

EMPOWERING THE PRIESTS IN THE PEW: THE SHEPHERD LEADER DELEGATES TO
MULTIPLY MINISTRY

BY

NATHANIEL D. SAVAGE

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PROF. DAVID G. SCHARF, ADVISOR

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ABSTRACT

August Pieper observed in the early 20th century that most Christians sitting in the pews rarely nor actively participated in the ministry of the Church, despite being members of the priesthood of all believers. This observation still holds true in the 21st century. What can be done? How might Lutherans retain what Pieper calls “the essence of Lutheranism”? How might Lutheran pastors empower, encourage, and equip the people under their care to be the priests that God has made them to be? This paper endeavors to answer these questions and to propose ways in which a pastor might properly, sufficiently, and successfully delegate areas of ministry to the priests within his care. The goal of any Lutheran shepherd is that his sheep cherish their status before God and fully realize and exercise their purpose in life on this side of eternity. This paper points the reader toward that goal.

THE ESSENCE OF LUTHERANISM

It was the 400th anniversary of that historical day on which Martin Luther had nailed up his 95 Theses. At the Wisconsin Synod's Nebraska District convention, Professor August Pieper had something to say. Before he began his lengthy address, Pieper said of his appointed topic: "I would like to present the treasure of the Reformation according to the concept which the greatest man of the Lutheran church in this country, Dr. Walther, introduced to identify the essence of Lutheranism: the priesthood of all believers."¹

Luther had caused quite the stir over the years as he taught and advocated for this doctrine that depleted the papacy's authority. By Luther's time, the church in Rome had divided the ordained clergy from the laity, citing a difference in estate that ultimately elevated the former above the latter. Luther, however, argued there was only one estate for Christians, whether clergy or laity: simply being Christian. He writes, "All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate ... This is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people."² Mark Zarling captures well the importance of Luther's stance in a time when Christians hardly had a strong grasp of how their God viewed them: "Understanding the truth of justification and the power of baptism underscores the truth—radical for the time—that the Christian laity in their

1. August Pieper, "Luther's Teaching of the Christian Priesthood," trans. John Jeske, 23, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File. Jeske provides a note to the reader in which he clarifies that Pieper originally spoke this presentation in German, which was audio-recorded and then translated.

2. Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate" (1520): vol. 44, p. 137, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009–), LOGOS edition, hereafter AE.

status before God are equal to the clergy.”³ Although contrary to what Christians had been taught for a thousand years, Luther’s teaching did not end there. He names each Christian a priest in the service of God, which is contrary to Rome’s emphasis on priestly authority by apostolic succession. In a separate work, Luther writes, “Every baptized Christian is a priest already, not by appointment or ordination from the pope or any other man, but because Christ himself has begotten him as a priest and has given birth to him in baptism.”⁴ Every Christian has just as much spiritual authority as the pope himself.

By all accounts, Luther’s teaching of this priesthood of all believers was relatively unique at the time and remains an essential mark of true Lutheranism. Pieper, in his presentation, gave considerable credit and respect to Luther for this doctrine: “After the apostles, Luther was the first to teach correctly the truth about the priesthood of all believers.... Luther taught this facet of the gospel clearly and emphatically.... This teaching is absolutely priceless, for it teaches us what God has given his church as its inner glory and as the basis for its holy character.”⁵ It truly was and is the essence of Lutheranism.

While priceless and essential, Pieper recognized that an issue of this doctrine had appeared in the Lutheran church of his time. The issue was not of teaching but of practice. He observes,

Here is a truth that needs to be emphasized in our day, that individual Christians are to exercise their priesthood (as long as they do not violate good order in the church). Unfortunately, one doesn’t see much of this among us Lutherans. Congregations call someone to be their pastor, others to teach their children, still others to serve as officers of their congregation. But what about the rest of the membership? They’re informed of their financial responsibilities and reminded that they’re expected to attend worship

3. Mark Zarling, “Luther and the Saints: The Priesthood of All Believers—A True Treasure of the Lutheran Reformation,” 18, Essay file. This essay was originally presented at the WLS Symposium on the Ministry of Dr. Martin Luther in Mequon, WI in 2017.

4. AE 13:329.

5. Pieper, “Luther’s Teaching of the Christian Priesthood,” 2.

services, to receive the Lord's Supper regularly, and to live a godly life. But the real priestly activity to which Luther referred is usually left up to the called workers. Most often individual Christians as such do not share in preaching and teaching God's word, in baptizing and using the Keys, in the priestly work of praying and offering sacrifice, in striving to preserve sound doctrine, and in showing concern for the lives their fellow Christians are leading. It's almost as though the congregation has hitched its pastor to the congregational wagon, after which the members climb aboard and allow themselves to be pulled along by the pastor.⁶

Though it was the essence of Lutheranism, though Luther's rediscovery of this treasure⁷ had shaken the foundations of Roman Catholic authority, and though it had redefined the Christian's own understanding of his status before God, it appeared as though God's priests were not being the priests he had called them to be.

Nearly seventy years after Pieper's presentation, Armin Schuetze observed the same issue in his own church body in 1986. He writes, "We all no doubt have heard and ourselves expressed complaints about our laity to the effect that they do not practice the priesthood they possess. They see their position as one of being served and not of serving,"⁸ and later quotes an unnamed author: "Too many Christians believe that their obligation to the church is to pray and to pay and to hope the pastor keeps the devil at bay."⁹ Four years later, David Valleskey cited author Kent Hunter's position:

Often people are content to "let the pastor do it." Consequently, the pastor is seen as the only one who can teach the Bible or evangelize or administrate the church. The local congregation can easily become an organization in which the membership, like stockholders, pay their dues for the upkeep of the building and the salary of the

6. Pieper, "Luther's Teaching of the Christian Priesthood," 9.

7. Zarling, "Luther and the Saints," 4.

8. Armin Schuetze, "The Significance of the Reformation for Our Ministry Today," in *WELS Ministry Compendium: Study Papers on the Doctrine of Church and Ministry II* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1992), 548.

9. Schuetze, "Significance of the Reformation," 562. No citation provided.

clergyman whom they have called to do their ministry.¹⁰

In the nearly three-quarters of a century following Pieper's initial presentation on this issue, it seemed the "congregational wagon" was still being pulled along by the pastor alone.

Is it still today? Does Pieper's early 20th-century observation still hold true in the 21st? How relatable are these woes of pastors of the past to pastors of the present? Regardless of whether the problem persists to the same degree in modern times, the fact is the problem *does* exist. Some hold that the priesthood largely remains passive in its devoted, intentional practice. What can be done? How might Lutherans retain the essence of Lutheranism? How might Lutheran pastors properly empower, encourage, and equip the people under their care to be the priests that God has made them to be?

To be clear, the intent of this paper is not to imply that God's people in the pews are doing *nothing* in service to their Lord. In fact, just the opposite is true.¹¹ By their faith in Christ alone worked by grace, believers simply and naturally bear fruits of faith as a result of the new person living within them, washed and renewed by the Holy Spirit.¹² Every act of love, compassion, kindness, gentleness, and patience¹³ is evidence of the priest serving his Lord simply by offering himself as a living sacrifice in true and proper worship.¹⁴ For these and more, we are thankful and attribute all glory to God alone.

10. David Valleskey, "Motivating and Mobilizing the Laity for Service," 2–3, Essay File. Valleskey cites Kent Hunter, *Foundations for Church Growth*, 59. Valleskey's essay was originally presented at the Nebraska District Missionaries' Conference in North Platte, NE in November of 1990.

11. See Luke 6:43 NIV11.

12. See Titus 3:5.

13. See Col 3:12.

14. See Rom 12:1.

However, this paper does aim to answer the question of how pastors might better prepare the priests in the pew for more purposeful and intentional service in the ministry of the Church. Such an aim, then, points the reader toward the goal of any Lutheran shepherd: that his sheep cherish their status before God and fully realize their purpose in life on this side of eternity. The Apostle Peter comforted his audience of this wonderful truth in his first epistle: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pet 2:9). The Apostle Paul phrased the goal in this way in his letter to the Ephesians:

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph 4:14–6)

Keeping in mind the goal of the priesthood being built up and Luther’s own doctrine of the priesthood, Armin Schuetze posits this possibility:

What a blessing would come to the church if every Christian functioned as Luther describes. How much easier the work in the Christian day schools would be, not to speak of Sunday school and confirmation instructions, if all parents would exercise their priesthood in the home in teaching the Word to their children! We might not even need schools to the same degree. Or consider the matter of delinquents [sic], of the backsliders in our congregations. Whoever would see someone becoming lax in church attendance would admonish him as a brother or sister in Christ, would show deep concern and act on it, privately, as neighbor to neighbor, friend to friend, and concerned relative, or acquaintance. Or consider evangelism. Each Christian would concern himself with the unbelievers, the unchurched in his circle of friends and relatives and acquaintances in the area where he lives and works. Each Christian would be alert to opportunities to bring an unbelieving person into contact with the life-giving gospel, to bring that person to worship services, to a Bible information class. He would feel his personal responsibility toward mission work throughout the world. Our sick members in the hospital would be prayed for not only on Sunday morning in the church service, but in the private prayers each by his friends and acquaintances.¹⁵

15. Schuetze, “Significance of the Reformation,” 548–9.

In effect, the “congregational wagon” of ministry would no longer be pulled by the pastor alone, but instead by the whole body of believers for the building up of the Church¹⁶ and for the advancement of the Kingdom.

The reality is this: both the pastor and the parishioner work and serve God together. “Together we are carrying out the one ministry of God’s church on earth, namely, proclaiming the gospel of Christ.... Pastors and Christian laypeople are in partnership with each other to carry out the one ministry of the church and to encourage each other individually and as members of a congregation ... to preach the gospel of Jesus to the entire world.”¹⁷ This is our goal, our purpose as priests in service to Christ.

In order to reach such a conclusion, we must first define “ministry,” both in a general sense as well as in the contexts of the priesthood of all believers and the public ministry. From there, we need to examine more closely the topic of leadership, noting especially its role in pastoral ministry. This will allow us to propose ways in which a pastor might properly, sufficiently, and successfully delegate areas of ministry to the priests within his care. For a real-world example, we will apply these principles to the culture of ministry at Faith Lutheran Church in Sharpsburg, Georgia.¹⁸ Thus, this paper seeks to prove that by utilizing thoughtful, purposeful, and wise delegation, shepherd leaders can multiply the ministry of the Church by empowering, encouraging, and equipping the priests in the pews to be active participants in that ministry.

16. And, if it is God’s will, for the building up of the local church.

17. E. A. Sorum, “Pastors and Laypeople in Partnership to Advance Christ’s Kingdom,” *WLQ* 110, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 122–3, 128, 130, Essay File, *Passim*. This essay was originally presented at the Center for Christian Leadership’s 2012 Leadership Conference in Milwaukee, WI.

18. I was assigned to serve as vicar under Pastor Jonathan Schroeder at Faith Lutheran during 2020–21. All applications to Faith’s culture of ministry in this paper are based on both my experience there as well as on personal survey responses gathered expressly for this paper. See “Appendix 1: A Faith Study” below.

PART 1: MINISTRY

Thus far, the term “ministry” has appeared not a few times in this paper. What exactly is meant by it? What is its origin? Its scope? For what purpose does the “ministry” exist? Who is involved in it? Are there different kinds? The answers to these questions form the basis for Part 1 and must be established as a foundation to proceed.

Definition

“Ministry” in the broadest sense simply means “service.” The Apostle Paul used the word *διακονία* in his letter to the Ephesians when describing the service that God’s people are to be prepared to do. (Eph 4:12) In its basic use, the word means “service rendered in an intermediary capacity, mediation, assignment.”¹⁹ Thus, a “service to God, assigned by God, and/or as an intermediary for God” can be properly termed “ministry.” James Huebner provides a broad-stroke summary of this ministry: “Jesus has given his church, that is, all believers, work to do. The work which Jesus has given ... includes everything a believer does out of faith-born love: his good works ... his worship, his witness—everything!”²⁰ One immediately thinks of the Apostle Paul’s words of instruction to the Christians in Colossae: “Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col 3:17). This is “ministry” in the most general sense. Yet it is hardly a surprise that the

19. BDAG, 230.

20. James Huebner, “The Relationship Between the Doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers and Public Ministry,” 4, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the Metro-North Pastoral Conference of the Southeastern Wisconsin District in Oshkosh, WI in January of 1993.

Lord Jesus has a more specific mission in mind for his people.

The Missions of Ministry

Throughout the three years of Jesus' earthly ministry, he taught his disciples various truths about what it means to be a servant of Christ. While certainly not an exhaustive list, the following passages provide a valuable picture of service to God.

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:14–16). Christians do not hide their faith in Jesus but instead, make it known by the way they live.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples” (John 13:34–35). By showing each other godly love that knows forgiveness and grace, Christians make their service to Christ known. This is part of the life of a Christian.

Yet Jesus also has an even more direct purpose for his people: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20). Christians witness about Christ, spreading the good news, and teaching people about his love for them.

The Apostle Paul elaborates on Jesus' mission for his ministers:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. (2 Cor 5:18–20)

Paul reminds Christians that they are to carry to the world God's own message of salvation accomplished. This is the ministry of the Church, the ministry of God's Word. Luther comments, "The ministry of the Word ... is common to all Christians.... Peter [in his first epistle] not only gives them the right, but the command, to declare the wonderful deeds of God, which certainly is nothing else than to preach the Word of God.... Nothing can prevail against these divine thunderings."²¹ Jonathan Schroeder gives further explanation to these reliable "divine thunderings" when he writes, "No longer does God's voice thunder from the mountain or from the skies. Rather, God puts his words into the mouth of his Church and his ministers, and God speaks through us."²² Together with the Lord, Christians carry out the ministry of the Church by proclaiming the Word of God to the world.

This ministry had been present long before Christ's earthly work. God's mission for his people to carry out the ministry of spreading the gospel of the Messiah began immediately after he first promised that there would be a Messiah.²³ John Schaller offers this explanation:

The New Testament ministry, better termed service, began with and through the first preaching of the gospel in Paradise and appears wherever the gospel is in any way communicated. For the gospel is a *word* which is to be preached, and it immediately through the very process of conversion turns those whom it brings to faith into preachers of it. Thus every believer since the beginning of the world is according to his spiritual nature a preacher of the gospel.²⁴

After Adam and Eve first heard the promise of a Savior in the Garden, anytime they or any of

21. AE 40:21, 23.

22. Jonathan Schroeder, "Our Calling: Christian Vocation and the Ministry of the Gospel," 12, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the 60th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Synod in Saginaw, MI in July of 2009.

23. See Gen 3:15.

24. John Schaller, "The Origin and Development of the New Testament Ministry," in *The Wauwatosa Theology* III, ed. Curtis A. Jahn, trans. Wilbert Gawrisch et. al. (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1997), 89. The entire essay is worthwhile to read. See 73–94.

their descendants speak about it or him in faith can be considered a part of the ministry of the Word. Note the lack of limitation: *any* believer, as opposed to those specially called by God, has this mission. Consider those who fled after Stephen’s martyrdom: “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all *except the apostles* were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.... *Those who had been scattered* preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there” (Acts 8:1, 4–5; emphasis mine). Those who were carrying out the ministry of the Word were believers who *were not called to be apostles*. They were “everyday Christians.”

This is not to say that those called by God into the public ministry do not participate in the ministry of the Word. That distinction is treated below. Rather, the point is this: one need not be officially called into the public ministry to preach the Word. It is the mission of all believers, regardless of vocation. Luther writes, “No one can deny that *every* Christian possesses the word of God and is taught and anointed by God to be priest ... But if it is true that they have God’s Word and are anointed by him, then it is their duty to confess, to teach, and to spread [his Word].”²⁵ The primary mission of any Christian is to confess, teach, and spread the Word of God as an anointed member of the priesthood of all believers. Now, what exactly does it mean to be a “priest”?

The Service of the Priesthood

In a general sense, a priest is “a minister whose stated business [is] to perform, on behalf of the community, certain public ritual acts, particularly sacrifices, directed godwards.”²⁶ As stated

25. AE 39:309 (emphasis mine).

26. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Priest,”
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Priest.

above, God has made use of such persons since Eden. However, he established an official order of priests in the Old Testament. For the sake of brevity, what follows is an overview.

Old Testament Priesthood

While the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, the LORD said to Moses: “Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests” (Exod 30:30). Following their anointing, “Moses said to Aaron, ‘Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded’” (Lev 9:7). Aaron and his sons—who would make up the Levitical Priesthood—were to be intermediaries between God and the people, and to offer sacrifices to pay for their sins.

One of whom was to be named the High Priest, who “is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb 5:1), and one of his duties was to enter the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement to offer sacrifice for the whole nation once a year.²⁷ This ministry was to be carried out year after year as the Old Testament priesthood interceded on behalf of the people of God while carrying out the ceremonial law. Yet, “those sacrifices [were] an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb 10:3–4). While legitimately an established priesthood with dedicated service, those Old Testament priests were ultimately doing nothing more than painting a picture of the true Priest and his effectual sacrificial work.

27. See Lev 16.

Fulfilled in Christ

The writer to the Hebrews offers perhaps the greatest explanation of Christ as *the* High Priest:

When Christ came as high priest ... he did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.... For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb 9:11–12, 24–26)

No longer did an order of priests need to carry out the ceremonial laws. No longer did animals need to die so that the people could be spared from the punishment for their sins. Instead, Christ in his work was “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29).

The writer to the Hebrews also confirms Jesus' eternal priesthood: “Because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens” (Heb 7:24–26). Christ serves as the High Priest, always interceding for his people, whom he has made “to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God ... to reign on the earth” (Rev 5:10). In Luther's words: “All Christians are priests, and all priests are Christians.”²⁸

New Testament Priesthood

The essence of the New Testament priesthood has been covered above: this priesthood is of all believers, who are born into it through the washing of rebirth and renewal by faith, and who carry out the ministry of the Word. Permit, though, this summary from John Brug:

28. AE 40:19.

Because Christ has offered the once-for-all sacrifice for sin, New Testament priests offer no sin offerings. We offer only spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. We do this as we live our whole life for Christ. Priestly service ... encompasses the whole life of the Christian.... The priesthood of all believers is both a status and an activity. We become priests when we are reborn through the gospel. We enjoy forgiveness of sins and access to the Father at all times. Everything we do as Christians is an exercise of our priesthood, whether it is “spiritual” or “secular.” We are priests who show forth the praises of God both when we share the gospel with others and when we let our good works shine to the glory of God.²⁹

Wherever a believer is, he or she functions as a priest, and is encouraged and compelled by faith to heed the words of the writer to the Hebrews: “continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name” (Heb 13:15) and of the Apostle Paul: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Rom 12:1).

Yet Christ also gave a certain authority to the New Testament priesthood. He said to his disciples: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt 16:19). The authority to forgive or not to forgive sins is given to all believers. When a Christian forgives another person for sinning against them, that person is *actually forgiven*, because Christ—to whom all authority in heaven and on earth had been given³⁰—has given out that authority which had previously been held by God alone,³¹ to believers.

Thus, every believer is a functioning priest 1) simply because he or she is a Christian; 2) when he or she proclaims the Word of God; and 3) when he or she forgives sins (or does not). What, then, is the purpose of the public ministry? How is it different?

29. John Brug, “The Priesthood of All Believers and the Ministry,” 5, Essay File.

30. See Matt 28:18.

31. See Mark 2:1–12.

The Ministry of the Called Worker

As it is an excellent explanation of the public ministry, permit this rather lengthy selection from Pieper's presentation:

There is in the church a public office which Christ has instituted and ordained, "the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments," as Article 5 of the Augsburg Confession calls it.... This is the ministry which the Lord has implanted when he brought [the disciples] to faith and which he has commanded them to carry out. What the Lord said to Peter [in Matt 16:19] ... he says to all Christians. *In its content* the public ministry is not different from the priesthood of every individual believer. It differs from the priesthood of the individual Christian only *in form*.... In other words, the public ministry is nothing else than *the joint exercise of the priesthood which, according to proper divine order, belongs to every Christian*. The Lord has not instituted a priesthood made up only of selected individuals, but a whole community of spiritual priests, the entire church of believers.

The Lord calls Christians to carry out the activities of their priesthood not only as individuals, but also jointly.... In good order the Christian church carries out this command through those whom God has specially equipped for this work. So that the body of Christ may be built up, the ascended Lord himself has given his church special gifts, to administer publicly those priestly prerogatives and to exercise that priestly authority which he gave to each individual Christian.

Right here, along with the command to follow good order in the church, we have the scriptural basis for administering the public ministry of the church through individual, specially-equipped members of the church.... The work carried out by the public servants of the church is nothing else [than] what the spiritual priesthood has been given to do. Church officials as such carry out nothing more than their own spiritual priesthood, as well as that of every other member the congregation, in whose name they function.³²

Notice that Pieper emphasizes that those in the public ministry are "specially-equipped."

Consider the Apostle Paul's words to the Corinthians:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not or that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part

32. Pieper, "Luther's Teaching of the Christian Priesthood," 12–13, author's emphases.

of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. (1 Cor 12:12–18)

Here the Apostle is teaching about the diversity of gifts that God gives to his people, the Church, the priesthood of all believers. Kurt Ebert comments on these diverse gifts: “Some gifts may be very evident and use out in front, where everyone can see; others may seem a bit obscure and will be used so that hardly anyone knows it’s happening. The Lord assures us that, whether big or small, obvious or hidden, public or private, every gift is important in his Church.”³³ It is evident in Scripture that among those gifted people are those who are specially equipped to serve as pastors in the public ministry, to whom the Lord Jesus gave specific instructions.

The Pastor’s Purpose

To Peter, Jesus said, “Feed my lambs ... take care of my sheep” (John 21:15–16). To the elders in Ephesus, Paul said, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Peter instructed the elders who were among his audience: “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:2–3). Pastors are to be under-shepherds for the sheep of the Good Shepherd.³⁴ David Valleskey offers this description:

As a nurturer ... the pastor feeds, guards, and guides the flock. He does this through his regular preaching and teaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments. A ministry of nurturing the saints is bound to have an impact on the congregation's work of

33. Kurt Ebert, “Lay Ministry: The Wave of the Future?,” 7, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the Winnebago Pastor/Teacher Conference in April of 1993.

34. See John 10:14.

evangelism. The more thoroughly God's people are nurtured by Word and sacrament, the more they become conformed to the image of Christ. And the more they are conformed to Christ's image, the more effectively they will be able to function as salt and light in the world.³⁵

In this way, they are also functioning “to equip [Christ’s] people for works of service” (Eph 4:12). Valleskey elaborates on Paul’s words here:

[This] is the immediate purpose of Christ's gift of spiritual leaders to his Church: that the saints might become prepared and equipped for ministry. The ultimate purpose is “so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Building up, internal and external growth, occurs when the spiritual leader prepares and equips the saints for ministry rather than seeks to carry out the whole ministry himself; for all of God's people are gifted and the use of these gifts is fundamental to the growth of the kingdom.... These words make it clear that equipping the saints for ministry is not merely a sideline but a primary reason for the existence of the public ministry. Christ instituted the public ministry that all the saints might become equipped for their ministries.³⁶

A pastor carries out his role in the public ministry not as the *only* active member, but as the one who motivates and equips *others to serve with him*. Valleskey writes elsewhere:

The pastor’s training does not establish him as the only one to do the ministry. He is not a replacement for the people’s ministry. Rather, his training enables him to be a resource person; he is a motivator, a trainer. He is given by God to equip God’s people so that they do the work of the ministry. The word translated as “equipping” in Ephesians 4:12 has as its basic meaning “to render fit, sound, complete.” It is used for mending torn nets, thus getting them ready for action. That’s a key role of the pastor: “Mending” the saints, getting them ready for action.³⁷

With this in mind, recall Kent Hunter’s position: “Often people are content to ‘let the pastor do it.’ Consequently, the pastor is seen as the only one who can teach the Bible or evangelize or

35. Valleskey, *We Believe—Therefore We Speak* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1995), 155.

36. Valleskey, “Equipping the Believers as Disciples,” 8, Essay File. This essay was originally given at the 49th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Synod in Watertown, WI in August of 1987.

37. Valleskey, “Motivating and Mobilizing,” 20.

administrate the church.”³⁸ This simply is not what the pastor’s role is. Consider John Stott’s apt description:

[The pastor is not a person who] jealously guards all ministry in his own hands, and successfully squashes all lay initiatives, but of one who helps and encourages all God's people to discover, develop and exercise their gifts. His teaching and training are directed to this end, to enable the people of God to be a servant people, ministering actively but humbly according to their gifts.... Thus, instead of monopolizing all ministry himself, he actually multiplies ministries.³⁹

To reemphasize, the pastor’s ministry is not the only ministry of the church, in which the rest of the people are merely aiding him. “In God’s view the members of the congregation are not pastor’s little helpers, assisting him to carry out his ministry. That’s a fantastic perversion of the truth. The pastor is the one who is to serve the members, helping them carry out their ministry”⁴⁰ as members of the priesthood of all believers. The pastor is the one who empowers, encourages, and equips the priests under his care by leading them to use the diverse gifts that God has given them to ultimately multiply the ministry of the church.

To be a pastor is to be a spiritual feeder, a spiritual guide, a spiritual leader. To be a pastor is to be a servant leader. This was one of my first lessons as a vicar...

38. Schuetze, “Significance of the Reformation,” 562. No citation given.

39. John Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 167).

40. John Jeske, “Building Lay Leadership Within a Congregation,” 2, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the Church Officers’ Seminar in Lansing, MI in February of 1971.

PART 2: LEADERSHIP IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

It was new vicar orientation day. Pastor Jon Schroeder welcomed me into his office, gestured toward one of the empty chairs. There was small talk about the drive down to Sharpsburg, Georgia, about moving into the townhouse that served as the vicarage, about whether I had gone exploring yet in the community I would call my home for a year. But then he paused. He pointed to the bronze statue that was on his desk. “You see that? That’s what we’re all about. Everything we do here at Faith centers on what that statue is showing. That’s what shepherd leaders do.”

I didn’t need any more explanation. I’d read the passage describing it, been told what it meant. But seeing it, hearing it from my new bishop ... that’s when my pastoral training took on a whole new level of meaning.

The statue was of Jesus. He was washing the feet of one of his disciples. The Lord of the universe, creator of all things ... was on his knees, scrubbing the stinking, grimy, disgusting feet of a sinner.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

It is not a story that I will easily forget. In many ways, the experience impacted how I carried myself over the course of the year, and how I hope to carry myself throughout my ministry as a pastor. The fact is pastors *are* leaders ... *servant* leaders. The questions are what makes a pastor a leader? How does a pastor’s leadership affect his ministry? How might that leadership aid in the ministries of the sheep he is shepherding? How might a pastor become a better leader? These questions and their answers are worth considering.

A Servant Leader

The Apostle Paul gave his protégé Timothy a list of qualifications for those serving as leaders in the church. Certainly, they apply to the servant leader pastor:

Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. (1 Timothy 3:1–7)

First and foremost, the pastor ought to keep the above qualifications in mind, even before he considers his leadership. After faith in Christ, they are indeed part of the foundation of what it means to be a leader in the church.

Beyond these, permit a few more descriptions of a pastor and let them serve as lenses through which to view the role of servant leader:

- A servant leader is a Humble Helper: “Good spiritual leaders are shepherds not saviors, leaders not lords, guides not gods.”⁴¹
- A servant leader is a Direction Pointer: “St. Paul uses a remarkable word for the work of a Christian leader; he says that he is to do the work of a helmsman. The man at the tiller of a sailing vessel does not give orders or push the boat. He points the boat in the direction that causes the maximum thrust of wind upon the sails.”⁴²
- A servant leader is a Spiritual Gift Nurturer: “Just as a major role for parents is to

41. Lynn Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep* (West Monroe, LA: Howard, 1997), 74. See also Matt 20:25–7.

42. Richard Caemmerer, *Christ Builds His Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 37. See also 1 Cor 12:28.

empower their children to discover, develop, and use their unique giftedness; even so, a major role of church leaders is to help each Christian discover, develop (be trained), and use his or her spiritual gifts in the building up of the body [of Christ].⁴³

Each of these descriptions emphasizes the service aspect of a pastor's leadership within the church, especially as it pertains to serving others in their own ministries. More than that and in the interest of the entire church, Valleskey argues that, as the leader-equipper, the pastor is:

a leader who actively, but not autocratically, sets a vision before his congregation, obtains a good ownership from the people, and sees that each church member is properly motivated and equipped to do his or her part in accomplishing the goals.... Having a strong leader out front helps produce a positive, forward-minded congregational atmosphere, a congregation with a definite sense of mission.⁴⁴

Similarly, Jonathan Hein offers these four practical aspects of Christian leadership which every pastor should exhibit:

- Spiritual leadership: the shepherd leads his people into Scripture, helping them to understand and apply it, for the maintenance of their faith and their service to their Savior.
- Relational leadership: the shepherd nourishes relationships within the congregation, which is essential not only for spiritual encouragement but also for effective, harmonious functioning of ministry.
- Operational leadership: the shepherd sees what needs to be done in the congregation and can organize and manage resources to get those things done.
- Replicational leadership: the shepherd attempts to expand the total gospel efforts of his congregation by equipping others for ministry.⁴⁵

A pastor dedicated to his own leadership effectiveness will seek to exhibit each of the above aspects when carrying out his ministry as the shepherd leader. In the interest of better preparing

43. Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep*, 86. See also 1 Cor 4:14–15.

44. Valleskey, "Motivating and Mobilizing," 13.

45. Jonathan Hein, "The Shepherd-Leader at Work: Moving Forward," 11, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the WLS Symposium on The Pastor as Shepherd-Leader in Mequon, WI in September of 2018.

the priests in the pews, however, he should take special care to exercise replicational leadership. Because of its importance, it will be discussed in more detail in Part 3 below.

Now let us tread forward into other definitions of leadership from outside of Scripture. In preparation, however, take these wise words to heart: “Measure the process against Scripture. Whatever sets itself up against the knowledge of God, demolish. But if you find something that might help you carry out the mission Christ has placed before you, then take that idea and make it obedient to Christ.”⁴⁶

Another Take on Leadership

There are many ways to define “leader.” In his endeavor to define “leadership,” author Jacob Morgan interviewed 140 CEOs around the world and asked them to offer their own definitions. In the end, he settled on this: “A leader is someone who can see how things can be improved and who rallies people to move toward that better vision.”⁴⁷ However, in his article Morgan notes that every leader has a somewhat distinct definition of leadership, yet none are inherently “wrong.” He argues that ultimately the definition depends on the leader. Now consider this view of what makes a leader:

In America, the land of “how-to pragmatism,” people who can get things done are admired as leaders. Whatever the arena, whether business or politics, whether on the battlefield of military conflict or on the field of athletic conflict, leaders are those who achieve. If bystanders get brushed aside, so be it. If others are stepped on in the pursuit of the ultimate goal, that is just the American way. Results, not relationships, are what make

46. Hein, “The Shepherd-Leader” 21, Essay File. The original citation is in the context of strategic and tactical planning, neither of which are mentioned in Scripture. Hein argues, however, that just because something is not in Scripture does not make it an unworthy pursuit. Instead, after comparing it to what Scripture says and ensuring nothing is contrary, giving it a try is a worthy pursuit. This advice is particularly pertinent as a transitional statement between sacred definitions of leadership and other, extra-scriptural definitions.

47. Jacob Morgan, “What is leadership, and who is as leader?” last modified January 6, 2020. <https://www.chieflearningofficer.com/2020/01/06/what-is-leadership-and-who-is-a-leader/>

the bottom line.⁴⁸

Quite a bit different. The fact is countless authors offer innumerable definitions. Where can one start? Which definition might serve our interests best if we are to delve into the extra-scriptural waters? In what ways might a leader at the very least be generally defined, characterized, and identified?

Valleskey offers this worthwhile and succinct list of effective general leadership traits:

- Proper self-image
- A servant attitude
- Trustworthiness
- Enthusiasm
- Discipline
- Confidence
- Decisiveness
- Courage
- Humor
- Unselfishness⁴⁹

In Valleskey's view, every leader must retain and actively exercise the above traits to remain effective. Surely each is a worthy trait of a servant leader pastor.

Leaders are also managers. Valleskey defines management as “the ability to organize, delegate, and motivate people in such a way that what needs to be done gets done.”⁵⁰ It is true that pastors manage the ministry efforts of a congregation, much like a helmsman manages the direction of a sailing vessel. However, Valleskey also notes distinctions between “leadership”

48. Mark Zarling, “Leaders in the Lord! What makes a ‘Lutheran’ leader?,” 1, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the Western Wisconsin District Men’s Convocation in Watertown, WI in June of 1998. Please note that the above quotation is *not* the definition of “leader” to which Zarling subscribes. Rather, he is offering a perception of leadership that was and is present in modern American culture.

49. Valleskey, “Motivating and Mobilizing,” 13–14.

50. Valleskey, “Motivating and Mobilizing,” 11.

and “management.” He lists the following:

- Leadership is the ability to see what needs to be done; management is the ability to see that what needs to be done gets done.
- Leadership is a quality; management is a science and an art.
- Leadership provides vision; management supplies realistic perspectives.
- Leadership exercises faith; management has to do with fact.
- Leadership seeks for effectiveness; management strives for efficiency.
- Leadership decides where we are going and why; management figures out how to get there.
- Leadership looks for potential resources; management coordinates available resources.
- Leadership provides direction; management is concerned about control.
- Leadership thrives on finding opportunities; management succeeds on accomplishment.⁵¹

In many ways, leadership comes first, followed by the efforts of management. Pastors do both, and are wise when they can distinguish when which is best utilized.

Before moving forward, we must ask, “Are all of these qualities and characteristics of leadership only those which a person is born with? Or can they be learned?” Edward Wynne of the University of Illinois at Chicago lists leader characteristics as a combination of skills and attitudes:

- The insight to understand the thoughts and values underlying the thinking of significant persons or groups;
- The judgment to determine which issues can become sources of potential group coalescence;
- The moral qualities to decide whether such issues are deserving of concern;
- The desire to unite people around such issues;
- The ability to commit oneself to such an end over long periods of time;
- The communication and interpersonal skill to foster cooperation;
- The sense of acquiescence necessary to loyally serve others who may grant the authority to lead.⁵²

51. Valleskey, “Motivating and Mobilizing,” 11–12.

52. Edward Wynne, “What About Teaching Leadership?,” *AGB Reports* 26 (March/April 1984): 38–9. Cited in Harris Lee, *Effective Church Leadership* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 37.

In his original research, Wynne was responding to the notion that leaders are born with these types of characteristics and was advocating that certain inborn characteristics truly enhance leadership capability.

Is this always true for pastors? Not necessarily. Harris Lee comments on Wynne’s list: “Some people may have one or more of the characteristics innately; others may have them as a result of their overall life’s experience; still others as the result of intentional development and education. The traits are thus learned and practiced consciously and deliberately.”⁵³ While it is true that those who are pastors do have God-given gifts for leadership,⁵⁴ certain studies have shown that leadership characteristics which are deemed to be “effective” can be developed and fine-tuned. The lesson is this: pastors should be encouraged to become better leaders to hone their God-given gifts and skills for the benefit of not only themselves but also for those they are leading. In Jeske’s words: “Christian leaders are made, not born.”⁵⁵ How, then, can one become a better leader?

Leadership Pointers

What follows is an overview of ways in which a leader can hone his leadership, gathered from various sources. Note that it is by no means an exhaustive list. The intent is to provide aspects that might directly impact a shepherd leader’s equipping of the priests under his care and the overall culture of ministry at his church.

53. Lee, *Effective*, 37.

54. See 1 Cor 12 and “The Ministry of the Called Worker” above.

55. Jeske, “Building Lay Leadership,” 1.

Exemplify

It is no surprise that a pastor ought to be an example for his people—both the Apostle Peter and the writer to the Hebrews give evidence that being an example is part of being a leader.⁵⁶ But *why* is it so important? Is it more than just being a good role model? How does it impact a shepherd leader’s ability to equip those he serves? First, consider Valleskey’s description:

A pastor ... is an example—first of all in his personal ministry as a priest of God, a calling that he retains in common with all believers even while serving in the public ministry. The pastor, who not only is encouraging his members to share the gospel with a friend or to bring a neighbor to church or to a Bible information class, but is seeking to do the same himself, serves as a fine role model for the congregation. He is practicing what he preaches.⁵⁷

That last part is incredibly important for the following reason: “I’d rather see a sermon than hear one, any day. I’d rather someone walk with me than merely point the way.”⁵⁸ People do not want to take advice from someone who does not listen to it themselves. Thus, “spiritual leaders ... [effectively] equip out of the credibility of their lives, demonstrating consistency between what they say and what they do.”⁵⁹ If a pastor is not practicing what he preaches, he has no credibility.

Another fact: people do not follow someone who has no credibility. Glenn Wagner writes, “When the sheep see a regular inconsistency between the shepherd’s voice and the shepherd’s actions, they refuse to follow.... If the shepherd preaches one model but lives another, his sheep will become disenchanted. In that case, one of two things will occur. Either they will become frustrated and leave, or they will become bitter and stay. Neither helps the body

56. See 1 Pet 5:3 and Heb 13:7.

57. Valleskey, *We Believe*, 156.

58. Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep*, 114. Anderson here is quoting a poem; he provides no original source.

59. Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep*, 114.

of Christ.”⁶⁰ Of course, this result cannot be expected in every scenario, but the warning holds true.

More positively, a pastor’s example for ministry helps establish an overall culture of ministry. Consider David Scharf’s words: “The pastor’s mindset and enthusiasm for ministry is contagious. If members [see] the Pastor joyfully leading by example, they will be more inclined to want to be part of the congregation’s ministry efforts. If they see the Pastor willing to share the ministry of the congregation and his willingness to equip others for ministry, they will be more inclined to serve.”⁶¹ As this is part of the goal of every shepherd leader who is looking to equip the priests in the pews, it is worthwhile to emulate. Hein writes,

Do you want your members to invite their next-door neighbor to church? How will you motivate them? First and foremost, you motivate them by helping them see Jesus. But secondly, you motivate them by doing yourself what you ask them to do. *You have your neighbors over for dinner. You cultivate that relationship.* Let your members know you are doing this. It might even happen from the pulpit, when appropriate. That is not bragging. It is leading by example.⁶²

Consider the possible outcome: “A congregation will often reflect the characteristics of their pastor over time. There are few more beautiful things than a congregation that embraces their Shepherd’s mission and zeal because it is their shepherd’s mission and zeal.”⁶³

60. Glenn Wagner and Steve Halliday, *The Church You’ve Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 244.

61. David Scharf, personal interview with author, December 1, 2021.

62. Hein, “The Shepherd-Leader,” 17, author’s emphases.

63. Scharf, “St. Paul and Martin Luther: Paradigms of Shepherd-Leaders,” 11, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the WLS Symposium on The Pastor as Shepherd-Leader in Mequon, WI in September of 2018.

Fail Forward

Nobody likes to fail, or at least to be seen failing. It shows weakness in one way or another, and the leader should not be showing weakness, otherwise people would start to question his abilities, right? While this is an understandable and relatable sentiment, many authors argue that never showing weakness or never embracing failure is actually detrimental to a leader's effectiveness and influence. Jeff Polzer of Harvard University connects this notion of vulnerability to its tendency to garner cooperation and trust. He writes,

People tend to think of vulnerability in a touch-feely way, but that's not what's happening. It's about sending a really clear signal that you have weaknesses, that you could use help. And if that behavior becomes a model for others, then you can set the insecurities aside and get to work, start to trust each other and help each other. If you never have that vulnerable moment, on the other hand, then people will try to cover up their weaknesses, and every little microtask becomes a place where insecurities manifest themselves.... [When you convey vulnerability] you can actually see the people relax and connect and start to trust. The group picks up the idea and says, "Okay, this is the mode we're going to be in," and it starts behaving along those lines, according to the norm that it's okay to admit weakness and help each other.⁶⁴

Consider this phenomenon in the context of pastoral ministry and the impact it can have on the overall culture. Scharf says, "Seeing the pastor fail is more powerful for members to see than a rock star pastor that makes them think they can never try anything because they won't be as good at it as their pastor."⁶⁵ Pastors may be rock stars at ministry, but none is absolutely perfect at it. Hiding that imperfection simply is not helpful and it surely is not wise. To lead more effectively, pastors ought to be willing to show their weaknesses, to be unafraid to fail.

This, of course, applies to how one reacts to failure, as well. Pessimism is hardly ever helpful and rarely ever productive. Pastors would be wise to remember that "our attitudes as

64. Jeff Polzer, personal interview with Daniel Coyle, *The Culture Code* (New York: Random House, 2018), 104.

65. Scharf, personal interview with author, December 1, 2021.

shepherd leaders undoubtedly have a psychological effect on the flocks we are called to shepherd. ‘Optimistic enthusiasm inspires followers. People will naturally follow a leader who arouses their hopes, and they will just as surely back away from someone who is perpetually pessimistic.’”⁶⁶ Scharf goes on to describe an exchange between Martin Luther and his wife: “You know the story of Katie Luther dressing herself in a black dress because of the depressed mood Martin was in. When Martin noticed it, he asked her, 'Are you going to a funeral?' To which she responded with something along the lines of 'No, but since you act as though God is dead, I wanted to join you in your mourning.' Sometimes we need that.”⁶⁷ While Katie was supporting her evidently pessimistic husband, not every member will do the same for their pastor if he is in the same way perpetually pessimistic as a result of some failure or another.

Consider also that while failing at something is, by definition, not a success, it does not always have to be a bad thing. “Trying something and failing is better than letting fear hamstring any effort at all.”⁶⁸ In fact, it is often an opportunity for growth. “Learning what doesn’t work brings the leader one step closer to what does work. Failure is not failure if something is learned from it. Failure that teaches a lesson is simply tuition toward a future success.”⁶⁹ Similarly, “great leaders learn to find a defeat in every victory and a victory in every defeat.”⁷⁰ No victory is perfect;⁷¹ there is always *something* that could have been done better. Conversely, no defeat is

66. Scharf, “St. Paul and Martin Luther,” 9. Please note that the included quote is from John MacArthur, *Called to Lead: Leadership Lessons from the Life of the Apostle Paul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 39.

67. Scharf, “St. Paul and Martin Luther,” 9.

68. Scharf, personal interview with author, December 1, 2021.

69. Chris Brady and Orrin Woodward, *Launching a Leadership Revolution* (New York: Business Plus, 2005), 126.

70. Brady, *Launching*, 178.

71. Except one. See John 19:30; Rom 8:37–9; 1 Cor 15:55–7; Rev 1:17–8. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

without something worth commending. This is the concept that drives something called a “post-mortem.”

The Post-Mortem

Jon Schroeder provides a suggestion and example to shepherd leaders when he writes,

Be relentless analyzing your work. After programs, events, or major ministry efforts at Faith, Sharpsburg, we gather the team involved for what we call a ‘post-mortem.’ We ask ourselves what went well and what we will [do] better the next time.... These post-mortems lead us to honest evaluation, a culture where we can make constructive criticism, and encourages us to get a little better each year.⁷²

Post-mortems allow leaders and anyone involved to assess “what went wrong,” to determine how and in what way exactly __(*insert ministry effort*)__ failed. This exercise is not unique to Jon Schroeder and his team of ministers. The Navy SEALs—who boast one of the most effective leader and team training courses in the world—conduct similar exercises, which they call After-Action Reports. Retired SEAL team-organizer Dave Cooper describes their process:

It’s got to be safe to talk. Rank switched off, humility switched on. You’re looking for that moment [when] people can say, “I screwed that up.” In fact, I’d say those might be the most important four words any leader can say: I screwed that up.... The goal of an AAR is not to excavate truth for truth’s sake, or to assign credit and blame, but rather to build a shared mental model that can be applied to future missions.⁷³

Notice that it is *not* about assigning blame or shining a spotlight on somebody’s weakness. It is about moving forward. It is about learning from those weaknesses and those failures in order that the entire group can do better the next time.

72. Jonathan Schroeder, “Shepherds Under the Cross,” 26, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the WLS Symposium on The Pastor as Shepherd-Leader in Mequon, WI in September of 2018.

73. Dave Cooper, personal interview with Daniel Coyle, *The Culture Code*, 141. In his book, Coyle also describes how the creators at Pixar similarly carry out “BrainTrusts” at regular intervals during film projects. These are designed to allow full transparency for the benefit of the content creators and to allow others not directly involved to have meaningful input on the project. They are like “a painful medical procedure—specifically, a dissection that spotlights, names, and analyzes the film’s flaws in breathtaking detail” (99). Coyle notes that since they started doing this, few Pixar films have turned out to be busts. See 165.

A pastor who actively and willingly exercises the fail-forward mentality and utilizes post-mortems (or something similar) is likely to exhibit more effective leadership because he is highlighting these two facts: 1) he is not perfect, and 2) he can and wants to do better. And, according to Polzer, that vulnerability leads to greater cooperation from the group.⁷⁴

Success Doesn't Mean Excellence

A wonderful truth is there will be successes in a pastor's ministry. Thankfully, these will result from his hard work and God's blessing. However, after success, "there will always be the temptation to become complacent or lazy, to give in to the satisfaction of a job well done."⁷⁵ Undoubtedly, success is a good thing, but one success in ministry is not the end of that ministry. Of course, this is common sense. No freshly ordained pastor hangs up his alb and stole, never to wear them again, after he talks to his first prospect. The point is this: "Hunger not for success, but for excellence."⁷⁶ A pastor who desires to grow as an effective leader understands that while he will never be perfect, he "must never cease wanting to be."⁷⁷ As the leader, having that mentality in his ministry inspires others and provides a good example for them in theirs.

Strive to Motivate Well

Every pastor knows it is part of his responsibility to motivate the people under his care—it is part of being a leader. But how many actively think about what *not* to do? Consider psychologist M. M. Feinberg's summary of how to motivate people in the workplace, supplemented with Ted

74. See note 64 above.

75. Brady, *Launching*, 152.

76. Brady, *Launching*, 152.

77. Brady, *Launching*, 152.

Engstrom's commentary in parentheses:

- Never belittle a subordinate. (Destroys sense of self-worth and initiative.)
- Never criticize a subordinate in front of others. (This temptation appears under pressure. Destroys rapport.)
- Never fail to give subordinates your undivided attention. (Personal, undivided attention from time to time is imperative. Self-respect disappears with the realization that the boss will never give his undivided attention.)
- Never seem preoccupied with your own interests. (Gives impression of selfishness and of manipulation of others for your own purposes.)
- Never play favorites. (Quickly destroys morale of group.)
- Never fail to help your subordinates grow. (The feeling that the boss is one who fights for his men is a great motivator. Inform them of openings, opportunities, and never hold them back out of self-interest.)
- Never be insensitive to small things. (What may seem insignificant to you may be extremely important from the employees' perspective.)
- Never vacillate in making a decision. (Indecision at the top breeds lack of confidence and hesitancy throughout an organization. Add this to other problems above and motivation may be irreparably damaged.)⁷⁸

With a fair assessment of himself after reading this list, a pastor can apply strategies and work to establish habits that reflect the above to improve his own leadership and motivation skills.

However, Engstrom also writes that “a leader’s success as a motivator is directly related to his sincerity in showing concern for his subordinates”⁷⁹ and he goes on to quote Feinberg further: “The best way to motivate a subordinate ... is to show him that you are conscious of his needs, his ambitions, his fears and himself as an individual. The insensitive manager, who is perhaps unintentionally aloof, cold, impersonal and uninterested in his staff, usually finds it very difficult to get his people to put out an extra effort.”⁸⁰ Hopefully, a pastor is already exhibiting such concern—and avoiding such aloofness—due to his nature as a shepherd caring for the sheep

78. Ted Engstrom, *The Making of A Christian Leader* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 128. Please note that Engstrom here is citing from another work of his. See Ted Engstrom and R. Alec Mackenzie, *Managing Your Time* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 136–7.

79. Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 129.

80. Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 128. Again citing from *Managing Your Time*, 137.

under his care.⁸¹

Finally, an effective leader understands that “not only do motivating needs differ from person to person, but in any individual, they vary from time to time.”⁸² A pastor would do well to remember this when attempting to motivate those under his care, and he would be wise to utilize different strategies of encouragement when doing so.

Leadership Styles

The focus now shifts to the different styles of leadership. Ken Blanchard narrows down these styles to four basic categories: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating:

- In the directing mode, the leader provides specific instructions and close supervision.
- In the coaching mode, the leader continues to give direction and supervision but also explains decisions, invites suggestions, and notes progress.
- In the supporting style, the leader facilitates and gives support, and begins to share decision-making responsibilities.
- In the delegating mode, the leader turns over the decision making and problem solving to coworkers.⁸³

The question, then, is which style is most effective to use? Blanchard suggests that the leadership style the leader decides to use depends on the competency and commitment of the follower:

- Directing Style is for people who lack competence but are enthusiastic and committed.
- Coaching Style is for people who have some competence but lack commitment.
- Supporting Style is for people who have competence but lack confidence or motivation.

81. The reader is invited to consult Appendix 2 to read Feinberg’s list of ways to show concern for one’s subordinates. Though written for those in a manager-employee context, the list is quite practical and includes several worthwhile reminders for shepherd leaders. Some, though arguably required for pastoral ministry, are still worth reading.

82. Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 133. Please note that Engstrom is quoting a general principle of motivation as presented by Mungo Miller of Affiliated Psychological Services, and cites Kenneth O. Gangel, *Competent to Lead* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 85.

83. Kenneth Blanchard, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 68.

- Delegating Style is for people who have both competence and commitment.⁸⁴

Notice the similarities to Hein's four aspects of Christian leadership,⁸⁵ especially the supporting and delegating styles. While all styles are useful for a pastor, and while all surely have a place in his ministry as a shepherd leader, there is one of particular interest. To be an effective leader who utilizes well the delegating style, a leader must properly prepare his followers, inviting sufficient commitment and equipping with the necessary competence. Phrased differently: a leader must properly empower and encourage his followers before he can delegate to them.

This is the goal of the shepherd leader who is interested in preparing the priests in the pew for service in their own ministries.

Recall that the pastor is not the only one serving in ministry as a priest, but he is preparing other priests to serve with him. "[A] leader is not concerned with being a star in the organization; he is concerned with developing other stars."⁸⁶ The pastor is concerned with developing other leaders. Aubrey Malphurs defines leadership development as "the intentional process of helping established and emerging leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and to acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge and skills."⁸⁷ This is simply another way of phrasing the goal of the pastor who wishes to multiply the ministry of the church by empowering, encouraging, and equipping the priests in the pews to be active participants in that ministry.

84. Blanchard, *Leadership*, 57.

85. See page 20 above.

86. Brady, *Launching*, 193.

87. Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 23.

PART 3: TO EQUIP FOR WORKS OF SERVICE

Having laid a foundation of both strong sacred and strong secular leadership characteristics and having built upon that foundation a structure of various leadership styles, let us now solidify that structure by committing to a deeper understanding of what it means to equip by means of delegation. However, as stated before, the shepherd leader must first empower and encourage his people before he equips them for works of service.

Empower

The good news is that God's people are already empowered for service in the ministry of the Church, simply by being his people through faith.⁸⁸ Luther elaborates on this power as he writes,

Every Christian is by faith so exalted above all things that, by virtue of a spiritual power, he is lord of all things without exception, so that nothing can do him any harm.... This is not to say that every Christian is placed over all things to have and control them by physical power ... for such power belongs to kings, princes, and other men on earth.... The power of which we speak is spiritual. It rules in the midst of enemies and is powerful in the midst of oppression.... This is a splendid privilege and hard to attain, a truly omnipotent power, a spiritual dominion in which there is nothing so good and nothing so evil but that it shall work together for good to me, if only I believe. Yes, since faith alone suffices for salvation, I need nothing except faith exercising the power and dominion of its own liberty. Lo, this is the inestimable power and liberty of Christians.⁸⁹

Against all spiritual enemies, against any who would oppose or doubt or admonish, Christians have an unparalleled spiritual power and authority. In fact, many of them are already exercising this power and carrying out this ministry, sometimes without even knowing it:

88. See Part 1: Ministry above.

89. AE 31:354.

When a Christian laborer in his daily activities counters with a clear witness to Christ a scoffer who blasphemes in his presence, then he has engaged in gospel preaching, for he has borne witness to the contents of the gospel. When Christians at a social gathering privately discuss with one another the great deeds God has done to accomplish the salvation of sinners, even if this is in a most informal way, the gospel is then under discussion, and the one who gives expression to it is carrying on the ministry. When a member of the family or a Christian neighbor who is not a pastor, yes, when a mother, sister, or Christian neighbor lady offers a sick person the comfort of the forgiveness of sins or in some other way strengthens his patience by pointing to the goodness of God our Savior, spiritual priests and priestesses are functioning in the New Testament ministry.⁹⁰

Of course, this is comforting to the pastor: he is not expected to actually give power to his people ... they already have it, by God's design and good grace. Also, by his grace, he has called them to bear fruit that will last.⁹¹ He has created them in Christ to do good works in his kingdom, works that he arranged in advance for them to do.⁹² More incredibly, he himself works in and through his people to accomplish those good things on earth.⁹³ Consider also this explanation of God's masks:

Luther says that God wears masks when he interacts with man.... What is the mask that God wears to interact with the world? You. He wears you and your works and your ways. He puts you on and wears that mask as he protects and preserves this world. Here is life with high dignity. Not only that you should be called sons of God, but that God would use you and even the smallest things you do to care for this world.... The Christian autoworker heads to the plant each knowing that even the repetitive nature of his job cannot take away the dignity of being God's mask to provide for his family. The Christian homemaker covered in baby food knows that lack of recognition for her work cannot take away the dignity of God wearing her as a mask today to care for these young ones. From janitor to general manager, from engineer to day laborer, God has given every Christian a calling to serve the needs of neighbor and family, with the high dignity of fulfilling God's purpose as his mask.⁹⁴

90. Schaller, "Origin," 81–2.

91. See John 15:16–7.

92. See Eph 2:10.

93. See Phil 2:13.

94. Schroeder, "Our Calling," 9.

As the Christian carries out his vocation, he also retains his authority and power to share the Word of God and the saving message of Jesus with whomever he meets wherever he goes.

“Every Christian has the right and duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and whenever necessary.”⁹⁵

The task for the shepherd leader, however, is to make sure that each and every one of God’s people under his care *knows* that, through his preaching, teaching, and interacting with them. Valleskey writes,

The pastor will want to see to it that all the members of the congregation are sensitive to the fact that God has put them into their own personal mission field, that is, their circle of family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. He will then want to help his members become more adept at sharing the basic message of sin and grace with those in their personal mission fields.⁹⁶

This is part of a pastor’s call to equip. In his paper, Zarling offers an incredibly helpful list of practical suggestions.⁹⁷ Please permit the following lengthy excerpt:

- Perhaps in a Bible study on the call, it would be only natural to include the interaction of public ministry with the priesthood of all Christians. If a unit of Bible study might include a comparative religions component or an aspect of apologetics, create learning tasks in which your people are presented case studies of varying ideas about church and ministry and the interaction between layperson and clergy.
- Connect the doctrine of vocation and encourage your people to see how their labors are also a way in which they *offer their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and [pleasing] to God—which is your spiritual worship*. No doubt all of us have served souls that felt trapped in a career or job in which they imagined they made no real difference in anyone's life. Let them marvel how God views the reality.
- Empower parents to serve as priests in their home. Perhaps open a parent/teacher meeting by modeling a simple devotion for small children. Teach parents a simple outline to help them learn how to pray *ex corde*. Help them find appropriate resources for prayers or devotions. Perhaps host a NPH book fair at church or school and thus acquaint parents with devotional and educational resources.

95. AE 13:333.

96. Valleskey, *We Believe*, 168.

97. All of which I quickly recorded for later use.

- Help Christians, parents and children, friends, fellow members, learn how to confess and absolve each other. Teach them the need to lovingly rebuke a loved one who is caught in a sin and to urge him or her to repent. Teach them the joy of absolving the penitent, proclaiming first the forgiveness won by Christ and then reassuring them also for your personal forgiveness. The use of the keys by the priesthood is basic law and gospel talk. Conflict management within our relationships is no longer an effort to squelch conflict and stoke the feel-good emotions. Nor is it the detective work to find out who is more wrong. It is confession and absolution.
- Allow council members or other laymen on various committees to offer *ex corde* prayers prior to a meeting. Of course, first train and prepare them, if needed, much like helping parents with a simple outline. We dare never coerce them, but we can encourage them to learn to feel comfortable in praying out loud together. Otherwise, one might think that only the pastor can pray in such situations. Encourage Christians who visit friends or relatives in hospitals or nursing homes to take along a devotional book, or prepare a list of passages and devotional thoughts for them to share.⁹⁸

Naturally, this list is not all that a pastor can nor should do thoughtfully to remind his people of the power they have as Christians to carry out the ministry of the gospel as priests in service to God ... but it is a start.

Encourage

It is hardly a surprise that encouragement is part of a pastor's responsibility, nor is it a surprise that he has to do it often, especially when needing to encourage the priests in the pews. Anybody who knows that God is God knows that he cannot possibly give anything to him that he needs, so why serve? Luther agrees, yet responds with this encouragement:

Since of ourselves we are nothing but have everything from God, it is easy to see that we can give him nothing; neither can we repay him for his grace. He demands nothing from us. The only thing left, therefore, is for us to praise and thank him. First, we must recognize in our hearts and believe that we receive everything from him and that he is our God. Then out with it, and freely and openly confess this before the world—preach, praise, glorify, and give thanks! This is the real and only worship of God, the true office of the priest, and the finest, most acceptable offering ... We can give him nothing, nor

98. Zarling, "Luther," 36–7, *Passim*.

does he need what we have; for he has given us all that we have anyway. But he wants to be our God.⁹⁹

Whenever a priest in the pew feels they cannot possibly give to God anything he does not already have, commend them for their correctness, to be sure, but then remind them that despite God's having everything, he still wants to be worshipped and praised. This is that priest's call and opportunity to serve simply by being the priest that God has made him.

What a blessing it is, then, that this service in praise and witness to God actually comes easily. It comes naturally to Christians. Peter and John said, "As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "We also believe and therefore speak" (2 Cor 4:13) and then to the Romans: "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved" (Rom 10:10). Those who believe in Jesus cannot help but talk about Jesus. It is not just *part* of who they are ... *it is* who they are. Pastors are wise when they purposely encourage their people with this truth.

Of course, the hesitant priest may still be wary of verbally witnessing or participating actively in the Church's mission. They may even offer excuses, whether in doubt or denial. "I don't have time." "I don't have the gifts." "I can't talk to others." "Someone else can do it better." "You wouldn't want me to represent the congregation. People around here know my past." These are just a few excuses that may surface. The Christian ought to be reminded to remember those whom God called and used in Scripture. "Excuses are not a recent invention,"¹⁰⁰

99. AE 14:32, 34.

100. Zarling, "Leaders," 3. Zarling takes time to explain how people like Moses, David, Elijah, Nehemiah, and Paul—all of whom had a "good excuse" not to serve—can *still* be leaders in the church. To be sure, Zarling is describing the rationale when electing leaders to specific positions in a church, but his reasoning stands firm as an encouragement to any Christian who doubts his competency, commitment, aptitude, or circumstance.

yet see how God used them; see what God accomplished through them despite their apparent weaknesses; see how God can do just the same with any and all of his people now.

Not everybody is an eye, not everybody is an arm, not everybody is an ear ... but everybody is part of the body, and God has placed them exactly where he wants them to be.¹⁰¹ What a comforting reminder and a worthwhile staple of any pastor's words of encouragement! Brady expands on this and offers: "If people are not created equal in all things, then it only follows that people are unequal in different things. This means that some are better in some areas than others.... Nobody is good at everything, but everyone is good at *something*. Success comes from identifying what your strength is and building on it."¹⁰² Part of the pastor's role is to help identify exactly what people *are* good at, and then encourage them to use those gifts in their service to Christ.

Now, if and when the priests in the pews do participate in ministry—whether in evangelism efforts or church events or greeting a visitor or any other dedicated effort—it is important to celebrate their involvement, and *especially* to celebrate their victories. Specificity is also important. "Flattery and loose words mean nothing, and may actually serve to diminish a [person's] confidence even further. A mentor knows the abilities and past successes of his student and mentions them specifically."¹⁰³ Simply put: "Be your team and church's lead cheerleader, making a big deal of every success and positive adjustment along the way.... Thank people. Honor people. Bring people into the fold of acknowledgment and celebration. Help them

101. See 1 Cor 12:15–20.

102. Brady, *Launching*, 157.

103. Brady, *Launching*, 212. Note that in this section of his book, Brady is outlining ways in which leaders can properly train to be mentors themselves, thereby enabling them to train other people then to be leaders. The entire outline is a worthwhile read. See 203–28.

feel like they belong, that change isn't just happening *to* them but also *by* them."¹⁰⁴ After all, "everyone wants to be acknowledged and accepted. Great leaders understand this and make it a point to treat their people as special,"¹⁰⁵ and the priests in the pews are, of course, no different.

Equip

Having reflected on the need to remind the priests of their power, and having spent time on the necessity for encouragement, recall now the shepherd leader's original purpose from the Shepherd: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:12–3). The question, then, is how does a shepherd leader equip Christ's people? Unsurprisingly, it starts with God's Word.

Bible Basics

Consider Valleskey's words: "Equipping as stewards and evangelists flows directly out of being properly nourished and nurtured as disciples. Equipping begins with discipling, with nurturing. It then can proceed to train God's disciplined people for ministry according to their gifts."¹⁰⁶ Equipping God's people for service begins with the proper teaching and preaching of his Word to them. Though at risk of stating the obvious—as preaching and teaching the Word is a requirement for pastoral ministry—this *must* be established as the starting point. Without it, without dedicated sharing of God's truths and application to people's lives, the shepherd leader

104. Jared Wilson, *The Gospel-Driven Church: Uniting Church-Growth Dreams with the Metrics of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 200.

105. Brady, *Launching*, 122–3.

106. Valleskey, "Equipping," 12.

simply would be unable to equip them properly. Such is the importance of faithful study, preparation, and proclamation on the part of the pastor. Ponder, though, what happens when he does: “As disciples grow in their faith by solid nurture in God’s gracious Word, they grow both in their zeal and in their ability to bring that same Word to others.... They recognize ever more fully what a blessing it is to be disciples of Jesus Christ. That, in turn, leads them to want others to have what they have.”¹⁰⁷ To properly equip God’s people is to equip them with the Word of God itself. That will, in turn, increase their faith and ignite the flame of their zeal for sharing the gospel message, that is, for carrying out the function of their priesthood.

This sharing of the Word certainly does not happen during the Sunday morning worship hours alone. One of the most beneficial times to equip by means of sharing the Word is during Bible study. Of course, there are many ways to properly conduct the study of God’s Word in a classroom context. Valleskey offers this suggestion based on his own extensive experience:

[Pastors should] give serious thought to beginning at the beginning: that they set the goal of getting all of their members to participate in a Bible information class that reviews the basic doctrines of the Scriptures. It was the experience of this essayist in his parish ministry, and others have had the same experience, that nothing increased zeal for Bible study more than this. When the basic Bible information class was taught as one of the Bible classes and was strongly promoted among the members, attendance at Bible class more than doubled. And, what is more significant, when the course was completed, virtually all of the new attendees continued in the class as eager students of the Word.¹⁰⁸

Is that too simplistic? Is saying, “just invite the people to BIC; that will solve the problem” really going to help get them through the door? Maybe, maybe not. But consider the effect reviewing such teachings has: it affirms (or reaffirms) what God’s people already know. It comforts and reassures them that not just Pastor knows these things. Besides, some may have been hesitant or

107. Valleskey, *We Believe*, 137.

108. Valleskey, “Equipping,” 12.

wary of sharing these teachings with others simply because it has been so long since they have reviewed them. Who knows? That might have been the only thing holding them back. To those arguing, “Yeah, but I’ve already taken that course,” a pastor need only remind those good people how many times he gets to study the same Bible text over the years, and then how beneficial it is to repeatedly dive into God’s Word.

Consider also: if the people are not active in their individual ministries because of faith nurtured by God’s Word, do they need to be chewing on the meaty doctrines in a Bible study on, for example, St. John’s Revelation ... or ought they receive their nourishment from the milk of simpler, more introductory doctrine? Please do not misunderstand: this is not to say that this is not already happening, or that such in-depth deep Bible studies should never happen—that would be unwise and irresponsible action as the shepherd leader. Rather, the question to ask is, *what do the people need more of right now* when it comes to their spiritual education?

There is a practical side to this, as well.¹⁰⁹ Again, it may seem overly obvious, but it is important to make it *easy* for the people to be present at and involved in a Bible study and Bible Information Course. This means conducting it on the days when the most people are at church. For most, that is on Sundays. It means calling it something other than “Bible Class,” since most adults have decided that they are done with going to school by this point in their lives. It means holding it in a room that is not cramped, if at all possible. It means greeting them by name at the door and thanking them for being there when they leave. It means scheduling the course to repeat multiple times per year.¹¹⁰ It means making a point not to schedule it during another Bible study.

109. The bulk of this section is based almost entirely on the advice and teaching I received as a vicar in Sharpsburg. Pastors are, of course, allowed to exercise their free will in such matters. These are merely suggestions I personally found to be both wise and worthwhile.

110. This would, of course, be a challenge for those who are currently utilizing a course that is designed to last 12+ weeks. The encouragement, then, is to ask how much of such a course is truly introductory and how much can be part of a separate, more specific study? At Faith–Sharpsburg, we utilized a ten-week course with one week

If the priority is to avoid making Sunday mornings a three-hour commitment for people, then schedule the more in-depth Bible studies for a different day, since the BIC will not be running on all fifty-two Sundays, anyway. In the end, there is little sense in inviting people to come and learn but then declining to hold open the door for them.

This is in many ways about *removing* as many of the opportunities for excuses that people might come up with as possible. Conversely, the emphasis is to *provide* as many opportunities as possible for those people to grow personally in the Word, which will then empower, encourage, and equip them for service as priests. God’s Word is reliable, powerful, and effective, after all.¹¹¹ In Jeske’s words: “Right here is the big job of Lutheran congregations and church [leaders]: to provide abundant opportunity for the promises and the claims of Jesus Christ to be brought to bear on the hearts and lives of men. God has promised us: ‘You busy yourself with that, and I guarantee you there will be results.’”¹¹²

Training Time

When, by God’s grace, one of the priests in the pews spends time in the Word, and God then works through it to strengthen that person’s faith to the point of having a desire to serve in some specific, dedicated capacity, what comes next? Now comes the time to train that person in ways that are dependent on their gifts and interests. That last part is critical because, as Anderson

dedicated to each of the following: Sin, Grace, Faith, Works, One True God, Jesus Christ, Baptism, Lord’s Supper, Stewardship/Ministry, Fellowship/Holy Christian Church. The final two were “stealth classes.” The ninth was covered during Breakfast with Pastor and the tenth during Coffee with Pastor. Instruction in these was deemed sufficient for membership. My bishop noted that new members are not and should not be expected to be biblical experts—they are new, after all. Much like Confirmation, induction into membership is not the end of one’s spiritual education, but the beginning.

111. See the comforting words of Isa 55:11; Rom 10:17; 2 Tim 3:16–7; Heb 4:12.

112. Jeske, “Building Lay Leadership,” 6.

argues, “equipping requires attention to God’s distribution of spiritual giftedness. It does not mean simply dumping jobs on available bodies.”¹¹³ Rather, purposely train the people in areas where they can let their gifts shine. Anderson continues, “Part of the equipper’s work is to help men and women discover and develop their own spiritual giftedness. This means leaders must (1) delegate meaningful tasks to others, who (2) have spiritual gifts and passions suited to those tasks, and (3) equip them with skills to do those ministry tasks.”¹¹⁴

Take evangelism. In his book, Jared Wilson spends many pages advocating for churches to “move toward mission,” or train their people to be more mission-minded in their everyday interactions. He notes an important aspect that is present in our time:

People need intentional, direct training on how to share the gospel, how to respond to challenges and questions from critics and skeptics, and how to become more hospitable and servant-minded in their neighborhoods. We can no longer expect people to “just know” how to do this.... In our rapidly pluralizing world, we cannot assume that most of the unbelievers we share the gospel with will have a basic understanding of Christianity, or an awareness of spiritual things at all.... Our culture’s latent knowledge of Christianity is eroding.¹¹⁵

As unfortunate as this is, it is a reality. Pastors would do well to remember it and not assume their people know how or will even do it on their own without being trained. So train them. Offer the course on evangelism and God’s Great Exchange. Encourage those who are interested to join in. Let those willing practice with each other. Again, the emphasis is to *create opportunities*.

Of course, this is not the end. There is more to it. Wilson offers the following helpful excerpt from Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, from their book, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything*:

113. Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep*, 85.

114. Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep*, 85.

115. Wilson, *Gospel-Driven Church*, 158.

Having run a group or groups of people through the [evangelism] course, you can pat yourself on the back for having done some “training.” And there is no question that working through this material will be of benefit to those involved. However, to make real progress in helping the Christians in your congregation become “encouragers,” they need more than a six-week course. They need the example of seeing it done; and they need the personal instruction and mentoring and prayer ... This takes time and personal attention—before, during, and after the structured training opportunity.¹¹⁶

The importance of being an example has been covered in the pages above. It shows its true significance when it is used to equip people, to help them develop their own ministry gifts to emulate the ministry gifts that the shepherd leader himself has. It shows its true significance when it is used to help them become active priests on their own, leaders in their own right. Brady said it well: “Followers need help. Leaders need an example.”¹¹⁷ Consider also the following practical advice from Schroeder:

Put prospects and God’s people together in a purposeful way. Plan for space so that people can talk to one another; provide food after worship to keep people hanging around to talk; teach your people again and again to talk to the new folks. Introduce each visiting family to someone that has a similar background; give them something to talk about.

Model it for them. If the ten minutes before and after worship are the pastor's time to buttonhole people to talk about church work, consider the example you are setting. If your last-minute rushed preparations require you to quickly walk past visiting families, why are you surprised when your members do the same? Don't complain that your people aren't friendly and welcoming to new visitors. Show them how to do it.¹¹⁸

Note the emphasis on *purposefully* creating opportunities, *repeatedly* teaching the people, and *intentionally* exemplifying the expectations. In the end, this allows for the people to be empowered, encouraged, and equipped for service in the ministry of the church.

116. Wilson, *Gospel-Driven Church*, 160. Wilson cites Collin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media), 79.

117. Brady, *Launching*, 207.

118. Schroeder, “Worship & Outreach: A Lutheran Paradigm,” 26, Essay File. This essay was originally presented at the WLS Symposium in Mequon, WI in September of 2010. The entire essay is worthwhile to read.

While this is not the only way to equip the priests in the pews, it does serve as an example of where to begin. It also allows us now to shift focus to the specific strategy under our consideration, one that enables the shepherd leader to multiply the ministry of the church in a thoughtful, purposeful, and wise way: delegation.

Delegate

The reasons for delegation can easily be misunderstood. Society outside the religious, for example, often associates delegation by leaders to subordinates with a negative stigma. Zarling observes, “Secular society often finds delegation a tool the powerful use in order to get out of work, or to avoid some unpleasant task.”¹¹⁹ This is absolutely not why shepherd leaders should consider delegation. First, no honest shepherd leader considers himself to be “powerful” in this sense—he is a servant of all first.¹²⁰ Secondly, he most assuredly is not attempting to avoid some “unpleasant task.” Ministry is a joy in which to serve and a joy in which to share. May no shepherd leader fall under this poor perception and retain such a negative understanding of such a useful strategy.

And it is undoubtedly useful. Why? Admittedly, it is useful in part because it enables the shepherd leader to share the load of ministry at church. Consider Moses’ predicament while in the wilderness:

Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them

119. Zarling, “Leaders,” 6.

120. See Mark 9:35.

of God’s decrees and instructions.”

Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone...” (Exod 18:13–18)

Moses was exhausted. The ministry around him was quite involved—he was busy from sunup to sundown every day. He could not handle it alone.

The modern shepherd leader is not carrying out the exact same ministry as Moses, but he is busy every day. None in our circles would argue that the pastoral ministry is limited to only preaching and teaching on Sundays. There is always something to do, and something else that needs to be put on the back burner, saved for another time. Delegating some of his tasks that do not *require* his doing them as a function of his call would then be quite helpful.

Beyond that, however, is the desire to share in the joy of ministry with the members of the priesthood around him that he has been called to serve and equip for such a ministry. *That* is the ultimate goal of delegation: *sharing* the ministry to multiply the ministry. It is pertinent, then, to delve into the concept and practice of delegation more deeply.

Definition

A basic definition of delegation has already been mentioned: to share responsibility. It would be useful, however, to consider a more complex definition. Valleskey proposes that delegation is “transferring authority, responsibility and accountability from one person or group to another.”¹²¹ Consider Engstrom’s four basic ideas behind delegation, which further advance Valleskey’s thoughts. Delegation is:

- Transfer of work
 - An assigned task goes from the leader to a subordinate, and the subordinate

121. Valleskey, “Motivating and Mobilizing,” 14.

accepts the delegated work on the basis of the expected results.

- Transfer of authority
 - This is essential in most cases. Most experts in management and organization feel that authority should be commensurate with the nature of the work.
- Acceptance of responsibility
 - If delegation is to be effective, the subordinate must be genuinely willing to perform the work and must have the initiative to get it done.
- Importance of follow-up and accountability
 - Delegation does not mean abandoning all interest in the work. The leader is still accountable, and therefore he should always be available and ready to give the subordinate help or advice if and when he needs it.¹²²

Engstrom's definition is a bit more complex, even if it is notably secular. However, perhaps

viewing it through the lens of ministry may be helpful:

- Transfer of work being accepted on the basis of expected results could be understood as participation in ministry efforts for the benefit of the Church.
- Transfer of authority, both essential and commensurate with the nature of the work, could be understood as the priest's empowerment to participate in the ministry, which he inherently has through faith.
- Acceptance of responsibility willingly and with initiative could be understood as the fire of zeal that grows as the priest becomes more equipped through the strengthening of his faith by the Holy Spirit through the Word.
- Importance of follow-up and accountability by the leader could be understood as the shepherd leader remaining involved with the ministry efforts as the leader/manager, not as the primary doer.

Scharf acknowledges the importance of the last idea in two ways. When asked to explain the difference between “doing” and “delegating” for a pastor to whom seemingly everyone looks for final decisions, he responded, “Delegating is empowering others to serve by invitation, by instruction and equipping, *as well as assisting until they feel comfortable doing it on their own.*”¹²³ There comes a time in the process of delegating that the leader must step away. In this case, it is when the people are comfortable working independently. Scharf acknowledges this.

122. Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 163.

123. Scharf, personal interview with author, December 1, 2021 (emphasis mine).

When asked then when he thinks a pastor should start to think about backing off and ending his involvement in a ministry effort to let it run itself, he responded, “As soon as possible. The longer a pastor is seen as the driver of an initiative, the harder it is to pass it off to skilled laypeople. You become a crutch instead of an equipper.”¹²⁴ Delegation does not mean the leader stops his involvement entirely, but it does mean that he is not the primary doer. In this light, Engstrom’s more complex definition can be easily applicable and its content made useful.

In the context of delegation’s usefulness to a leader, George Barna acknowledges the following reality: “Every leader has an incomplete set of tools to lead with and must, therefore, know what he can and cannot do. Effective leaders overcome their weaknesses by combining forces with [others] whose strengths compensate for those weaknesses, thereby creating a more complete and powerful mix of gifts and abilities.”¹²⁵ The wise shepherd leader acknowledges his own weaknesses and seeks to complement them by empowering, encouraging, and equipping those around him. Often, those around him are humbly willing to lend a hand. Mark Massmann once said, “I believe that it’s the privilege and responsibility of the congregation to make up for what their pastor lacks.”¹²⁶ Delegation, therefore, can be hugely beneficial.

Engstrom outlines extensively what delegation can do to better a work environment.

Again, note its secular framing:

124. Scharf, personal interview with author, December 1, 2021.

125. Brady, *Launching*, 174. No citation given.

126. Schroeder, “Shepherds,” 28. Massmann was a good friend to Schroeder and served as a congregational leader, a member of the Synodical Council, and advisor to many congregations across the synod, before God called him home to heaven in 2018. Schroeder recounts the story: “In my first year of ministry, I had a lot to learn. Much of it God taught me not in books but in the lives of faithful members. I was talking to my dear friend, Mark Massmann, about the congregation he had attended previously which was served by a pastor who had lost both his legs and suffered from extended illness. Knowing all that I had planned to do at the church that week, I asked Mark how the pastor had been able to accomplish everything necessary to serve the congregation” (28). Massmann responded with the above quote. I found the story to be incredibly moving and very relevant to the present argument for delegation. Mark’s widow, Antoinette, was my landlady while I was Sharpsburg. She, too, shares Mark’s servant heart and attitude.

- Benefits of Delegation
 - Improved understanding between levels. It seldom fails that when persons on one level undertake the work on a higher level, understanding is increased because a deeper appreciation of the problems and demands is developed.
 - Improved leader-follower relationships. The increased understanding develops rapport, which tends to strengthen the relationship. Leaders will learn to rely more on their subordinates, and these in turn will learn how they can be more helpful to their supervisors.
 - Increased job satisfaction and morale. Delegation is a powerful means for job satisfaction. It has been pretty well established that morale depends less on pay and benefits than on how people feel about their leaders and their work. When relationships are rewarding, people are more productive. This helps to develop a strong team spirit between departments that is vital for organizational efficiency.
- Benefits to the Leader
 - Eased job pressures. It relieves work pressure. Holding a leadership position involves many frustrations and tensions.
 - Increased time for broader functions. By delegating less important aspects of his job, the leader frees himself for more important managerial and leadership functions. This gives him more time for planning and making careful decisions.
 - Increased chances of promotion. This is possible because when a person delegates, it frees him to develop other skills that increase his worth to the organization. Moreover, when he is ready to assume a more responsible position, a replacement for him will be available in his department.
- Benefits to Subordinates
 - Challenge and interest. Most of our associates like a challenge, especially if they want to advance in the organization. Delegated authority gives them the chance to show what they can do, to test themselves in new situations, and to make mistakes and learn from them.
 - Increased motivation. The opportunities provided by delegation stimulate subordinates to more effective work. If they find they are successful at tasks outside their routine, their confidence and efforts to perform and to achieve will increase.
 - Increased opportunities. Delegation provides opportunities for subordinates to practice managerial skills, to understand the problems, pressures, and point of view of the leader and to get a broader perspective of the whole picture. In short, it prepares them both to act more responsibly in their work and to accept a more responsible position in the future.¹²⁷

Helpfully, Valleskey offers the following more church-centered and concise list of benefits to

127. Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 163–4, *Passim*. Content has been condensed and paraphrased. Please note that while Engstrom's presentation of benefits is framed in a secular context, his goal is to provide practical, real-world evidence for the point he is also trying to make: delegation for church leaders *is* beneficial.

delegation. Note the interesting similarities between Engstrom's and his:

- Allows the Body [of Christ, the Church] to work as God wants it to
- Permits maximum utilization of spiritual gifts
- Makes the leader's job easier
- Increases productivity
- Develops additional leadership
- Allows more time for personal spiritual development
- Demonstrates trust in members' abilities
- Stimulates members' creativity
- Stimulates members' commitment to their congregation and its ministry
- Increases pastor's time for broader functions¹²⁸

It is easy for the shepherd leader to see the benefit of delegating ministry activities to the priests that are in the pews. Why, then, might some be hesitant? Valleskey, again, offers a concise and worthwhile list of possibilities:

- Supposed incompetency of delegates
- Pride
- Insecurity
- Too time-demanding
- Perfectionism
- Reluctance to let go
- Lack of organization
- Equating delegating with "dumping"
- Frustration with unreliability
- An activist spirit¹²⁹

By personal estimation, in the list of possible reasons to avoid delegation, most items are indefensible, even worth abandoning. However, consider now the first: supposed incompetency of delegates. This one may be especially tempting for pastors, each of whom typically 1) has completed eight years of dedicated training, and 2) has been in the public ministry for x -years. It may be tempting to think, "Well, I can get this done a lot faster, and I could then just move on to

128. Valleskey, "Motivating and Mobilizing," 15.

129. Valleskey, "Motivating and Mobilizing," 15.

other things.” Malphurs comments and offers warning:

Unfortunately, the attractiveness of short-term effectiveness is too strong for many leaders. To complicate matters, the interest in efficiency is usually accompanied by the pride of competence. Not only can the leader do it faster, he can also do it better. And not only can he do it better, he feels good about the fact he can do it better! Many times this reality eclipses the opportunity for empowerment. All leaders face this defining moment—the choice between performing a function themselves and delegating it to someone with less experience or technical competence. . . . Patience in these situations is much deeper than simply waiting. It involves dying to self, which is very painful. In many cases it is allowing someone else to do what you love to do, what you were trained to do, and what you can do better!¹³⁰

Sobering thoughts. If he is hesitant to delegate, a pastor would be wise to examine whether if he struggles with any of the above reasons and then how many may be the cause for delay. He would also do well to remember that the ministry of the Word is not his, it is God’s, and he has been called to steward it as a shepherd leader. Malphurs says it well:

Leaders must lead with the perspective of stewardship over ministry rather than ownership of ministry. Stewardship is being responsible for something that belongs to someone else. When leaders insist on control, they are really assuming the role of owner of people and ministry outcomes, promoting themselves to a role that only the sovereign Creator and Manager of the universe can hold.¹³¹

Now that we have established a worthy definition and outlined the benefits of delegation, the question before us is simply this: how does one delegate effectively?

To Effectively Delegate

If the shepherd leader is striving for excellence and not merely success, he understands that delegating *ineffectively* would be detrimental to the ministry efforts he is trying to achieve. It is important, then, to keep the following questions in mind when delegating.

130. Malphurs, *Building Leaders*, 49–50.

131. Malphurs, *Building Leaders*, 46–7.

Where to Start?

Effective delegation begins by asking certain questions of oneself and one's circumstances. It requires a degree of reflection, strategy, and planning before ever asking someone to take on a task or responsibility. Engstrom offers the following tip with a series of practical questions regarding the transfer of work, or delegation:

One way to approach the issue is for the leader to make an informal survey of every piece of work that crosses his desk, by asking the following questions: "Could this be done by someone else?" "Could someone else be assigned a part of the job?" "What is the worst that could happen if someone else took it over?" "Assuming someone did take it over, what specifically could I tell him or do to prevent his mishandling the work?"¹³²

Though written for use within a manager-subordinate context, Engstrom's series emphasizes that these questions all take place *before any action does*. These are questions that the leader must ask of himself. Malphurs is like-minded when he offers these possible questions:

- What ministry areas require my direct attention, and which ones do not?
- What are the most strategic ministry areas at this time (and therefore require emerging leader involvement)?
- Who qualifies as an emerging leader?
- What are the passions and gifts of the emerging leader?
- How will the transfer of authority take place?¹³³

While similar, Malphur's list of questions to ask conveys a greater and more careful consideration of the delegate, which needs to be an emphasis for the shepherd leader who is seeking to share the ministry with the specific priests around him in order to multiply the ministry, not just to "dump work onto able bodies."¹³⁴ Doing so is beneficial because it ensures that 1) the right person is considered, and 2) the wrong person is *not* considered. Having the

132. Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 161.

133. Malphurs, *Building Leaders*, 40, *Passim*.

134. See note 113 above.

wrong person—someone with an inadequate skill set, motivation, temperament, etc.—can also have detrimental effects. Obviously, this ought to be avoided.

In short, to effectively delegate, the leader must ask what needs to be done by himself and what could be delegated to be done by others; and then he must ask who is most able, most qualified, most willing to volunteer their time to do it. That last part is key: unless they are also called workers or paid by the church, all those priests in the pews are considered volunteers. As such, it is important to consider a number of specific points when delegating.

What to Consider?

The shepherd leader must be in the frame of mind that volunteers are most likely in. Valleskey offers a general list of factors to consider regarding the ways people—including Christians—think and feel.¹³⁵ The list is bulleted below, with commentary on the relevance of each point and support in part by several responses to an interview that was conducted for this paper.¹³⁶ Note how many factors' relevance to the discussion on delegation has been covered above and is repeated here. The list is as follows:

- People want to feel that they belong

If a person does not feel like they belong at a church, they likely will not be looking to volunteer their time to contribute to its ministry. Consider Dan Curcio's description of the culture of ministry at Faith: "It is inviting and outreaching at the same time. It feels like a large family."¹³⁷

135. Valleskey, "Motivating and Mobilizing," 18–9.

136. The reader is encouraged to consult Appendix 1: A Faith Study for an in-depth application of the contents of this paper to the culture of ministry at Faith–Sharpsburg.

137. Dan Curcio, personal interview with the author, November 2, 2021. Dan is a very active member at Faith, including as a member of the Council of Ministry (Faith's leadership council). One of my favorite things about Dan is his willingness to help whenever he is needed as one of the resident handymen—all on a volunteer

That family feel contributes to a person's sense of belonging, which helps to remove possible obstacles. Of course, what aids this is that the people around are not just fellow worshippers and nothing more. No, by God's grace, they are brothers and sisters in Christ.¹³⁸

- People want to [do] meaningful work

This is the importance of proper empowerment and encouragement paired with proper education carried out by the shepherd leader. If the people do not know why ministry participation is important, they will not be motivated to participate. Consider Megan Buth's motivation when asked what the most significant motivating factor is for her to get involved in ministry efforts: "To serve God and others! It brings me the most joy to know that I'm doing something that can have an eternal impact on someone's life!"¹³⁹

- People want to do work that appeals to them

Similar to the importance of the work being meaningful in order to be considered worthy of participation, involvement in ministry efforts becomes that much more worthy when the effort is appealing. People like to do what they like. For example, Dan Buth had this to say about what motivated him to participate in ministry efforts: "[One of the best encouragers] for me is interesting opportunities. It makes it super easy to get involved with something when it is

basis. In his interview, he noted that the greatest and only obstacle when it comes to participating in ministry at Faith is his Multiple Sclerosis that has negatively affected his energy level. If he could serve more, he would.

138. See Matt 12:46–50.

139. Megan Buth, personal interview with the author, November 2, 2021. Megan is an extremely active participant at Faith when she is there. At the time of this writing, she is a senior at MLC studying for the public teaching ministry. Over the course of my time there, she exemplified what it means to be an active priest in the pew (though she very regularly was up in the balcony, accompanying the worship services musically. Once, she even recorded a piece and sent it while at MLC).

something that interests me and that I enjoy, like soccer camp.”¹⁴⁰

- People want to do work that is challenging

Mundane or overly simplistic work is not always appealing to people, especially those willing to be active. Often, something simply being a challenge is enough to get people motivated, active, and—sometimes—successful.¹⁴¹

- People want to do work they are able to do

Quite literally, this is the importance of empowering, encouraging, and equipping. When opportunities to participate are provided to allow people to use their specific gifts, they are more likely to participate. Another Faith member considered this to be her strongest motivator:

“Opportunities to serve as we are called by God and using the gifts he has given me to their fullest.”¹⁴²

- People want to know what they are supposed to do

Scharf and others¹⁴³ emphasize the importance of sharing the “job description” with whomever is being considered for a task. He says to encourage a potential leader, one needs to provide a

140. Dan Buth, personal interview with author, November 3, 2021. Dan is brother to Megan (above), a fantastic soccer player/coach, and one of my good friends whom I met while in Sharpsburg. At the time of this writing, he is in his sophomore year at MLC studying for the pastoral ministry. He references “soccer camp,” which is an annual ministry event held in June organized and led by Faith’s vicar. It also serves as an incredible opportunity for delegation. The event is four days long, includes 150 grade school kids, 70+ volunteers, extensive planning that starts in January, coordinating with various staff members, and many other edifying challenges. One of the things that made it easier, as Dan mentioned, is that *people like to do it*. With that level of interested commitment, even an event of that size is much more easily run.

141. Coyle summarizes the story of Google’s success in the targeted ad market in the early 2000s over the widely favored company Overture. The success came at the hands of a worker from a different department who simply tackled the job because it was a challenge. See *Culture Code*, 16–21.

142. Personal interview with the author, November 7, 2021. Interviewee requested to remain anonymous.

143. See also Brady, *Launching*, 156; Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 165, 172.

“personal invitation with a ready job description, including the resources they would need to carry out the task.”¹⁴⁴ Being transparent and helpful in this way only removes any obstacles that a person sees preventing them from serving.

- People want to know how much time is involved

Similar to the previous point, being transparent in the time commitment early and often when seeking volunteers is essential to encouraging participation.¹⁴⁵

- People want to have a feeling of achievement

This is especially important when seeking more participation for ministry efforts, and even more so when seeking to delegate those ministry efforts. Jim Christopher offers a helpful example of the importance of the shepherd leader who emphasizes the resulting achievement that excites people to participate. He writes the following about putting up door hangers:

It is not a fun thing to walk up and down hills, hanging door hangers on people’s front doors. Pastor [Schroeder] can cut [through] any hesitance, overcome the negative aspects of all that “work,” and motivate participation by naming individuals in the congregation who have joined because they got a door hanger on their door and decided to visit Faith. How many more people will hear the Word of God if you simply place a door hanger on their door?¹⁴⁶

This achievement/result mindset is critical for motivating the priests in the pews. Celebrating the victories—whether individual or group—is of great importance because it is not just that a

144. Scharf, personal interview with the author, December 1, 2021.

145. I learned this early in my vicar year when seeking volunteers for a church workday. Pastor Schroeder suggested to include the expected time commitment, otherwise people could not plan around it and therefore would not show.

146. Jim Christopher, personal interview with the author, November 15, 2021. As of this writing, Jim serves as the Head Elder on the Council of Ministry. He also exhibits an exceptional servant heart and attitude towards ministry even outside of his elected position. I am very grateful to have served with and learned from him while in Sharpsburg.

victory was won, it is that a victory was won *by each and every participant*.

Final Encouragement

Delegation—when carried out thoughtfully, purposefully, and wisely—can profoundly affect a shepherd leader’s ability to empower, encourage, and equip the priests in the pew to be active in their participation in the church’s ministry efforts. However, one crucial aspect cannot be omitted and is worthwhile to remember. Malphurs provides this pertinent picture for those who delegate:

Think about teaching someone to drive a car. The student driver must first study the rules of the road, watch more experienced drivers, and learn how to operate the vehicle. But the student cannot actually drive the car until he or she sits in the driver's seat—the place of decision-making power. For the student driver to sit in the driver's seat, the existing driver must take his hands off the wheel and move over.¹⁴⁷

Even with all the effort to prepare, plan, coordinate, teach, train, and provide all the necessary resources, a shepherd leader’s efforts to delegate effectively are brought to a screeching halt if he never takes his hands off the wheel and moves over.

147. Malphurs, *Building Leaders*, 41.

CONCLUSION

This paper began by acknowledging this reality: both the pastor and the parishioner work and serve God together. To repeat: “Together we are carrying out the one ministry of God’s church on earth, namely, proclaiming the gospel of Christ.... Pastors and Christian laypeople are in partnership with each other to carry out the one ministry of the church and to encourage each other individually and as members of a congregation ... to preach the gospel of Jesus to the entire world.”¹⁴⁸ This is our goal, our purpose as priests in service to Christ.

To reach this goal, this paper endeavored to define ministry in multiple contexts, whether broadly in reference to that of the priesthood of all believers or narrowly in reference to the public ministry. With this foundation, we sought to define leadership more deeply and with relevance to the shepherd leader role of pastor. Having solidified the understanding of leadership in ministry, we outlined the various ways in which the shepherd leader can more effectively prepare the priests in the pew for works of service in Christ’s kingdom. Thus, we conclude that by means of thoughtful, purposeful, and wise delegation, shepherd leaders can multiply the ministry of the Church by empowering, encouraging, and equipping the priests in the pews to be active participants in that ministry.

There are numerous shortcomings in this paper and areas into which we may have gone into further detail. However, it is my prayer that it still serves as a tool, an encouragement, and an inspiration for others to consider delegation and implement it in their own ministry settings.

Soli Deo Gloria.

148. Sorum, “Pastors and Laypeople,” 122–3, 128, 130, Essay File, *Passim*.

APPENDIX 1: A FAITH STUDY

When I first heard that Faith Lutheran had about six hundred members and only one pastor, I initially thought that the pastor must be a superhero. How could one person serve that many people? While Jon Schroeder is undoubtedly gifted in many ways, I knew there had to be more to it. Before I arrived in Sharpsburg, I knew I wanted to find out how such a thing was happening and remain in awe at the wonders God was accomplishing through those who serve in his Church. The answer came quickly but became clearer as the year went on: delegation; cultivating a culture of shared ministry and giving permission to participate in order to multiply the ministry of the Church. Ultimately, this was the spark that fueled my pursuit of this topic and my writing of this paper.

Over the course of my research, I found that it would be worthwhile to interview members of Faith, in order to get their perspective on the ministry and their involvement. At the start of the process, the goal I had originally envisioned for this paper was to describe how to cultivate a congregational culture in which members actively participate in the efforts of the church. While there are elements of that within the paper, the final product was a bit different. However, some of the data from the study was still useful. What follows is the methodology I adopted to conduct the personal interviews, and then the results of that interview process with respect to various elements covered within the paper above.

Methodology

The interview process was somewhat simple. I asked Pastor Schroeder whom he thought would be good subjects. He specifically noted that the pool should be limited to a select group, rather than opening it up to the entire congregation. Doing otherwise would have skewed the participation rate. Working with Schroeder, I compiled a list of 61 interviewees to whom I would send a Google form questionnaire. Of those 61, I received 27 completed forms.

The form included the following broad definition for ministry:

[Ministry is] any activity or service in which the congregation or its members participate that advances the gospel message of Jesus—whether in worship, outreach (activities done primarily by members of the congregation for the unchurched or non-members of the community), in-reach (activities done primarily between and for members of the congregation) or education—and can either be an organized/official or unorganized/unofficial effort.

Each participant was also given this disclaimer:

Your participation in this research may be used in the following ways:

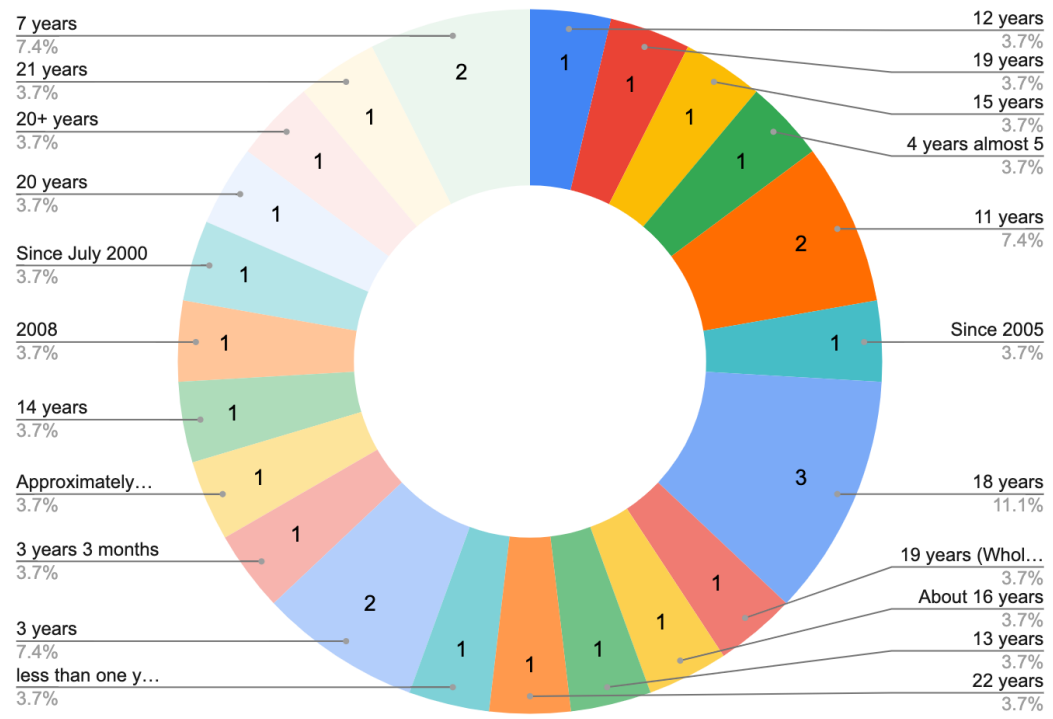
- *as a direct quotation with accompanying citation within the final paper;*
- *as a paraphrase with accompanying citation within the final paper;*
- *as part of a data set that presents overall results, categorized by the author based on commonalities and/or differences.*

Participation in this digital questionnaire is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any or all questions, or request that a portion or all of any submitted information be excluded from the final paper. If you do not wish to submit an answer for a question that is marked “required,” please enter “prefer not to answer,” and make a note in the comments section.

**By submitting a completed form, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the above information, and voluntarily agree to participate in this study under the conditions described.*

The questions provided—written by me and fine-tuned by my thesis advisor—are listed below with their corresponding results (where graphable):

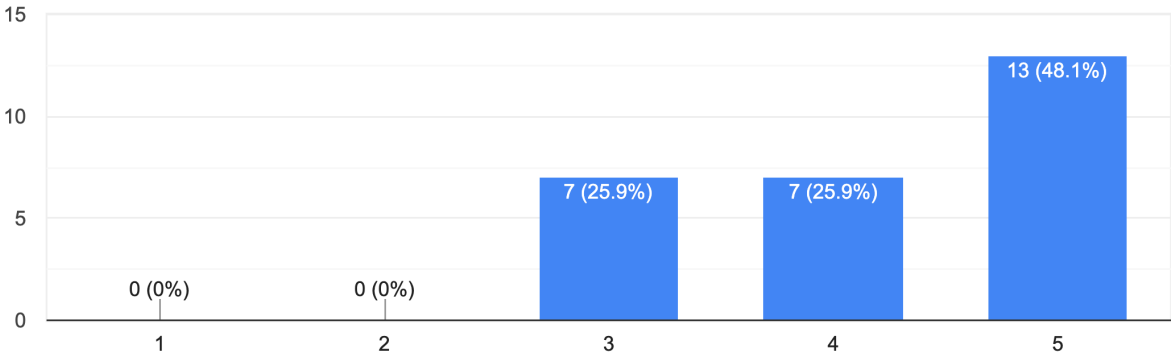
1. How long have you been at Faith Lutheran Church in Sharpsburg, GA?



2. Do you feel that there are ample opportunities to be involved with ministry efforts at Faith? Why or why not?

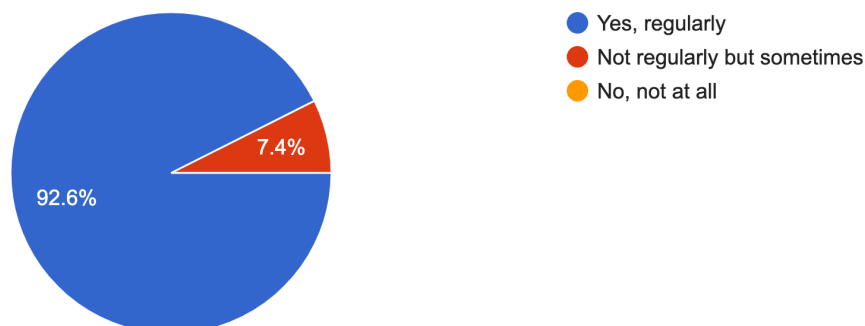
3. On a scale of 1–5, how often do you feel you are involved with ministry efforts at Faith?

27 responses



4. Would you say that you have been regularly encouraged to participate in ministry efforts?

27 responses



5. What are some of the best encouragers for you to be involved with ministry efforts? (Participants were instructed to list 3–4.)

6. What do you feel is the greatest motivating factor for you to get involved with the ministry efforts at Faith? Why do you feel it is the greatest?

7. What do you feel is the greatest obstacle for you when it comes to participating in the ministry efforts at Faith?

8. What are some other obstacles that might limit your participation in ministry efforts?

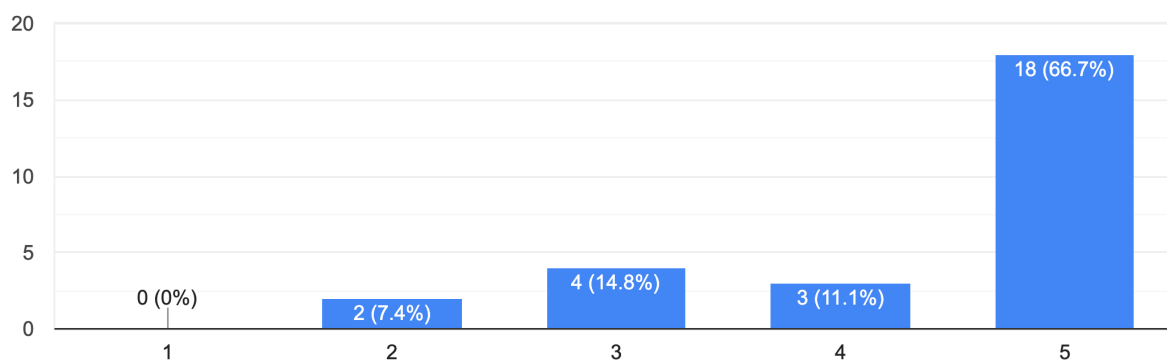
9. Describe the “culture” of ministry at Faith. What are its strengths and weaknesses?

10. How do you think most people in the congregation would describe the “culture” of ministry at Faith?

11. How do you think a relatively new member would describe the “culture” of ministry at Faith?

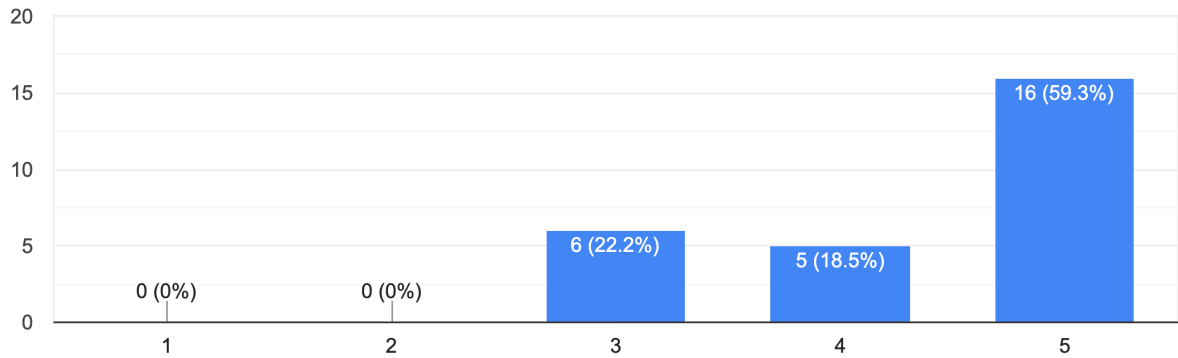
12. On a scale of 1–5, how comfortable do you feel inviting a stranger to church?

27 responses



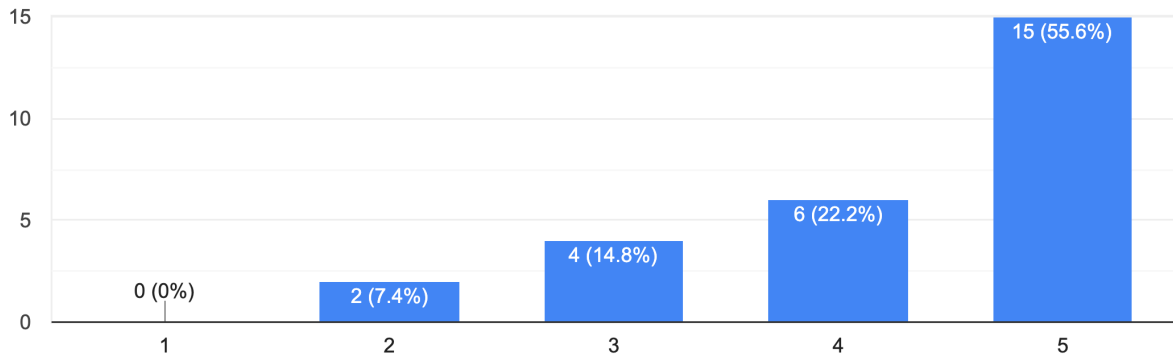
13. On a scale of 1–5, how comfortable do you feel inviting a neighbor to church?

27 responses



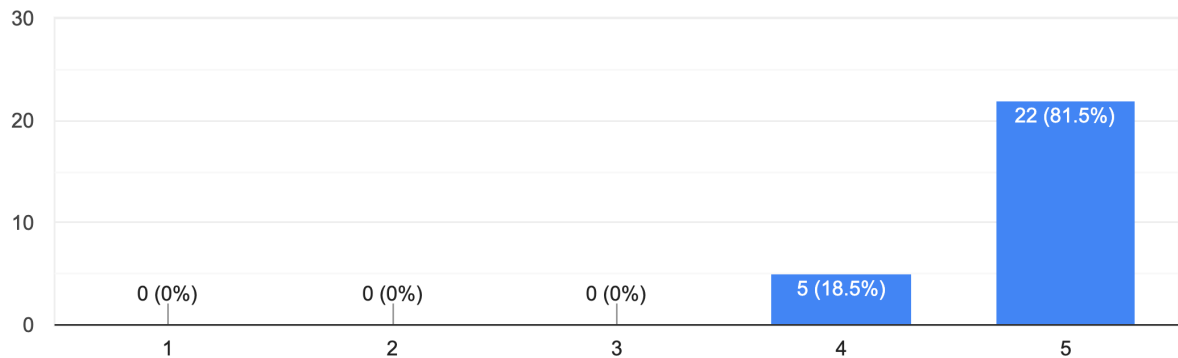
14. On a scale of 1–5, how comfortable do you feel inviting a coworker to church?

27 responses



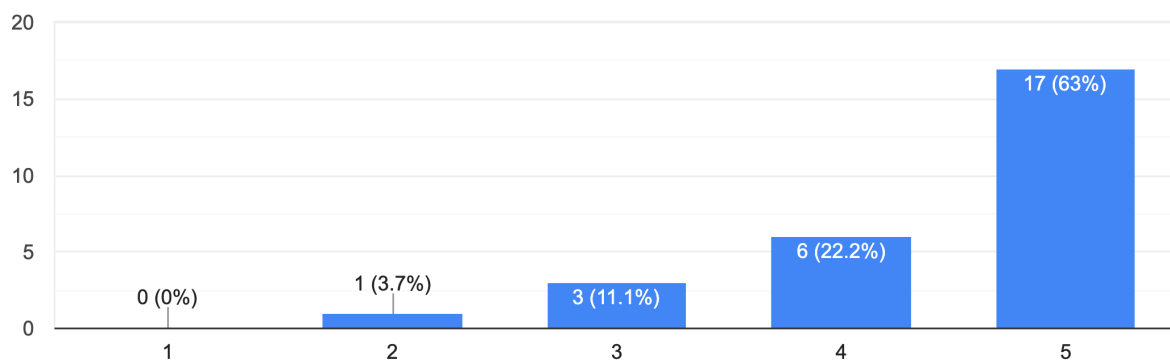
15. On a scale of 1–5, how comfortable do you feel inviting a friend to church?

27 responses



16. On a scale of 1–5, how comfortable do you feel inviting an unchurched family member to church?

27 responses

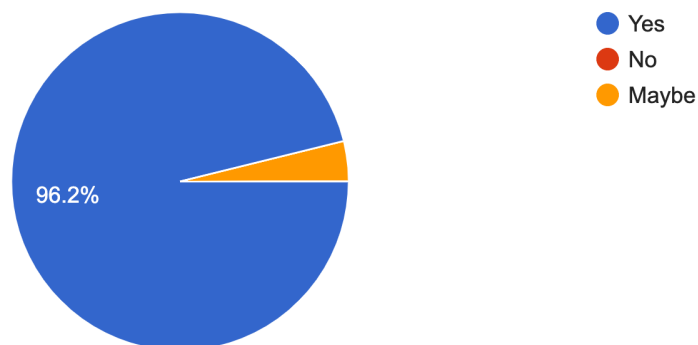


17. How would you define a “leader” in the congregation, in the context of ministry efforts?

18. What do you think makes a leader in the congregation identifiable to others?

19. Can you confidently identify at least 2 leaders at Faith, by name or by recognition?

26 responses



All responses were genuinely helpful, and I am thankful for each and every person who participated in the study. However, several responses proved to be incredibly useful in explaining and exemplifying the various elements covered in this paper. What follows is a list of elements covered with responses categorized based on commonalities. Commentary is provided where applicable.

Ministry

There were various responses that pertained to ministry (using the definition provided) and letting one's light shine that are worth listing here.

- One person, who requested to remain anonymous, wrote, “God’s grace to me is so undeserved. I want all to feel that and be a motivating factor for them also.”
- Sharon Buck¹⁴⁹ wrote, “The gospel truth compels getting involved—to share, encourage, pass it on.”
- Ruth Curtis¹⁵⁰ wrote, “Faith offers ample ministry opportunities for any who are willing and able to be involved. These opportunities are fueled and fostered by the love of Christ shared consistently in Word and Sacrament. This drives and motivates the members of Faith in service to share this message with others in the community.... I want to serve the church to help spread God’s message to the community at large and I want to serve with the fellow believers at Faith, that is the most motivating factor for me. The opportunities being offered that are so easy to do, like putting flyers in door hangers or helping stack chairs after a meal (back in the day!¹⁵¹) or volunteering to watch the bounce house at Fall Festival, anyone can do these things and it’s exciting to see our members step up and simply do those things that are needed. That desire is fueled by our shared faith in Christ and our Christian love for one another.”
- Another person, who requested to remain anonymous, wrote, “[The] motivating factor is to serve Jesus. All that Jesus has done for us I want to serve him, our church and others. I see the emptiness in the ‘community projects’ I do at work as often times really not doing anything for anybody [and it] seems to me [that people are] just doing that project to look good or think [they’re] doing something good. Serving at church can and does have an eternal impact and personal impact on folks serving and receiving.”

149. Sharon is the epitome of what it means to be a Christian evangelist, especially among those who are not in the public ministry. Her willingness to share the gospel with anyone and everyone is incredible and, thankfully, infectious.

150. Of all the wonderful people I got to know and work with while in Sharpsburg, Ruth is among those I surely will never forget. A teacher in the preschool, a frequent accompanist for worship, and a regular helper at church functions, she is a fantastic example of what it means to be a Christian servant. Her constant involvement and help in so many areas were and are an inspiration to me.

151. Before the 2020 opening of Faith’s new Commons, all Advent, Lenten, and other congregational meals and gatherings were done in the “gathering space”—a relatively small area just outside the sanctuary. For years, 150+ people would gather there for a meal. At a certain point, Pastor would get up and pull out the broom, and it was apparently like a beacon to everyone there. Everybody helped to clean up, pack up, and put away the folding tables and chairs. The small space with near-standing-room-only was clean in a shockingly short amount of time. It was a great opportunity for anyone and everyone to serve. Now, by God’s grace, they have a more permanent area for such gatherings that does not require the same amount of setup and take down. Still, people want to be a part of the helping.

- Another person, who requested to remain anonymous, wrote, “Outside of the gospel motivation, there are just a lot of members willing to do ministry and I think that is infectious.”
- Dan Buth wrote, “The greatest motivating factor is the ability to make a difference. When I go to church every Sunday, I am not actively pursuing outreach. I hear this amazing gospel message and am filled with zeal but often I don’t get a chance to act on that zeal throughout the week. So, when I get a chance to get involved I often jump at it because I have an ability to make a difference.”
- Christell Bakken¹⁵² wrote, “[The people of Faith are] servant-minded and committed to helping others and to seek out mission opportunities to help.”

Priesthood of All Believers

There was one response that pertained especially to the Priesthood of All Believers. Joe Sanders spoke to the equal authority Christians have in sharing the gospel with others. He wrote, “Members of Faith are very outgoing and everyone treats everyone else as equal.” Not one person is better than another when it comes to sharing their faith.

Leadership in Ministry

There were various responses that pertained to leadership both in general and in regard to spiritual leadership that are worth listing here.

- Frank Cook¹⁵³ wrote, “The leader provides the purpose (WHY are we doing something), the direction (HOW we are doing something), and the motivation (the INSPIRATION to do something)... [A leader is identifiable] by their actions. When someone is identified

152. Christell is a great example of a Christian with a servant heart. With many others at Faith, she is among those who are not only willing to but also do show up and help when something needs to get done around the church campus, often at a moment’s notice.

153. Pastor Schroeder describes Frank in this way: “Frank is a retired Army Colonel. He knows what he’s talking about when it comes to leadership.” As the “Coaches Overseer,” Frank is *absolutely instrumental* in the annual success of Faith’s Soccer Camp. He has developed a systematic way of building leaders among the coaching staff, the vast majority of whom attended the camp as kids. Under his direction and leadership, many of them are now head coaches and inspirations for the new campers every year. Working with him is among my most favorable memories from my time in Sharpsburg and I fully acknowledge that I could not have done Soccer Camp without him.

as the ‘leader’ of an action, it is their giving or [sic] purpose, direction, and motivation that others will identify with.”

- Joe Sanders wrote, “[A leader is] someone who makes themselves available but not pushy. Leads by example.... They are visible in their actions and participate in many activities.”
- Ruth Curtis wrote, “I would describe a leader kind of as a facilitator, one who has done this before and can show someone else the ropes.... I think a leader who has a servant heart makes them identifiable and approachable to others.”
- Shelly Sanders wrote, “[A leader is] someone who sets good examples of being a Christian, and someone who is actively involved in the church.”
- Christell Bakken wrote, “[A leader is] someone that assists with the day-to-day management of the church, leads with integrity, initiates mission projects and lives by/practices biblical principles in their daily lives.”
- Josh Buth¹⁵⁴ wrote, “[A leader is] someone who guides a Connect Group¹⁵⁵ or helps organize events, but also applies matters of God to their life to guide their decision-making process.”
- One person, who requested to remain anonymous, defined a leader as someone who is “outgoing, great communicator, leads by example,” and what makes one identifiable is the fact that “there is so much work done ‘behind the scenes’ if you will and what I see from people that I would consider leaders is they do it out of love for their Savior and not to be seen as an example.”

Empowered

There was one response that pertained especially to being empowered in ministry. One person, who requested to remain anonymous, wrote almost as a matter of fact: “I have never been turned down.” This is such an important aspect to the congregation’s culture of ministry and what it

154. Brother to Dan and Megan, Josh is a person well on his way to becoming an active leader in the congregation, driven by his desire to serve and be involved at Faith. It was a joy to get to know and work with him.

155. Connect Groups are Faith’s small-group ministry program. They are exclusively lay-led and are a way for members to get connected to each other in study, service, and social areas. Anybody who is interested in starting a group simply needs to reach out to the Connect Group coordinator and get it on the schedule and a poster up on the wall. There is minimal involvement by Pastor Schroeder. At this point, he does not need to help to get groups growing ... the culture of ministry and the empowerment and permission to lead drives the growth.

means to serve. People know that if they have even the desire to be involved, no one is going to reject them. Everyone is good at something, so everyone has a place.

Encouraged

There were several responses that pertained to being encouraged, one especially that is worth including here. Tiffany Harris¹⁵⁶ wrote, “Personal invitation cannot be beat! When offered a personal invitation, I always feel as though the person issuing the invitation sees a gift or talent that I might have to offer.”

Similarly, Ruth Curtis, Dan Buth, Megan Buth, Holly Buth, Kelly Calvert, Frank Cook, Dawn Hill, Sharon Buck, Jim Christopher, Shelly Sanders, Joe Sanders, and four others, who requested to remain anonymous, all commented that personal invitation is among the best encourager for participation in ministry efforts at Faith. While it is rarely overlooked, the post-service announcement is incredibly important and effective when done verbally instead of only printing or displaying it and hoping people read it. Beyond that, however, when leaders—pastors or laypeople—go out of their way at other times to invite someone and encourage their involvement, it clearly has a positive effect.

Equipped

There were various responses that pertained to being equipped for participation in ministry that are worth listing here.

- Holly Buth¹⁵⁷ commented on Faith’s culture when she wrote, “Strength: involving

156. Tiffany is the Preschool Director at Faith. I got to work with her on a near-daily basis and she is a wonderful example of what it means to be a Christian servant who is genuinely interested and invested in bringing the little children to Jesus. Outside of her professional career, she is very regularly involved in the functions at Faith and has encouraged her own children to be just as involved, as well.

157. Mother to Josh, Megan, and Dan, Holly is evidently an amazing example of what it means to have a servant heart. Why else would all her children be as involved as they are, outside of gospel motivation? I am

children of all ages in worship.¹⁵⁸ The formalized activities and opportunities from birth through high school are rich.”

- One person, who requested to remain anonymous, wrote about the opportunities to be involved: “Absolutely. Options are available for us to be as involved in ministry as we want to be.”
- Jim Christopher commented on the culture at Faith equipping its members just by its very nature. He wrote, “The existing ministry options allow for participation from all aspects of church membership from the youngest to the oldest, male and female. The multiple options allow each individual to be as engaged as they would like to be, and the opportunities can be as simple as hanging door hangers to as complex as serving as a Connect Leader or Council of Ministry member. If any individual has a desire to expand the ministry or feels there is a gap in the ministry, then they are welcome and encouraged to propose expanding the ministry as long as they are also willing to lead and facilitate that ministry.” That last part is incredibly important to Faith’s culture and the emphasis on building and training leaders.
- Megan Buth wrote, “There are ample opportunities just through Connect Groups. They are easy to start and really thrive in Faith’s atmosphere.” Writing about her greatest obstacle when it comes to participating, she wrote, “It would be having to pick and choose my commitments” because there are so many opportunities. That is a good problem to have.
- Jim Christopher also wrote about the obstacle of having too many opportunities: “There are so many great ministry options, especially with the Connect Groups, that a person can get overwhelmed by the sheer number. If people are not selective and actually commit to more than they are able to cover, they risk burn out. This can become especially true for individuals who are still working, have kids, and are trying to juggle the many demands of their lives.”

incredibly thankful to have met and gotten to know Holly during my time in Sharpsburg. She became something of a second mother to me in several ways.

158. Her comment here calls to mind Pastor Schroeder’s rationale behind having 4–8-year-olds hand out the Fellowship Register: nobody—no member, no visiting WELS member, no visitor from a different church, no visitor without a church—nobody rejects that little red booklet if it is being handed to them by a wide-eyed and smiling 6-year-old. It is a good way to keep the worship statistics accurate. It is a great way to learn who the visitors are. It is a fantastic way to get the kids involved. Once they grow out of it, then they “graduate” to being the sole volunteers involved with processions when they occur. After that, teens are entrusted with managing the camera and livestream duties. By college age, they are encouraged to be involved in other ways outside of worship by joining or starting a Connect Group. It is a system that involves all age groups and leads to service and involvement just being a part of the culture at Faith. It’s just what happens.

Culture of Ministry

What follows are summary statements that I found described Faith's culture well.

- Ruth Curtis wrote, "I think the culture of ministry at Faith is overall very welcoming. There are very basic opportunities that even the most timid new member would feel comfortable helping with. These then evolve into the new members connecting with other members and presenting other opportunities for them to serve. I think Faith's culture of ministry fosters good connections with mature adults and families with children."
- One person, who requested to remain anonymous, described Faith's culture as if they were a relatively new member and wrote, "I would say it usually is taken as a great thing. I've seen some new members be here for a little over a year, and then they are leading their own Connect Groups. It's so awesome to see the encouragement that is laid in the foundation of our church to do that sort of stuff. Others may take more time and it may seem a little overwhelming to some, but there is absolute[ly] no pressure to throw yourself into involvement right away."
- Josh Buth wrote, "I really like hanging out with my church friends and family. It is the greatest motivating factor because it's not driven by ambition, but by the desire to be involved with my community."
- Dan Buth wrote, "I think [Faith's] strengths are its bright, cheery, and welcoming atmosphere. As soon as you walk through the doors you see a bunch of smiling, happy people and they are all friendly and welcoming."
- Tiffany Harris described Faith's culture as "positive, willing, hard-working, focused on a common mission of outreach."
- Jennifer Bockmuller¹⁵⁹ wrote, "We have a big congregation. It is not always easy to tell who is new or visiting. As a relatively new member, I would say [other new members] would see and feel the culture is one of service."
- Dawn Hill¹⁶⁰ described Faith's culture of ministry as one of "excellence, [where] everyone can be involved [and is a part of the] family."

159. Jennifer, while a relatively new member, is an avid volunteer at Faith's ministry functions. She has helped teach the Bible lessons during Soccer Camp and encourages her two kids to be just as involved. I had the privilege of teaching and confirming her son, Thor, during my time in Sharpsburg. He, too, is a willing and joyful young Christian with a servant heart.

160. Dawn is Pastor Schroeder's administrative assistant, so I worked with her on a daily basis. Though no organization should have an irreplaceable worker—as a precaution, because, as Pastor Schroeder jokingly asked, what if they get hit by a bus and no one knows how to do their job?—Dawn is as close to that as it gets. Similar to Frank and Soccer Camp, she is *absolutely instrumental* in keeping things organized and going smoothly. Without her, I strongly doubt that I would have been successful as a vicar at Faith. She also became something of a second mother to me while I was there, and she exemplifies humility, Christian love, and servant-mindedness.

- Dan Curcio described Faith’s culture of ministry in this way: “Inviting and real.... A large family that takes the spiritual care of its members as a priority.”
- Greg Morgan, Faith’s preschool coordinator and representative on the Council of Ministry, described the culture of ministry in this way: “Strengths: warm, friendly, outgoing, many offerings to fit needs of many. Weaknesses: ?”
- Frank Cook wrote, “Faith Lutheran has an outstanding culture when it comes to having multiple ways to share our faith through ministry. The strengths of the church are the diverse ways people can serve.... I do not know of any weaknesses.”
- One person, who requested to remain anonymous, wrote this thought-provoking comment: “I can’t think of a Faith-weakness ... the weakness is always us.”

Faith–Sharpsburg is not perfect—by any means—but after spending a year there, and after conducting the research for this paper, it is clear to me that there is a culture of ministry there that empowers, encourages, and equips the priests in the pews to be the priests that God has called them to be. This ultimately allows for a culture that multiplies ministry. Permit, now, one final quote from Jim Christopher:

Faith has a culture of empowerment and trust. The strength of this culture is that [it] compounds the number of available ministry options. The church is not limited to the number of things that the trained leadership is able to cover since the layleaders are empowered and encouraged to carry entire ministries. This also frees the trained leaders to focus on those few areas of ministry in which they are the leaders. Worship, Bible Study, Outreach, and those pastor-led ministries can flourish because he is not spending his time trapped in meetings that need little or no input from him. The obvious potential weakness of this culture is the tenuous cord of trust. It is so easy to break trust and once broken, it is difficult or impossible to repair. Trust is not something that can be legislated or even mandated but it can be nurtured and encouraged.... I think most people see the culture of Faith as being modeled on grace rather than law. We are forgiven people who are able to forgive and trust that others have our best interest[s] in mind.¹⁶¹

161. Jim Christopher, personal interview with author, November 15, 2021.

APPENDIX 2: FEINBERG'S 17 WAYS TO SHOW CONCERN

- Communicate standards, and be consistent. (Minimizes mid-directed effort and motivates through known goals.)
- Be aware of your own biases and prejudices. (Emotional reactions often color what should be objective judgment.)
- Let people know where they stand. (Do this consistently through performance review or other methods. To withhold this critical information does the ultimate disservice to your organization—through demotivating the employee—and to the employee, who needs and has a right to know.)
- Give praise when it is appropriate. (Properly handled, this is one of the most powerful motivators—especially in difficult performance areas or areas of anxiety.)
- Keep your employees informed of changes that may affect them. (This doesn't mean telling them all company secrets, but you evidence your concern for them by informing them of matters in which they are likely to have a direct interest.)
- Care about your employees. (Not only be attuned to the individual needs of those under you but communicate this awareness.)
- Perceive people as ends, not means. (To avoid the charge of using people for your own selfish goals, remember Thomas Cook, the explorer. He named a newly discovered island after the first man who spotted it. He regarded each man on the crew as a partner in the adventure and they loved him for the feeling of usefulness he gave them as individuals.)
- Go out of your way to help subordinates. (A little extra effort, some personal inconvenience, goes a long way with subordinates in confirming the feeling that what they are doing is important to you ... and that they are, too. Be sure the help you are giving is what is needed. Remember that in correcting an error, improving a deficiency, or strengthening a weakness, you must first know the individual. This may take hours of hard thought and experience.)
- Take responsibility for your employees. (A part of caring is the willingness to assume some responsibility for what happens to your employees. Be involved in their personal failures as well as their successes. A part of you fails or succeeds with them. As Frank Stanton, CBS president, asks his key people, 'Is this the best job you and I can do together?' He thus demonstrates that he assumes partial responsibility and that he really cares.)

- Build independence. (A supervisor who cares seeks to loosen and gradually drop the reins of supervision. Encourage independent thinking, initiative, resourcefulness.)
- Exhibit personal diligence. (The most highly motivated leaders have the most highly motivated followers. An example is one of the best motivating factors.)
- Be tactful with your employees. (Consideration, courtesy, sense of balance, appreciation, and sensitivity to the views of others—all are important in dealing with employees.)
- Be willing to learn from others. (Give new ideas a friendly reception, even when you know they will not work. This will encourage more creative thinking, and future ideas that may work.)
- Demonstrate confidence. (Review any doubts you may have about your department, your staff, your projects, or your company alone and in private. Demonstration of a leader's confidence builds confidence in his followers. Show by your behavior and speech that you are confident the work can be done; confident of your own responsibility confident of their ability to handle the job.)
- Allow freedom of expression. (Assuming your subordinates are reasonably competent, relax your vigil and allow them freedom to do things their way occasionally. Be more concerned with ultimate results than with methods of accomplishing them. This makes assignments much more interesting and challenging for subordinates.)
- Delegate, delegate, delegate. (Assuming your people are competent and ambitious, delegate to them as much of your burden as you can. Recognize that pressure motivates and that most of us are not challenged to perform close to our capacity. Then, as much as possible, let them ride with their own decisions, learn from their own mistakes, and revel in their own successes.)
- Encourage ingenuity. (The lowest-paid clerk may be ingenious. Challenge creativity by urging subordinates to beat your system of doing things. If your filing system isn't satisfactory, don't change it yourself; have your clerks and office manager tackle the job. The challenge to improve on the boss's system may bring surprising results.)¹⁶²

162. Engstrom, *Christian Leader*, 128–30. Engstrom cites Ted Engstrom and R. Alec Mackenzie, *Managing Your Time* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 137–9.

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