and help the board decide what it wants to do about it. The "Life Cycle of Too Many Churches" on page 23 is from page 3 of Interim Pastor Ministries "Training and Resource Manual." It has a solid discussion and explanation of a church's life cycle. We commend these insights and wisdom to the interim pastor and encourage him to use them to instruct and prepare the board for the next chapter of the church's ministry.

Note: This reality informs church leadership of the essential profile of PastorNext.

The Interim Pastor Ministries trainers wisely say relative to the Life Cycles graph:

1. Innovation in ministry often causes some people to leave.
2. The church board and transition committee often put a church on the left side of the graph while the staff often put it on the right side.
3. It is the responsibility of the interim pastor to discern where the church is and get the board and staff on the same page.
4. It is also important for the pastor, the board and the transition committee to discern what needs to be done regarding its place in the life cycle and if, necessary, determine what needs to be done to begin a new life cycle.

Building the Missional Mentality and Vision

1. Test the Spirit to make sure no ego or human "kingdom building" are involved.
2. Understand the church leadership is prayerfully looking for God's mission, vision and purpose for the church.
3. Understand He has the freedom to lead each church differently.
4. Always be motivated by what Jesus said in Matthew 28 and Acts 1:8.
5. Ask yourselves, "What is our address?" For example, a church cannot say part of its Jerusalem is a community many miles away. Rather, think through normal boundaries, travel patterns, school districts, etc. in determining your Jerusalem. We know of one church that did it by their zip code. We know another which did it by a river to the north, a freeway to the east, a different people group/different language to the west and a freeway to the south. We think of one veteran interim pastor who helped a church understand and know its "address." Before his arrival the board leadership had

no sense of natural geographical borders that made its Jerusalem obvious, did not know the number of residents in that area, did not know the demographic profile of the area and did not have any clear sense of how to minister to the people in the area. Interestingly (and probably tragically), the church did not reflect the demographic profile of its Jerusalem.

6. Use one of the fine research ministries which can tell you how many people are in your Jerusalem, who they are (married, single, single parent, nationality, language, etc.) and then gear ministry to reaching them.
7. Never lose sight of the fact that Jesus talked about talents. Some of us are 1-talent people, some are 3-talent people, and some are 10-talent people. So it is with churches. If your church is a 3-talent church then do not pretend you are a 10-talent church. Be realistic in setting your goals.
8. Teach from the Bible on this subject so people who have grown comfortable or come to the church for social reasons will understand that Christ's commands and wishes are going to be followed—not their personal purposes or preferences for the church.
9. Begin to pray regularly and publicly for the people and people groups in your Jerusalem.
10. Celebrate conversions to Christ and baptism of new believers.
11. Ask God for “entry points” into the “Jerusalem.” Churches are being led to be very creative in building relationships with people to lead to conversations about Christ. If people do not know us then they probably will not trust us to talk to them about eternal matters.
12. Be aware of and practice the “Six Steps to Helping People Find Their Way to Maturity in Christ.” (See in Section 2, Page 37.)
13. Do not grow comfortable. This is not a game or a hype job. This is spiritual warfare and the enemy of our souls is not pleased with such visionary and big thinking.

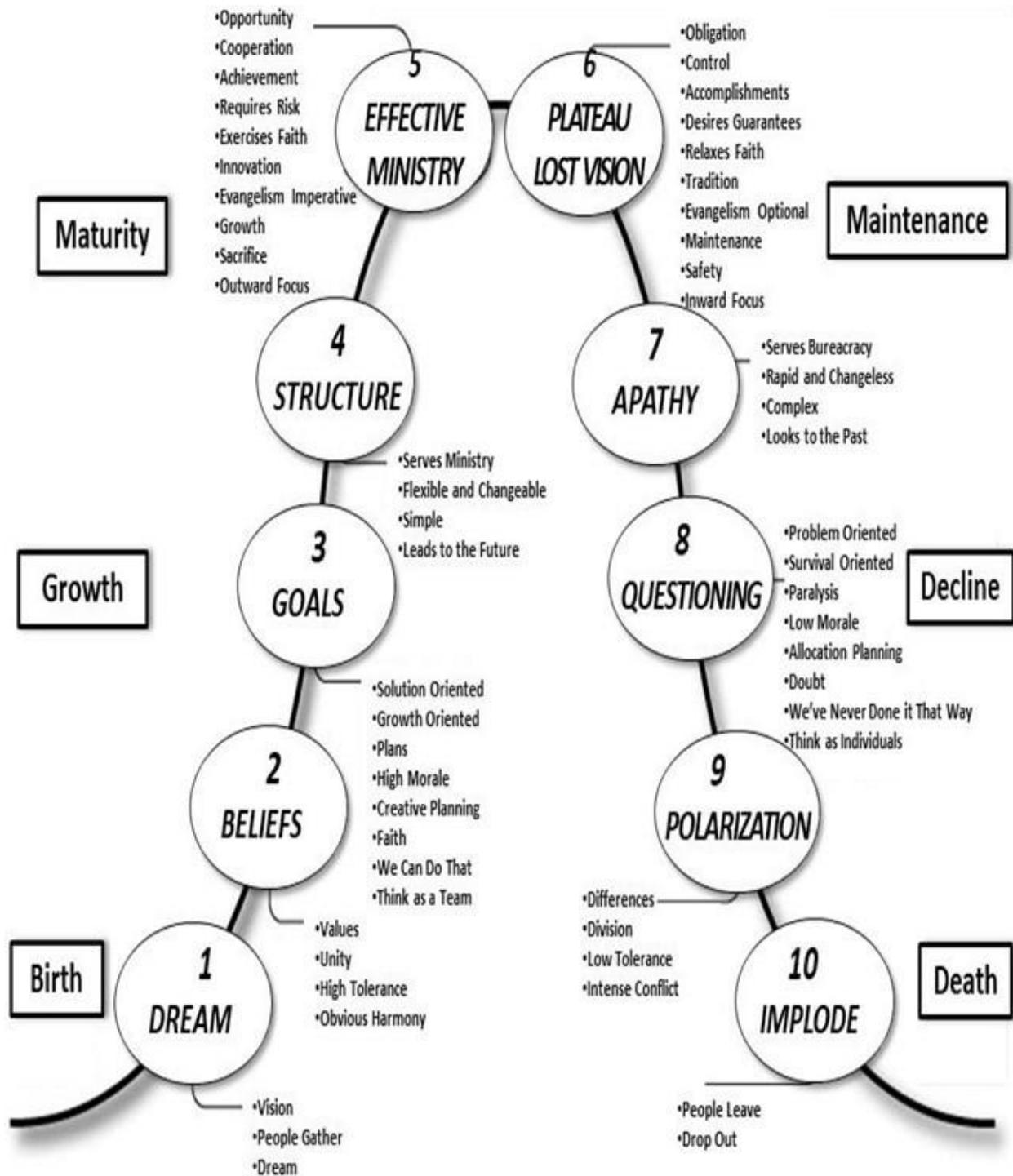
The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 14:23, “That which is not of faith is sin” and Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” As Steve Douglass, the former president of CRU said, “If we can do it in our own power then it is not of faith.” So, we must be honest – the “Missional Thinking” – vision and goals have to be significant enough that we cannot accomplish them in our own power.

It is incumbent on the board to realize one of its key responsibilities is to make sure the lead pastor is the chief motivator in keeping the church on track relative to the mission and goals the leadership believes God has given to them. Thus, part of every annual evaluation of the lead pastor is to evaluate how he is doing in this area of his responsibility.

Also, the board continually has to be aware of itself to make sure it does not get bogged down in detail and lose sight of the mission the Spirit has set before it.

Finally, it is most important that leadership not coerce people into this kind of missional/visionary thinking. This has to become a natural and honest way of life for the church. Coercion is not of the Spirit of God.

THE LIFE CYCLES OF TOO MANY CHURCHES



DEVELOPING BOARD RECRUITMENT

WHAT TO DO BEFORE SOMEONE BECOMES A BOARD MEMBER

1. Under the leadership of the interim pastor the board members and staff members will create a list of people with the potential to be on the church board.
2. The staff and board members should discuss each person mentioned. But, the discussion is just a “yes” or “no” discussion. There is no arguing, politicking or breaking of confidential information. For example, suppose “Joe” came to Pastor Jack to ask advice about a struggling marriage. No one but Pastor Jack knows that. So, when “Joe’s” name is raised and Pastor Jack says, “No,” that ends the discussion on “Joe.” Board members and pastors must trust one another in this situation.
3. It must be understood at this juncture no commitment is being made on the part of anyone. Names of people are just being brought forward and being considered. There is to be no one-on-one talking to potential board members. This is a group dynamic at this point.
4. Once the discussion has been completed, individuals are assigned to meet individually with the potential candidates. It is suggested the board member or pastor take along a letter (everyone gets the same one) that explains what is happening, the process, the need for the person to consider and pray about the issue and take a prescribed amount of time to make a decision.

The letter (of which there is a copy of a suggested letter in Section 2, Page 34) will explain:

- a. The process.
 - b. The compliment that people think this person could be a positive board member.
 - c. There will be 3-4 “teaching” sessions for the potential board members with the interim pastor where he will give an overview of what the Bible says about board leadership, what being on the board of this church means and the process for choosing board members. People are encouraged to attend all 3-4 meetings; but, if for some reason during the process a person realizes they are not interested or have no potential to be a board member or have no interest then they can graciously step out of the process. (See suggested teaching outline below.)
 - d. The potential candidates will sit in board meetings for 3-6 months. All is confidential. At the end of the 3-6-month time frame each person will have to decide before God if they want to be considered as a candidate for board membership.
5. This process should not just happen when board members are needed. Rather, it should be happening regularly so a good pool of potential candidates is always at the ready and the word is spread that being a board member at this church is a very serious

spiritual matter. It is imperative that persons have to be screened, trained and qualified. It is a very humbling, growing and holy responsibility.

6. The following is the outline one church used. The 3-4 recruiting/teaching sessions should be a process with which the interim pastor is comfortable. He might want to build his own curriculum or modify the suggested curriculum here. We strongly urge that each session not last more than one hour. As much teaching as possible should be taken from Manuals #1, 2 and 3 to introduce an ongoing resource to each individual.

Session 1

- Explain that a leader in the church is impressed with each of these individuals enough to recommend them for this training. This is a high compliment. Help them understand that.
- Teach on Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3 and what these verses say about board life.

Session 2

- Explain teamwork—relative to growth, humility, faith, vision and the ability to minister to people.
- Explain the difference between the responsibilities of a secular board and a God-honoring board.

Session 3

- As best you can, talk about the value of this church and its vision, future ministry and areas where it needs to change and grow.
- As best you can, explain the process for choosing board members at this church.
- Explain the longevity of terms on this board.

Session 4

- Explain the pattern of authority with the lead pastor relating to the board but all staff members relating to the lead pastor and not to the board. Explain how the board members relate to the church and church members and minister to them.

TRAINING TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE IN THE SIZE OF CONGREGATIONS

CATS, COLLIES AND RANCHES BY LYLE SCHALLER

Lyle Schaller helps us understand the distinctives of church life based on size in his “Cats, Collies and Ranches” study. Each church has a name and characteristics based on its size. The interim pastor is well-advised to know the characteristics of the church he is serving to help him understand it better. These insights will help him as he prepares the church for its next chapter. “Former Pastor” and “Board Realities” are not from Schaller. They are our insights.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Former pastor</u>	<u>Board Realities</u>
Cat	0-40	No leadership No plan Much independence	Not strong leader Church boss often is present	Often “boss” in control His money is crucial Interim pastor must help them find God’s will not boss’ will
Collie	40-100	Three questions only: Pastor, do you love us? Pastor, do you really love us? Pastor, will you always love us?	High on kindness and acceptance	Group of kind people Relationships more important than growth Interim pastor will help them accept lack of growth
Garden	100-175	Organization begins Rows are planned Rows are planted Sensitivity to differences	Solid leader Reached level of competency Left for other opportunity	Some board members have leadership and vision capabilities Interim pastor can help them admit need for growth and equipping of saints
House	175-250	Owner cannot do all the work Specialists are called in Delegation happens	Probably very similar to Garden pastor	Some board members want to grow Interim pastor helps them understand the Mansion church He helps them decide if they are willing to make changes

Mansion	250-450	Strangers at dinner More organization	Solid leader Delegated to staff	Interim pastor will explain roles, rules and relationships He helps board understand it cannot micromanage He helps them believe for a greater vision
Ranch	450-700	Foremen are hired Managers are hired A major change happens at this point	Good leader and recruiter Trains others	Interim pastor helps board understand roles, rules and relationships for board and staff Helps board understand next pastor will be strong leader and a visionary
Nation	700 plus	Lots of talent Create own ministries Pastors recruit, train, deploy and manage Decisions are spread out More make small decisions No one knows and controls the entire church	An outstanding leader	Interim pastor will train board in realities of large church He will help board not succumb to realities of the church life cycles He will explain the reality of next pastor being outstanding leader.

Lyle Schaller discusses these concepts in greater detail in his book, "Looking in The Mirror: Self-Appraisal in The Local Church" by Abingdon Press

TRAINING TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE IN LEADERSHIP STYLES STYLES OF PERSONALITY AND LEADERSHIP

When we study the Apostle Paul and the 11 disciples who remained with Jesus, we see some distinct personalities. There is no right or wrong. It is not their family environment shaping children’s personalities; it is how God made them. And, it is how God made us.

As followers of Christ and particularly as board members it is important to know who we are, how one’s style often works against faith-living, growing in Christ and obedience to Christ and how we all need to grow in the image of Christ. Every personality and leadership style has strengths and weaknesses.

Dr. David Merrill’s “Personal Styles and Effective Performance” system has been used in many church settings to help boards and staff. Dr. Merrill explains four styles and their strengths and weaknesses. We have added to his study by suggesting how each style has to move closer to Christ and how each style has to be aware of the others for a board to grow in faith, humility, holiness and the unity of the Spirit. (There are other inventories such as the Meyers-Briggs, DISC, Enneagram, Clifton StrengthsFinder, etc. Use the one with which you are most comfortable.)

<u>Analytical</u>	<u>Driver</u>	<u>Amiable</u>	<u>Expressive</u>
<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Strengths</u>
Detailed oriented	Leader	Relational	Likes people
Obedient	Visionary	Peaceful	Energetic
Step by step	Focused	Well-liked	Verbal
<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
Moves slowly	Lacks kindness	Avoids conflict	Does not follow thru
Lacks faith	Strong-willed	Takes no risks	Yes is not always yes
Small thinker	Impatient	Peacekeeper	Can lack discipline
<u>Needed for growth</u>	<u>Needed for growth</u>	<u>Needed for growth</u>	<u>Needed for growth</u>
Be less critical	Be less severe	Be less conforming	Don’t overreact
Understand others	Don’t dominate	Solve problems	Be less excitable
Be more decisive	Grow in kindness	Make decisions	Don’t oversimplify
Follow Spirit and not own thoughts	Know difference between Spirit’s and his own thoughts	Tell people the truth	Give people time to make their own decisions
Trust others		Speak up	
<u>Needed for unity in the Spirit, following the Spirit and growing in the Spirit and ministry</u>			
Assume others just might be right	Be quick to listen and slow to speak	Speak your thoughts	Control emotions
Hear the Spirit’s voice	Keep order in meetings	Know your worth	Don’t talk over others
		Tell disagreements	

There is an important principle as boards evaluate themselves in a number of areas. These areas include board effectiveness, growing in the unity of the Spirit, honoring one another in holiness and growing in humility and vision. The principle is: the talkers must be quiet long enough to let the quiet ones talk...and the quiet ones need to be honest enough to talk. And, the members must be honest to correct each other—in front of everyone else—if they think there is someone who is not listening, talks too much and is quenching the moving of the Spirit in board meetings.

IMPORTANT TRAINING RESOURCES

1. The IPM Interim Pastors Survey	Page 31
2. Key Findings from the Survey	Page 32
3. Board Recruitment Letter	Page 34
4. Six Biblical Principles of Spiritual Listening	Page 35
5. Listening 101	Page 36
6. Helping People Find Their Way to Maturity in Christ	Page 37
7. Helpful Resources	Page 38

THE IPM INTERIM PASTORS SURVEY

1. How many interim pastor experiences have you had?
2. As you think about your interim pastor experiences what positive thoughts do you have about boards with which you have worked/ministered?
3. As you think about your interim pastor experiences what negative thoughts do you have about boards with which you have worked/ministered?
4. What positive/Godly/Biblical traits have you observed in boards and board members?
5. What negative/ungodly/unbiblical traits have you observed in boards and board members?
6. Have you moved into an interim pastor role where the church had in place a solid and relevant training program for board members? If so, what were those qualities that made it solid and relevant?
7. Have you moved into an interim pastor role where the church did not have a solid and relevant training program for board members? What were the negatives you have observed as a result of that?
8. What advice do you have for interim pastors who inherit a weak board?
9. What advice do you have for interim pastors who inherit a board with “church bosses”, strong-voiced people who do not listen and people who are not motivated by the Spirit of God?
10. What is the best way to ascertain the quality of the board and how long does it take to do so?
11. What do you know now about ascertaining the help (spiritually and functionally) of the board that you wish you had known during your first interim pastorate?
12. What advice do you have for a first-time interim pastor in this area of ascertaining what the help (spiritually and functionally) board is?
13. What are some things you are glad you have done with boards?
14. What are some things you wish you had not done with boards?
15. How has the size of the church affected the board or boards with which you have ministered?
16. How has the surrounding community (rural, suburban, city, etc.) affected the board/boards with which you have ministered?
17. What words relative to the denominational/associational relationship do you have for a first-time interim pastor?
18. How has your leadership style/personality profile helped or hindered your interim pastoral ministry?
19. What has been the process and criteria to select new board members in churches you have served?
20. Are there any other insights you want to share with us?

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

159 Interim Pastorates have been served by respondents

1. Very few churches have board recruiting or training.
2. Board training is necessary in interim pastor work.
3. Interim pastor ministry is very fulfilling ministry.
4. Do not hesitate to recruit and train new board members and other lay ministers.
5. Time spent with board members corporately and individually is the best way to ascertain the level of their spiritual maturity.
6. Do not let negative people persist in being negative.
7. Positive instructions and advice for future interim pastors.
 - a. Most board members were eager, open, responsive and teachable.
 - b. Respondents observed humility, a desire to honor Christ and a love for God and people.
 - c. Respondents were impressed with the faithfulness they observed.
 - d. Honor the board members before the congregation.
 - e. The size of the board is more important than the size of the congregation.
8. Instructions and advice for future interim pastors related to the negative.
 - a. Respondents observed a lot of confusion about the role of board members.
 - b. Resistance to change and controlling members were observed.
 - c. Pride, arrogance, power plays, personal agendas and a commitment to the past were observed.
 - d. A lack of vision for future ministry was frequently observed.
 - e. Smaller churches seem to have longer terms for board members.
9. Size of church—larger.
 - a. Larger churches are more challenging, better organized and better structured.
 - b. Larger church boards are easier to lead.
 - c. Larger church boards work together better and have a larger qualified leader pool.
10. Size of church—smaller.
 - a. Smaller churches tend to micro thinking, more power struggles, more church bosses.
 - b. Smaller churches have more dysfunctional, overworked board members and a smaller qualified leader pool.
11. Advice for interim pastors who inherit a strong church boss.
 - a. Meet with them personally, listen (get their spiritual journey) and begin coaching.
 - b. Train/teach board and congregation re: character and Biblical leadership.
 - c. Pray.
 - d. Use church processes (board, congregation, denomination) to discipline them.
12. General advice from respondents.

- a. It is the Lord's church not ours. Accept what is and proceed to lead. You can work with the board you are given.
- b. Board members can become dear friends in Christ.
- c. Pay attention to your wife if she has been uprooted for this assignment.
- d. Do not neglect the need for conflict resolution.
- e. Pay much attention to the process for board selection.
- f. The interim pastor's job is to give the best professional advice they can – board can choose to listen or not. Do not take not listening personally.
- g. Build trust with leaders.
- h. My first interim experience has been a spiritual growth experience.
- i. Pay attention to relationships with other IPM members.
- j. Don't vote at board meetings.
- k. Love the flock.
- l. The relationship between pastor and board is the most critical dynamic in the church. Make sure you work on that relationship.
- m. Lead the church to discern God's will not yours.
- n. Make board ministry and work fun.
- o. Understand that boards and churches are "systems."
- p. Interim pastoral work has changed me more than I changed churches.
- q. Listen to IPM.
- r. Preach on Biblical leadership.
- s. Use Manuals #1 and #2 for discussions with the board.
- t. Know how to develop a criteria and process for training board members.
- u. Churches want help on leadership.
- v. Be patient and discerning.
- w. Do personal interviews; match people with opportunities so you can observe them.
- x. Use some type of personality assessment tool.

BOARD RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear _____:

You are highly respected in our church. As the board and staff members have been discussing potential board members your name has come up. Indeed, your name has been put forward as one to whom we should talk and one who should be considering whether or not God has His hand on you as a board member. This is a high and sincere compliment to you.

Let me explain the process:

I am going to have 3-4 teaching sessions on what the Bible says about board members and what our church expects from board members.

You are being invited to attend these teaching sessions.

If at any time you would have the sense that you have no interest in becoming a board member you can drop out without obligation.

At the end of the teaching sessions if you are interested in being considered as a board member you will be asked to attend board meetings for 3-6 months.

At the end of this time if you have interest in being a board member you can put your name forward to be considered when there is an opening on the board.

There is no pressure. This is a matter between the Lord and you. Please give it some thought and prayer and let me know if you are interested in being with us when I start the teaching time. We will start on _____.

Sincerely in Christ,

Name of Interim Pastor

Six Biblical Principles of Spiritual Listening

Dr. Robert W. Kelleman

The article is excerpted from “Spiritual Friends” by Dr. Kelleman.

The Big Idea: When your friend is hurting or struggling in life, learn how to LISTEN spiritually.

L Loving Motivation: Proverbs 21:13 “If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry and not be answered” (Proverbs 21:13). As a loving spiritual friend, you are motivated, like God, to listen for, hear, care about, empathize with, and respond to the hurts of the wounded. What drives careful listening is not secular theory or human curiosity. Care does. Christ-like compassion does.

I Intimate Concern: Galatians 6:1-3; Colossians 4:6; James 3:17-18 Paul (Galatians 6:1-3; Colossians 4:6) emphasizes the humble, spiritual, gentle, and gracious concern that accompanies competent spiritual listening. James (James 3:17-18), in a context sandwiched between the use of the tongue and the cause of quarrels, explains that wisdom for living flows from a heart that loves people and peace, a soul that is considerate and submissive, and a mind that is impartial and sincere.

S Slow to Speak: Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19 James is emphatic. “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (James 1:19). Solomon explains why. “He who answers before listening—that is his folly and his shame” (Proverbs 18:13). Remember a basic principle of spiritual friendship: hear your friend’s story before you tell God’s story to your friend.

T Timing: Proverbs 15:23; 25:11 “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word!” (Proverbs 15:23). “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Proverbs 25:11). “Apt” means fitting, timely, given in due season. As a skillful spiritual friend, speak words said at the right time, in the right way, for the right reason because of right listening.

E Exploring: Hebrews 3:7-19; 10:24-25 Both Hebrews 3 and 10 speak of encouraging in the context of exploratory listening. Before you encourage your friend, tune into, see, listen, and hear what is going on in your spiritual friend’s life (external situation) and heart (internal reaction).

N Need-Focused Hearing: Ephesians 4:29 Before speaking words that benefit others, listen for specific needs. “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29). As you listen, ask: “What is it that my spiritual friend most needs? What are his hurts and wounds? What are her fears and scars? What wholesome words relate to her specific situation? Specifically, given his situation, what words will benefit him?”

DR. JIM KOK

Listening 101

www.peoplekindness.com

November 13, 2020

*"Listening is easy. What I need to know is **what to say**."* Those are the words of a frustrated student who was exasperated with such a big emphasis on listening in care ministry.

What my experience has taught me is contrary to the student's remark. Listening is **not** easy.

Can you remember the last time someone really listened to you? It's a deep and memorable experience. It doesn't happen often. Most of us are so conscious of ourselves — our ideas, our answers, our experiences — that we are anxious to tell about as quickly as they come to mind. Our focus is so intent on what we want to say next that we don't listen to what the other person is really saying right now.

Effective listening includes watching and paying close attention. Listening involves more than the ears! It involves the eyes and other senses. Did you see the quivering chin? Did you see the reddening rims of the eyes? That glint of a tear? When you do, you begin to know the depth of feeling behind the words spoken.

Good listening includes the listener talking a little — enough to indicate awareness of what the other is saying or sharing, or experiencing emotionally. Pure silence can be confusing, so being a bit verbal as you listen encourages the speaker to know that you are indeed hearing them.

Relaxation and modifying our need to give answers and solve problems is vital to listening. Later, when we have listened long enough, and have listened deeply, we may be able to suggest, challenge, confront or offer some suggestion or an idea that is appropriate. (Here is where I remind you of my usual caution — don't be too quick to speak. Make sure you have heard the person out BEFORE you start offering comments.)

Later . . . later . . . when we have listened long enough, and deeply taken note of what the speaker is experiencing emotionally, we may see how shallow and superficial our earlier solutions or answers would have been. At that point we may now dare to move on, having done much by doing little. Taming the tongue is not a small accomplishment. It's a lot easier to say something than to be quiet; it's a lot easier to say much, than to say little.

Christians tend toward being people with answers. The unkindest cuts of all may be rendered by Christians giving answers, solutions, remedies to other Christians before knowing what the real questions are.

HELPING PEOPLE FIND THEIR WAY TO MATURITY IN CHRIST

The following graph was developed by David Stavros, a veteran missionary with obvious gifts of evangelism and apostleship. After being in Lima, Peru for many years he returned to the United States. He observed the lack of evangelism and developed this graph as a way for pastors to train their people to evangelize in a normal and relational pattern. The graph helps the pastor, board and church recommit to the Lord’s mission for His church and to return to what undoubtedly was the original vision of the church when it started.

STEPS	MOTIVATION	ACTION	AVENUE	BIBLICAL BASIS
1	Starting	Meet someone or nurture an existing relationship	Personal relationships	Matthew 22:34-40
2	Building the relationship	Value the relationship	Do life events together	John 4:1-26
3	Deepening the relationship	Get to life “Why?” questions	Church small group, seminars, etc.	John 3:1-8 & Matthew 9:9-13
4	Choosing Christ	Receiving Christ	Personal witness or evangelistic meetings	Acts 2:14-15
5	Growing	Build in Christ	Studies, sermons, disks	Romans 8:29
6	Extending	New child in God Tells others	Spiritual gifts and witness	Ephesians 4:11-13

HELPFUL RESOURCES

“First Century Leadership for Twenty-First Century Christians” by Dr. Fred C. Campbell

“The 21st Century Pastor” by David C. Fisher

“Spiritual Gifts Inventory” by Dr. Larry Gilbert. Available at www.churchgrowth.org

“339 Questions Jesus Asked” and **“Great Leaders Ask Questions”** by Bob Tiede

What Does the Bible Say About Listening? 75 Bible verses on listening are listed at www.openbible.info/topics/listening