

10-1-2006

The Spirit Driven Church

Timothy Robnett
Luis Palau Association

Allen H. Quist
Multnomah Biblical Seminary

Follow this and additional works at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/jascg>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Practical Theology Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Robnett, T., & Quist, A. H. (2006). The Spirit Driven Church. *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth*, 17(3), 19-43. Retrieved from <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/jascg/vol17/iss3/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* by an authorized editor of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange.

The Spirit Driven Church

Timothy Robnett and Allen H. Quist

Abstract

Christian leadership books overflow pastors' shelves, many skillfully presenting information on listening, controlling, directing, planning and other facets of leadership. The principles presented in these books apply equally well to the church, Christian ministries, or any other organization. However, many people ask, "Is there anything unique about Christian leadership that separates it from non-Christian leadership?" This article, which is an excerpt of The Spirit Driven Church, presents the distinctiveness of Christian leadership—the centrality of God in all aspects.

The authors focus on three initiatives of Christian leadership, all addressing the nature of the relationship between God and Christian leaders. For his part, God fills us with his Spirit, God calls us to walk in his Spirit, and God empowers Spirit-filled leaders to lead by the Spirit. For our part, we are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind; we are to choose God as our source of our control rather than our own self-interest (i.e. our flesh); and we are to stay dependent on God for leading and empowering. Robnett and Quist call leaders to return to a love-based, dependent and obedient walk with Christ.

The following material engages the three initiatives more deeply, by providing a brief expansion of the theme of each initiative, a sample of the initiative presented in The Spirit Driven Church, and a challenge. As you read, please keep in mind that you are reading a segment of a larger work and thereby are missing some of the foundation laid in the unread portions. We recommend you read the entire work to capture the complete message of The Spirit Driven Church. For more information about The Spirit Driven Church visit our web site at: www.spiritdrivenchurch.net.

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Fall 2006

First Initiative:

God fills us with His Spirit. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind.

God fills us—we do not fill ourselves. We wrestle against the ineffable aspect of our walk with God. We fight the loss of control when we cannot rely solely on our cognitive verbal expressions. Much of the scholarly discussion about the Spirit centers on using human wisdom, a cognitive activity using words and ideas of the world. Yet in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, Paul teaches us God fills us with his Spirit in a way not using worldly ideas and words. He writes, “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”

God’s Spirit And Our Minds

In 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us that God reveals what he has prepared for us through his Spirit.

However, as it is written:

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (1 Cor. 2:9–10)

Paul also tells us that God not only reveals himself to us by his Spirit, but that he has put his Spirit in us so we are able to understand what God has given us.

Paul continues by stating how a person who does not know God cannot understand the things of God, and then he finishes this thought by quoting Isaiah 40:13.

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment: “For who has known the

mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:12-16)

The Bible is clear; with God's Spirit in us, we do have the mind of Christ in us, and it is God's intent to do a work in our minds.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:2)

Barriers To Hearing God

It may be helpful at this point to look at what gets in the way of hearing God—whether from Scripture, counsel, circumstances, or our minds.

Time to Listen

Who has time to listen these days? Life is going from one "to do" to another. We have a living to earn. We have a home to maintain. We have our church activities. We have children. There are the favorite television programs to watch or movies to see or games to attend.

Life is hectic today. We have convinced ourselves that we do not have enough time, and listening suffers.

Real listening is love because love focuses on the other person. Love takes communication; communication takes time. A father once said to his pastor, "I may not give my children much time, but what time I give is quality time." The pastor said, "Baloney, there is no such thing as planned quality time with anyone. The quality of the time is in the hands of the other person, not just you. It takes much time invested to have quality time with someone." Hearing someone with an understanding ear (quality hearing) takes time.

Hearing God is similar; it requires time for listening with an ear ready to listen.

The Tempo of Life

When Jesus Christ walked on earth, he walked two to three miles per hour. While he was walking, he was talking and teaching. He spent hours of the day conversing with his Father. Life was slower then—no more carefree, but slower.

The tempo of life may seem similar to "lack of time," but the difference lies in what is crammed into any one hour.

Television is one of the industrialized world's primary

places of relaxation and entertainment. Some homes have several televisions so family members can watch programs of their choice. However, have you ever watched a television screen when it was too far away for you to be involved with the program? Did you notice how rapidly scenes change? You could measure scenes in seconds, and even then you would probably not find many that last ten seconds. While the scenes scream past our eyes, the tempo of the music, the words, and the sound effects hammer at us. This is anything BUT relaxing. Professionals design the programming to grip your attention. The rapid-fire pace does a lot to destroy an atmosphere for meaningful listening.

The nearly instant communication of telephone and e-mail make it possible for us to perform far more of whatever we think we need to perform per hour, but at a great cost. Our hectic technology-based communication has replaced much of the face-to-face communication. It is easy to see why there is a drought today in real hearing.

Real hearing is hearing between the words. We might say that real hearing is hearing with the third ear, and the third ear hears better face-to-face.

The Desires of Our Hearts (Our Affections)

The lack of time and the tempo of our lives muffles our ability to hear (listen to) God or hear (listen to) other people. However, limited time and rapid tempo may not be as significant a barrier to hearing as we would like to believe. It may be the issue is more that we simply choose not to listen. Remaining silent before God or with another person is uncomfortable.

Most people want to talk. They do not want to listen. Why? Perhaps it is because when we talk we feel in control or important. Even in time with God, believers monopolize the time by talking. In these cases, prayer (a visit with God) is mostly asking God for something. We pray for God to make us (or someone else) healthy, to provide what we need and want, to make us a better people, or to help someone else see that he is wrong and we are right or whatever else.

It seems that this kind of life is more about receiving love than loving, more about talking than listening, more about getting than giving.

We will make the time for what is most important to us. Spending time with family or God may be important to us; however, the urgent things that may not be important in the end seem to loom over our heads and take over our time with family or God. Simply stated, it is more important to us to get rid of

urgent things than to take care of important but not urgent things. It is usually our choice—whether we recognize it or not.

It is what we value, the center of our affections, that controls our behavior and choices. When we are the center of our affections, then listening to others will be a priority only when what they have to say will affect us—when there is something important for us to gain or lose. Perhaps at times we listen to make a good impression or so we will not be embarrassed when it is our turn to say something. We are still the center of our listening.

The Focus of Our Love

In chapter three, we read that God's desire for our love is his priority for us. The time necessary to love God is no different than it is with a family member or friend. Time alone with our Lord with a listening heart is critical to hear him and to grow in our love for him. Time spent reading his love letter to us will give us understanding about his sovereignty and the depth of his love for us.

Many people believe that a disciplined reading of the Bible coupled with disciplined prayer will result in God loving us more, or at least looking favorably on us. Please dispel that thought. God will not love us any greater because of our great discipline of Bible reading and prayer. God loves us infinitely now. However, we should find that because of our disciplined time with God (pouring over his love letter to us while praying and listening) we grow in our love for Jesus Christ and an awareness of what pleases or displeases him.

Dr. Ronald Frost, a professor at Multnomah Biblical Seminary, captures this relationship of time with God and hearing him. Dr. Frost shares the story of when he was a boy. His father did not have a printed rulebook, but he knew his father well from the years of close interaction with him. Dr. Frost knew all through the day whether his actions or attitudes would be pleasing or displeasing to his father because he knew his father well. He knew his father well because he had spent time with him.

As we meet with churches having problems, we find that many of the leaders spend little time with God either in conversation (talking and listening prayer) or in reading his love letter—the letter he has provided them to get to know him.

Think about a young couple when they begin to discover that they are mutually interested in each other. What do they do? They spend every available moment with each other sharing about themselves, listening to each other's dreams, fears, experiences, and values. When they are apart and receive a letter from the other, they read the letter repeatedly. When they are reading

they feel closer to the one they love.

Our growing relationship with God should be the same way. Since it is God's number one commandment for us to love him with all our heart, all our soul and our entire mind, it would seem that it would be important to us as leaders to do just that. To love God with our entire heart, soul, and mind requires that we spend focused time with him in order to know and love him deeply. And hearing God corresponds directly with knowing and loving him. No matter how we look at it, our lives as believers or leaders pivot around taking time to know and love our sovereign and loving Jesus Christ.

Reading the Bible is reading God's love letter to us, so that we might get to know him well and fall more deeply in love with him. If we wrote a love letter to someone we loved, we would hope they would not read our letter out of a sense of duty and discipline. Instead, we would hope they would embrace every word because they love us and want to know us better and in some way grow closer to us.

Idols in the Heart

When the leaders of Israel went to Ezekiel wanting a word from God (Ezek. 14), God responded by pointing out that these leaders had idols in their hearts and "stumbling blocks" before their faces and that God would deal with them in accordance with those issues. Obviously, God knew that they did not ask for a word from him with the intent to receive the word in their hearts and take appropriate response. These double-minded men were interested in their own power, respect, recognition, approval, safety, and comfort. Each was his own biggest idol. They loved themselves, giving lip service to their relationship to God.

This is still happening today among many church leaders. As church leaders or as individuals, we may be going to God asking for a word about his will, yet keeping the right to make the final decision. Other things have to be considered, things that tug at our hearts. If those other things keep us from responding to what we know God is calling us to, these things are idols.

Those idols are things that society has convinced people are essential for life. The idol may be a house that is bigger or more expensive than Jesus would have had us buy if we had let him decide. Of course, it could go the other way. The house we have may be smaller or less expensive than Jesus would have had us buy, perhaps for a larger ministry to which he may have been calling us. Other idols may be success, power, recognition, respect, approval, predictability, comfort, or any number of other

things.

Like the leaders of Israel, we can wrap all these idols into one—"the self." People tend to be their own biggest idols. We can easily lull ourselves into the illusion that God is pleased with how we live, because after all, we make good money and we give to the church. Look how much we do for God. God wants us to be happy and enjoy life, does he not?

As a church leadership team, we may use words that tell people we are inquiring about God's will, yet keep in our hearts the right to make the final decision. Or we may hold a subtle yet real expectation that God's answer would only be within our preconceived limits. It is possible that a church could turn a church ministry into an idol. It may not even occur to us that God might have something different for the church from the direction we have been going.

Remember the carousel when you were a kid? It was a lot of fun when you were small, but after a while it probably occurred to you that you weren't going anywhere—just around and around. In the movies, the horse and rider always went places, so you wanted to move up to the real thing. Yet when the time came to make that switch, perhaps at the beach or summer camp, it was scary getting up on that horse for the first time. Oh, the exhilaration when you did it—you rode the horse and actually went somewhere.

Life and ministry in our churches can be much like that carousel. We feel like we have been riding the carousel horses up and down and round and round. But God wants us to exchange the imitation horse for a real one and to ride off with him to an adventure full of risk and uncertainty, yet with him fully at our side. It can be scary when our churches start looking at getting up on that horse. That fear can act like an idol that controls us.

Competing Noises

Some years ago, an artist was explaining his view of impressionism. He was trying to explain the difference between painting what the camera sees and what the mind sees. To explain the difference, he asked his listeners to look at Mount Rainier, which was in view, and notice how big it was. He then showed a picture of roughly the same scene. Mount Rainier was only a small part of the picture. The artist explained that the mind is able to filter the total view received by the eye and to focus attention on only a small part of what it sees.

We hear in much the same way. Have you noticed how when we are in a social situation, such as a restaurant or party, with people milling around visiting, music playing in the back-

ground, plates and glasses clanking, everyone talking and laughing, we are still able to have a discussion with one person? We seem to be able to sort out what that person is saying from all the sounds that are coming at us. Our minds are able to filter out sounds that are not pertinent at the time.

Even more amazing is that in the middle of that noise, including the voice of the person we are listening to, we are able to hear our son or daughter off in the near distance crying out, "Mommy, Daddy, where are you?" Is it not amazing how out of all that clamor, our child's voice grabs our attention—not someone else's child, just ours. Why is that? It is because we know that voice intimately. With love, we have spent a great deal of time listening to that voice. Through our relationship with our child, we have an intense interest in hearing that voice.

Jesus said, "My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27 NLT). That brings us back to the need to be in a dependent love relationship with Jesus Christ—to know the voice of the one who loves us most in order to filter out the competing noises.

Expectation To Hear God

There are two factors that determine what we expect to hear from God: our view of our ability to hear and our view of who God is. In his book *Christ Is All*, David Bryant addresses the believer's tendency to spontaneously talk or not talk about Jesus Christ. He says the following:

What if He (Jesus) usually seems to be indifferent to securing meaningful solutions for the struggles of our lives? What if He comes across to us as offering little immediate hope for broken relationships, or financially besieged families, or bungled battles with addictions, or our beaten-up sense of self-worth, or the breathless bustling of our churchly activities, or the moral bankruptcy of our communities? What if the Jesus we call Lord is perceived frequently as incapably involved with us when we are drowning in dark moments of despair? Why would we want to make him a major topic of conversation when we gather together?

If Bryant paints a word picture similar to our real view of God, then why would we expect to hear from God? Or for that matter, why would we want to hear from him?

Many believers today do not expect to hear God because they do not understand that they can hear God. That idea just does not reconcile with the rational thinking of the Western

world.

How Do We Hear From God?

As we have already discussed, the most obvious place to start is Scripture—the Bible. Be careful, because there is a question that we need to answer first: “Do we really want to hear from God?”

Many believers say they want to hear God’s voice—they even pray about it. Yet look how much God has already spoken to his children through his Word. Perhaps believers should be more consistently obedient to the Word they have already heard.

Paul wrote, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom. 12:1–2).

Bring this verse to its logical conclusion and it has to affect myriad choices we make. What house will we buy, and what will be our criteria if we are a living sacrifice, holy (set apart) and pleasing to God? If we are a living sacrifice, what movies will we watch or what discussions will we not enter into? If we are a living sacrifice, how will we treat a difficult person at church—the one we want to avoid?

Ezekiel 14 suggests that our hearing of God may be linked to our affections—in direct proportion to the idols or lack of idols in our hearts.

We have come to believe the number one controlling factor in hearing God is our relationship with him, knowing and loving him. If we want to know more about God’s will for us, we have to start by getting to know God more. We have to open our Bibles and start reading his love letter, not to get some verse that we can quote or use, but to know better the God of the Bibles. Spend more time with him, just as we would someone we were courting. Talk to him more in prayer, tell him how much we love him, and bask in his love for us. Occasionally, be silent and meditate before him. Let our minds dwell on him. Ask him to help us recognize doors he is opening or closing. Do all this with him alone and together as a leadership team. Please do not turn this into an obligation.

God already loves us infinitely. The time we spend with him will not cause him to love us more; but it may have an enormous impact on our love for him, and as a result, our love for others and our ability to hear him.

It is critical for us as leaders and as leadership teams to allow God to lead us. Therefore, it is critical that we are intentionally and continuously crucifying idols and drawing closer to him into a deeper and deeper love relationship. The challenge is to remain in a constant crucified life, clinging to God every moment of the day out of a love and dependent relationship with him.

Second Initiative:

God calls us to walk in His Spirit. We are to choose God as the source of our control rather than our own self-interest (i.e. our flesh)

In Galatians 5, Paul makes it clear we have a tension constantly battling for our affection. God calls us to choose to walk in his Spirit, and our flesh screams at us to look out for our worldly selves (the flesh). Even though Paul states clearly the tension is there and outside of our clinging to our walk with Christ through his Spirit, we will automatically default back to our self as the center of our concern. This is particularly damaging when it happens in the lives of ministry leaders. Without the controlling Spirit, we resort to seeing people as a tool for maintaining or gaining respect, control, recognition, approval and safety. *The Spirit Driven Church* addresses this battle.

During my time of education and for years into my banking career, I (Allen) learned about a number of concepts regarding leadership and management. One of those concepts had to do with "input factors." Simplistically, input factors are what you invest into a process that results in output. People use the term "input factor" in a variety of disciplines, but I became familiar with it as it is primarily used in business.

As best that I recall, the primary input factors in business are money, real and personal property, and people (usually referred to by the impersonal term, human resources). It never was particularly exciting to me to know that I was a human resource. I never did feel like one; I always felt like a person. For as long as I can remember, in banking and in most of the companies large enough to have departments, the group that was responsible for people was called the Human Resource Department, or HR for short.

As far as employer/employee correspondence is concerned, I never did get a letter from the bank that said, "Dear Human Resource." The worst I ever received was "Dear Valued Employee." I have to admit that "Dear Valued Employee" was still better than "Dear Human Resource." It could have been worse. The letter could have said, "To whom it may concern." Fortu-

nately, most letters said, "Dear Allen."

When I left banking and went to seminary, I said good-bye to Human Resources. I thought that in ministry, both churches and parachurch ministries, they must have something other than human resources; they must have something like the Ministry Care Department, or maybe the Servant Service Section. To my dismay, even in large churches and in many parachurch ministries, some still use the term "human resource," though many use the term "Personnel Department." I like that better; I am still a person.

By now you are asking, "Where is this guy going?" In this chapter, we will be addressing a tendency in churches and parachurch ministries to forget how important people are to God. We will be looking at the struggle leadership has, often unknowingly, of using people rather than loving people. We will be examining how a leader executes time management through delegation and training in the new light of ministry.

The Leader is the Slave

To me, one of the most powerful stories in Scripture is in John 13. Jesus and his disciples were eating a meal when Jesus got up and began washing their feet. What makes this act difficult to grasp is that in a home that had servants at that time, washing the feet of the guests was the job of the servant lowest in the order of hierarchy. Jesus was assuming the role of the lowest servant. After he finished serving them, he taught them.

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:13–15).

For a long time, I believed that the foot-washing lesson was for leaders to remember that they are serving those they lead. I think that is where they get the term *servant-leader*. Lately, I discovered an additional lesson I believe Jesus wanted us to learn; it has to do with the role Jesus accepted as being the lowest of servants.

At the beginning of John 13, it says that Jesus knew that it was time for him to go back to the Father. Jesus knew that he was about to return to the glory he came from, that of God himself. Yet he took this lowest of all positions. From a worldly point of view, you could draw a continuum line with God at one end and the lowest person in the world at the other end. Jesus is obviously at God's end of the continuum. But Jesus demonstrated

an extreme shift by taking the servant role at the very opposite end of the continuum. And Jesus did not give up his position as Christ while he made that shift. That is the power of this story.

The lesson that Jesus demonstrated was that leaders always have two roles. First, the leader is a steward or agent for Christ, leading as Christ's representative. The leader is not more important or valuable than any other follower of Christ.

Second, the leader is a servant, serving those being led and doing it from the *heart*. This means that the leader leads while serving those being led. If the leader does not make the switch in his heart, but only in his behavior, they could easily become like the Pharisees. Jesus is asking leaders to do what he did, which is to accept these two roles. We will identify a leader who accepts both of these roles as a servant-leader.

The two roles of servant leadership are seen clearly in the Great Commandment, found in Matthew 22. The leader is to love God, which is foundational to the stewardship role of leading the people of Christ's church. The leader is to love others, which is foundational to the role of serving others (those led).

Using People

In our travels and meetings with a variety of church leaders, we have noticed a tendency for ministry leaders to perceive people as "human resources" and to forget their role as ministers to those people. When people become only a "human resource," an "input factor" invested to produce a successful output, they become a tool for leaders to use for their desired result. We believe the vast majority of Christian leaders do not intentionally ponder how they might use people for their own purposes or to make themselves look good or make work their easier. We believe that the tendency to use people (to see them as primarily a human resource) is a function of several influences.

- Using people can be a result of forgetting (or ignorance of) the depth of the stewardship role to which Christ called his leaders.
- Using people can be a result of forgetting (or ignorance of) the depth of the servant leadership role to which Christ called his leaders.
- Using people can often stem from the current trend of adopting secular leadership and management techniques without overlaying them with God's love-based model of servant leadership.
- Using people can result from a lack of awareness about the impact that normal leadership and management activities have on people without the influence of love through ser-

vant leadership. *We are not arguing against the use of leadership and management techniques, only their use without overlaying God's love for his children.*

For the rest of this chapter, we will be focusing on the role of servant leadership to minister to the people being led. In later chapters, we will explore the servant-leader's role as a steward for God. This stewardship relates to leading the church toward its God-given purpose and mission through God's unique vision and plan for the ministry.

Ministry of Delegation

One of the significant activities of a leader is assigning and directing the activities of those he leads, an activity frequently called delegation.

A leader usually delegates for one of two reasons:

- 1 Delegation to get something done or save the leader time.
2. Delegation to accomplish God's purpose and mission for the church while at the same time providing a means to serve, love, and develop the servant.

1. Delegation for the Sole Purpose of Getting Something Done or Saving the Leader Time

Jack was pastor over the children's ministries and had been so for sixteen years. He was fortunate to have a number of very good teachers, most of whom required little oversight. It was that time of year again when Jack had to line up teachers for the season from September through May, and he was busy at it. All the classes now had teachers except for third grade girls.

Maggie had been teaching that group of girls now for nine years and was fantastic. It was a large group, but Maggie had a real gift at recruiting volunteers to help her, even when she was going to be absent herself. She was very organized, an excellent communicator, well liked and respected. Yet she had a desire to move on to something more challenging.

Most teachers did not have an assistant and so had to do everything themselves unless they could find someone to help. However, Janet was Maggie's assistant. She started helping Maggie while she was a senior in high school. With Maggie's coaching and encouragement, she could step in when Maggie was away and the class functioned normally. Janet was looking forward to taking over the class on her own. However, Pastor Jack needed them to stay together with the same class again. So they agreed.

What is notable about this scenario is that Jack needed someone to handle the third grade girls, and that is what he got. From Jack's perspective, he got the job done, and all is well because, after all, Maggie and Janet enjoy what they do.

Joyce was the women's ministry director over a large group of three hundred women. She enjoyed this ministry. Then again, she enjoyed most everything in life, including her tennis club. She would do more in the tennis club if she had the time but she did not. Women's ministry consumed too much time.

It occurred to Joyce that one of the things she did that took much time was the word processing, printing, and mailing of the monthly women's ministry newsletter. It had grown to a six-page document and required about five hours a week to produce.

One of the women in the group was Naomi, an older woman but retired from being a secretary for a publishing company. Naomi was so good that she could do the newsletter in her sleep. The problem was that Naomi was tired of word processing and publishing and wanted take some Bible courses to prepare her to spend her later years as a missionary in Latin America. She just needed more Bible training.

Joyce really needed Naomi to take over the newsletter so Joyce could become more involved in the tennis club. What was Naomi going to say? She felt guilty for thinking about herself and not Joyce's need. So she agreed.

Joyce accomplished her goal. She was able to recover the five hours a week she wanted in order to do something else. How is Naomi? She is doing an unbelievable job at the newsletter. It is amazingly professional, just as Joyce had expected.

Both Jack and Joyce accomplished what they wanted to accomplish. Both Jack and Joyce led people to accomplish the ministry they believe God called them to lead. Jack filled all the teacher roles he wanted to fill, including the third grade girls' class by keeping Maggie and Janet. He had a great team to get the job done, and done well. Joyce accomplished what she wanted to accomplish. She now has gifted Naomi putting out a newsletter that any women's director would covet.

But what about God's vision for Maggie, Janet, and Naomi? Maggie is still doing third grade girls, even though she is challenged to step into something more stretching. Janet is not having the opportunity to try her wings as she would like to do and feels she is ready for. Naomi is doing a great job, but the ministry to which God has called her will have to wait.

The Servant-Leader Approach

Let us run those two scenarios again, only this time let us change the motivations of both Pastor Jack and Joyce to be that of the servant-leader who is a lover of those he is leading. Remember the two roles of the servant-leader: (1) to be a steward or agent for Christ, leading as Christ's representative, and (2) to be a servant, serving those being led.

2. Delegation to Accomplishing God's Purpose and Mission for the Church While at the Same Time Providing a Means to Serve, Love, and Develop the Servant

Jack was pastor over the children's ministries and had been so for sixteen years. He was fortunate to have a number of very good teachers, most of whom required little oversight. It was that time of year again when Jack had to line up teachers for the season from September through May and he was busy at it. All the classes now had teachers except for third grade girls.

Maggie had been teaching that group of girls now for nine years and was fantastic. It was a large group, but Maggie had a real gift at recruiting volunteers to help her, even when she was going to be absent herself. She was very organized, an excellent communicator, well liked and respected. However, she had a desire to move on to something more challenging.

Most teachers did not have an assistant and so had to do everything themselves, unless they could find someone to help. However, Janet was Maggie's assistant. She started helping Maggie while she was a senior in high school. With Maggie's coaching and encouragement, she could step in when Maggie was away and the class functioned normally. Janet was looking forward to taking over the class on her own.

Maggie and Janet were a great team. Pastor Jack would love to have them to stay together with the same class again—it would mean less work for him, but it was not the best for the future of Maggie or Janet.

Maggie had a gift for organization and leadership. She recognized new talent when she saw it and knew how to develop it. The gift God had given Maggie was something this church could use; for that matter, any church could use it. Asking Maggie to teach the third grade girls was no longer a growing experience for her and would limit what God may want to do in her life for the years to come.

Janet was young, but was fully able to handle her own class and wanted to.

Jack pondered what he could do to give Maggie a stretching, growing experience and still accomplish what was needed to be

consistent with the church's purpose and mission for God in the lives of the children.

It did not take long for Jack to realize he could minister to these two servants while at the same time perform his role as a ministry leader. He asked Janet to step up and take the lead teacher role for the third grade girls. Janet was thrilled to have Pastor Jack trust her with the challenge. Maggie had trained Janet well, and Janet was ready for the stretch.

Jack then asked Maggie if she would be willing to be his assistant. This would accomplish two things. Maggie could start a new challenge with all the new experiences it would bring, and Jack could begin developing his replacement, so he could consider any new challenge God may put in front of him.

What a deal. Jack was a dual-role servant-leader. He acted as a steward of the responsibilities God gave him regarding the purpose, mission, and unique vision of the church. At the same time, he was a steward of the responsibilities God gave him regarding serving, loving, and discipling two of God's servants.

Joyce was the women's ministry director over a large group of three hundred women. She enjoyed this ministry. Then again, she enjoyed most everything in life, including her tennis club. Joyce saw the tennis club as an outreach opportunity to women. Establishing a new outreach like that was just what the women's ministry needed to spur on more women to do something similar. However, it was impossible since the women's ministry consumed so much of her time.

It occurred to Joyce that one of the things she did that took much time was the word processing, printing, and mailing of the monthly women's ministry newsletter. It had grown to a six-page document and required about five hours a week to produce. If Joyce could delegate that to someone else, it would free the time for Joyce to focus on developing more outreach; something that is in line with the purpose and mission of the church.

One of the women in the group was Naomi, an older woman and retired from being a secretary for a publishing company. Naomi was so good that she could do the newsletter in her sleep. The problem was that Naomi was tired of typing and publishing and wanted take some Bible courses to prepare her to spend her later years as a missionary in Latin America. Naomi spoke Spanish well, but she just needed more Bible training.

What was Joyce to do?

Joyce realized that since Naomi is retired, she has time to do the newsletter and take an online Bible course. And Joyce could be her mentor. In addition, Joyce thought that Naomi, as she was ready, could begin to write a women's Bible course that could be

published in the newsletter.

Naomi was thrilled. What a challenge. Not only does she have a great mentor and friend in Joyce, she has the opportunity to learn two things. She will learn more Bible, which is something she will need on the mission field. She will also learn how to write Bible lessons for women, something she will also need on the mission field. Joyce now has the time to begin leading a new thrust in women's ministry.

Joyce was a servant-leader for God, leading people to accomplish Christ's purpose, mission, and unique vision for the church. At the same time she helped accomplish Christ's purpose, mission, and unique vision for Naomi through serving, loving, and discipling her.

Implications

In the second scenario, Jack and Joyce were able to see people as more than a human resource to use to accomplish ministry. They saw ministry as an opportunity to accomplish God's purpose, mission, and unique vision for the church while simultaneously accomplishing God's purpose, mission, and unique vision in the lives of the ministers. The challenge is to walk continuously in God's Spirit, motivated out of a heart of love for him and others.

Third Initiative:

God empowers Spirit-filled leaders to lead by the Spirit. We are to stay dependent on God for leading.

Leadership carries with it an implication of power or authority and it is easy to assume that the power or authority rests in the leader. Scripture directs the ultimate leadership to Jesus Christ. The person with the role of leader is not in that position for his or her personal power, respect, recognition, approval or safety. *The Spirit Driven Church* paints the picture of biblical leadership where the leader becomes the servant.

A Culture of Grace

Ray Stedman brought a culture of grace and forgiveness to thousands who enjoyed his relaxed leadership style during the tumultuous days of the 1960s in Palo Alto, California. The Jesus Movement was just starting when a number of "their types" first walked through the doors of Peninsula Bible Church. Upper middle-class folks turned their heads at these uniquely dressed, longhaired, free-spirited souls. What would the church do? How would the church respond to this new breed? With warmth and affirmation, Ray welcomed and encouraged them to become part

of the body of Christ in that place. A refreshing spirit swept away many of the doubts and fears of those church members with questions. Peninsula Bible Church became a haven and harvest field for the younger generation who were seeking God. Spiritual leadership brought integrity and love to those on both sides of a changing culture.

With a few powerful words, the apostle Paul emphasizes the utter necessity for the Spirit of Christ to empower personal relationships. "Do not get drunk on wine ... instead be filled with the Spirit ... submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:18, 21). Without this journey of submission to the leadership of God, we become destructive healers in a broken and fragmented world. This is not an option for leaders within the body of Christ. What empowers our thoughts, emotions, and volitions crafts the reality of relationships within the family and the church. Thank the good Lord that our relationship with him is not merely a matter of cognitive input or determination to "live for God." Rather it is a life characterized by his pursuing grace.

Spiritual leadership begins with those leaders who will recognize their utter dependence upon God. As they are learning what it means to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18), spiritual leaders must face the brokenness that comes by living in reliance upon their own human efforts apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. These leaders find new joy in knowing the forgiveness of God and are quick to extend that forgiveness and grace to others.

Our egos and self-interest have gotten in the way of God's leadership on many occasions. This is particularly true in our roles as leaders. Many times, we have failed to rely on the Holy Spirit and have become anxious, defensive, angry, and boastful. However, Holy Spirit-inspired leadership focuses on the healing and strengthening of others. It does not draw attention to itself or protect itself; rather, it seeks to serve and empower others.

A Distorted View of Leadership

I (Tim) remember the numerous times that I attended the carnival section of the Kern County fair in Bakersfield, California. One of my favorite attractions was the walkway of mirrors. This was a simple portable trailer with a number of mirrors crafted to distort one's appearance. One mirror showed me fat, another showed me tall, some mirrors gave me a big head and a small body. I did not understand the technology, but the effect was humorous.

Often what some call biblical leadership appears rather dis-

torted, which is not humorous. These distortions come to us from various sources. Some are a product of popular culture. Others come from traditions in the church. Biblical leaders are a rare breed. Their leadership desires are challenged by the many views of what constitutes a spiritual leader.

In America, a business environment dominates us. Free enterprise and capitalism rank with baseball, apple pie, and the American flag as core values. As such, we often cannot distinguish between entrepreneurial-style leadership and biblical leaders. Donald Trump, on his TV show *The Apprentice*, articulates the business model of leadership. There are educational models of leadership that emphasize process and collaboration. There are nonprofit models that seek to discover and resolve the social ills of society. However, we believe that these leadership models often fall short of the biblical norm.

What is Biblical Leadership?

Jesus used two small, yet powerful words in correcting the disciples' view of leadership. He uttered the phrase, "not so" (Matt. 20:26). The disciples longed to be famous and powerful. The mother of James and John sought to position her sons in places of power (Matt. 20:20). She asked Jesus to have her sons "sit on each side of him" in his coming kingdom. Jesus said that was not his decision. His emphasis was on his teaching to her and the disciples. It established a definition of leadership in his kingdom that was far different from how the world viewed leadership.

Jesus announced two startling dimensions within his kingdom. He began by first emphasizing that the "first will be last" (Matt. 19:30). He noted that rather than seeking top positions, true biblical leaders ask, "How can we empower others?" *Empower* refers to the transformation that occurs when one integrates biblical truth into the normal patterns of life.

Second, Jesus emphasized that serving is what makes a leader great (Matt. 20:26, 28). The leaders in his kingdom will be servants of all. Rather than using a sword to symbolize leadership, Jesus chose a water basin and towel. With these tools, he washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1-7). This is a very different and seemingly unrealistic type of leadership in comparison with what we experience in the world today. These dynamic principles demand our constant attention. Many of us are not reflecting on or teaching these principles for the first time, but for the hundredth time. Yet, Jesus' kingdom is built on such truths and we need to recommit ourselves to his way.

Where are the Leaders?

The story of the early church indicates that leaders become evident to those they lead. Biblical leaders clearly demonstrate godly character. Biblical leaders have a reputation. Their lives demonstrate a transformation of heart. Christ's disciples were leaders who encountered the resurrected Jesus Christ. That encounter radically transformed their lives—and not just as a course in character development or leadership skills. Their priorities were radically adjusted and completely rearranged.

When ethnic discrimination expressed itself in the early church, the apostles asked those feeling the crisis to choose men “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3) to help find resolution. The church was able to discern and select such men. They chose an ethnically diverse group who handled the situation with grace and wisdom and allowed the church to continue to grow and impact their world with the good news of Jesus Christ. This problem-solving ability didn't come from strong individuals doing their own thing. It was based on the work of the Holy Spirit through men yielding to his leadership.

Where are these leaders today? We wish we could say they are our pastors and the other leaders in our churches, but this is not always the case. Are we truly being led by his Spirit? The carnal mind can invade and control any Christian leader. We need to examine ourselves regularly and ask ourselves: What are we modeling and teaching? What do our corporate structures look like? How are our policies and procedures reflecting his way? What outcomes are we really concerned about?

Paul instructs his protégé Timothy, a young pastor, to be selective when asking others to serve with him in leading the church. Timothy, as we discern from the Scriptures, may have tended to be overwhelmed at times. He could have chosen anyone who was willing and available to provide leadership for the church. Yet Paul insisted that those who would provide leadership for the church must be godly, mature men, devoted to the task at hand.

A leadership criterion has been clearly articulated for the church in the Word of God (1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; Eph. 5:10–6:3). This criterion requires that the church take seriously the plan of God for leading his church. God views his church as a bride and uses terms of familial definition to focus our attention on the importance of relationships over tasks in leading the church. It may not be good leadership according to today's standards and the rationale might even rub against a purely organizational view of the church, but because it's God's plan and from God, it accomplishes his purpose.

God describes the character traits of those he wants to lead his church. These qualities are evidence of God living within. They are the result of new birth and the presence of the Holy Spirit and are evidenced by a spiritual life filled by God. They reveal that these leaders have been humbled before God and have experienced renewal of mind and conformation to the image of Christ. By describing these qualities, God places an emphasis on who a person is over what a person does or how a person leads. This truth is particularly evident in the following two passages.

An elder must be a man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, peace loving, and not one who loves money. He must manage his own family well, with children who respect and obey him. (1 Timothy 3:2-5 NLT)

An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious. He must live a blameless life because he is God's minister. An elder must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must live wisely and be fair. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. (Titus 1:6-9 NLT)

Fundamentally, the Word of God underscores *character* over skills, talents, or spiritual gifting when it comes to defining a spiritual leader.

The Influence of a Biblical Leader

Hebrews 13:7 says, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." This injunction supports the teaching throughout the Bible that godly leaders provide a picture of the Christian life for others to follow. Obedience to the Word of God is what sets spiritual leaders apart from other types of leaders.

These leaders are not only knowledgeable, but are men and women who have been transformed by the Word of God. Their lives demonstrate the practice of the presence of God.

These leaders have journeyed down the road of life long enough that the evidence of obedience is seen by all: Belief has become sight, righteous behavior has brought maturity and grace, which leads to personal transformation, and has positively influenced others. Their marriages have matured into rare and beautiful portraits of love. Their children have followed in the steps of faith. Their careers have demonstrated the value of people formation, not just monetary rewards.

What happens when leaders fail? Leaders are not perfect, but they of all people should be transparent! They should be honest in confessing their sins and seeking proper resolutions and restitutions for personal failures. Keeping accountable to God and his people typically guards anyone, leaders included, against the major disasters of life.

A Spirit-Filled Leader

As we have already noted, Paul commands biblical leaders to be filled by the Holy Spirit. What does this mean? According to Ephesians 5:18–20, to be filled by the Holy Spirit means that one is not controlled by any external or internal force other than the Spirit of God. The person of the Holy Spirit living in us produces the motivation for our behavior, decisions, and communication. Ephesians 5:19–20 indicates that proper worship provides the context for the working of the Holy Spirit in and through the Christian leader. Colossians 3:16 supplements this teaching with a parallel focuses on allowing the Word of Christ to live within us.

Therefore, to be filled by the Holy Spirit means we yield to his control (Holy Spirit) and guidance (Word of Christ) moment by moment. This process requires that we as believers humble ourselves before God, yielding to him the control of our minds, emotions, and wills. As a Christian learns this walk with Christ, he or she will be conformed to God's image and become qualified to serve as a leader in his church.

Acts 11:1–4 illustrates a proper response by the apostle Peter to criticism for his ministry to Cornelius and his household. Some of the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, when they heard that Peter had entered a Gentile's home and eaten with him, were critical of this behavior because it violated the Jewish customs and laws. Instead of defending himself or arguing with them, Peter "explained everything to them precisely as it had happened" (Acts 11:4). As Peter's response shows us, a Spirit-filled

leader is not defensive. This nondefensiveness builds confidence and safety in those they lead. Safe leaders obtain better information in any situation. Because the leader is safe, people are willing to be open and honest. Safe leaders gain discernment from this information and are better equipped to make wise biblical decisions. The Holy Spirit's control transforms disciples into spiritual leaders.

The Devotion of a Biblical Leader

Biblical leaders are devoted to pursuing God. Spiritual leaders seek God, trust God, and live for God (Ps. 27:4; Prov. 3:5-6; Gal. 2:20). However, with the demands of performance that leaders keenly feel, the "God question" is not always addressed. Much of this book attempts to show how leaders can answer the God question. That is, "Do I actively trust God in all areas of my life and ministry?" Easier said than done.

We see biblical leadership as an active and dynamic relationship with God and his people. Therefore, at the core of our lives is the essential need to be loved by God. Godly leaders have been melted and molded by his grace, not by our competency. Though structure and form characterize all healthy organizations, the supreme ingredient in all relationships is love.

And the first place love needs to be experienced is in the life of the leader. Loveless leaders seek to use others, not love them. Without love, the Bible says, we are just making a lot of noise. In other words, a leader without love is "just blowing smoke."

While sitting in a hotel in St. Petersburg, Russia, I (Tim) reflected on a question asked by one of the older pastors in the city. We were discussing the possibilities of churches doing ministry together with Luis Palau for a season of evangelism. He inquired, "Does Luis Palau love the Russian people?" More than vision, organizational structure, goals, money, or impact in his city, this seasoned pastor demanded to know, "Do you love us?"

Love is the glue that binds people together in dynamic relationship and holy service for God. Churches are healed and become healthy when love empowers the leaders' relationships.

How are Biblical Leaders Chosen?

The biblical answer is clear. Leaders are discovered in the context of relationships. Leaders will arise as the church lives together and serves our Lord. As we "do life," godly leaders become evident to all. As the church focuses on the teaching of God's Word, worship, sharing the good news, and serving one another, leaders will surface. Leaders are not to be selected because of their gifts alone, but rather because of their character.

They are to be Christ like.

The challenge for us as a church today is the void of relationships. We live in a fractured world where relationships have become secondary to personal goals and ambitions. The affluence in America has widened the door for independent living. So rather than choosing to invest our lives in relationships, we have chosen to travel, move, recreate, become workaholics, obtain more education, etc. Taken within the context of life's totality, these things are not bad. But in a church setting, they can be disastrous because they often become substitutes for significant and meaningful relationships with others.

Community is a term we use for a geographical boundary or a center for recreation. It is most often used to describe a location rather than to describe the relationships within a group of people learning to live life together. But it is in the context of this kind of community that relationships are formed, which make it possible to identify truly Spirit-filled leaders.

How can healing and health come to the thousands of churches who are suffering from a terminal condition? Spirit-filled leaders are a critical "antidote" to this condition. Spirit-filled leaders must be affirmed and chosen on the basis of biblical instruction. And we identify these leaders best in the context of a living community. These leaders, when walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, will be ready to embark on a journey of healing, health, and holy impact in their communities. The challenge for leaders is to keep their eyes on our Lord and from a heart of love for him and others, lead from the posture of a servant.

Writers

Dr. Timothy Robnett is currently the director of Next Generation Alliance, a ministry of the Luis Palau Association, which trains and equips evangelists. He has also served as a pastor, a professor at Multnomah Biblical Seminary, and as a leader for organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Youth for Christ, and the Conservative Baptist Association of Southern California, and currently for the Proclamation Evangelism Network of Mission America. Tim earned his BA from Stanford University in 1972, his M. Div. from Western Seminary in 1977, and his Doctor of Ministry degree from Fuller Seminary in 1994.

Allen H. Quist earned a Masters Degree in Pastoral Studies at Multnomah Biblical Seminary after retiring from 35 years in commercial banking. Experienced in lay leadership, Allen is an

adjunct instructor at Multnomah Biblical Seminary, teaches with Ministry Management Seminars, and ministers to struggling churches in the Northwest and internationally. He is currently studying for a Doctorate in Strategic Leadership from Regent University in Virginia.