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ABSTRACT

EMPOWERING THE LAITY FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY: A STUDY ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP IN VIDA ABUNDANTE CHURCH IN MONTERREY, MEXICO

by

Sergio S. Coronado

The ministry of a local church is not properly represented by all their members actively functioning as the Body of Christ. Normally, the pastor and very few people from the church are taking most of the responsibility of the ministry done inside and outside the church building. The laity's involvement is as important and necessary as the clergy for the fulfilling of God's vision for the church.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the involvement, knowledge about ministerial gifts, behavioral, and cognitive elements among the participants of the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico, through a series of five workshops regarding the themes of relationships with others, spiritual disciplines, gifts and abilities, equipping for the ministry, and outlining a plan.

The most important findings of this study based on the information given from the participants of the Vida Abundante church were a low interest in spiritual formation, lack of knowledge in the gifts of the Spirit, imbalance relationships, unplanned vision, and time limitation in ministry.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
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A STUDY ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP IN VIDA ABUNDANTE CHURCH
IN MONTERREY, MEXICO

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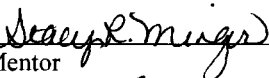
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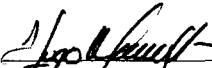
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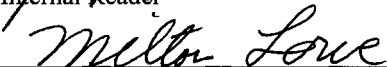
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Sergio Coronado

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

At the beginning of the last century, Rev. Agapito and Rebeca Coronado started their ministry under the Methodist Church in Mexico. Without any kind of resources or preparation for their task, Coronado began working with the Mexican people, especially in Central and North Mexico, establishing over sixty missions that eventually became churches in almost every known city in the area. Coronado's family settled for months, or even years, until the mission was ready to be delegated. He appointed pastors and their leaders in cities such as Monterrey, San Luis Potosi, Veracruz, Piedras Negras, Saltillo, Nuevo Laredo, Chihuahua, and Durango.

Don Agapito, as they called him, was a very visionary leader who was not only accepted in the Christian community but also by secular business men of that time. Laypeople became involved in different church projects with Coronado and were willing to help financially to buy properties for the Methodist Church. This kind of coordinated effort, between the pastor and the laity, resulted for the benefit of God's kingdom.

Agapito and Rebecca reared a total of seven children, each of them born in a different town or even in a different country because of their itinerant ministry. Coronado not only taught his children to love God, but he demonstrated to them that to live a life of faith and gratitude is possible. Coronado died thirty-five years ago, but I still remember every time I went with my parents to visit him. Don Agapito Coronado was not only a great preacher or a great leader, he was my grandfather, and his works remain as a testimony for many.

The evangelical church of Latin America is lacking men and women such as Agapito and Rebeca. In my opinion, leaders with a measure of faith and boldness who can influence others to do the work of the ministry are greatly needed. Evidently, the evangelical church is experiencing a void in training leaders and a lack of involvement in Christian service. Today, the few evangelical seminaries in Mexico are faced with major concerns for their mission and ministry: declining enrollments, very few students in the program, and financial needs.

Though Mexicans are being saved by the thousands, sects such as the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico are taking discipleship seriously by having a persistent and systematic visitation program, which will end up boosting enrollment in their groups.

Therefore, the greatest challenge Mexican evangelical churches have in the midst of great revival and church growth is preparing the laity to participate in ministry with their pastors to aid the expansion of God's kingdom throughout the nation in a more coordinated way. In order to evaluate the impact the Mexican church is having, I must explain leadership in a more contextualized perspective and how its mission can become a reality to this new generation.

Statement of the Problem

Two decades ago, the evangelical churches in Mexico began growing their influence and impact among society not only by their numerical growth but also by an active participation in the life of the community, even socially and economically. This impact is now recognized not only by the populace but even by the government.¹

¹ *Evangelical* is a term used by congregational churches with Protestant backgrounds regardless of denominational affiliation. Particularly in this study of Latin America, the Catholic Church is not included in this group of churches.

According to studies regarding church growth in Mexico, Protestants are increasing at a rate of about 7 percent per year ("Ruth and Jim Padilla DeBorst").

Hundreds of churches are being planted every year as part of a strategic plan for growth, not only in main-line denominations, but in nondenominational circles as well. For example, states in Mexico, such as Chiapas and Tabasco, are now registering almost half of their population as evangelical. In addition to preaching of the Word every week, the presence of the evangelical church in Mexico has contributed highly to the well-being of their communities by assisting them through social action, free medical and dental service, counseling to families, and psychological support to people in need. These services attracted the masses, especially those from very poor backgrounds, and the church became identified with the love and affection received in the community in contrast to the standard treatment by the Catholic Church. People from very complicated backgrounds such as prostitutes, drunkards, drug dealers, and others testify to their deep change after conversion. People have found a sense of purpose in their new beliefs, and they are able to develop abilities and a new character in the church that are very helpful to their everyday work.

Even though the evangelical church enrollment is growing and has a spiritual and affective link with their communities, sufficient evidence exists of serious deficiencies taking place in the church. These three problems are interconnected and need urgent consideration and analysis. First is a dichotomy between the theological and secular among the church. Second is an apparent conflict between emotion and reason. Third is the question of ecclesiastical hierarchy as a *dominant class* in relation to the rest of the church members.

Ecclesiastical Dichotomy

The distinction between the Christian worldview and the secular worldview is becoming more and more disparate. This pattern of thought has caused an *ecclesiastical dichotomy* between the spiritual and the material, the sacred and the secular, the clergy and the laity. Most of the people in the church see themselves as inferior to their spiritual leaders because they think that their work is not sacred.

Within Mexican Pentecostal groups, the people are taught to embrace spirituality and reject any material aspect of life. Many evangelicals believe they are doing *spiritual things* only when they are reading the Bible, attending church, or praying. Everything else such as studying, working, or eating is considered worldly. Through a study of the situation in Latin American churches (including Mexico), Ricardo Gómez affirms that Latin American pastors spiritualize the texts and keep an individualistic vision of the church:

The Pentecostal pastors interviewed do not have a unified view of the gospel: some of them spiritualize the text by applying anything supernatural to the church today, but discard any social or cultural references. These pastors claim that the priority of the church is to win souls for Christ and therefore most of this group's pastoral task is focused on evangelistic efforts. (141)

In this regard, Dr. R. Paul Stevens reaffirms this statement by defining a *secular job* according to the religious spectrum as “getting own's hands dirty.” He adds the following hierarchy:

As we have seen, the missionary is at the top of the list. In most circles, the missionary is roughly equivalent to the martyr in the second century. Next to the missionary is the pastor. Then down it goes in descending order of “Christian value: people-helping work, intellectual work, creative work, physical work, political work. The trades are not highly esteemed but they offer “clean” work. This is followed by the questionable

occupations: law, stock brokering, sales, advertising, and the military.
(109)

This type of listing has resulted in evangelicals despising their studies, professions, or work in order to emphasize church activities rather than family. For instance, secular professions such as law, economics, politics, and entertainment are considered *worldly* or *evil* for some Pentecostal circles in Mexico because they are surrounded by sinful activities and dishonest practices. Instead, they encourage the congregation to work in other secular activities or professions that are not consider *dirty jobs*. In contrast, minority groups such as homosexuals are entering politics with the mentality of influencing the Mexican parliament from within where important decisions about the future of Mexico are made (Vazquez 1).

While the vision of the evangelical church in Mexico is becoming too centralized and self-oriented instead of looking for new avenues of leadership opportunities, other minority groups are taking advantage not only in the religious arena but even in political and social areas. This ecclesiastical dichotomy between the sacred and the secular is becoming separated more and more. The church needs to build new bridges of communication and concepts that can contribute to an evangelical understanding of how to create new opportunities of ministry.

Conflict between Cognitive and Experiential

Pentecostal circles in Mexico place a strong emphasis on faith healing, prophecy, and casting out of demons and evil spirits for illness. This insistence on being healed, saved, and financially prosperous could lead them to very disappointing results. The people, most of the time, come to church in order to receive a *miracle* from God rather than giving themselves to him. Rationalism, according to Pentecostals, is contrary to

having faith in God and trusting his leading through the Holy Spirit. One of the negative developments of this type of thinking is exemplified by the lack of interest in formal education.

For example, Dr. Mortimer Arias, a recognized Latin-American scholar, points out a new shift in worship services in Latin America:

So while here in Latin America some Methodist churches have been “pentecostalized” especially in worship style other Methodist churches have become more conservative in liturgy and moved toward ecumenical and social identity, particularly in the language of such declarations on social issues. We think, however, that in line with our Methodist heritage, to be reasonable does not mean cold, detached, without enthusiasm, making a virtue of necessity. And vice versa, the social dimension does not exclude, indeed, demands the whole person. (135)

As Arias affirms, the church has no reason to detach itself from reasoning while shifts take place, such as changes in worship. If the church demands changes, reasoning should remain as part of spiritual exercises as much as faith is necessary too. Arias states, liturgy can change, but the exposition of the Word should remain the same.

The same vicious circle has happened in the biblical preparation for ministry. The pastors do not want to pursue higher education because they believe they already know the Bible. As a consequence, the people are not encouraged to go deeper in their biblical studies. Robert E. Coleman explains the urgent need for the evangelical church to train disciples:

The church today has been slow to come to grips with the principle of training. Efforts by mature Christians to follow up the maturing believers have lacked the aspect of personal attention needed by immature Christians. As a result of slipshod methods of follow-up, about 50 percent of those who unite with local churches eventually become inactive. The attempt has been made to produce disciples on an assembly-line basis and the results have been disastrous. Some system must be found whereby every new Christian may be taken under the wing of a mature believer and encouraged to stay there until he or she has matured to the point of leading

another. To train people for this follow-up ministry is a current imperative facing every church that does not already have such a program. (136)

Reason cannot be against faith and faith cannot be against reason. Moreover, they complement one another in order to fulfill different aspects of Christian beliefs. As faith is important to any Christian in order to trust in God, reason keeps the mind active in the knowledge of Christ. The task of every minister should be to weigh every theological/philosophical thought in the light of the Word of God until it is confirmed with other fellow servers. Then, the teaching can be share with the people of God.

Domination by Ecclesiastical Hierarchies

The freedom provided by Pentecostalism for all to become leaders, combined with the ease with which churches divide, made possible for a number of movements to develop that many consider questionable and even heretical. In Mexico, Pastor Ruben Ortega founded a denomination called the *Apostolicos*. Ortega declared that he was the Messiah and insisted that all true believers should accept him as such. Eventually, from this movement came a new one called the *Iglesia de La Luz del Mundo* (The Light of the World Church). This movement is now a widespread denomination around the country and in some other Latin American countries as well. Its origins are traced to Eusebio Joaquin Gonzalez, who in 1926 had a vision telling him that henceforth he would be called Aaron. His calling was to restore primitive Christianity. *La Luz del Mundo* rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and insisted on baptism only in the name of Jesus. They also rejected the very notion of the eternal divinity of Jesus. Members of *La Luz del Mundo* were told to lead austere lives. Women were not to wear pants or makeup. In church, they had to sit to one side and men to the other. Worship included no musical instruments, for they were seen as an abomination unto God. Part of the attraction of this movement was

their emphasis on social service with great support to its members by both direct assistance and the development of cooperatives. By 1992, this movement, with headquarters in the city of Guadalajara, one of the most religious cities of the country, claimed to have two hundred thousand followers in Mexico and a total of more than one million throughout the world (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 287).

Pastors often feel isolated in the ministry because of a lack of interaction and support from their spiritual leader—any authority who is assigned to monitor their spiritual welfare. In some cases, pastors are without any kind of spiritual covering to give account for their ministry. This phenomenon is becoming more and more common in new ministries in Latin America. At the same time, the congregants are not involved in the work of the ministry because they feel neglected by their leader or because of personal issues, particularly low self-esteem or a poor perception about their spiritual life. Dennis E. Williams and Kenneth O. Gangel note, “Past failures, what unthinking people have told them about themselves, the fear of failure, and the large responsibility before them could be several reasons people lack confidence to volunteer” (40). Williams and Gangel see the people of the congregation isolated from the ministry mainly because they do not want to take risks and participate in unknown activities normally performed by the clergy. The problem of lack of accountability among the leaders is not only in sects but among evangelical groups as well. Although traditional Protestant churches became autonomous during the second half of the twentieth century, they are experiencing some leadership deficiencies through pastor and laity relationships.

While the local pastor takes care of most of the ministry and decisions of the church, the laypeople are neglecting their gifts and abilities, but at the same time, they are

expected to be faithful to the vision of the leader. Very few laypeople are actively involved in the ministry of the church because they are not allowed to exercise their vocation for service fully or because they have personal issues with which they are dealing.

Howard A. Snyder says that most church members “expect doctors to treat us, not to train us to treat others. We expect lawyers to give us expert advice, not admit us to the secret fraternity of those who understand how the legal system works. Likewise, we want pastors to serve us, not to build and train us to serve others” (169). The clergy are called, according to Snyder, to train the people so they can become what they were called to be and not just seen as religious professionals.

The full activation of the whole body of Christ can make a difference in the fulfillment of God’s mission to the church: “What does this mean for the ministry of the people of God under the New Covenant? Every believer is called and equipped by God to bear witness to the gospel and to bring God’s Word to the world” (Stevens 172). In this regard, Gary Yukl affirms, “Leadership involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (3). Leadership functions when it is intentional, not by giving a set of rules and plans to execute. Relationships in any organization are made to edify one another, to be transcendent and not judgmental. In addition, preparation for Christian leadership requires not only the acquisition of knowledge but also a transformational process through which a person goes until he or she reaches maturity in Christ.

The aim of this research was to bring a clearly defined perception about the pastors' role and their involvement in the church, as well as the laity's role in their participation in the church in order to create a hegemonic paradigm for the benefit of the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico. The process of this study may help to heal the pastor-laity relationship to a point of renewal and restoration through the teaching seminars and the completed study.

Purpose

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of a five-module, training workshop to empower the laity of the Vida Abundante Church to be actively involved leaders in the ministry of the church.

Research Questions

The following questions helped in the process of assessing the five workshops through pretests and posttests.

Research Question #1

Prior to the workshops, what were the participants' affect and behavior in relation to ministry involvement?

Research Question #2

After the workshops, what were the people's affect and behavior in relation to ministry involvement?

Research Question #3

Before answering the gifts inventory, how much do the participants want to contribute to the ministry of the church?

Research Question #4

After answering the gifts inventory, how much do the participants want to contribute to the ministry of the church?

Research Question #5

In the participants' own consideration, what are the main distinctive characteristics of effective leaders who serve within the church?

Definition of Terms

The following words are substantially important for the sake of this study. These two words are mentioned repeatedly throughout this work and need clarification.

Empower

Empower means to give someone the power or authority, especially by legal or official function in order to perform a specific duty or action. In terms of leadership, empowering is the action of delegating a responsibility with the purpose of fulfilling a task or a specific goal according to a vision ("Empower").

Laity

The term *laity* has different meanings depending on function (laity do not administer the Word and/or sacraments), status (laity are not considered to be reverends), location (laity serve primarily in the world), education (laity are not theologically trained), remuneration (laity are not employed by the church nor are they paid), and lifestyle (laity are not occupied by religious life but with secular life). Frequently, they are referred to negatively (Stevens 29).

Ministry Intervention

Leaders and members of Vida Abundante Church were invited to a workshop about leadership involvement. In the first module, they were asked to answer a pre-journal questionnaire prior to the presentation. The results of the evaluation helped to measure the participants' involvement in the church and their commitment to spiritual disciplines and human relationships. These themes were covered in the first and second modules. During the third, fourth, and fifth modules, the themes included vision, gifts of the Spirit, and ministry involvement. In the fourth module, the participants completed a gifts inventory.

Finally, in the last module, the participants answered the post-journal questionnaire. Following the evaluation, they responded to a questionnaire about leadership distinctiveness in order to discover what they think are the most important features required of those serving as leaders in the church.

Context

The study of the origins of Mexican and Latin American history will provide extensive and sufficient background information about how the evangelical church initiated and identify the most distinctive cultural and traditional features of the Mexican evangelical church.

Church in Mexico

The following description is an overall view of how the evangelical Protestant church was established in Latin America.

Spanish colonization. Europeans not only brought their diseases, crops, and livestock to the Americas; they also brought their religion. They could not do otherwise,

since, for them, religion permeated all of life, to the point that the distinction between religion and politics was nonexistent (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 12).

When the Pope divided the non-Christian lands of the earth, already discovered or yet to be discovered, between the crowns of Portugal and Spain, he laid upon the monarchs the obligation to evangelize the peoples of those lands, to establish the church, and to maintain it. The Queen of Portugal delegated the mission of conquest to Christopher Columbus.

On Friday, 12 October 1492, Christopher Columbus made the following entry in his log:

At dawn we saw naked people, and I went ashore in the ship's boat, armed, followed by Martin Alonso Pinzon, captain of the Pinta, and his brother, Vicente Yanez, captain of the Nina. I unfurled the royal banner and the captains brought the flags which displayed a large green cross with the letters F(Ferdinand) and Y(Isabella) at the left and right side of the cross. Over each letter was the appropriate crown of that Sovereign.... After a prayer of thanksgiving I ordered the captains of the Pinta and Nina, together with Rodrigo de Escobedo (secretary of the fleet), Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia (comptroller of the fleet) to bear faith and witness that I was taking possession of this island for the King and the Queen. I made all the necessary declarations and had these testimonies carefully written down by the secretary.... To this island I gave the name San Salvador, in honor of our Blessed Lord. (qtd. in Gonzalez and Gonzalez 12)

Thus began an encounter that would change the world forever.

The form of religion they brought was Roman Catholicism:

[T]his branch of Catholicism was a particular brand from the Iberian Peninsula. At the end of the Middle Ages, Spanish nationalism was blended with religion in the myth of the Reconquista. This myth claimed that ever since the Moors invaded the Peninsula in 711, Christian Spaniards had been resisting them and regaining lost territory. It was out of this myth of the Reconquista that Spain was born as a nation convinced that God had entrusted it with the defense of Catholic faith against all Muslims, Jews, heretics, and other unbelievers. (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 45)

The invaders brought their religion the same way they did earlier in the southern part of Spain during the Reconquista, and to the Canary Islands—by force of arms. The conquistadores were not only men in armor riding horses and carrying firearms. They were also men in clerical garb riding mules and carrying crosses. The men in armor did not become rich; the clerics who invested in various enterprises of conquest became rich.

Latin history was shaped by the Spanish colonization with the subjugation of the native Indians. At the same time some Indian groups protested to oppose the imposition of the foreign culture upon them.

Mexico. Because of Spanish colonization, Mexico has been Catholic for more than five hundred years. In the period of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, Christianity actually became a worldwide religion in connection with the expansion of the Portuguese, Spanish, and French empires.

In the beginning, missionary strategy of the nineteenth century, especially coming from the United States, aimed at individual conversions, church planting, and social transformation through three main types of action—evangelism, education, and medicine. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Baptists and Methodists were the first to establish the first official evangelical churches in Mexico.

Government and the Catholic Church. In 1924, General Plutarco Elias Calles was elected president of Mexico. He became increasingly dictatorial and ruthless in ridding himself of those he considered political enemies. Archbishop Jose Mora y Del Rio became one of those enemies. Unlike his immediate predecessor in the office of president, Calles enforced the anticlerical provisions of the 1917 Constitution. Calles reacted by closing religious houses and schools, deporting foreign-born priests, and

prohibiting religious processions. In addition, “[n]o public masses were to be said, no public marriages or baptisms performed” (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 293). President Calles was the first Mexican president who confronts the highest religious leaders of his time by ordering the closing of any religious activity in the country. During this time, the laity from the Catholic Church started to work closely with the priests and even take charge of some offices they would never have performed in the past. This act of volunteerism developed because the priests were afraid they might be persecuted or expelled from the country:

Lay activity, by both men and women, also increased within the church in Michoacan, with laity leading devotions and nonsacerdotal acts. By 1927, the church was producing pamphlets that instructed lay persons how to perform sacramental functions such as baptism, marriage, and extreme unction wherever a priest was not available (Mass was always reserved for the clergy). Women became increasingly active as leaders within the church. This situation was only temporary, however, for as soon as peace was restored, the clergy resumed its hierarchical position vis-à-vis parishioners. (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 147)

The clergy decided to ask their laity of the church to substitute them for duties were reserved just for them. The laity were trained but also were sent to become *the priests* for the people as the *ambassadors of Christ* for just a moment.

Protestant church. In Mexico, most of the evangelical denominations structure their organizations by a shared leadership between the elders and the pastors in decision making, but the pastors are seen as employees. In contrast, most independent churches function with a single leadership system. In these churches the senior pastor takes charge of every important and unimportant decision. Even though, the pastors of independent churches can have additional leaders, few of them share the decision making within the church. The senior pastor makes most of the important decisions.

Political and ethnical situations. With 110 million people, Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. The country is about three times the size of Texas. More than half of the population lives in the central highland part of the country. Most people, about 75 percent, live in cities. Many Mexicans migrate from rural and other areas lacking in job opportunities to the industrialized urban centers and border communities. Mexico City, with more than twenty million people, is the largest city. Mexico is the second largest trading partner of the United States. Nearly 80 percent of Mexicans are *mestizo*, a mixture of Spanish and indigenous ancestry. Another 10 percent are native Mexicans, belonging to more than fifty ethnic groups (“Ruth and Jim Padilla DeBorst”).

The constitution of Mexico provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice. The federal government continues to strengthen efforts to promote interfaith understanding and dialogue and to mediate cases of religious intolerance. The relationship among religious groups in society contributes to religious freedom. In certain areas, particularly in the south, political, cultural, and religious tensions continue to limit the free practice of religion within some communities. In the south, this kind of persecution is more evident than in other areas of the country. State and municipal governments generally protect this right, but some local officials infringe on religious freedom, using religion as a pretext for conflicts related to political, ethnic, or land disputes.

Monterrey. The immediate geographical context of concentration is Monterrey, Mexico, where the workshops will take place. Monterrey is a city situated in the northern part of Mexico with a population of approximately four million people. The city is

predominantly an industrial city with a good number of well-educated people. The workshop took place in a church called Vida Abundante in Monterrey, Mexico, where I am the senior pastor.

The congregation initiated five years ago with thirteen families who lived in the area of Monterrey. At the beginning, the church started as an independent church, but now it has a Methodist affiliation from the Northern Conference of Mexico. The church has around 130 members, not including children.

Personal application. The hindrances I have observed in my own personal and pastoral experiences are those related to the lack of Christian involvement within the church: superficial relationships, lack of spiritual disciplines, little exposition of the use of spiritual gifts, misunderstanding about Christian ministry, and undefined plans and vision. Most of the people from the congregation do not want to make any commitment to serve in the church according to their gifts and abilities. They attend the worship services but without any responsibility whatsoever for the needs of the church.

Latin American Churches

The evangelical Protestant churches in Latin America have been growing in the last four decades with an outstanding influence among their communities, even in secular arenas such as politics, culture, education, and business. Out of a total population in Latin America of 520 million, 170 million call themselves members of Pentecostal, charismatic, or independent, usually Pentecostal, churches (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 294).

While countries such as Brazil and Guatemala have taken the lead, being about 20 and 30 percent evangelical respectively, other countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica,

and El Salvador are growing steadily with congregations more than fifty to one hundred thousand people in attendance (Orozco).

Evangelicalism's intense religious regimen makes for busy schedules. Pentecostals demand weekly church attendance as a minimum commitment. The Pentecostal churches further involve their members by encouraging them to organize meetings, perform with a church band or choir, participate in Bible study, and volunteer to help and proselytize to addicts, sex workers, and the homeless. This commitment has been growing, but the clergy are still weak in the areas of growing relationally and scholarly speaking (Orozco).

Even the Catholic Church, which still is the dominant religion in Latin America, is prioritizing its ministry. In the conference held in 2007 in Medellin, Colombia, in the CELAM V, which included 260 church leaders, the bishops at the conference endorsed and expanded the key concepts of the Latin American Catholic Church. These challenges were globalization, rapid urbanization, the changing of roles of families and youth, and the demand for much better dialogue with the indigenous and African-American communities. They also analyzed such ongoing issues as greater decision-making roles for women in the church and balancing the roles of ministry and the laity (Leege and Gremillion 1).

The Catholic Church in Mexico is becoming more aware of the fact that they need to start reorienting their focus on the laypeople. They are seriously reconsidering the old practice of domination by ecclesiastical hierarchies and becoming more open to the lead of laypeople who may be willing to serve in the church as volunteers (*Notre Dame 2*).

The Catholic Church is starting to see a great opportunity in preparing the laity for leadership roles, even including conducting mass. However, some still are hesitant to receive this idea, especially because it represents an important risk of division within the church. Although Latin American evangelicalism has successfully competed against the centuries-old dominance of the Catholic Church, the story of an imminent evangelical takeover of Latin America is more than a little exaggerated. For example, people sometimes look for a lightweight evangelicalism. They want easy solutions to their problems rather than a profound transformation. Furthermore, the difficult financial situation of Latin American families are making them turn to the evangelical church in spite of their spiritual root heritage or past religious links. They are willing to renounce to their Catholic membership. Most of the Latin American countries today are facing a severe economical and political crisis that affects the well-being of their people, including the evangelical church. David Eduardo Ramirez affirms that the financial situation from the Latin countries is becoming crucial to the well being of their families,

In Latin America people are living in a world of contrast. On the one hand: technological advance, industrial development and growth of urban areas, and an increase tempo of secularism. On the other hand, poverty is reality among masses where thousands of people are unemployed and underemployed. (18)

This contrast between social and economical differences, the emotional and rational thinking, and the religious versus the sacred are becoming hindrances in the evangelical church not only in Mexico but also in Latin America. In this regard, Ramirez affirms that the Latin American church in general needs to evaluate the leadership deficiencies that are affecting the good growth of the church (3).

These differences are producing a significant alienation between the clergy and the laity, making the leader or pastor takes responsibility for most of the things that need to be done in the church. This alienation is mentioned by Stevens: “[C]lericalism is not expressed in dominance through knowledge, position or exclusive right. It often gets expressed as disdain for the laity as unreliable, incompetent and unavailable” (52). The clergy, according to Stevens, should not be seen as the *authoritarian* one only but a co-worker in the ministry of the church. The clergy and the laity should not be against one another but working coordinately for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

The clergy and laity disassociation is becoming more evident in the evangelical church not only in Mexico but also in Latin America. The pastors are not willing to invest their time in a person who is not rooted in the church because they think the parishioner could leave the church at any time. This vicious circle is affecting the relationship between the pastor and the laity and is consequently affecting the rest of the congregation.

A Catholic journalist says, “If current growth rates continue, Latin America will have an Evangelical majority in the early 21st century” (McCoy 2). Nevertheless, some disturbing trends are taking place that are directly affecting the well-being of the Latin American church. Guillermo Cook responded to this journalist’s remark by saying, “In spite of its significant numerical growth, Protestantism finds itself today in a sad, polarized situation that thwarts its possibilities of providing the spiritual energy for alternative social and political ways at a time of crisis” (28). This crisis of leadership is becoming more evident in evangelical circles not only in traditional but even in nondenominational groups where the cooperation between them is decreasing.

Dr. David McKenna exhorts the church in regard to its lack of leadership:

With the undermining of authority, the erosion of morality and the loss of the sacred in society, the leverage for Christian leadership has been reduced to the narrowest of margins. Add to these changes the troubles in our primary institutions, the home, church and school. Leaders, whether secular or Christian, are not loners. They must have followers to be effective and institutions to be efficient. Christian leaders, in particular, are dependent upon the corporate and communal Body of Christ as represented in the home, the church and the school. Radical individualism, a characteristic of our time, is a mortal enemy of Christian leadership. (12-13)

According to McKenna, the characteristic of time in Christian leadership is radical individualism, which is translated into a more centralistic view of doing ministry rather than the corporate gifts dynamics of the body of Christ.

Long considered a monolithic Roman Catholic bloc, Latin America is undergoing religious transformation. About 15 percent of Latin Americans have converted to evangelical Christianity, making it the fastest growing religion in the region. A few years ago, the Latin American Catholic Bishops Conference claimed that eight thousand Latin Americans converted to evangelical Christianity every day (Orozco).

Distinctive Groups in Mexico

Mexico has three distinctive groups of people who are shifting the direction of the nation to a new trend and challenge the governmental authorities as well as the church in Mexico. The indigenous groups, the premodern generation, and the postmodern generation are becoming the most influential groups among the nation.

The first group is *indigenous*. As I mentioned before, Christian groups are victims of rejection and persecution, especially in the south. Even today in Mexico are fifty-three major groups with 285 languages and thirteen unreached groups. As Dewi Hughes and Christopher J. Wright convincingly argue, “[I]f there are people who are poor, the basic

reason is that there are people who, moved by self-interest, are able to use power to oppress others” (23). I believe the evangelical church in Mexico has the responsibility to assist these groups of people through spiritual, financial, and moral support. George G. Hunter says, “Indigenous ministry is just as necessary to reach people *almost like us* as it is to reach a very different people with a different language”(56). A good number of laypeople from the indigenous groups are taking charge of congregation but with no previous training. This lack of training is becoming an issue, especially with the fact that the people are not being trained adequately in biblical principles and leaving the leadership to people coming from witchcraft, new age philosophies, or other ways of thinking. The evangelical church needs to renew their self-discipline in knowing not only what the Bible says, but how it should be interpreted accordingly to sound biblical, hermeneutical, and theological approach. Laity should get involved in receiving theological instruction as well as participating actively in the ministry of the local church while working secularly if they are required to, but always with a kind of supervision by experienced ministers.

The second group is the *premodern generation*. This group is experiencing a disruptive increase in divorce and domestic violence. One out of two marriages ended in divorce in the first ten years, and according to polls, the premodern generation is less concerned about religion by a decrease of 15 percent. Also, according to the same study, Mexican families are shifting from being conservative/religious to more materialistic/nonreligious beliefs. (Esteinov 2).

Though this generation is more tolerant in accepting other religions besides the Catholic Church, it is becoming more centered in its own personal interests, putting aside

the religious background from which they came. According to Dean Flemming's understanding about contextualization and the awareness of how to face this dramatic shifts among any culture shift, he stated that, "The question is this: how do we articulate the meaning of the gospel or of the Scripture, which came to expression in one cultural, social and historical setting, for people who are living in quite another?" (16). The challenge as a church is to know how to minister to this emerging group in a way that the gospel can speak freshly and currently to their own beliefs and thinking.

Interestingly, from this generation, some laypeople are starting to participate not only in the local church but even as senior pastors of local churches while keeping their secular jobs. However, they are assuming this responsibility by themselves without any kind of formal seminary education and most of them without any salary. Sadly, some religious leaders are not accepting them as ministers until they resign to their secular jobs.

The challenge for the evangelical church in Mexico is to incorporate the new coming leadership to a full training seminary preparation until they can be ordained ministers while keeping their secular jobs. The incorporation of laity in ministry will help the demand and the need for ministry outreach in order to bring people to a renewal of self-study and biblical interpretation in the midst of great revival and growth among the churches.

The third group is the *postmodern generation*. More than twenty million young people from fifteen to twenty-four years old are facing cultural trends that are affecting their perspective about religion. An increase in unemployment and violence, less opportunities for studies, and more epidemics are making a good number of young people

decide to dedicate their lives to drugs and other illegal activities apart from any kind of Christian influence. Mexican society had changed in the last decades because of the increase of violence and drugs: “Every day the headlines mark the daily death in drugs’ war, a war in which and everyone loses.” (Rourke, 100) The social effects of drug trafficking are accentuated and reinforced by their direct and indirect economic impact. Without prejudice or condemnation, but with love and kindness, these new generations and their modern perspectives can receive a gospel of truth with boldness and with more contemporary and modern material. Mexican churches must offer to the younger generation modern and practical means of communication through media, music that appeals to them, and conferences that relate to youth.

For instance, the government, by their own initiative, is asking the evangelical church to help alongside them to run youth rehabilitation centers for drug addicts in order to return them to work or school. These centers are growing very rapidly because of the financial help they are receiving from the government and the open doors they have to the preaching of the word.

Methodology

The project was designed to transform the laity for the ministry through five workshops conducted in Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico. The intervention contributed to laity getting involved in the ministry more effectively according to their gifts and abilities. I used two methods to collect data for the study: (1) pre-post journal questionnaires, and (2) the questionnaire of leadership distinctiveness. The study was a mixed-design, explanatory method.

Participants

The workshop seminar involved thirty members of the Vida Abundante Church, the majority of which are actively involved in leadership. The rest were potential leaders. The potential leaders were selected according to the criteria of being members of the church for more than two years and by their involvement within the church.

Instrumentation

Two different instruments helped answer this study's research questions. The first one was a pre-post journal questionnaire, which helped discover their personal and ministerial situations before the seminar. The second was a questionnaire about leadership distinctiveness that helped reveal their personal opinions of the main features a leader must have in order to serve in the church.

Variables

For this study, the independent variable was the workshop consisting of five modules. The dependent variables were the changes in affect and behavior in regard to Christian service as measured by the study's instruments.

Data Collection

During the research project, the following procedures allowed for the distribution and collection of the pre- and post-journal questionnaires and the questionnaire of leadership distinctiveness. The pre-journal questionnaire was collected in the first module and the post-evaluation was collected in the fifth module. The five modules occurred over a period of six weeks. The participants submitted the questionnaire of leadership distinctiveness at the end of the last session.

Data Analysis

First, descriptive statistics analyzed the growth rate of the laity's affect and behavior in regard to Christian service. Second, I coded the journal responses to analyze the participants' opinions on leadership effectiveness.

Generalizability

Although this study was made to benefit the Vida Abundante church and its impact in the community, the conclusions and results could be used to the enrichment of other churches or communities, in Mexico or in other part of Latin America.

Biblical Understanding

Leadership is about influencing others. Although the word *leadership* does not often appear in the Bible, by looking to the narrative teachings its meaning can be deduced. However, God had always took the initiative in having a very active role as a leader in the important events of Israel and with the Gentile world as well.

In the Old Testament, God appointed individuals to pursue his desire to bless all the nations of the earth. This empowerment started with Abraham:

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Gen. 12:2-3, NIV)

The blessing chain of Genesis 12:2-3 continued throughout the Old and New Testaments with godly men and women such as Moses, the judges, the kings, the prophets, Paul, Peter, and the rest of the disciples. Their leadership guided the people of Israel to the Promised Land and to recapture their identity as the people of God. However, these leaders were not leading the people by self-initiative but because of God's prompting. God always revealed his thoughts, ideas, and plans to individuals to carry out what he

intended. For example, Moses was working for his father-in-law when he suddenly received a divine call from God who asked him to deliver the Israelites from Egypt (Exod. 3:1-10). Gideon had a visit from an angel, when he was hiding wheat from the Midianites, who encouraged him to battle against Israel's enemies (Judg. 6:11-16). Even the kings of Israel waited until the prophet received specific revelation from God before they decided to do something (2 Sam. 7:1-3). Craig Van Gelder says, "The bottom line is that the ministry of the Spirit is able to transcend human limitations and failures in bringing about God's redemptive purposes" (30). God was revealing his plan to his servants in order to fulfill his will, regardless of their own insecurities and failures.

When Jesus died on the cross, most of the disciples thought that Jesus' leadership was finished on Calvary, without realizing that Jesus was actually entrusting them with following up his leadership (John 20:19). Jesus spent ten days with his disciples trying to encourage and reinforce their call for leadership before he ascended to heaven. He especially exhorted Peter. He asked Peter three times the same question, "Do you love me?" Jesus' affirmation, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15) means to take the next step into leadership. Jesus empowered this kind of leadership when he said to his disciples: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). The command to go and preach demanded of the disciples leadership action, not just a passive attitude as learners. They had to put into practice what they had learned from their Master. However, in Acts 1:4 Jesus ordered them to wait: "While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father." The new beginning of service was now to come. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the primitive church, the leadership transitioned into a missional leadership. Jesus' plan for

them was now ready to put into action. According to Lee Roy Beach this stage is called implementation: “Having formulated a plan, it’s time to implement it. You might think that, as a leader of the organization, implementation would be your biggest and most challenging job” (93). They started to spread the gospel into different communities in spite of persecution. Some disciples were sent to Africa, others to Asia and India, but all of them fulfilled the missional leadership Jesus empowered them to do.

Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton affirm, “The Old and New Testament give us great insight into leadership. The Scriptures should also impact you personally” (25). They add, “You should use those portions of the Bible that are yours to impact the lives of your followers” (26). The primitive church was proclaiming what Jesus empowered them to do, not only within their own communities, but even in unknown places.

According to 1 Peter 2:9, and in a parallel way to Exodus 19:4-6, God’s people are called to lead the world: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” This chosen people, however, did not covenant with God as an already existing nation, but as new created people, brought up from virtually nothing. God first called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all of the sons and daughters of Israel. The original covenant people prepared the way for the renewed covenant people:

In the New Testament the people of God came to refer not only to the seed of Abraham but more so to a postresurrection community whose proclamation would address all nations, all cultures (1 Pet. 2:10; Clement of Rome, *Cor* 30.1; 59.4)... The renewed people of God after the resurrection were not a specific race or tribe or ethnic identity, but a missionally reconstituted people who would be found reaching out for all peoples, all nations, the Gentiles (Tertullian, *Ag. Marcion* 1.21; *ANF* III, p.

286; *Apology* 21, *ANF* III, p. 34-36; Clementina, *Recognitions*, *ANF* VIII, p. 145-46). (Ogden 296)

The divine call is to all the church to serve God as a chosen people, but also as a royal priesthood, which means to represent God to the world. This priesthood includes every tribe, group of people, or nation who represents the Lordship of Christ.

The witnesses or the *good works* of the church need to be *seen*, not merely heard, by new generations. In fact, the current new generation is known as the *sight generation* because of the media influence on them. John Raleigh Mott says, “The minister as a Christian preacher and teacher can do more than anyone else to influence their civilization and life” (26). According to evangelical tradition, every member of the body of Christ is called to be a minister that can influence the world.

Martin Luther’s affirmation five hundred years ago still is liberating the church from the captivity of hierarchical structures. He says, “Everyone who has been baptized may claim that he already has been consecrated a priest, bishop or pope” (53). Luther continues, “Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian be assured of this, and apply it to himself, that we are all priests, and there is no difference between us” (qtd. in Woolf 54). Sadly, some people who have been sitting in the pews for years, and even some who have become comfortable in their pulpits, will opt to stay in their personal situations. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit will draw others out of the world’s systems and infuse them with a sense of leadership and urgency in order to serve God with boldness. Like young David who dared to fight against Goliath, they will not settle for the status quo but will take up the weapons of warfare and overcome enemies until they see their families and areas of influence come under the lordship of Christ Jesus.

Overview

Chapter 2 reviews literature associated with the mission and volunteerism in the Old and New Testaments, cultural changes, the equipping and ministry to the laity, and research methods. Chapter 3 includes discussion and explanation for the design of the study, research questions, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection, variables, and data analysis. Chapter 4 details the findings of the study through journal questionnaires and evaluations. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the conclusions derived from the interpretation of the data, as well as practical applications of the conclusions and further study possibilities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

For various reasons, most of the churches in Latin America are facing a crisis of participation from their own people. Members of churches do not want to collaborate for personal issues about ministry participation, and at the same time, they are not allowed by their ministers to get very involved in the decision-making process. In a good number of churches the congregants believe that their leaders and pastors are the illuminated ones who receive the *word from the Lord*, and their responsibility is just to listen to what their leaders say. The lack of participation has gradually affected the good growth of the churches and has stimulated questions about how this kind of leadership is shaping the present and the future of the Latin American Church. Gómez affirms that leaders of the evangelical church are more interested in gaining power and authority and having the best building in town (150).

According to historian Carmelo E. Alvarez, who has worked among Pentecostals in Latin America for years, the history of Latin American Pentecostalism is made up of three main periods. First, the years 1909-29 mark the beginnings of the evangelical church in Latin America as a result of the missionary work of foreign Pentecostal churches. Second, the years 1930-60 were a period of stabilization and organization, seeking to establish the character of the movement. Third is the current time—1960-present. The time after 1960 was marked by explosive growth and the multiplication of independent churches and small denominations. Alvarez calls this period one of “heretical Pentecostal movements.” Ondina E. and Justo L. Gonzalez agree with Alvarez by saying, “The impact of Pentecostalism and Charismatism on Latin American

Christianity, even in those churches that do not consider themselves Pentecostal or Charismatic is undeniable” (294). However, Gonzalez and Gonzalez affirm, “There is a need for constant change” in the Latin American evangelical church today” (310). The Latin American church, according to Gonzalez and Gonzalez, is on a critical point of development or decrement. This change to which Gonzalez and Gonzalez are referring comes in a parallel perspective of what has been said in this study. The evangelical church must reevaluate its position into a more self-evaluative than just gaining weight. According to Latin American theologian, Rene Padilla, the Latin American church is entering a very risk era:

This fantastic numerical growth, however, has its dangers. One of them, perhaps the most obvious, is superficiality. Many of the megachurches that do not preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, but the so-called “gospel of prosperity” are proliferating in Latin American cities and converting movie theatres into temples. They grow in numbers, but they run the risk of institutionalizing a Protestant popular religion that has very little to do with an evangelical faith rooted in biblical teaching. (44-45)

This superficiality of the spoken Word is affecting enormously the foundational ground of evangelical Christianity especially because of the lack of solid and sound doctrine, which has eclipsed seriously not only the spiritual growth and maturity of the people but the vision and direction of the Latin American church. George Barna, referring to the laity who want to get more involved in ministry, affirms, “These individuals, whom the church so desperately needs, are leaving the church because they can no longer stomach being part of an alleged movement that lacks strong, visionary leadership” (*Revolution* 19). Eventually, the laity decided to leave the church because there is no profundity in Scriptural study, which finished by not having a clear vision of where to go as a church.

James Macgregor Burns asserts that although “leadership has no ethnic boundaries, those who lead are restricted by the rules of the organization or group who position people in leadership. In the world of reality, those who are in power do not share power” (45). Leaders are not delegating the ministry of the church while many within are still willing to help.

The fact is that leaders and pastors are separating themselves from their potential servers and the success of their own people. A congregation cannot be properly managed without the help of other gifted (perhaps differently gifted) people who may want to contribute to the vision of the church.

Biblical Foundation—Mission in the Bible

In order to become an influential entity in the world, the church must reevaluate its own understanding of mission based on biblical principles and perspectives and with a correct view of cultural aspects drawn from Scripture that can be applied to the contemporary society. The evangelical church, particularly in Mexico, has the urgency to reevaluate the understanding of Christian vision from the very beginning as main pillars to its faith. Through a deep study of the Scriptures and a correct contextualization of spiritual principles that can bring meaning of practical theology, not just for witness to the world but as an identity of pure Christianity, the church can embody a message of hope to its communities. Missions and volunteerism in the Bible are two main sections of the biblical foundations that I want to cover in order to reinforce the principles and conclusions of this research.

Old Testament

Since the book of Genesis, God has always had the intention of reaching the whole world. When God created the world, he pronounced everything “very good” (Gen. 1:31). God gave man and woman a mandate to rule over creation, but that order was interrupted by the Fall. The following eight chapters (Gen. 4-11) describe the devastating results of the Fall in terms of the progressive alienation of human beings from God and from other human beings. In this setting God’s call and promise came to Abraham. Genesis 12:1-4 discloses the foundational text for world mission. Every person, regardless of ethnical, social or economic background, can become Abraham’s spiritual children by an act of faith in Christ. No doubt the key word here is *bless* or *blessing*.

Three promises of blessing are listed in Genesis 12:2-3:

1. I will make you a great nation.
2. I will bless you.
3. I will make your name great.

This passage is immediately followed by a purpose clause: “so that you may be a blessing.” God’s promise to bless Abraham followed a commitment to bless others. He and his nation were to be blessed so that they might be a blessing. The writer of Genesis explains, “[S]o that in you all the families of the earth might be blessed” (Gen. 12:3) The word *blessing* in Hebrew (*waabarekka*) means the people of God are favored with a permanent felicity of every kind but it also includes to share this felicity with others as the fountain of all blessing (Vine, 41).

This man and his descendants were to be missionaries from the very beginning. The nations were to be blessed in this man’s seed. The message of the whole purpose of

God was that he would make a nation, give them a name, bless them so that they might be light to the nations and, thereby, be a blessing to all the nations.

The recipients of this blessing are listed in Genesis 10—a record of seventy nations. This chapter precedes human's failure at Babel, which in turn leads the nations of the world to God. The word to Abraham was meant to have a great impact on all families on the face of the earth.

Out of all the nations of the world, God specifically called Israel. Israel was the chosen nation from which God's blessing to the world began. As priests were to represent God and mediate his word to the nations, so Israel as a holy nation was to assume two relationships: one bond with God their king, and the other with the nations. Instead, Israel began to act for itself rather than to fulfill God's intentions for them as a nation and for the sake of the world.

Repeatedly, the prophets recorded their deep disappointment over Israel's disobedience and rebellion of its divine calling in almost every book of the major and minor Prophets. Although the people of Israel have a vocational call for the nations and a holy and unbreakable promise, God decided to use the Gentiles to fulfill his plan for the nations.

The prophets picture the people of other nations returning to Jerusalem, where the God of Israel shall appear as the God of all the peoples (Isa. 2:1-4; Mic. 4:1-4; Jer. 3:17; Isa. 25:6-9; 60; Zech. 8:20). The stories of Melchizedek, Ruth, Job, the people of Nineveh described in the book of Jonah, and many others in the Old Testament are windows through which to look out on the vast expanse of people outside the nation of Israel.

New Testament

From the beginning to the end, the New Testament is a book of mission. The gospels are live recordings of missionary preaching, and the epistles are the doctrinal foundations of missionary work. Remarkably, especially in the book of Acts, the primitive church emerges in the midst of persecution, not only among the Jewish community, but also among the Gentiles.

The Gospels. All the main prophecies of the Old Testament converge in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus lived his youth enthusiastically by learning from respected teachers, the synagogue, and his parents. Though he was the Son of God, he had the need to learn deeply about the Torah and to bring spiritual truths to experience. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus came to his hometown of Nazareth. Having gone to the synagogue, he started to read the book of Isaiah 61: “Today in your very hearing this Scripture has been fulfilled” (Luke 4:21). The coming salvation to which the prophets bore witness came true in Jesus Christ. Applying the words of Isaiah 61:1-2 to himself, Jesus said the Spirit of the Lord was on him: “He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isa. 61:2). The ministry of Jesus was prophesied by Isaiah and fulfilled in Luke to portray the main emphasis of Jesus’ ministry on earth.

Jesus’ miracles and parables provide special help in understanding how the kingdom is revealed in this world. These miracles address every human need: poverty, sickness, hunger, sin, demonic possession, temptation, and the threat of death. Every

miracle performed by Jesus fulfills a twofold purpose: to glorify his Father and to assist those in need.

The canonical Gospels record that Jesus created his circle of followers from relational settings. These followers included the apostles, as well as those not named but recorded in the gospels as volunteer followers of Jesus. The basic ethic of Jesus' ministry was based upon a voluntary response and service. The cost of discipleship was a voluntary commitment: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up the cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Each and every disciple who wanted to follow Jesus was in the understanding of a free, willing decision of service/work in ministry without any monetary exchange. Jesus expected them to serve him without demanding any kind of payment; moreover, the disciples apparently did not wonder how they were going to be compensated. They seemed to enjoy serving Jesus from a voluntary heart.

In his book on volunteerism, William H. Brackney affirms the ministry of Jesus and his disciples' commitment:

The rewards for such a commitment were not obvious in material terms or self-interest, so Jesus reminded his new followers in his Sermon on the Mount to avoid preoccupations with material pursuits. Rather, they were to expect that their reward for voluntary service for God would be the provision of life's essentials. (15)

The twelve disciples understood their mission and volunteer service not only to the Israelites but to the entire world. This same availability for service was even more evident after the Holy Spirit descended unto them.

The Book of Acts. The Spirit came upon the apostolic community Jesus had gathered and empowered it to become a missionary movement. This climatic event took

place on the morning of the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came upon a small company in an upper room (only 120) and they began to speak under his unction. This amazing experience became an ethnic encounter with some other Gentile groups who heard the disciples in their own language. At this point the church emerged as a witnessing community. According to Acts 1:8-9, the church understood the mission to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Stevens points out an important shift in the Bible regarding leadership among the church:

When you enter the church today there are two peoples—laity, who receive the ministry, and clergy who give it. But when we enter the world of the New Testament we find only one people, the true laos of God, with leaders among the people. (26)

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within the apostles brought a turning point in the way they served the world.

In Table 2.1, leadership and church enrollment moved from individualism to a corporative endeavor from the Old to the New Testament. Particularly since Pentecost, the so-called *primitive* church took a more communal role regarding the use of spiritual gifts and ministries of the church. For the first time in the Bible, the operation and function of specific ministries different from the ministry of a prophet, priest, and kings is mentioned, especially in Paul's letters.

Table 2.1 Comparison between the Old and the New Covenant

Old Covenant Ministry	New Covenant Ministry
Limited word ministry (Jer. 31:34)	Unlimited word ministry (Acts 2:18)
Externally motivated ministry (on tablets of stone; 2 Cor. 3:3)	Internally motivated ministry (on the human hearts; 2 Cor. 3:3)
Temporary and fading (inspiration; 2 Cor. 3:13)	Permanent and continuous (transformation; 2 Cor. 3:18)
Priestly caste and tribe (Exod. 28:1)	Unlimited priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9-11)
Sacerdotal mediation of priests (Exod. 30)	Total/life priesthood (Rom. 12:1-2)
Occasional and exceptional spiritual giftedness (Exod. 31:3)	Unlimited spiritual giftedness (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7)
Unique and special calls to service (1 Sam. 3)	Unlimited call to service and ministry (Eph. 4:1)
Limited ordination	Universal ordination to the ministry
Occasional gift of wisdom—the wise person (1 Kings 3:16-28)	Wisdom available to all (Jas. 1:5)
Special representatives of the rule of God in judges, prophets, priests, and Kings (Judg. 3:9-10)	Unlimited experience of the power, sovereignty, and rule of Christ (the kingdom of God) by all believers
Cultural separation (Deut. 17:14-20)	Apostolic ambassador (all things to all people; 1 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 5:20)
National focus (Jews and proselytes; Zech. 8:20)	World mission (disciples of, to, and from all nations; Matt. 28:18-20)

Source: Stevens 33.

The early Church. The first century of the Christian era was marked by intense missionary activity on the part of the Jews. Because of intense persecution, the apostles left Jerusalem for different places in order to fulfill Jesus' command. For instance, John went to Asia where he wrote the book of Revelation, Thomas proclaimed the gospel in India, and the Apostle Paul established churches among the Gentiles in Ephesus, Antioch, and Corinth.

For more than 250 years, the church was scattered around the world, not just because they were commanded to but because of political pressure. The rise of the primitive church occurred among great persecution from its inception to the start of the new and modern church form of religion by Henry VIII. The birth of the so-called *primitive* church was conceived with so much tribulation and pain that people had no

time to think of personal matters. These heroes of faith devoted themselves to Jesus as the most brilliant light shining in the darkest hour ever.

Each and every one of them contributed to the expansion of God's kingdom regardless of their own interests and human thinking or even physical harm. They just wanted to give in return what they had received from Jesus and from the wonderful influence of the Holy Spirit. God's kingdom was built because of these sincere and faithful men and women.

A Call for Christian Living

In Ephesians 4:1, the Apostle Paul urges the church to “live a life worthy of the call you have received.” A key word in this verse is the word *call*, which comes from the Greek word *kaleo* and means to call aloud, with a loud voice (Vine 86). According to W. E. Vine, the meaning of *kaleo* is directly related to an action of blessing and it is “used particularly of the divine call to partake of the blessings of redemption” (86). This word is the same root word used by Jesus when he appointed his disciples to follow him. The same root is used in order to call the church for a specific task according to their vocation. Interestingly, this word is used precisely in this passage, but with an urgent call to serve God. A link is found between *kaleo* and the word *ekklesia*, which has a similar meaning. This Greek word, *ekklesia*, entered into the New Testament from the Septuagint and was used to translate the Hebrew *qahal*—assembly, congregation, those called out, gathered, congregated (Oden 266). The apostles used the word to refer to the act of assembling, or the assemblage of persons brought together by God's own calling for the purpose of hearing the gospel.

According to Thomas C. Oden, the call for service was not exclusive but inclusive:

[T]here is one noteworthy difference that quickly emerged between *qahal* and *ekklesia*: the *qahal* was strictly speaking, a calling forth of men only, the circumcised, while *ekklesia* included women, children and men, all those baptized. In Spanish the Greek idea of *ekklesia* has been preserved with the word *iglesia*. (265)

The new God's assembly is without any restriction at all. Anyone who wants to come to the Lord regardless of gender, race, age, or social and economic background, can freely come without hesitation.

Paul used the word *urge* (*parakalao*), which could mean *exhort* but according to the context is more than that. This word means to *beg* someone to do something (Vine 655). Paul was actually begging the Ephesians to live a worthy life according to their calling for service, which indicates the importance of their actions as servants of the Lord.

From Ephesians 4 verses 2 to 6, the Apostle Paul gives a description of the quality and kind of life to which he was previously referring. Some particular aspects of such a life are mentioned. Lowliness and meekness are fruits of the Spirit necessary to have a good relationship with God and with others. Humbleness is a starting point for unity. In any personal relationship, having a humble heart will make the relationship last. The word *gentleness* comes from "*prate*" which denotes willingness to submit to obey God's direction. The Bible mentions Moses to be the gentlest person ever.

Another important fruit of the Spirit mentioned is *patience*. The expression, "forbearing one another in love," is also found in Colossians 3:13, which means to endure

in extraordinary patience. One of the most difficult lessons to learn as Christians is how to get along with others. Paul paraphrases the two main commandments given by Christ:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:29-30)

All of these virtues contribute toward keeping “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). The main purpose referring to this verse is not a matter of making unity but keeping it. Within the church, differences in wealth, education, race, color, and social status create the temptation to deny that unity.

A call for unity. Paul’s exhortation was to keep this unity with God and with God’s people through the bond of peace. He prayed that his readers may be rooted and grounded in love (Col. 3:17), for love is the basic attitude of seeking the highest good of others. Therefore, it will lead to all these qualities.

From verses 4 to 6 in Ephesians 4, the apostle makes a sudden shift. He describes the church’s beliefs. The *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* describe about Paul’s statement:

[T]his is a creedal summary, perhaps a fragment of an early Christian hymn, they have in common, a unity by the Spirit in the church, a unity in Christ acknowledged and confessed as Lord and unity ultimately in God the Father and source of all. (“Ephesians” 54)

For the Jewish, the oral tradition was still maintained as a way to keep the commandments in order to fulfill the law and ordinances. The oral tradition consisted of parental transmission to their children of the Word of God about all the basic beliefs given from the Torah, and the children to their children, and so on. The creed reinforced

the transition legacy in order to keep doctrinal beliefs that remained from generation to generation.

This affirmation of faith and beliefs confirms the meaning of the unity of the body of Christ. The foundation is grounded in fundamental Christian beliefs that every Christian should confess regularly. Paul summarizes seven of them.

Christ has one body. To be in Christ is to be part of his body just as organs are integrated fully into the human body. In the diversity of the human race and of different gifting, the church is linked together as one perfect entity as one person made in God's own image.

The body is united by the same Spirit. All who are members of the body of Christ are recipients of the Holy Spirit according to Romans 8:9. "This fact prevents any view of the church as a mere organization, for the presence of the Spirit constitutes the church, and it's the basis of its unity" ("Ephesians," *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* 76). Those born from the Spirit have a common *hope*. The hope as Christians is to live with him forever and to live on this earth with expectancy.

Believing in one Lord means to deny any other form of god besides Christ. In the book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul reaffirms the name that is above every other name: Jesus is the Lord. Paul says, "Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Christ is glorified through the Church by believing that he is the Son of God and the one true Lord.

Walking in one faith means to depend upon God's providence in any path of life and not leaning to any other thing or person. God's key for entering his kingdom is only by faith.

The outward sign of this faith is called *baptism*. Instituted by the Lord himself, it is an experience of cleansing and purification by the immersion in water. Though it is an outward sign, baptism can unlock the heavenly just by believing as the Father did with Jesus when he was baptized by John the Baptist. After the heavens were open, God spoke these words to Jesus but also to the multitudes gathered: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22, NIV). People gathered there recognized the voice from heaven and testified to Christ as the Son of God.

The church is covered by one God and Father of all. All Christians belong to one another as brothers and sisters and share the same Father and God: "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live, and there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Cor. 8:6). Unity is a prerequisite to usefulness, especially in the church, where one finds the variety of personalities and the greatest diversity of gifts. John Calvin says, "[N]o member of the body of Christ is endowed with such perfection as to be able, without the assistance of others, to supply his own necessities" (Bible Gateway). God created every human being so unique and different in order to fulfill his plan for the world.

A call for Christian service. God's grace is given to each member of the body of Christ through spiritual gifts for Christian service. "To each of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Eph. 4:7). Everyone has been the recipient of the gift of grace.

The following verse describes how Christ overcame evil in order to give the church freedom and provide them gifts promised to them: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men” (Eph. 4:8). The Apostle Paul makes reference to Psalm 68:18, which says, “When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men even from the rebellious that you, O Lord God, might dwell there.” Apparently, David writes in the Psalm of an historic incident during his own reign as King over Israel, perhaps of the conquests over his enemies when he led as captives those who had attacked his people. The conquering King’s return from battle was with the giving of gifts as part of the celebration (King’s conquest, Net Bible, 17). Paul understood the Lord’s triumph over death as well as over him, which had the power of death and over Satan. Upon his triumphant return to his Father’s house, he distributes gifts to his subjects.

In Figure 2.1 Christ is giving the gifts to the church in order to fill the earth with Christ’s blessing.

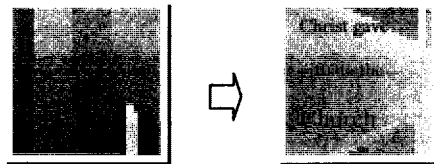


Figure 2.1. Gifts given to the Church.

The world is full of too many gaps to fill with hope and restoration. God is going to fill the earth through each and all members of his body by using their gifts and abilities given from the Spirit. Another translation says, “That he might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10).

The words *world* and *all* are used in seven or eight ways in Scripture; very rarely does the *all* mean all persons, taken individually. The words are generally used to signify that Christ has redeemed Jews, Gentiles, rich, and poor and has not restricted his redemption to a certain people group. This Scripture is linked with an Old Testament verse in Habakkuk 2:14: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14). The church is here today to fill the emptiness of a lonesome world.

The focus of Paul’s teaching changes dramatically when he mentions Christ’s intervention in giving the ministry gifts to the church: “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4:11). Christ himself appointed gifts and ministries to the church. Although, my aim in this research was not to describe these ministerial offices, I considered it necessary to mention them briefly for the sake of understanding this model of transplanting teaching. These five gifts constitute the five core ministries of the church.

First, the ministry of the apostle is the one called to lay down the ministry and operation of the church. The ministry of *apostleship*, “[b]uilt on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:30), is given to the church for the establishment of doctrinal and ecclesiastical order among the church. Second, the ministry of a *prophet* in the Old Testament was to receive a specific word of inspiration from the Lord to a certain person or a community of faith with the purpose of edification or exhortation. Third, an *evangelist* is the one called to preach to multitudes and ministries related to bringing people to salvation in Christ. Different kinds

of mass evangelism as well as personal evangelism are very effective among the ministries of the church. Fourth, a *pastor* is the leader of a congregation who provides spiritual growth and also enables the people to work according to their vocations. Every denomination has its own regulations for the ordination of pastors to be appointed to a local church. Fifth, a *teacher* is the person with qualifications of an instructor in a local church or in any place or organization where teaching is taking place.

The five main ministries of the Church, apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are given by Christ with a very specific purpose: “For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:12). The reason for the giving of these gifts is for the perfecting of the saints and not for other reasons.

The word *katartizo*, or *perfecting*, has two different meanings. First, it means to repair what has been broken and second, make one what he ought to be. Before any member of a congregation wants to start serving God, some healing *katarsis* or transformation of the heart needs to take place. In Romans 12:1-2, the apostle used the same verb *parakaleo* to mean *to beg* when he asked the people with vehemence to offer themselves to God in sacrifice:

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 the mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In this passage the Greek word for *transformation* (*metamorphoo*) means *change into another form*, which is the same concept given in Ephesians for *to repair*. This perfection to which every Christian is called is not a blameless life but a continuous search for what

God is intending to do. This search will lead to know the will of God for, which is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Figure 2.2 shows how dependable the church is of the five ministries in order to become an agent of service. The reason for Christ giving gifts to the church is to have God's people ready for service. This causation explains that God's people go through the preparation of these five ministries in order to be trained for service.

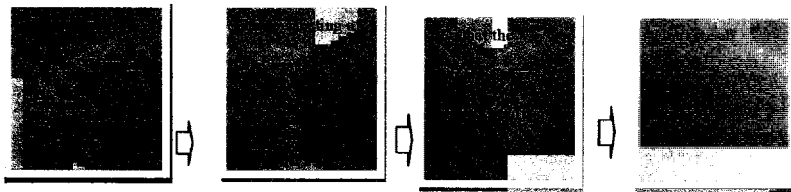


Figure 2.2. Preparation for service.

The church must be willing to enter into a training process of learning by the ones gifted as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers until the body of Christ is ready to be used by God to do the work of the ministry. This process will be completed until each and every member of the body of Christ can reach maturity and wholeness.

The ministry of the church, then, flows naturally through an active use of all the gifts of the Spirit given to the body of Christ, including the five main ministries of the church. Following preparation, God's people become the cause and the effect, the *built up* body of Christ. This ongoing action of blessing activates the whole church for Christian service ever since the writings of the prophet Isaiah:

Alliements will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named

ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in the riches you will boast. (Isa. 61:56)

The body of Christ will be called ministers of the Lord and not just a flock. The church is called to be ministers and, therefore, needs to be prepared for the work of the ministry.

The use of the term preparation is more of a conditional form and not for the sake of functional reasons. In other words, the church depends on these five ministries in order to function properly according to God's design for each and every member of the body of Christ. This process of growth will mature the church in Christ.

According to Craig S. Keener, the whole body of Christ is called for training by the five ministries recorded in Ephesians 4:11:

Most strikingly, Ephesians 4 indicates the purpose of these ministries of the Word: They were to equip all God's people for the work of ministry, so that by evangelism, preaching, and inspired guidance the church would become all it should be (Eph. 4:12-13). The most important function of these ministries of the Word, therefore, was to mobilize the rest of Christ's body, because all Christians are called to be ministers. If we could mobilize all Christians to minister where they live, we would have a spiritual army to proclaim Christ, to meet the needs of our society, and to lay a better foundation for our society's ethics. (132)

Any community can be really changed by the manifestation of the whole body of Christ participating in active roles. They can be transformed from regular member attendants to active proclaimers of God's kingdom until the waters cover the land.

Bill Hammon underlines the importance of a coordinated function of the ministries of the church through the participation of each and every member of a local church: "The five ministries of the church must be alive, active, and unified in fulfilling their divine commission of Ephesians 4:11-16" (112). In this respect, Hammon believes that the church can only be nurtured and become very much alive with the full activation of the five foundational ministries of the church. Therefore, and according to Ephesians

4:11, these main ministries are not to be underestimated for any reason because they are the basis of Christian spirituality and numerical growth.

Voluntarism in the Bible

The act of giving time for a specific task in a voluntarily way with religious purposes is often found in the Bible, which sometimes was brought from gratefulness but some other times was motivated out of improper reasons. In the Old Testament, the people gave voluntarily.

Exodus 32 narrates how the people of Israel voluntarily assembled to create an object of worship while Moses received the law on the mountain. They collected gold and precious metal from each person in order to create a golden calf to substitute for Jehovah the God of Israel. They commanded Aaron, according to Exodus 32, “to make gods for us, to go before us” (v. 1). Once the calf was created, which presumably took some days, the people ate, drank, and were merry (v. 6). In other words, they worked together in a coordinated way with Aaron, whom they unanimously appointed, to fulfill the need of having *a god* who could lead them. The alliance was finished, however, when Moses returned because he destroyed the idol, diminished the association, and separated Aaron from the leadership the people gave him. Obviously, this negative event illustrated how much an associated group of people could accomplish when they work as a team with the leader.

In contrast to the *golden calf association* was the Israelite congregation in the wilderness who helped to create the Tabernacle. Individual volunteerism is evidenced throughout the narrative of Exodus 35 and 36. Moses reported God’s command to take an offering from those “generous in heart” (35:5). Later, after some associative consultation

among themselves, “everyone whose heart was stirred and everyone whose spirit was willing ... brought the Lord’s offering...” (35:20-21). Skilled workers, women and men, offered themselves. To reinforce the voluntary nature of the giving, the writer records that the gifts were a “freewill offering to the Lord” (35:29).

According to Brevard S. Childs, “the direction of the Lord to collect the Tabernacle offering was made within the context of forgiveness and the renewal of his covenant with the Israelites after they chose the golden calf over the Lord” (562). So great was the response of the people that they did not stop giving until Moses asked them not to give any more. What the people had already brought was more than enough to do all the work (36:6). Stacey Minger says, “Gifts given from a willing heart are given cheerfully. The abundance of giving that accompanied the building of the Tabernacle gained momentum morning by morning, creating an atmosphere of gladness and celebration” (46). The source of their giving was a grateful heart rather than any kind of imposition.

Another example of task-oriented religious volunteerism may be found in the Palestinian Jews organized by Nehemiah during the exile to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The fifth century narrative indicates a spontaneous reaction to Nehemiah’s call to rebuild the city walls: “Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace” (Neh. 2:17). The people who responded were “Jewish priests, nobles, officials, and workers, who committed themselves to the common good” (2:18). Tyndale Commentary of the book of Nehemiah explains how well the Israelites cooperated for the good of Jerusalem: “The works shared out in the narrative of chapter three of this book gives a list of names and places that reveals an extraordinary feat of

organization and concerted action. It has all the marks of a shared enthusiasm, shown in the heterogeneous groups which set to work on their adjacent stretches of wall” (83). No indication was made whether the association received any compensation for their labor. Beyond the actual reconstruction effort was also the generosity of families (gold, silver, priestly robes) toward special projects (Neh. 7:70-73).

In the New Testament, and as the primitive church continued to grow, the apostles followed the pattern of volunteerism such as in the decision-making process of the ministry. In Acts 2, a voluntary communalism emerged to meet the needs of the growing association: “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.” (Acts 2:44). The historian notes the “glad and generous hearts” and “goodwill of all the people,” signifying full assent to this arrangement.

Forefathers’ Understanding about the Priesthood of Believers

In order to have a solid ground on which to build the concepts of the priesthood of all believers, I want to present the theological perspective of the forefathers of Christianity regarding this important doctrine.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther states that the true church may be known by seven outward marks:

1. The preaching of the Word;
2. The sacrament of baptism;
3. The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper;
4. The keys of Christian discipline and forgiveness;
5. A called and consecrated Christian ministry;

6. Public worship with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving; and,
7. The Holy Cross (i.e., suffering in many forms through which the Church must inevitably pass).

The first mark, the preaching of the Word, and, consequently, the rest of them, became a real issue of discussion in the time of Luther, especially because the laity was not allowed to participate in any of these functions. Clergy, exclusively, conducted all of these marks. However, for Luther, the concept of the enrollment of the church was significant in his time. In order to have a platform from which to start, he gave a basic definition of what the Church is:

The Church is the congregation of the saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered. And for the true unity of the Church it is insufficient to agree about the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, nor is it necessary to have everywhere like human traditions, whether rites or ceremonies instituted by man. (qtd. in Kidd 264)

In this regard, for Luther, the Church was an active entity of human beings without any class distinctions—an assembly called to proclaim the Word. The exterior Word must always be present and the Holy Spirit is active through the proclamation of the gospel. The fellowship of believers is not only dependent upon the proclaimed Word but also is the result of it.

Luther relates the ministry of the Word to the priesthood of all believers:

Therefore everyone who knows that he is a Christian should fully assured that all of us alike are priests, and that we all have the same authority in regard to the Word and the sacraments, although no one has the right to administer them without the consent of the members of his Church, and the call of the majority. (qtd. in Woolf 318)

According to this statement, Luther believes that all Christians possess the same authority, though all are not called to exercise it. “Wherever,” says Luther, “you see this

Word preached, believed, confessed, and acted on, there do not doubt that there must be *ecclesia sancta catholica*,... for God's Word does not go empty away" (qtd. in Woolf 271). For Luther found no distinction or discrimination among the body of Christ; they are all God's children.

Luther goes further by making a distinction between the Roman Catholic Church and Lutheranism. While in the Roman Catholic Church the hierarchy was viewed above the congregation and regarded as a special state or caste. In the Lutheran view the ministry takes place in the congregation and fulfills its function there. Furthermore, Charles Cyril Eastwood states that for Luther, the priest should ensure the freedom of the believer and not bondage (4). Luther, according to Eastwood, believed that the priest should never limit the ministry of any member of the body of Christ.

John Calvin

John Calvin properly revived the triplex *munus*, which speaks of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. In this regard, he bases the priesthood of all believers on two main interpretations. First, Christ is the only High Priest; no other priesthood exists. Second, the business of all Christians is to offer spiritual sacrifices because they belong to a royal priesthood. Eastwood, in commenting about Calvin's position of this doctrine, says, "Christ is Prophet, Priest and King, not for Himself alone, but for the Church; and so on the ground of His substitutionary priesthood the whole Church has a corporate priesthood" (68). According to Isaiah 61:1-2, Christ's unction for teaching and performing miracles was not for himself but for his whole body, that a corresponding efficacy of the Spirit might always accompany the preaching of the gospel.

Moreover, the passage of Isaiah 61 changes from an individual setting to a plural one at the end of verse 3:

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

The prophet changed the description from Jesus the anointed one to the church as the priesthood of believers. Therefore, the church became the mean for God's power in order to renew the ruined cities.

Robert A. Muthiah reaffirmed the doctrine of the priesthood of believers sustained by Calvin:

Calvin did not emphasize this doctrine to the extent Luther did, but neither did he ignore it. He stressed that Christ is the only high priest and he held that through Christ's substitutionary priesthood the people of God are formed into priesthood. Calvin's view of the priesthood of all believers was also tied to his understanding of calling. Each person has a divine calling, and as a people follow their calling, they are priests in their daily vocations. (19)

The ministry of the local church for Calvin was initiated in the calling for believing and not necessarily in the activation of the Spirit influence as Luther indicates. The mark of a Christian for Calvin was the election and not the personal decision made. The conclusion to be drawn here is that Luther's own understanding of the priesthood of all believers rests in the doctrine of justification by faith, while Calvin's view is more focused on calling and vocation.

John Wesley

The doctrine of priesthood of all believers, as Calvin sustains, is based in Christ's personhood as King, Priest, and Prophet, and in these offices the people share. However, Wesley teaches, first, that a line of demarcation must be drawn between those who

possess faith and those who do not. He refers to those who only imagine that they are Christians, but he shows that they are not really *kings and priests*. They have the name without understanding the true experience of a Christian.

The Methodist Catechism asserts that Christ fulfills his purpose through faithful members in ministry and laity alike. The faith statements of this doctrine are disclosed in the United Methodist *Constitutional Practice and Discipline*, the Deed of Union:

Christ's Ministers in the Church are Stewards in the household of God and Shepherds of His flock. Some are called and ordained to this sole occupation and have a principal and directing part in these great duties but they hold no priesthood differing in kind from that which is common to the Lord's people, and they have no exclusive title to the preaching of the Gospel or the care of the souls. These ministries are shared with them by others to whom also the Spirit divides His gifts severally as He wills. (Section 12 Amendment, Section 2)

Wesley's view of the priesthood of believers, according to Kenneth J. Collins was a full participation of the body of Christ:

Wesley began to employ lay preachers, that is, unordained assistants whose ministries would be limited, for the most part, to the task of preaching. Wesley often spoke of these fellow laborers in the gospel as his children; and their relationship with their leader was more paternal than anything else. (108)

Ordained or unordained were actively working according to Wesley's perspective about the ministry of the church.

Wesley's and Calvin's contributions to this doctrine are insightful, not only in reaffirming the principle of laity's participation in ministry but also in the way this doctrine must be understood. Wesley believes that any person called by God to be his child can do the work of preaching just by having the *catholic spirit*:

Each however, should accept the other as true members of the church; there should be interchange of preachers and freedom of movement from one to the other. Above all they should witness together in the common

mission of the church to the world and display their mutual love by common worship in the great congregation. (Williams 155)

The interchange of preachers mentioned by Williams seems to be a normal practice for in the time of revival, especially because of the high demand of available preachers.

However, the final cause for was unity. The “common mission” is the purpose of the work and not individualistic aims or interest.

In the present time, and according to Hunter, the United Methodist Church is calling its churches to elevate more attendees into leadership roles: “[T]he Early Methodist societies in England, and the early Methodist churches in the United States, were indeed substantially lay led, but the piece is much less important than most of the ministry that mattered was done by the laity” (14). Hunter says that the church should renew its vision through a calling back of lay recognition among the churches so the vitality of the body of Christ can be manifested (15).

The cooperation of each and every member of the body of Christ, according to Wesley, is the result of living guided by the Spirit of God who is the unifier of the church regardless of clerical or hierarchical position laypeople were called to participate in Wesley’s societies and even in official meetings of the church and was the way the Methodist church came to be known.

Council of Trent

In the time of the Council of Trent, about 1545 and 1563, the council took steps to reform many of the major abuses that, according to them, were heretical, most of them incited, in part, by the Reformation. One restricted the preaching of sermons only for bishops and their assistants, yet, according to Hans Kung, a layman (Lodovico Nogorola)

preached at the Council of Trent itself, and at the Second Vatican Council laymen gave sermon-like addresses to the Council of Fathers.

Kung went further affirming the ministry of the priesthood of believers,

Every Christian is called to be a preacher of the word, in the widest sense, even though, in view of the variety of the gifts of the Spirit, not everyone can by any means do everything. All are called to preach the gospel in the sense of their personal Christian witness, without being all called to preach in the narrow sense of the word or to be theologians. (481)

The priesthood of all believers includes, according to Kung, not only the witness of actions of one's own life but also the specific witness of the Word. Kung understood the priesthood of believers as the vital action of proclamation of the Word by anyone who has confessed Christ as his or her Savior to a person or a number of people gathered in a certain place. This kind of thought eliminates any suspiciousness about who can minister or who cannot.

Hebrews 13:15-16 clearly shows how everyone is called to the preaching of the Word:

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

This preaching is not only performed in good conduct but also in words. To manifest a life of good works represents the fruit of how the Spirit is inspiring Christians, but the word that Christians can bring would complement their deeds and actions to others.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples in that first day of the week after his resurrection, he said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). In this Scripture, Jesus never mentioned his disciples, all the different ups and downs, cultural barriers, persecution, and all kinds of great difficulties

they were going to experience in their way to service. They just decided to follow Jesus regardless of the cost they were about to face. This new epoch of conquest will require a wider vision and strategy of how to do ministry. *The vision for the contemporary church in Mexico should include, by all means, the active participation of the whole church as laypeople working together alongside the pastor.*

As every person has his or her own personality and uniqueness, every group of people who gather together in the name of the Lord is also peculiar. Therefore, every local church was created unique in God's own perfect design to accomplish a specific task in this world, regardless of its social, economic, or cultural background.

Congregational distinctiveness is the identity given by the Holy Spirit to every Christian assembly that worships God. Each congregation has a call for ministry, its own style of preaching and worship, and a cultural background. This spiritual distinctiveness, which could vary from church to church because of cultural and ecclesiastical differences, should not be a reason for separation but a way to appreciate diversity among unity. Nevertheless, every congregation has the same specific *task* given by Jesus before he ascended unto heaven.

The life of the church must be in transforming lives more than in activities. The movement of the saints is the involvement of every member of the body of Christ in the actual ministry of the church by serving God according to his or her gifts and abilities. Young members and adult laity in churches are ready to serve. Pastors' responsibility, according to Ephesians 4:11, is to encourage congregants to do the work of the ministry. The ministry of the church will be limited to the participation of each and every member of the congregation and the best way to activate them is by organizing teamwork.

James G. Clawson (294), Jon R. Katzenbach and Zia Kahn (197), Douglas K. Smith (87), and John P. Kotter (82) agree in the fact that each and every group has the potential to do great things. Smith affirms that there is great power in working together regardless of differences: “Seek out the real teams that undoubtedly work within your own organization regardless of its culture and environment” (263). They sustain that in order to have a successful result, any group should identify differences, and keep working if there was no difference. The best way to start is by organizing the group into small *working teams* so they can become participants in the vision. Kotter talks about teamwork by saying, “If teamwork does not exist in the guiding coalition, parochialism can turn vision creation into an endless negotiation” (82). Some of these teams could participate in specific purposes of the church such as the administration, construction, missions, and supportive ministries.

According to Clawson, four stages are needed in order to transform a group into a team: forming, norming, performing and reforming. In the introductory stage of *forming*, members spend most of their energy asking these questions: (1) What is the purpose of this group? (2) Should I be here? and, (3) Who is the leader? If the group jumps into a task prematurely the issues of membership, purpose, and leadership will surface later and cause disruption and confusion.

The church does not need group expansion but teamwork expansion. The more people from the church can get involved in Christian ministries, the better building a great vision will be. However, a *forming* individuals into a group is not the important experience, as Clawson affirms, but a *transforming* one through a profound change in the hearts of each and every person wanting to cooperate in the group.

Christians living in the twenty-first century ought to have images of leadership that can help the people relate to a world quite different from anything that has preceded it. These images of leadership must come from a transformed heart and a renewed mind, so the church can penetrate to the cultures and subcultures within their communities.

Derek Tidball states, “[C]onversion has a beginning but not an end. It’s a lifelong process of discovery and transformation” (10). Inner healing is not an automatic process but a long and tedious time of giving and receiving (to God and to others) until the heart is completely healed from memories, habits, vices, and unethical practices. In Romans 12:1, 2 Paul addresses this notion. The word *transform* comes from the Greek *methamorphosis*, which means a radical change or shift from the mind. Paul is now making a transition from the apostle’s missionary leadership role to a transformational leadership of every believer (Eph. 4:7-16). Flemming talks about this verse: “For Paul, cultural transformation starts with individual Christians and Christian communities themselves experiencing the renewal of God’s grace” (36). As a result of God’s love, every minister or leader who is called to serve in the church should go through a healing process. Elmer L. Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird add, “The first thing a leader must change is himself” (186). Rick Warren affirms by saying, “Leaders are learners. Because they are constantly leading people into change, a leader must be constantly learning, which is another way of saying they must be constantly growing” (99). Too many leaders have experienced painful failures because of a lack of self-reevaluation. Christian leaders do not want to admit the kind of personal lives they are living. They hide their failures and insecurities because they do not want the people to know about them. Rainero Cantalamessa believes that “one of the great dangers in our spiritual walk is that we

become discouraged because we fall into the same sin again and again, and it seems that we will never be able to keep to our resolve to avoid it” (72). He adds in this respect by reaffirming the importance of having hope:

Hope gives us the strength to start again from the beginning, to believe every time that this time we will succeed, this time we will really be converted. This moves the heart of God to come to our help with his grace.
(72)

Spiritual healing demands a constant personal reflection on how to deal with personal failures and how to overcome temptation. The main source of healing for the wounded is through understanding the meaning of the cross and the personal application of this essential Christian doctrine. Stephen Seamands says, “The cross is a place, a wonderful place where there is ‘mercy and grace’ for those who have been ‘accused and condemned’ and deeply wounded” (*Wounds* 78). In his book *Wounds That Heal*, Seamands affirms, “Deep wounds require deep healing. And deep healing involves a slow and difficult process” (39). The church is not to accommodate to this world’s views or practices but to be inwardly transformed with a renewed mind.

Towns, Stetzer, and Bird reaffirm the need for transforming the mind:

Being a transforming community of faith is more than just building a big church. It requires being a transformed and transforming church—a church that is transformed by the Gospel and that seeks to transform its community. That means it impacts its community more than by just existing within it. (127)

In order to become a community of influence, new patterns must be developed as a result of a radical change of mind through the process of transformation. The heart of the people from the local church must be released from any earthly dust in order to become a community of faith that can impact its closest world.

In the secular arena, the concept of transformational leadership was brought up by Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio in the beginning of the eighties and consisted in underscoring the importance of self-motivation among employees in contrast with the concept of transactional behavior. Transactional in contrast with transformational behavior was more dependable in salary and recognition only. According to Bass and Riggio, “[T]ransformational leadership elevates the awareness and consciousness about organizational goals. A shared agreement is developed that bonds leader and followers in a moral commitment to a cause that goes beyond their own self-interests.” (26). Richard L. Hughes, Robert C. Ginnet, and Gordon J. Curphy affirm Bass by saying, “Transformational leaders are believed to be more successful at driving organizational change because of followers’ heightened emotional levels and their willingness to work toward the accomplishment of the leader’s vision (648). However, transactional leaders are those who give but expect to receive something at the same time: “In contrast, transactional leaders do not possess these leader characteristics, nor are they able to develop strong emotional bonds with followers or inspire followers to do more than followers thought they could” (648). Muthiah affirms that those who empower the people to do a little more than just delegation have “transformative empowerment,” “which is an internal commitment which developed when people define their own tasks and they are willing to move beyond the initial tasks they have been given” (171). The people do more when they feel internally a sense of belonging to what they are doing rather than just having a task that must be done.

The second stage of transformation, according to Clawson, is *norming* the group—exploring how to do the task. As soon as the group sorts out what they are

supposed to do, who should be there, and how they will manage the leadership, it begins thinking about the how questions: (1) How will they work together? (2) How will they resolve disputes? and, (3) How will they relate to the outside world?

This stage for Christian involvement I prefer to call *nurturing* instead of *norming*, mainly because the term nurture explains the process of assimilation of Christian faith as an infant is nurtured in order to survive. In 2 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul addresses his disciple Timothy with these words: “You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Timothy was seen by his *spiritual father* as a dear child. In order to have stronger generations, a closer feedback between the instructor and the disciple as a father-son relationship will be required.

Furthermore, Paul continues (2 Tim. 2:2) by saying, “[A]nd what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.” Paul is talking about four continuous generations: Paul to Timothy, Timothy to faithful people, faithful people to others.

The Jewish people practiced oral tradition in a regular basis. The father taught the stories and teachings from the Torah to his wife and children as they were also taught. They kept this teaching tradition from generation to generation. From this point of view, Timothy knew what Paul was talking about. He received the Word from his mother Eunice and Eunice from her grandmother Lois and then he reproduced it with other disciples (2 Tim. 1:5). The message of the gospel is being transmitted from generation to generation because of faithful servants who have been fulfilling this task of multiplication. Jesus’ ministry is still touching the lives of many around the world.

The ministry is about teamwork. The call of the church is not just to fulfill a vision but to make disciples. The first task should be to reproduce discipleship in others and to make each disciple part of a team that can work together. Through a continual feedback between the leader and the disciple, great advances can be accomplished. As John Maxwell states about the fruitfulness of a good leadership, “He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk” (43). Making disciples through teamwork can become the most rewarding experience a church ministry can have.

The third stage proposed by Clawson is *performing*. Individual roles and interpersonal relationships become clear and comfortable. Members stop challenging the purpose, membership, or leadership and focus their efforts on getting the job done. The questions answered in this stage include (1) Are we doing this job accordingly to the purpose and vision? (2) How is this job done? and, (3) Is service the main motive of these actions?

The term *performing* is not precisely what the Bible explains about Christian involvement. Instead of *performing*, the term *serving* explains the core of any task made in the church or outside the church.

Service must be the heartbeat of the church as a distinctive feature to the unbelievers. Steve Sjogren’s church, one of the best growing churches in America, emphasizes service to the community as the number one task of their ministries:

We love, serve and care for others because that is normal behavior for people who are filled with God’s Spirit. We are Christians. Christ was the ultimate servant. We cannot help but serve because the Spirit of the Servant has filled our hearts. When we serve, we are just being who we naturally are. (39)

The ministry of service is the result of God's unconditional love to us, and others must see this love regardless of self-interest. Tony Morgan and Tim Stevens explain how to fill up those ministries that normally are not often requested in the church: "Eighty percent of people's time should be spent doing what God has created them to do. The remaining 20 percent of their time should be spent fulfilling roles (like picking up trash)" (19). The church must learn that loving others can break the yoke of selfishness and vanity better than anything in the world.

Van Gelder states, "Congregations need to ask on a regular basis in regard to the contexts they seek to serve, what does God want to do?" (60). By a continuous search of God's presence, congregations may do a greater work than if they pursue works by their own human effort.

Christianity cannot be reduced to God meeting people's needs, rather to display his glory and to further his kingdom in the world. As the need for social work services continues to grow globally, the various types of professional roles for social workers also continue to increase. For instance, the United Nations is looking to fulfill the following global needs during the coming years (by 2015):

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
 2. To achieve universal primary education;
 3. To promote gender equality and empower women;
 4. To reduce child mortality;
 5. To improve maternal health;
 6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
 7. To ensure environmental sustainability; and
 8. To develop a global partnership for development.
- (Raymond 11)

Most of these goals are related to uplifting and empowering those who are in need or suffering. Good number of people can come to a commitment with Christ when they can

see the good works done by the people of God such as social and medical assistance or any way available to help those in need.

People get involved in ministry because they are motivated to work. Kotter affirms, “When trust is present, you will usually be able to create teamwork. When it is missing, you won’t” (61). I personally believe that the best way to motivate each and every member of a congregation is by helping them to see how many gifts and how much potential they have for ministry and by encouraging them to serve according to these gifts.

Discovering Spiritual Gifts

Jesus gave all Christian disciples the promise of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). This presence includes his companionship and friendship and a number of gifts available for the church. He provided for his children an incredible amount of spiritual resources. Unfortunately, millions of Christians remain unaware of these gifts and are living at their natural capacity level rather than reaching their full potential through the power of the Holy Spirit. Pastors’ responsibility is to consider the ministries that can provide life for the church. According to Greg Ogden, an emphasis should be upon the gifts of the people rather than the leader’s charisma: “[T]he biblical emphasis is not on the ‘multigifted’ pastor, but on a ‘multigifted’ body” (99). Jesus was the only multi-gifted human, and when he ascended to his Father, he chose to use the church with multifaceted capacities in order to fulfill God’s plan for humanity.

Kenneth Cain Kinghorn suggests that in order to understand the spiritual gifts better these three principles must be grasped:

1. Spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit not from a church, the pastor, parents, or personal determination (1 Cor. 12:11).
2. Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities that enable people to do more than natural endowments will allow (Acts 1:8).
3. Spiritual gifts bring responsibilities from which God expects his followers to be faithful (2 Cor. 5:10; Kinghorn 20).

The New Testament catalogs twenty spiritual gifts and Paul gives them in four lists. These lists of spiritual gifts were presented in the workshop seminar (see Appendix B). Paul presents a descriptive list of spiritual gifts in Corinthians and Romans. Two Greek words refer to the topic of spiritual gifts. One is *pneumatika* (what is spiritual), referring to the gifts exercised in public worship. The other is *charismata*, relating to all manifestations of God's favor to his people (1 Cor. 7:7, 28-30; 12:1, 4-11; 14:1,12; Eph. 4:7-13; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

Bill Hybels states, "The power of the Church truly is the power of everybody as men and women, young and old, offer their gifts to work out God's redemptive plan" (31). The power of team work is exponential not only because of what can each person can contribute to a ministry but what the Holy Spirit can do with two or more together in Christ' name.

This power is given by the Spirit through the five ministries of the church according to Ephesians 4:11 says, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, *to equip the saints for the work of ministry*, for building up the body of Christ." The word *equip* means preparation for service, consequently requiring change and a new set of challenges of which to take

charge. A very insightful verse is found in Hosea 4:6 which says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge....” The work of the ministry requires cooperation of every member of the church by active participation inside and outside the church setting, according to his or her own gifts and abilities. The pastor, after a self-reflective and in-filling of the Spirit experience, can function as a facilitator to the church. Morgan and Stevens say, “Instead of telling people what you need, tell them how you can help them use their gifts and experiences. Explain how they can find purpose and fulfillment” (17). A reevaluation of ministerial gifting would become a very uplifting experience for the church and should be practiced in a routine manner.

The fourth stage according to Clawson is *reforming*. The final process of teamwork is to reevaluate the work that has been done by each member of the group. Either by assessments, evaluation interviews, or other means of tests.

The term *reaffirming* is the one I suggest in this important stage. At this stage the questions include the following: (1) How am I doing the job? (2) Are the objectives been fulfill? and, (3) How much work is still left to do? This stage needs feedback from the superior in addition to feedback from peers. Therefore, the group must refresh the vision, the main purpose, and the commitment as well as to bring some kind of feedback about the work it has done.

Table 2.2 shows how the people from a group can increase their involvement in each stage by participating in teamwork according to the main vision and mission established previously.

Table 2.2. Stages of Group Development

Task	Transforming	Nurturing	Serving	Reaffirming
Membership	X			
Purpose	X			
Leadership	X	X		
Vision		X		X
Resources		X	X	
Discipline			X	
Action			X	X
Learning				X
Celebrating				X
Letting go				X
Moving on				X

The church must recapture God's call for service, especially outside the church walls. Though I mentioned earlier the definition for *church*, I just want to emphasize the purpose of the church. The Greek word *ekklesia*, which means "*those called outside*," is a mandate from God to go out from the four walls of the church (Oden 266). The work of the ministry should be from Monday thru Friday and not only during worship services on Sunday morning.

The meaning of the word *work* comes from the Greek *ergon*, which means *employment task* (Vine 683). According to the context, in Ephesians 4:28, the Apostle Paul expanded the concept of work by saying, "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need." Work enables to provide for the family and loved ones (2 Thess. 3:7-10) and is a practical way of showing neighborly love. The expression used in this verse, "doing something useful with his own hands," talks about the necessity

of getting involved in any kind of earthly job that could be translated as a manifestation of good works for others.

In his book, Stevens affirms that secular job is a good place to show God's love:

God's mission is directed to the whole of society, to structures of common life, bringing righteousness, justice, the empowerment of the poor and the liberation of the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). There is no place in the cosmos so demonized that a Christian might not be called to serve God there. (202)

One of the main ministries of the local church should be to train and equip the saints to preach and give testimony of Christ through good works in the marketplace. The movement of the saints in the next generations among the lost will be the upcoming great event from heaven until the Church may be "built up and reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Every member of any church must be fully involved in any kind of ministry according to God's gifts, calls, or vocation given by the Holy Spirit. Churches should spend more time in ministering to the heart of the people in order to have a transformed church so the congregation can really affect their community. Kotter says, "The implementation of any kind of major change requires action from a large number of people" (10). Tasks of everyday ministry and in Sunday worship service require not only the collaboration of a good number of people but of trained and well-prepared people to do the work.

The church must be creative in its presentation of the gospel by prompting a common-ground setting where Christians and not-yet Christians can relate meaningfully with each other. The goal is not only to have people coming to Sunday worship services in order to be saved but to impact the city as well. "More churches are seeing their call to

reach their city and that's vision that fits well when our Savior wept over the city as 'a sheep without a shepherd' (Luke 19:41)" (Stevens 126). The market place, schools, and neighborhoods are the ministry arenas of Christian service, and Sunday morning services became a celebratory worship to God.

The leaders should write down the vision, mission, and core values of their churches and post them for the people to remember. The success of a ministry will depend on how clearly the vision is imparted and how the congregation receives it. Barna believes that vision help to empower the people for ministry:

I have discovered that the primary benefits of operating in concert with God's vision are that vision provides continuity with the past while building a superior future; it empowers people to do the work of God; it heightens people's commitment to their faith, their community of faith and their own sense of calling and self-worth; and it brings unity to God's people. (Revolution 54)

The accomplishment of a vision will demand a total collaboration of each and every member of the church. Dale Galloway explains, "[A] vision is the ability, or the God-given gift, to see those things that are not as becoming reality. It begins with a dream. It is necessary for a leader to cast a vision and to live for it every day" (39). Another very effective way to reaffirm the vision and values is by preaching about them in the sermons, in the different activities of the congregation, and in any way available to communicate them. Also, it should be included in the annual church budget to provide financial planning for vision purposes and related congregational activities. Meetings every month and reviewing the vision and mission of the church will help strengthen the goals and objectives.

I believe the need of having a high expectation of doing ministry and a clear vision become the key of developing a voluntarily team of people among the

congregation to a point that everyone is taking full responsibility of the work. Barna affirms that a congregation with a vision should work together as a team and not competing with each other:

Revolutionaries are to be known by their excessive love for God and people. Once again, consistently following through on this is one tall order. How can we do it? Paul recommends that we aggressively look for opportunities to bless people. He suggests that we strive for peace and harmony with them, which we can facilitate by avoiding senseless arguments. He also moves us to realize that we need each other for the fabric of the Kingdom to be complete (see Rom. 12). A team player mentality fosters loving relationships, rather than competitive or jealous interaction. (98)

Teamwork among the congregation can help to build relationships but also can bring a sense of achievement among groups and not just as individuals. With the help of the Holy Spirit and the cooperation of each and every member of the body of Christ, the work can be fulfilling. As a music concert requires the participation of every musician playing in one accord in order to perform with excellence, the church is called to do ministry in a coordinated way with each person taking responsibility.

Research Design

The study employed a mixed-method design. The result of my intervention came through the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods by using the pre- and post-journal questionnaires and by a questionnaire of leadership distinctiveness.

Keith F. Punch affirms that quantitative data is necessarily structured in terms of the number system and reflect researcher-imposed constructs. Qualitative data may range from structured to unstructured formats and may not involve research-imposed constructs (88).

Quantitative research is more related to explanation and controled, inquiring facts. Qualitative research promotes “understanding the complex relationships among all that exists” (Stake 37). Both, quantitative and qualitative researchers provide a better understanding of the data by collecting the results and bringing the final conclusions to the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

The ministry of a local church is not properly distributed among the congregants according to their gifts and abilities because of alienation between the pastor and the laity in doing ministry in a certain local setting. This material of study serves as a link between the pastor and the laity in terms of formulated competencies for the training process of future laymen and women in leadership through a specialized study of five module workshops in the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico.

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of a five-module training workshop in order to empower the laity of the Vida Abundante Church to be active leaders involved in the ministry of the church.

Statement of Research Questions

This study was based on five research questions.

Research Question #1

Prior to the workshops, what were the participants' affect and behavior in relation to ministry involvement?

The first research question dealt with the perception of laymen and women participants regarding their own religious experience and practical training, as well as an evaluation of their understanding of service and involvement in the church alongside the pastor. This question attempted to identify the roles of participation in ministry and the attitudes and behavior regarding involvement in ministry. In order to answer this question, the participants responded to the journal questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Research Question #2

After the workshops, what were the people's affect and behavior in relation to ministry involvement? The second research question dealt with the perception of laymen and women participants regarding their own religious experience and practical training after the workshop, as well as an evaluation of their understanding of service and involvement in the church alongside the pastor. This question attempted to identify the roles of participation in ministry and the attitudes and behavior regarding involvement in ministry. In order to answer this question, the participants responded to the journal questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Research Question #3

Before answering the gifts inventory, how much do the participants want to contribute to the ministry of the church?

The participants in this seminar acknowledged in advance that they were willing to take a gifts inventory. This question was asked in order to gauge the importance participants place on the gifts of the Spirit they have for Christian service and what difference their knowledge of these gifts can make. Through this inventory the people will have a better idea not only of the gifts they have for Christian service but of how they can contribute to the kingdom of God. In order to answer this question, the participants answered the Kinghorn gifts inventory (see Appendix B).

Research Question #4

After answering the gifts inventory, how much do the participants want to contribute to the ministry of the church? The aim of this question was to know the participants' availability after discovering the gifts of the Spirit they have and how much

they want to contribute to service in the kingdom of God. In order to answer this question, the participants answered the Kinghorn gifts inventory (see Appendix B).

Research Question #5

In the participants' own consideration, what are the main distinctive characteristics of effective leaders who serve within the church?

The participants answered according to what they heard in the five-session seminar. They pointed out the main distinctive features of effective leaders. The workshop seminars consisted of five sessions and included the pre- and post-journal questionnaires and the questionnaire about the distinctiveness of a leader. The workshop seminar intended to assist in five particular themes: spiritual disciplines, relationships, gifts of the Spirit, vision, and ministry involvement, including a gifts inventory and training to prepare them for ministry. At the end of the fifth session, the participants were asked to answer a questionnaire that deals with their perception of the most distinctive features leaders need to have in a leader who wants to when serving in the local church. The question they were asked was, "What are the main distinctives required to lead effectively in the church?" In order to answer this question, the participants responded to a workshop seminar questionnaire (see Appendix D).

Participants

The number of people who participated in this sample was thirty, including fifteen laymen and fifteen laywomen of the Vida Abundante Church from Monterrey, Mexico. The criteria for selection of the thirty participants were as follows: (1) They must have been members of their churches for at least one year; (2) they must be participating in any leadership or service ministry within their churches; and, (3) they must show interest in

leadership and service. Some of the participants were under 18. I decided to include them because of their actual Christian involvement in ministry and their future ministry.

Design of the Study

The workshop seminar consisted of five sessions and included pre- and post-journal questionnaires and a questionnaire about leadership distinctiveness responses to the five themes addressing the main subject, which was about laity involvement in ministry. The instrument used for the assessments was the *Personal Inventory of Spiritual Gifts* by Kinghorn, used with permission. Leaders and members of Vida Abundante Church were invited to a workshop about leadership.

Instrumentation

In the first module, they were asked to answer a pretest journal questionnaire prior to the presentation. The journal questionnaire had twelve different categories describing each of the five core values—spiritual disciplines, relationships, vision, gifts of the Spirit, and ministry. Analysis included the average mean and standard deviation of each of the core values.

The results of the evaluation helped to measure the participants' involvement in the church, their commitment to spiritual disciplines, and their level of understanding about human relationships. These themes were covered in the first and second modules. During the third, fourth, and fifth modules, the themes were vision, Christian service, the gifts of the Spirit, and outlining a plan for ministry. Finally, in the last module, the participants were asked to answer the post-journal questionnaire evaluation, which included the same questions and categories as the first journal questionnaire.

In addition, in the last session, the participants answered a ten-question questionnaire about leadership distinctiveness for ministry. I evaluated this questionnaire by ranking the three most important features needed for a leader. Participants submitted this questionnaire at the end of the session (see Appendix D).

The survey instrument, based on the *Personal Inventory for Spiritual Gifts*, was written in Spanish. This instrument provided the participants information about their gifts and abilities and how they can be implemented in the local church. This instrument helped the participants understand their gifts of the Spirit and the natural abilities they have, so they can use them for the enlargement of the kingdom of God.

Variables

For this study, the independent variable was the workshop seminar consisting of five modules: (1) relationships with others, (2) spiritual disciplines, (3) gifts and abilities, (4) equipping for the ministry, and (5) strategic plan. The dependent variables were the changes in affect and behavior in regard to Christian service in the local church. The intervening variables to consider alongside the primary variables were the following: age, ministry experience, ethnic background, education, gifts and abilities, denominational background, practice of spiritual disciplines, and gender.

Data Collection

The seminar was held in the Methodist Church Vida Abundante in Monterrey, Mexico from 4 November to 11 December 2011. The intervention involved five Sundays plus another as a wrap-up session from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. The people were invited personally and by phone. They confirmed their attendance to the seminar with two weeks in advance. The total of people in the seminar was thirty ranging in age from 17 to 74

years old. Men and women participated in the seminar. In the last wrap-up session, Pastor David Almanza gave account of the seminar in representation of the Bishop of the Methodist Church. During the seminar presentation, the pre-journal questionnaire was collected in the first module while the post-journal questionnaire was collected in the fifth module. The five modules' impartation period was six weeks. In the third session, the participants took the gifts inventory was used by permission of the author with some changes for cultural reasons. The questionnaire about leadership distinctiveness was answered in the last session of the workshop and was submitted that day.

Data Analysis

Data analysis required organizing information from the pre-post journal questionnaires and the leadership questionnaire by using descriptive statistics and evaluation analysis of each of the categories drawn from the study. First, change scores from the pre- to the posttest were used to discover the growth rate for the participants' affect and behavior in the pre-post questionnaires. Second, leadership questionnaire responses evaluated the main distinctive features of a leader. Prior to the study were no particular theories or hypotheses for the purposes of accuracy in this research and was managed and interpreted with integrity.

Ethical Procedures

At the beginning of the workshop, the people who were invited to participate were instructed that the information they submitted was held strictly confidential, including the evaluation from the pre- and post-journal questionnaires, questionnaire inventory, as well as the leadership questionnaire. However, and for confidential reasons, I asked

permission of the participants to use their names when I am quote their testimonies in Chapters 4 and 5.

Because of my position as senior pastor, and for the sake of confidentiality, I asked Dr. Raul Garcia to be present at the time of the post-evaluation in order to collect the data so that the people of the congregation would not be intimidated to answer in a certain way. Dr. Garcia serves as the bishop of the North Conference in the Methodist Church in Monterrey, Mexico, and he is a graduate from Asbury Theological Seminary and a Beeson International Pastor. Although he was not present, he appointed David Almanza to represent him in this important process, the feedback of the evaluation was collected and revised by Garcia.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

This study identified the alienation between the pastor and the laity in terms of ministry work in a certain local setting and formulated competencies for the training process of future laymen and women in leadership through a specialized study of five module workshops in the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico. The aim of this research was to bring a clearly defined perception about the pastors' role and their involvement in the church, as well as the laity's role in their participation in the church in order to create a hegemonic paradigm for the benefit of the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico. The process of this study may help to heal the pastor-laity relationship to a point of renewal and restoration through the teaching seminars and the completed study.

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of a five-module, training workshop to empower the laity of the Vida Abundante Church to be leaders actively involved in the ministry of the church.

Participants

The thirty members of the Vida Abundante Church became the source from which all this rich information was gathered for the purpose of knowing how to incorporate laypeople into the ministry of a local church.

The participants' average age was about 38 years old. The oldest person is 74 years old and the youngest person was 17. Six young people aged 17-21 participated in the workshop seminar. Fifteen were male (50 percent) and fifteen female (50 percent).

They were all Mexican and full members of the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Profile of Subjects

Demographic Background	Characteristic
Age	38
Male	15
Female	15
Nationality	Mexican

Of the thirty participants, thirteen are actively working as employees in a company or working in their own businesses (43.33 percent). Five are housewives who are doing both activities: a secular job and taking care of the family. Almost half of the housewives who participated in the seminar are actively working in addition to taking care of the family. Nine are college or high school students (33.33 percent), six are housewives (20 percent), and two are widows (6.6 percent; see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Occupation (N=30)

OCCUPATION	n	%
Employed	13	43.33
College Student	9	33.33
Housewife	6	20.00
Widow	2	6.60

Research Question #1

Prior to the workshops, what were the participants' affect and behavior in relation to ministry involvement?

The researcher-created journal questionnaire was completed by the participants and submitted in the first session of the workshop seminar. This questionnaire was based on sixty questions about spiritual and behavioral categories regarding five core values of participation in ministry, which are relationships, spiritual disciplines, ministry, vision, and gifts (see Appendix A).

According to the responses given by the participants, gifts are in the first place as the highest score of the questionnaire with an average of 4.03 and with a standard deviation of .93. The lowest average came from spiritual disciplines with 3.41 and a standard deviation of .54. These scores indicate that participants emphasized the gifts and ministries more in contrast with relationships and spiritual disciplines. The participants' interests are to know how to use spiritual gifts and talents more than knowing how to practice spiritual disciplines or to have better relationships in the family. Table 4.3 shows how these five categories were answered by the participants from the highest to the lowest scores:

Table 4.3. Main Topics of the Workshop

Topics	M	SD
Gifts	4.03	.93
Ministry	3.90	.40
Vision	3.86	.44
Relationships	3.84	.33
Spiritual Disciplines	3.41	.54

On the journal questionnaire, twelve different categories described each of the five topics. The four highest spiritual gifts were admiration of those people with spiritual gifts ($m=4.60$), belief in the Holy Spirit manifestations ($m=4.33$), desired gifts ($m=4.20$), and the importance of being active in the use of spiritual gifts ($m=4.16$). The lowest results given in the questionnaire for gifts were being pleased with the gifts and talents they had ($m=3.40$), having confirmation of gifts and talents ($m=3.73$), and distinguishing the talents they have ($m=3.80$; see Appendix E). The second variable was ministry, and the highest results taken was that the participants respect for those in leadership ($m=4.50$), recognition of those who are truly leaders ($m=4.33$), the importance of being accountable to others ($m=4.30$), and the ability to accept the leadership of others ($m=4.1$). The lowest results given in the questionnaire for ministry were having a call for full-time ministry ($m=3.17$) and having a clear idea of vocation ($m=3.30$; see Appendix F). The third variable was vision, and its highest results was having dreams to expect for the future ($m=4.40$), liking to work until goals are achieved ($m=4.30$), being open whether God wants to change personal plans ($m=4.13$), and thinking of pursuing further studies ($m=3.83$).

Most of the participants answered with the highest scores being to have dreams for the future in terms of family life, work, and ministry ($m=4.40$), second, to enjoy working in the long-term ($m=4.30$), and third, being willing to exchange their own personal plans for God's plans ($m=4.13$). The answers given by the participants were very high in having personal vision.

The lowest results given for the variable *vision* were to develop a specific work plan for ministry ($m=3.06$), establish specific goals for ministry ($m=3.23$), and project ministry for the next five years ($m=3.26$). One of the lowest answers received by the participants about vision was to outline a plan for short or long-term goals. The behavior described was, developing a specific work plan for ministry ($m=3.06$), having the second lowest score of all the questions asked in the journal questionnaire (see Appendix G). The inconsistency in these responses is found in the fact that most of the participants are actively involved in the work of the ministry and serving in different responsibilities in the church but without a specific plan of work than can lead to fulfilling a dream or achieve a goal.

The fourth variable in this table was relationships. The participants considered themselves to be good friends of others ($m=4.23$), respecting relationships with subordinates ($m=4.23$), keep a respectful relationship with their bosses ($m=4.20$), and keep a respectful relationship with their friends ($m=4.16$). According to the scores given, most of the participants showed concern about the importance of having good relationships with persons related to authoritative and community interrelationships. They consider this kind of relationship fundamental for keeping a good expectation for work and also for achieving personal and professional goals. Most of the authoritative figures

are very well respected such as bosses in a company or government representatives and spiritual figures. However, in this variable, family was not as relevant as relationships developed at work. The emphasis was given on keeping a respected relationship with those related to a job or an old friendship. The lowest results given to the variable relationships were rarely getting mad with family ($m=3.13$), worrying about the well-being of others ($m=3.60$), and spending time with spouses ($m=3.66$). The variable indicates low emphasis made on keeping strong family relationships (see Appendix H).

The fifth variable was spiritual disciplines, and the participants answered worship service attendance every week ($m=4.20$), prayer for essential decision making ($m=4.13$ percent), a sincere life before God ($m=4.13$), and Scripture reading ($m=3.86$). The variable of spiritual disciplines was the lowest of the five core values proposed for Christian involvement. According to the participants, attending worship services every week ($m=4.20$) was considered the most important element of the spiritual disciplines even over prayer, justice, and reading the Scriptures. They answered positively about how beneficial the spiritual disciplines are but never mentioned the importance of practicing them on a regular basis. More than 60 percent of the participants responded low in their participation of the use of prayer, fasting, and reading the Scriptures as a daily discipline as Christians. These are the lowest results given to the variable spiritual disciplines: fasting at least once a week ($m=2.33$), having family Bible study at home every week ($m=2.83$), and keeping a daily devotional life ($m=3.33$; see Appendix I).

According to the results given, fasting at least once a week ($m=2.33$) is the lowest question of all the sixty questions asked of the participants. This spiritual weapon is being ignored by the participants in contrast to the other personal interests such as knowing

more about spiritual gifts and considering themselves as good friends. In addition, Christian education given at home is of least importance and keeping an excellent devotional life is lower in interest. The participants showed more interest, according to the surveys, to be actively enrolled in a spiritual and ministerial work rather than to know God deeply and to study the Bible personally.

Research Question #2

After the workshops, what were the people's affect and behavior in relation to ministry involvement?

Table 4.4 shows the final results and the comparison between the first journal questionnaire and the second one with the differences between them. The second journal questionnaire was completed by the participants and submitted in the last session of the workshop seminar. This questionnaire included the same sixty questions about spiritual and behavioral categories regarding five core values of participation in ministry: relationships, spiritual disciplines, ministry, vision, and gifts. Participants answered these questions after completing the workshop (see Appendix A).

Table 4.4. Journal Questionnaire Comparison

Core Values	First Journal		Second Journal		
	M	SD	M	SD	Diff
Gifts	4.03	.93	4.01	.30	(.02)
Ministry	3.90	.40	3.94	.39	.04
Vision	3.86	.44	3.89	.48	.01
Relationships	3.84	.33	3.80	.33	(.04)
Spiritual disciplines	3.41	.54	3.72	.36	.31

According to the results given in the second questionnaire, gifts still received the highest score with an average of 4.01 and a standard deviation of .30. Though the categories remained in the same order as in the first session questionnaire, some important changes are worth noting.

Based on the second journal questionnaire, the variable gifts presented the following results: admiring those people with spiritual gifts ($m=4.50$), believing in the Holy Spirit manifestations ($m=4.43$), being active in the use of spiritual gifts ($m=9.8$). The participants still consider gifts as the first and most important aspect of each of the variables taken for this study. The following responses received the lowest results in the questionnaire for gifts: being pleased with personal gifts and talents ($m=3.50$), having received confirmation in gifts and talents ($m=3.80$), and distinguishing personal talents ($m=3.86$; see Appendix J). The results given in this variable remain almost the same with no important changes.

Israel Valdez, a musician from the church who is 20 years old, mentioned that the experience of having the seminar helped him to realize all the variety of gifts and abilities available for the church. He is now asking for other specific gifts of the Spirit that he

never thought he could have. In addition, Martha Meneses, a 40-year-old woman from the church affirmed, “This kind of seminar helped distinguish the gifts we already have, but also the gifts that we do not have and the Spirit wants to give us. This Spirit impartation depends in how much we long to have a specific gift and the openness [we have] to receive it.” Most of the participants agreed that the seminar helped them to see more clearly the gifts they have but also those who may want to have.

The following results taken from the second variable ministry received the highest scores: the importance of being accountable to others ($m=4.43$), respect for those in leadership ($m=4.36$), a clear perception of what leadership is ($m=4.13$), and ability to recognize those who are truly leaders ($m=4.10$). The participants found having some kind of feedback about the work done in ministry relevant as indicated by the high score of accountability.

In this regard, Bernardino Ayala, who is a member and a leader of the church in charge of the ushers at the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, mentioned that sometimes he feels isolated while doing ministry especially without having any kind of feedback from the pastor. He felt motivated after the seminar to start meeting with the pastor at least once a month.

The lowest results given in the questionnaire for ministry were to have a call for full-time ministry ($m=3.13$), to recognize themselves as leaders ($m=3.70$), and to have a clear idea of vocation ($m=3.80$; see Appendix K). The participants for this questionnaire were more interested in knowing more about full-time ministry. They asked in the seminar the differences between those serving full-time in the church and those working

in the secular world. Some of them ($m=6$; 2 percent) wanted to know how to become full-time ministers.

In the third variable, vision, the participants answered having dreams first to expect for the future ($m=4.70$), being open if God wants to change personal plans ($m=4.43$), and considering the pursuit of further studies ($m=4.23$). This variable increased 11 percent more in relation to the first journal questionnaire as one of the most relevant variables for the participants. The lowest results given for the variable vision were developing a specific work plan for ministry ($m=3.10$), establishing specific goals for ministry ($m=3.36$), and having a project ministry for the next five years ($m=3.33$). The second questionnaire repeated the same report as the first with very low increase in interest.

In regard to the fourth variable, relationships, the results included considering themselves as good friends ($m=4.30$), respecting the relationship with boss ($m=4.23$), forgiving easily ($m=3.9$), and keeping a respectful relationship with friends (3.86; see Appendix M).

The new statement in this variable that was answered by the participants was forgiving easily ($m=9.5$). One of the activities done in the third session was to draw a picture that can describe the status of any relationship with any person they can imagine. Almost twelve ($m=40$) of the participants drew a picture related to a broken relationship that needed to be restored. During the workshop seminar, the group was taught in the area of forgiveness and at the end the participants were minister in the area of broken relationships. Gloria Cantu, one member of the church, mentioned the fact that she was

having problems trying to forgive her family, especially her ex-husband who abandoned her twenty-five years ago. She felt relieved from that burden after the time of prayer.

These are the lowest results given to the variable relationships: rarely getting mad with family ($m=3.20$), worrying about the well-being of others ($m=3.33$), spending time with spouse ($m=3.50$; see Appendix M). As I mentioned earlier, the remark made for good relationships at home helped the participants see the importance of keeping excellent relationships starting at home and then with others. Alicia Tejeida, a lady from the church who has around 74 years old, drew a broken heart, illustrating in this way the relationship she has with her daughter, Teresa, who lives with her. She explained that she had been having communication problems with her, but she cannot open herself to Teresa because of unforgiving actions and offensive words. This seminar helped her to realize the importance of asking forgiveness and receiving forgiveness from her daughter in order to be healed.

Finally, the following results are the highest given to the fifth variable, spiritual disciplines: attending worship services every week ($m=4.16$), needing prayer to make a decision ($m=4.06$), keeping a sincere life before God ($m=4.00$), enjoying reading the Scriptures ($m=3.90$). Though this variable had no important movement, the participants reconsidered their involvement in spiritual disciplines in this second questionnaire. They showed more interest in practicing spiritual disciplines than in the first questionnaire (38 more points with $m=17$). This increase was the highest of all the five variables according to the answers received by the participants.

The lowest results given to the variable spiritual disciplines were as follows: fasting at least once a week ($m=2.96$), having family Bible study at home every week ($m=3.10$), and maintaining a daily devotional life ($m=3.70$; see Appendix N).

The increase in spiritual disciplines was evident in this section in contrast with the answers given by the participants in the first questionnaire. After the seminar was finished, the participants affirmed the necessity of the instruction in the benefits of the spiritual disciplines. They agreed generally ($n=21$; 70 percent) to improve in this area of spiritual disciplines as a way to build a life of faith and dependence on God rather than leaning on their own understanding.

Research Question #3

Before answering the gifts inventory, how much do you want to contribute to the ministry of the church?

Prior to the gifts inventory, most of the participants were very open and with great expectancy of what was going to happen in the workshop seminar. Although the majority was serving the church in a specific ministry ($n=21$; 70 percent), they were invited to the workshop seminar in order to be equipped more fully in regard to their gifts and ministry capacities in addition to reflecting about Christian virtues and values that can enable and empower them more efficiently for ministerial reasons.

Beatriz Puente, a 38-year-old woman from the church, pointed out that the inventory would confirm the gifts and their implementation. She attended each session with great expectancy and responded very positively to the teaching and the formation received there. She said, "It is time to start working more actively in the ministry of the church. I want to get more involved in the ministry according to the gifts and abilities

God gave me. I hope to learn fully about their use and to be open to God's leading in my life and my family." After the participants took the gifts inventory, knowing their spiritual gifts helped them to realize how useful they can become for the enlargement of the kingdom of God.

The majority of the participants (n=26; 86 percent) agree that time spent being more involved in the ministry of the church is very important. They recognize that some factors affected them to serve more closely with the church. The highest negative factors that affect Christian participation in this questionnaire were lack of knowledge about the gifts (n=10; 33 percent), insecurity (n=6; 21 percent), and other priorities (n=5; 16 percent).

As seen in Table 4.5, this opportunity was the first time some of the participants (n=12; 40 percent) participated in a workshop about ministry involvement and took an evaluating assessment for spiritual gifts. They manifested also their misunderstanding about the use of the gifts of the Spirit but especially the misuse of some the gifts performed by other people with no evident fruit. The second factor was the insecurity they felt in regard to Christian service. Some of them felt some kind of unworthiness or low self-esteem, thinking that other people or other Christians are able to do better than they are.

In this regard, Karla Haydee Almaguer, a 34-year-old woman from the church, shared her frustrations and fears, thinking that she was not worthy of serving the Lord:

Before the seminar I felt insecure about getting involved in ministry because I do not have high school education. I am good helping others in the church, but not taking charge of a ministry or having the initiative to start something new.

After the seminar, she and her husband became involved in a Bible study group, and she realized how God could use her in ways she had never before imagined.

The third obstacle was having other priorities (n=5; 16 percent) such as getting a better job, taking care of the family, going through financial trials, or having any other issue that can hinder them from becoming more involved in ministry. In contrast, the participants before the seminar were not enthusiastic about participating in the ministry of the church for a variety of reasons.

Table 4.5. Obstacles for Christian Involvement

Reasons	n	%
Lack of knowledge about gifts	10	33
Insecurity	6	21
Other priorities	5	16
Confusion	4	13
Lack of vision	3	9
Too young	1	4

Research Question #4

After answering the gifts inventory, how much do the participants want to contribute to the ministry of the church?

Most of the participants answered that their involvement is not as active as it should be (n=17; 57 percent). The rest of them are actively involved in the ministry of the church, but even they recognize that their commitment is not as diligent as the church needs. Table 4.6 shows the highest scores of the gifts inventory and the second lowest-rated scores for spiritual gifts.

The answers given by the participants were submitted after a thorough explanation about each and every spiritual gift and the way they can be use. The thirty participants knew these questions were to be answered according to actual life events and not what they wish they could be. The highest score given by the participants was evangelism (n=18; 20 percent). The second one was compassion (n=10; 11 percent), and the third was teaching (n=7; 7 percent).

The participants' interest is serving in evangelism such as crusades, outreach, and one-to-one reaching out. The other spiritual gift mentioned in this inventory was the gift of compassion. The participants perceive this gift as showing compassion through medical assistance, food service, and other acts. Some of them mentioned that they are involved in some ministerial services outside the local church. The third most mentioned spiritual gift was teaching, which includes teaching children and adults within the church.

Table 4.6. Rank Order of the Spiritual Gifts Inventory (Three Highest Scores)

Variable	N	%
Evangelism	18	20
Compassion	10	11
Teaching	7	7

Table 4.7 shows the lowest scores given from the participants: the gift of deliverance (n=10; 11 percent), the gift of tongues (n=16; 17 percent), and the interpretation of tongues (n=19; 21 percent). Some of them manifested their interest in knowing more about the gift of deliverance, not only for the casting out of demons but

for the actual healing of the souls and minds of people. They saw this gift as a necessary tool to help those who are afflicted.

Table 4.7. Rank Order of Spiritual Gifts Inventory (Three Lowest Score)

Variable	n	%
Tongues interpretation	19	21
Tongues	16	17
Deliverance	10	11

After finishing the assessment, the participants shared with the group their findings in order to receive some kind of confirmation about their gifts from their peers. All of them were very positive to receive this kind of feedback about their evaluation of the gifts inventory. In this same questionnaire, the participants responded to a five-point scale question: How much do you want to contribute to the ministry of the church?

According to this evaluation, the participants answered with an increased standard deviation of .87, which shows the growth in interest concerning ministry intervention. Most of them are willing to serve more actively in the ministry of the church, but the participants mention the fact of some misinformation of how to get involved more in the ministry (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8. General Evaluation of Laity Involvement

Before the Seminar	After the Seminar	Difference
M	M	SD
2.83	3.70	.87

Adela Jimenez mentioned the fact that the seminar helped her to feel more confident about the gifts of the Spirit. She affirmed, “The workshop seminar helped me to realize how important it is to feel loved by God but also to experience his direction and leading in order to help others in need through a correct use of the gifts of the Spirit within the local church and also outside the church.” The majority of the participants (n=26; 86 percent) felt more confident in using their gifts for the sake of the kingdom of God, and they mentioned that knowing their gifts motivated them to collaborate in the church.

Research Question #5

In the participants’ own consideration, what are the main distinctive characteristics of effective leaders who serve within the church?

In the last session, the participants were asked to answer a questionnaire about the main distinctiveness of an effective leader. Of the ten questions, the participants chose only the more relevant of them (see Appendix D).

The first response was to have a strong relationship with God (n=15; 50 percent). The second was to have a clear vision (n=8; 26 percent). The third was to know how to relate with others (n=7; 23 percent). The fourth was the ability to discern spiritual gifts and to be a good administrator (n=7; 23 percent), and the fifth was being a good administrator (n=5; 17 percent; see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. Rank Order of Distinctiveness of a Leader

Distinctive	#1 Rank n	#1 Rank %
Keep a strong relationship with God	15	50
Have a clear vision	8	26
Know how to relate with others	7	23
Can discern spiritual gifts	7	23
Be a good administrator	5	17

These are core values the thirty participants saw as the most important ones to have for those who want to serve in the ministry. While in the last journal questionnaire spiritual disciplines was in the lowest place, here having a strong relationship with God is in the first place. Surprisingly, gifts of the Spirit is in the fourth place in contrast with the other results given in the journal questionnaire where it was in the first place (n=8; 26 percent). These answers also included a new element of importance according to the thirty participants concerning being a good administrator.

Summary of Major Findings

The most important findings taken from this study for the empowering of the laity within the local church are as follows:

- Spiritual formation, low interest—Seeking what ministry they have or what gifts are available and how to use them is becoming more important to the people from the local church rather than searching how to strengthen their spiritual lives;
- Gifts of the Spirit, lack of knowledge—The participants did not understand the good use of the gifts of the Spirit available for the body of Christ and the ministries operating within the church;

- Relationships, imbalance—Work and friendship relationships are given more importance even above family relations.
- Vision, no planning—The participants' emphasize conceptualization of a vision instead of taking steps to achieve a vision.
- Ministry, time limitation—Ministry intervention depends on availability more than on conviction.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary and Conclusions

As discussed in Chapter 1, a gap exists between the laity and the clergy in terms of ministry coordination within the local church. Hammon presents a vision for closing this gap and empowering the laity as leaders: “Lay involvement in ministry is one of the coming events that will bring an awakening to the church and a complete restoration of all things which are necessary for the return of Christ to take place” (367). This idea means a massive involvement of each and every member of a local church, serving God and the world in a humble and servant spirit in order to assist and cooperate for the well-being of their communities. The church will require more than just acquiring an adventurous spirit to try to save as many souls as possible. It will demand a new set of attitudes and behaviors from the participants until the message is understood, awaiting the imminent return of Jesus Christ to the world.

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of a five-module, training workshop to empower the laity of the Vida Abundante Church to be leaders actively involved in the ministry of the church. The thirty participants suggest that the following values are essential in order to fulfill God’s vision and mission to the Church, particularly in the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico, and these values need to be integrated in the life of every Christian.

Major Findings

The following findings taken from this study were the most important ones identified by the participants for the empowering of the laity within the local church.

Spiritual Formation—Low Interest

The participants showed a low interest in spiritual disciplines according to the journal questionnaire and their own comments about this subject. The participants emphasized the search of knowing their ministry and the gifts that are available and how to use them more than searching how to strengthen their spiritual lives.

A study about the benefits of spiritual disciplines and the basic meaning of identity can help increase the interest among the laity about praying, reading of the Scriptures, and fasting. The first stage, according to Clawson, forming, is the actual integration of any person to the life of the church, the body of Christ (294). A *forming* experience of individuals into a group can integrate them in such a way that they can start working toward a specific purpose. According to Oden, any person who wants to initiate a new transformational dimension would necessarily be implementing disciplines: “Transformation occurs by filling our minds with biblical content. If we want to encounter God, we do so in his word” (25). This spiritual formation needs to be nurtured by a consistent practice of spiritual disciplines among the participants of the Vida Abundante Church in order to be formed as Christians with new hearts and a new thinking.

Eduardo Saenz ,who is 42 years old, a business man, and a member of Vida Abundante Church shared the following testimony:

My desire to serve God will demand more preparation for ministry but also for Christian growth by reading the Scriptures, praying, fasting, and being open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I need to be more aware of the Holy Spirit’s leading and continually ask for discernment in order to know the gifts I have and those gifts the Spirit wants to give me. After the workshop I learned to be more disciplined in regard to spiritual disciplines and in knowing God’s will for my life. I will also want to have Bible studies every week with my family.

As I mentioned earlier, the participants were asked to make a commitment of spiritual disciplines in their daily agenda, so they can start a new relationship with God to help them increase their passion and vision for ministry. All participants agreed that increasing the exercise of spiritual disciplines was a forgotten area in their lives that needed to be reignited again. They showed an important improvement in this area according to the answered second journal questionnaire. Spiritual formation among the people from the congregation should become the foundation from which a new building can be constructed block by block, until it is finished.

Relationships—Unbalance

According to the participants' answers, work and friendship relationships are given more importance even above family relations. In the cultural Latin context, relationships are very important. However, human relations can also be a distraction to which many people fall prey. Instead of having a balanced life, Latinos prefer to have long meetings of fellowship and gatherings with friends and coworkers, frequently neglecting the family. Leaders must learn how to prioritize time spent with God, with family, and with the congregation wisely.

In order to give the closest meaning in Spanish to the word accountability could be “giving an account of a task.” This attitude of giving an account would bring more credibility to the church not only as an orthodox practice but also as a healthy way of working alongside others.

The togetherness of the Trinity shows the importance of establishing strong relationships within the body of Christ to help deal with difficult situations or problems in any life or ministerial trial. Dr. Ajith Fernando suggests accountability groups for

feedback and spiritual support between congregants or close friends, where a person can share his or her deepest struggles and feelings about life and ministry:

Many of our personal weaknesses and problems are best solved with the active involvement of the body of Christ. I believe there are many Christian workers today who are fighting a losing battle with these problems with no help from anyone in the body. (55)

The Bible recommends that Christians must help one another. Hebrews 10:24 says, “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.” Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton affirm, “Opening yourself to another is a step of faith that’s well worth the risk. You do not need to share only your struggles; you can reveal personal pursuits or goals” (180). This kind of fellowship can assist the person to establish strong relationships with other members of the church who can help deal with difficult situations or problems in ministry.

Clergy need to help the laity find a proper balance between family and friends in order to underline the importance of prioritizing time and values. Family should be at the first place in any priority list just after Christ. Therefore, the laity represents the closest extension of God’s kingdom in the active world, but they should always keep a healthy relationship within the family, with spouses and children even before the people from church or at work. Clergy must work in building the laity up as leaders of the Lord and as coworkers of the body of Christ.

Gifts of the Spirit—Lack of Knowledge

A general discontent about spiritual gifts was evident with the participants’ answers. Though most of them are serving the church, they have a general misunderstanding about the ministry of the gifts of the Spirit. Part of the problem facing today is the lack of understanding about the meaning of ministry and the way a minister

can function according to the gifts given by the Spirit. The laity feels neglected, thinking that they are second-class people in contrast to the clergy who are seen as God's representatives and the only ones authorized to perform leadership and ministry. In other words, the local pastor takes hold of all responsibility of these ministries, neglecting the role and participation of the laity and their gifts they have received from the Spirit.

One of the main ministries of the local church should be to provide the training and equipping of the saints in order to be sent to preach and give testimony of Christ through good works in the marketplace. A good way to provide this training is through the use of the gifts inventory, which can help to evaluate the person's own gifts and abilities for service. The gifts inventory is a useful tool in order to locate the strengths and vocation of the members of the church.

According to Stevens, the church not only should understand their calling inside the church but also outside the four walls of the church: "[T]he whole people of God must encompass not only the life of God's people gathered, the *ekklesia*, but the church dispersed in the world, *the diaspora* in the marketplace, government, professional, offices, schools and homes. (8) The ministry of service is the result of God's unconditional love. In my opinion, I still believe that the Church should practice all the gifts on a regular basis without any prejudice, regardless of misuse made in the past. With a sound doctrine and follow-through supervision, the whole gifts of the Spirit should be promoted for the benefit of God's kingdom.

Claudia Torres, who is a member of the Vida Abundante Church and is 41 years of age, gave the following testimony:

The seminar helped me to realize in what ministry I can be more useful in the church. I am now more motivated to get involve in children ministries

and also helping with evangelistic events for kids. I enjoy working with kids and I want to contribute to this ministry.

The total participants agreed that the gifts inventory helped them to see more clearly the way they can get involved in ministry

Vision—Without Planning

The journal questionnaires presented that the participants place more emphasis on conceptualization of a vision rather than taking steps for achieving a vision. The participants expressed very low interest in regard to planning the vision. However, the vision represents the map designed by God for every child to. Having a vision in any organization is clearly essential in order to produce change in the people involved:

Vision plays a key role in producing change by helping to direct, align, and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people. Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing, incompatible, and time consuming projects that go in the wrong direction or nowhere at all. (Kotter 7)

Anywhere a vision is understood, it will naturally be followed by each member of the group. The way to evaluate the process could be done by assessments, interviews, and other means of tests.

During the workshop seminar, the participants were asked to share their personal vision for life for the next five years. After some time of prayer and intercession, they were asked to share what they believe God wanted from them to do in the future. Then, they were asked to share the vision with the whole group so they could receive feedback from the participants. The experience was very refreshing according to the comments made by the participants. Luis Solis, a businessman about 34 years old, shared his experience in presenting his personal vision to the group:

I found very helpful the feedback experience about personal vision especially because it helped me to get focused more specifically in what I do for God and even for my business. It is easy to lose track of the vocation I was called to.

Dora Rodriguez commented about vision in ministry:

There are three important things in which I would want to get more involved: Being willing to serve, praying more consistently, and giving away to those in need. My vision is to prepare myself for the ministry in order to enable others to get involved in the ministry, especially counseling women and young people. Also keep praying for the pastor and the leadership of the church and for missionaries.

Every member of a local church should have a personal vision of what God has showed him/ her to be doing for Christ's sake but also a general view of the global vision of the congregation. After giving a brief summary of the vision, the people normally identify with the vision, and they even want to share it with others.

Since the beginning of this year, and as a strategy for strengthening the seminar teaching, I started to preach topical sermons about the vision and mission and core values of the church, and the congregation have started to increase in ministry participation. Suddenly, Carlos Muzquiz, who is a member of the church, by his own initiative, thought about starting a cell group, teamwork ministry around the city. We started three new cell groups, so the people from the congregation started visiting them. He assigned who was going to share the Bible study, who was going to be the hostess, and who could attend the group weekly. This teamwork has been very successful so far, with a participation of no less than thirty people or 20 percent of the members in the church. This new project has been working very well, not only because of the number of new people coming to the cell groups but also because of the active participation of church members who were not previously active in the church.

Ministry—Time Limitation

According to the participants' answers, ministry intervention depends on availability more than on conviction. Though previous answers mentioned that leadership is important for the enlargement of the kingdom of God, the participants do not want to take responsibility in ministry task involvement. They have no intention of collaborating as full-time ministers or even to collaborate partially. This paradox of disassociation between the pastors' duties with the laity is fully disclosed with the participants' answers in this respect. The following statement by Hybels is an exhortation to the whole body of Christ to get involved in the ministry of the church:

God calls us to roll up our sleeves and join him with our talents, our money, our time, and our passion. He wants his mission to become ours.... [T]he desire to be a world-changer is planted in the heart of every human being, and that desire comes directly from the heart of God. (13)

How different the congregations would be if all of the members would become active according to their vocations.

The ministerial work that can be done by the clergy and the laity will demand a coordinated way of recruiting those who are not just available but also have a strong conviction of Christian service. Armando Quezada is also a member of Vida Abundante Church, and he shared his testimony after the workshop:

I want to grow as a person, with my wife and as a father always with God's direction in order to serve him. According to the vision God had showed me, these are the three parts: Work with young people in the streets, gangs, drug addicts, so I can start a rehabilitation center in order to lead them to know Christ and follow him. Also, I want to work with couples so I can share my testimony in how God changed us as a couple by giving them counsel and teaching from the Word of God especially those who are being going through difficult times. The third thing is to participate actively in the different activities of the church according to God's call for me and timing.

This delegation should include young people wanting to serve God inside the church and in their school, but also adults who are presently working in the marketplace.

Implications of the Findings

In the last two decades, and especially with the outstanding growth of the Latin American church, the church has had some deficiencies in growing spiritually and doctrinally, particularly with the use of gifts of the Spirit and ministry performance (Gómez 15).

With so little Christian literature about Church ministry in Latin America about ministerial performance and laity intervention, this dissertation attempted to give some kind of explanation and suggestions in how to deal with these important issues, such as ecclesiastical hierarchies or disability of the laity in ministry. Figure 5.1 represents the model that has been used for so many years in many churches around the world where the clergy keeps a hierarchical position of authority disassociated from the Laity and having no influence with the outside world.

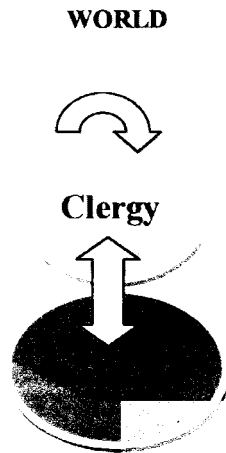


Figure 5.1. Clergy and Laity Disassociation

This research has led me to see what is essential and vital in the five dimensions of laity involvement, which are discipleship, equipping, vision, Christian service, and outreach.

Table 5.1. Leadership Involvement into Ministry

Dimension	Emphasis
Discipleship (spiritual formation)	Training workshop for leaders
Equip ministers (relationships)	Accountability
Vision (evaluation)	Core values
Christian service (gifts)	Gifts inventory
Outreach (ministry)	Community (reaching out)

The following principles I had developed are guidelines for action and implementation in the local church based in this study's findings and equally useful to any group wanting to have team work activation.

First Principle—Developing Spiritual Formation in the Leadership of the Church through Intensive Discipleship Training

One of the issues evangelical churches in Mexico are facing is the lack of training in leadership among the laity within the local church. This existing need is becoming more crucial not just because of the waste of spiritual gifts awaiting any local church through the laity but also because of the continuous alienation between clergy and the laity. My proposal to this great challenge is to provide instruction to the leaders on a formal basis and through a systematic teaching that can affirm them in order to serve not only inside the church but also in the marketplace.

In this respect, I propose a training workshop seminar for Christian leaders and workers that can include a twofold purpose. First is to provide deep discipleship, ministerial, and theological material and, second, to help the participants get through their inner battles and issues with which they are dealing. The purpose of this training is to help equip leaders and workers of a local church involved in the work of ministry by bringing spiritual formation for Christian ministry, implementation of biblical and theological practices for ministry, and contextualization through transformational leadership within the Mexican context (see Figure 5.2; Appendix C).



Figure 5.2 Discipleship training.

This kind of training is now being held (with some deficiencies) by a good number of evangelical churches, not only in Mexico but also in Latin America, which is called *encuentros* or in English *encounters* with great success. However, two things are missing in this program. One is related to a lack of doctrinal teaching and the other one to bring a ministerial preparation in order to discover gifts and abilities. I believe this kind of training can reinforce and activate the laity in a way that allows them to take hold of what God has in store for them.

Second Principle—Equipping the Laity as Ministers of Christ

In the first-century Church, the word minister was not the title of a position but a service rendered and the ministry of Christ manifested. Every child of God is to minister the things of God and manifest the life of Christ to the world. For that reason Christ declared that Christians are the light of the world. I personally believe that the best way to motivate each and every member of a congregation is by helping them see how many gifts and how much potential they have for ministry and by encouraging them to serve according to these gifts. Jesus gave all Christian disciples the promise of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). This presence includes his companionship and friendship in addition to a number of gifts available for the church. He provided for his

children an incredible amount of spiritual resources. The need to work as a team is not optional but mandatory. The Bible says that having a fruitful ministry requires working in a more coordinated way:

until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ,... from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Eph. 4:13, 16)

These verses are talking about how the Church must be organized from the five basic ministries to the involvement of the saints for the work of the ministry. Every ligament is talking about every saint sited in the pews of churches waiting for their turn to come.

In Luke 11:17, Jesus himself pointed out is the importance of being together: "Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house false on house.... [W]hoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." I wonder how much work had been scattered because members of the church are not working together as a team with laity, giving them the opportunity to grow and develop their ministries and fulfill their calls for service.

Pastors' responsibility is to consider the ministries that can provide life to the church. I wonder how many people can come to Christ if each and every Christian of any congregation, small or large, will embrace the fact that all Christians are divinely called to influence others through a sincere use of their spiritual gifts. Figure 5.3 illustrates what Ephesians 4:11 is commanding the people of the Church to do.



Figure 5.3. Accountability groups.

Now that the clergy and the leaders of the church are working and learning together, the time has come to start looking for laity who will be involved in some kind of Christian service. The best way of being involved is by having them go through the workshop seminar and by helping them through accountability groups coordinated with the leaders.

Third Principle—Getting a Specific Vision for the Church and Sharing It with Passion and Motivation until It Is Understood

In his book, Galloway gives a description of leadership: “Vision is seeing what is not yet here (visualizing something before it is)” (14). One of the assignments given to the participants was to take time to write their personal vision and the vision they have for their church. This assignment was delivered and discussed with the administrative committee of the church.

The vision of the Vida Abundante Church is *to train leaders who eventually can train other leaders*. I am developing a leadership team that can embrace the following core values:

- Have pastoral ministry team involved in preparing others
- Loving our community through sincere and passionate prayer;
- Reaching our community through effective evangelistic efforts;
- Serving our community through effective merciful care; and,
- Integrating our community to our family.

This vision was adopted from the Vida Abundante Church presented to the participants in the workshop seminar. The main purpose of this vision is to increase the motivation and passion for serving the Lord according to the core values, serving as a lighthouse to any person who wants to participate in the ministry of the church. The core values represent the columns that can support the main vision so that everybody can see it and become involved with it (see Figure 5.4).

CORE VALUES

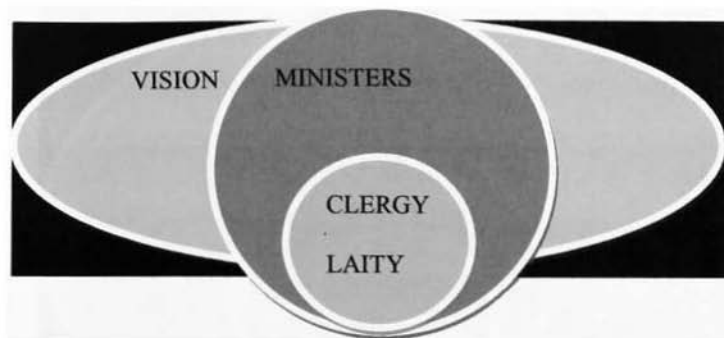


Figure 5.4. Vision for the church

Fourth Principle—Understanding the Meaning of Christian Service and Ministry Involvement in Order to Become Active by a Correct Use of the Gifts of the Spirit

The majority of the churches are lacking qualitative learning centers to provide their congregations for empowering the laity for ministry. Pastors had underestimated the potential of their laity or they felt like the laity can eventually take their positions for leadership.

Figure 5.5 illustrates how the people from the congregation can get involved in a church that has not only a specific vision but also a specific area of service through a training seminar of Spiritual Gifts Inventory.

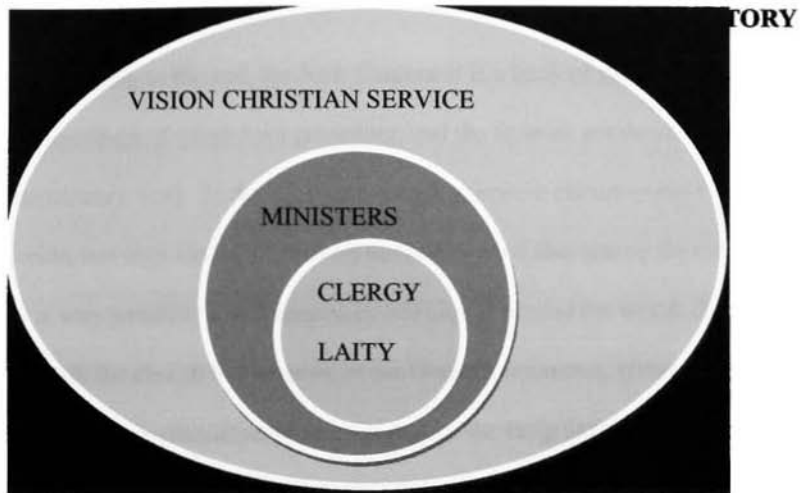


Figure 5.5. Christian service.

The gifts inventory is a useful tool for locating the strengths and vocation of the members of the church and a way to activate them to do the work of the ministry according to their gifts and abilities. The movement of the saints among the lost in the next generations will be the upcoming great event from heaven until the Church may be (Eph.4:13).

As a strategy made for this year, each ministry is required to submit to the administrative committee a three-month planned activity that needs to include ways of fulfilling the vision and mission and core values of our church.

Fifth Principle—Reconsidering the Mission by Shifting from a *Come to Us Church* to a *Go and Reach Church*

From the beginning to the end, the New Testament is a book of mission. The Gospels are live recordings of missionary preaching, and the Epistles are the doctrinal foundations of missionary work. In the book of Acts, the primitive church emerges in the midst of persecution, not only among the Jewish community but also among the Gentiles. This affirmation is very suitable to the complexity of cultures around the world. Figure 5.6 shows the mission the church has in terms of the Great Commission, giving the new converts a worldview that is consistent to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. The Church must realize its divine call for service, especially outside the Church. The term *church* comes from the Greek *ekklesia*, which means “those called outside” (Oden 265).

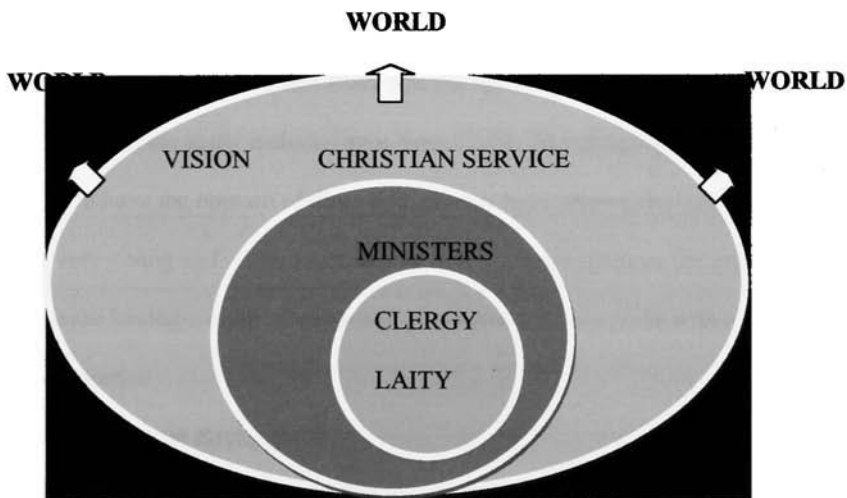


Figure 5.6. Church outreach.

In the New Testament, the early Church is a vivid example of this kind of launching ministry. They were not expecting people to come to their service; rather, they were very much involved *with* the people trying to meet their personal needs. Actually, this was Jesus' model for the apostles. This model started to change when the church began to build temples and ecclesiastical structures in the so-called Christendom era.

To reach people, believers must go where people are and learn how they live. Every minister must be looking for ways to build bridges of trust among the people around them. Therefore, the church vision must be outside the four walls of the temple through a creative and solid message and presentation so the people can see the benefits and be attracted to the life of the church.

Limitations of the Study

Four limitations were identified in this research.

Age

One limitation I found in this study was the age range among the participants. As I mentioned earlier, the study included ages from 17-74. The group was structured this way in order to have the opinion of those who already have responsibilities, even though some were very young and without material resources. In my opinion, the group worked well, but maybe having a more homogenous group would have results with a significant different perspective.

Theological and Social Background

Another limitation I needed to face was the variety of theological and social backgrounds of the participants. The group was represented from different theological backgrounds and educational levels, and social and economic status. Even when the

participants are from the same local church, the theological framework from each participant varied from Pentecostal to very conservative and traditional denominations such as Nazarene, Methodist, or Presbyterian. Even the social and economic statuses of the participants were very different from one another. However, the results given from them were very similar in coincidences and preferences, and they were very open to the teaching.

Attendance and Size of the Group

Five of the thirty participants were not present in two of the five sessions of the workshop seminar. However, they received copies of the material from the sessions, so they would be able to answer the journal questionnaire at the end of the sessions. They were ready to answer the second journal questionnaire with the rest of the group. In addition, not having a more representative group of the church could produce some kind of limitation. A total of thirty people represents only 30 percent of the total congregation.

Geographical Limitation

The material covered in this study was taken from the Vida Abundante Church in Monterrey, Mexico. Although the participants were answering according to their own experience and ethnic/social backgrounds, I found some kind of limitation in including/excluding some cultural aspects not adequately applied to cultures different from the Mexican. However, I believe that this information could be useful for the benefit of another ministry in Mexico or outside the country.

Final Results

The results given in servant leadership, missions, and contextualization were not tested. A test evaluating the issues of servant leadership, missions, and contextualization would validate better the findings of this research study.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The following topics might help to enrich the information of this study. Though some of the topics were mentioned in the study, a deeper study can be done in each of the subjects.

First, the subject of laity involvement was mainly focused on the involvement opportunities for the people of the congregation within the local church, but the study can be expanded by explaining how they can serve in the marketplace according to their gifts. I highly recommend the book *The Other Six Days* by Stevens, which gives a complete description of how laity can get involved in the marketplace.

Second, a more thorough study about the five ministries of the church according to Ephesians 4:11-12 and the implications of ministerial vocations can give a complete picture of how to serve God in relation with the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. As a consideration of further studies about this subject, I recommend the book *The Day of the Saints* by Hammon.

Third, a more thorough explanation about the gifts of the Spirit will be helpful in order to clarify misconceptions in how to use a certain gift of ministry in the local church or even outside the church. Another good book to read about spiritual gifts is *The New Testament Gifts of the Holy Spirit* by Kinghorn.

Fourth, a study about contextualization will complement this research, especially in terms of intercultural studies in Latin America. Cultures are living in an epoch of change in the West (globally) from modern to the postmodern society. The book that I will recommend in this respect is *The Mission of God in Latin America* by Gómez. He expanded in his book about how Latin American has shift culturally in countries like Argentina, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico. For instance, the development of ethnicity may be seen as part of the modernization process. In order to help better, the church needs to understand how these trends are taking ethnic communities not only to other countries but also into urban cities and how to minister to them more effectively. In addition, pastors and laity have the responsibility as ministers to give wise direction to a more and more desperate world.

Unexpected Observation

I decided to develop this study with my own congregation and knew from the beginning that using this population could be a limitation because of my position as the pastor of the participants. Nevertheless, I received very interesting responses from each of them, which brought the concluding principles and proposals for these studies and could be used for future studies, too. Though the participants differed in age and theological and social backgrounds, the main points of the research were accomplished. Through the study of the interviews, I discovered the lack of involvement in spiritual disciplines, emphasis of the participants for spiritual gifts, and misunderstanding of what ministry is about. These reports helped me to see the relevance of having a well-designed training program in discipleship, including a study of vision and teamwork with the use of the gifts inventory and ministerial commission.

Another positive surprise after the workshop seminar was the increase reported in the attendance in the following months during the worship services on Sunday mornings. The increase reported was about 13 percent more people. Perhaps, this increase could be a consequence of how motivated the people are in regard of having a clearer definition of the vision of the church or just because of the fact that they now can feel activated in the work of the ministry of the church.

Postscript

Although, the church in Mexico is growing, little emphasis has been placed on the need for preparing the new generation of leaders who are coming without formal training or experience for ministry. Many of the preachers and ministers from the churches are people without high school education and with no intention of pursuing further studies.

Alongside with this issue, in September 2011, I was invited to collaborate as a principal of a new theological seminary in Monterrey, Mexico. This seminary is the first that has government recognition so the students who graduate from it will receive official transcripts that can be accredited not only in Mexico but even overseas. We now have seventeen students, and half of them are young people who are professionals (graduated from college) but who want to pursue theological preparation. They do not want just an academic degree, but they want to contribute to their churches and their secular jobs. The name of the university is Iesdi, and we now are offering a bachelor's degree in theological studies and a master's degree in psychology. The main challenge is to prepare students who want to receive a formal education in theological studies so they can serve better in their communities and churches.

The implication for this study is that this dissertation, at least in part, attempts to deal with an issue that practically does not exist in the Latin American literature and the church context. This dissertation is an attempt to prepare the laity for the work of ministry in their local churches and according to their gifts and abilities with the intention of integrating them to the secular world with authority and boldness.

APPENDIX A

JOURNAL QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT

Participants responded to each item based on a scale ranging from 1-5.

1 = Very Poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent

I. Relationships

1. Respect the relationship with your subordinates.
2. Keep a respectful relationship with my boss.
3. Spend time with spouse.
4. Spend time with children.
5. Keep good relationships with friends.
6. Worry about the well-being of others.
7. Rarely, I get mad at my family.
8. Never had any conflict with congregants of the church.
9. It is not difficult to ask forgiveness when a mistake is made.
10. Forgive easily.
11. Considered to be a good friend.
12. Considered to be a good parent.

II. Spiritual Disciplines

1. Keep a daily devotional life.
2. Pray daily at least one hour.
3. Enjoy reading the Scriptures every day.
4. Fast at least one time every week.
5. Attend worship services every week.

6. Have family Bible study at your house every week.
7. Like to attend to prayer meetings.
8. Spent time to study scriptural passages.
9. Enjoy reading Christian literature.
10. Participate in conferences and retreats of the church.
11. Prayer is essential to making a decision.
12. Keeping a sincere life before God.

III. Gifts and abilities

1. Knowing the spiritual gifts I have.
2. Continually I ask God confirmation about the gifts I have.
3. Importance of being active in the use of the spiritual gifts.
4. Admiring those people with spiritual gifts.
5. Fluent with the use of spiritual gifts.
6. There are gifts I want to have.
7. Belief in the Holy Spirit manifestation.
8. Distinguishing the talents I have.
9. Having received confirmation in gifts and talents.
10. Having confirmed others about their gifts and talents.
11. Praying for gifts activation among the church.
- 12 I am pleased with the gifts and talents I have.

IV. Ministry

1. Having a clear perception of what leadership is.
2. Do I consider myself a leader.

3. Can I recognize those who are truly leaders.
4. Respect those in leadership.
5. It is important to be accountable to others.
6. Serving in my local church is my passion.
7. Having very clear vocation for ministry.
8. I am actually involved in ministry.
9. It is easy for me to recognize those in leadership.
10. Have learned to collaborate with others in ministry.
11. Have seen how God is using me for ministry.
12. Have a call for full-time ministry.

V. Vision and Planning.

1. Knowing the plans for ministry for the future.
2. Open if God wants to change personal plans.
3. Have projected a vision for my family.
4. Project ministry for the next five years.
5. Enjoy working in the long-term.
6. Established specific goals for ministry.
7. Developed a specific work plan for my ministry.
8. Thinking of pursuing further studies.
9. Do not allow lack of achievements to bring discouragement.
10. Ask God's direction for life continually.
11. Having dreams to expect for the future.
12. Like to work until goals are achieve.

APPENDIX B**SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY**

These are the spiritual gifts included in the workshop inventory according to the list given by Kinghorn in his book *The New Testament Gifts of the Holy Spirit*:

1. Prophecy. Applying the biblical revelation with clarity and power as light and truth for the present (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; Eph. 4:11).
2. Teaching. Understanding God's truth and communicating it clearly so others will grasp its relevance and importance for their lives (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).
3. Serving. Supporting others through Spirit-inspired service that lifts their loads and frees them for wider ministries (Rom. 12:7).
4. Exhortation. Comforting and encouraging others, using the ministries of sympathetic understanding and scriptural counsel to cause right attitudes and actions (Rom. 12:8).
5. Giving. Supplying generous material or financial means to help others and to advance God's work in people's lives and in the church's ministries (Rom. 12:8).
6. Giving aid. Providing leadership to coordinate the materials and abilities of others to meet the practical needs of people and organizations (Rom. 12:8).
7. Compassion. Sensing needs in others, feeling sympathy, and cheerfully showing mercy and giving comfort (Rom. 12:8).
8. Healing. Praying prayers of faith that bring God's healing to sick, frail, or disordered bodies, souls, and relationships (1 Cor. 12:9; 28, 30).

9. Working miracles. Trusting God to work supernaturally in people and circumstances, especially by healing, freeing from evil spirits, and delivering from dangers (1 Cor. 12:10, 28-29).
10. Tongues. Speaking in another earthly language or in an unknown language as a means of petition, praise, or thanksgiving (1 Cor. 12:10, 28).
11. Interpretation of tongues. Making clear to others the meaning or intent of what one says when speaking in an unknown tongue (1 Cor. 12:10, 30).
12. Word of wisdom. Receiving a Spirit-assisted illumination that enables one to understand and share the mind of the Holy Spirit in a specific circumstance (1 Cor. 12:28).
13. Word of knowledge. Knowing a fact or circumstance based on direct illumination by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:28).
14. Faith. The Spirit-given ability to believe that because God is able to do wonderful works, we can trust him to bring them to pass in response to prayer and faith (1 Cor. 12:9).
15. Discernment of spirits. Sensing whether a teaching or proposed action comes from a divine source, a human source, or an evil source (1 Cor. 12:10).
16. Apostleship. Transplanting the gospel to a new environment to begin a new Christian community among unreached people (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).
17. Helps. Unselfishly serving the needy through ministries of practical service (1 Cor. 12:28).
18. Administration. Setting goals, planning, organizing, and leading others to work harmoniously toward a common goal in the work of God (1 Cor. 12:28).

19. Evangelism. A special ability to understand the grave condition of unsaved people and lead them to commit their lives to Jesus Christ as their savior (Eph. 4:11).
20. Shepherding. Leading and serving others through the pastoral ministries of teaching, guiding, and nurturing to bring them to Christian maturity and Christlikeness (Eph. 4:11).

APPENDIX C

SEMINAR OUTLINES

1. Strengthen relationships.

- Understand the meaning of the Trinity and know how they interact between them in true unity.
- Explain the importance of having fellowship through accountability groups with other brothers and sisters of the body of Christ in order to build strong relationships among the church.

2. Spiritual disciplines.

- Prayer is our entrance to God's strategy room.
- Renew biblical interpretation by contextualizing the group that is receiving ministry in order to become more efficient in the work of the ministry.
- Empowering the new generations through the teaching of the Scriptures.
- Know the benefit of fasting.

3. Gifts and abilities.

- Help the congregation discover their spiritual gifts.
- Empower them to use their gifts for the edification of the body of Christ.
- Empower them to use their gifts for reaching out.
- Take spiritual gifts inventory.

4. Vision.

- Definition of a vision.
- How can we have a clear vision of our lives and ministries.
- Let the group cast the vision and mission of the church.

- How to move accordingly to the vision.

5. Outline a plan for ministry.

- Explanation of the passage of Ephesians 4:11.
- A challenge for service.
- Vocational ministries.

APPENDIX D

WORKSHOP SEMINAR QUESTIONS

1. Before the seminar started, what were your own personal perceptions and participation in relation to ministry involvement?
2. After the seminar started, what were your own personal perceptions and participation in relation to ministry involvement?
3. Before you answered the gifts inventory, how available were you to participate in the ministry of the church?
4. After, you answered the gifts inventory, how available were you to participate in the ministry of the church?
5. In your opinion, what were the most distinctive virtues any leader should have in order to be effective in the ministry of the church?
 - a. Be a direct and sincere person.
 - b. Manage difficult situations with assurance.
 - c. Know how to relate with others.
 - d. Be a good administrator.
 - e. Keep a strong relationship with God.
 - f. Gain authority from subordinates.
 - g. Can discern spiritual gifts.
 - h. Very intelligent person.
 - i. Have a clear vision.
 - j. Be a prepare person.

APPENDIX E

GIFTS AND ABILITIES J1 SCORES

Gifts and abilities (Journal 1)	Mean
1. Know the spiritual gifts I have.	4.06
2. Continually I ask God confirmation about the gifts I have.	4.00
3. Is important to be active in the use of the spiritual gifts.	4.16
4. Admire those people with spiritual gifts.	4.60
5. Fluent with the use of spiritual gifts.	3.99
6. There are gifts I want to have.	4.20
7. Belief in the Holy Spirit manifestation.	4.33
8. Distinguish the talents I have.	3.80
9. Have received confirmation in gifts and talents.	3.73
10. Have confirmed others about their gifts and talents.	4.03
11. Pray for gifts activation among the church.	4.13
12 I am pleased with the gifts and talents I have.	3.40
	Total 4.03

APPENDIX F
MINISTRY J1 SCORES

Ministry (Journal 1)	Mean
1. Have a clear perception of what leadership is.	3.30
2. Do I consider myself a leader.	4.0
3. Can recognize those who are truly leaders.	4.33
4. Respect those in leadership.	4.50
5. It is important to be accountable to others.	4.30
6. Serving in my local church is my passion.	3.96
7. Have very clear vocation for ministry.	3.96
8. I am actually involved in ministry.	4.0
9. It is easy for me to recognize those in leadership.	4.1
10. Have learned to collaborate with others in ministry.	3.83
11. Have seen how God is using me for ministry.	3.20
12. Have a call for full-time ministry.	3.17
	Total 3.90

APPENDIX G

VISION AND PLANNING J1 SCORES

Vision and Planning (Journal 1)	Mean
1. Know the plans for ministry for the future.	3.73
2. Open if God wants to change personal plans.	4.13
3. Have projected a vision for my family.	3.26
4. Project ministry for the next five years.	3.96
5. Enjoy working in the long-term.	4.30
6. Established specific goals for ministry.	3.23
7. Developed a specific work plan for my ministry.	3.06
8. Thinking of pursuing further studies.	3.83
9. Do not allow lack of achievements to bring discouragement.	3.96
10. Ask God's direction for life continually.	3.83
11. Have dreams to expect for the future.	4.40
12. Like to work until goals are achieved.	3.73
Total	3.86

APPENDIX H

RELATIONSHIPS J1 SCORES

Relationships (Journal 1)	Mean
1. Respect the relationship with your subordinates.	4.16
2. Keep a respectful relationship with my boss.	4.20
3. Spent time with spouse.	3.66
4. Spent time with children.	3.73
5. Keep good relationships with friends.	4.16
6. Worry about the well-being of others.	3.60
7. Rarely I get mad at my family.	3.13
8. Never had any conflict with brethren of the church.	3.90
9. It is not difficult to ask forgiveness when a mistake is made.	3.90
10. Forgive easily.	3.40
11. Considered to be a good friend.	4.23
12. Considered to be a good father.	3.70
	Total 3.84

APPENDIX I

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES J1 SCORES

Spiritual Disciplines (Journal 1)	Mean
1. Keep a daily devotional life.	3.33
2. Pray daily at least one hour.	3.10
3. Enjoy reading the Scriptures every day.	3.86
4. Fast at least one time every week.	2.33
5. Attend worship services every week	4.20
6. Have family Bible study at your house every week.	2.83
7. Like to attend prayer meetings.	3.60
8. Spent time studying scriptural passages.	3.30
9. Enjoy reading Christian literature.	2.83
10. Participate in conferences and retreats of the church.	3.83
11. Prayer is essential to making a decision.	4.13
12. Keep a sincere life before God.	4.13
	Total 3.41

APPENDIX J

GIFTS AND ABILITIES J2 SCORES

Gifts and abilities (Journal 2)	Mean
1. Know the spiritual gifts I have.	4.00
2. Continually I ask God confirmation about the gifts I have.	3.93
3. Is important to be active in the use of the spiritual gifts.	4.13
4. Admire those people with spiritual gifts.	4.50
5. Fluent with the use of spiritual gifts.	4.03
6. There are gifts wanting to have.	3.96
7. Believe in the Holy Spirit manifestation.	4.43
8. Distinguish the talents I have.	3.86
9. Have received confirmation in gifts and talents.	3.80
10. Have confirmed others about their gifts and talents.	4.06
11. Pray for gifts activation among the church.	4.00
12 I am pleased with the gifts and talents I have.	3.50
	Total 4.01

APPENDIX K

MINISTRY J2 SCORES

Ministry (Journal 2)	Mean
1. Have a clear perception of what leadership is.	4.13
2. Do I consider myself a leader.	3.70
3. Can recognize those who are truly leaders.	4.10
4. Respect those in leadership.	4.36
5. It is important to be accountable to others.	4.43
6. Serving in my local church is my passion.	4.00
7. Have very clear vocation for ministry.	3.80
8. I am actually involved in ministry.	3.96
9. It is easy for me to recognize those in leadership.	3.90
10. Have learned to collaborate with others in ministry.	4.03
11. Have seen how God is using me for ministry.	3.76
12. Have a call for full-time ministry.	3.13
	Total 3.90

APPENDIX L**VISION AND PLANNING J2 SCORES**

Vision and Planning (Journal 2)	Mean
1. Know the plans for ministry for the future.	3.73
2. Open if God wants to change personal plans.	4.43
3. Have projected a vision for my family.	3.33
4. Project ministry for the next five years.	4.00
5. Enjoy working in the long-term.	4.13
6. Established specific goals for ministry.	3.36
7. Developed a specific work plan for my ministry.	3.10
8. Thinking of pursuing further studies.	4.23
9. Do not allow lack of achievements bring discouragement.	4.00
10. Ask God's direction for life continually.	3.80
11. Have dreams to expect for the future.	4.70
12. Like to work until goals are achieve.	3.86
	Total 3.89

APPENDIX M
RELATIONSHIPS J2 SCORES

Relationships (Journal 2)	Mean
1. Respect the relationship with your subordinates.	3.83
2. Keep a respectful relationship with my boss.	4.23
3. Spent time with spouse.	3.50
4. Spent time with children.	3.83
5. Keep good relationships with friends.	3.86
6. Worry about the well-being of others.	3.33
7. Rarely I get mad at my family.	3.20
8. Never had any conflict with brethren of the church.	3.80
9. It is not difficult to ask forgiveness when a mistake is made.	3.80
10. Forgive easily.	3.93
11. Considered to be a good friend.	4.30
12. Considered to be a good father.	3.80
	Total 3.78

APPENDIX N

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES J2 SCORES

Spiritual Disciplines (Journal 2)	Mean
1. Keep an excellent devotional life.	3.70
2. Pray daily at least one hour	.3.60
3. Enjoy reading the Scriptures every day.	3.90
4. Fast at least one time every week.	2.96
5. Attend worship services every week.	4.16
6. Have family Bible study at your house every week.	3.10
7. Like to attend to prayer meetings.	3.73
8. Spent time to study scriptural passages.	3.83
9. Enjoy reading Christian literature	.3.63
10. Participate in conferences and retreats of the church.	3.90
11. Prayer is essential to make a decision.	4.06
12. Keep a sincere life before God.	4.00
	Total 3.72

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