

Leadership Tips

on Spiritual Formation

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QUOTES

“The whole point of what we’re urging is simply love – love uncontaminated by self-interest and counterfeit faith, a life open to God.”

I Timothy 1:5, *The Message*

“God’s Law, or his Word, is meant to penetrate the secret chambers of the heart, not merely be displayed externally like words chiseled in stone or written on parchment ... the goal of the New Testament Christian is to have the Law of God written on our hearts.”

R.C. Sproul, *The Soul’s Quest for God*, p. 100

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.’ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:37-40, *New International Version*

“Our love to God can only be a response to His love for us. If I do not believe God loves me, I cannot love him. To love God, I must believe that he is for me, not against me (Romans 8:31), and that he accepts me as a son or a daughter, not a slave (Galatians 4:7).”

Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*, p. 120

“Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commandments, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. Fulfill your promise to your servant, so that you may be feared. Take away the disgrace I dread, for your laws are good. How I long for your precepts! Preserve my life in your righteousness.”

Psalms 119:34-40, *New International Version*

“If we love the Word of God, we must therefore love the Law of God, both in the broad and in the narrow senses. The psalmist’s affection is not directed to the Law of God in abstraction. He loves it because he loves God, and the Law comes from him Love for the Law of God is rooted in the relationship between the Law and the lawgiver ... the Law of God comes from within him, from his own internal character. It is a reflection of his own righteousness.”

R.C. Sproul, *The Soul’s Quest for God*, p. 97

“Therefore I urge you ... by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Romans 12:1-2, *New American Standard Version*

“True character transformation begins, we are taught to believe, in the pure grace of God and is continually assisted by it. Very well. But **action** is also indispensable in making the Christian truly a different kind of person – one having a new life in which, as 2 Corinthians 5:17 states, ‘Old things have passed away and, behold, all things become new.’ Failure to act in certain definite [Biblical] ways will guarantee that this transformation does not come to pass.”

Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, p. 20

“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant.”

John 15:5, *The Message*

“The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-directed life by which Jesus lives in and through us in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised his followers they would have powerful, loving, abundant, and fruitful lives as a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Tan, Siang-Yang and Douglas Gregg, *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit*, p. 19

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8, *New King James Version*

Introduction to Spiritual Formation

From Celebration of Discipline, by Richard Foster

“Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for greater numbers of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people. The classic Disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths. They invite us to explore the inner caverns of the spiritual realm. They urge us to be the answer to a hollow world.” (p. 1)

“God has given us the Disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving his grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us In this regard it would be proper to speak of ‘the path of disciplined grace.’ It is ‘grace’ because it is free; it is ‘discipline’ because there is something for us to do.” (p. 7-8)

“The purpose of the Disciplines is liberation from the stifling slavery of self-interest and fear The life that is pleasing to God is not a series of religious duties. We have only one thing to do, namely, to experience a life of relationship and intimacy with God ...” (p. 2, 4)

“When the Disciplines degenerate into law, they are used to manipulate and control people Pride takes over because we come to believe that we are the right kind of people ... [and] we judge who is measuring up and who is not. [But] when we genuinely believe that inner transformation is God’s work and not ours, we can put to rest our passion to set others straight.” (p. 10)

The Inward Disciplines

- Meditation
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Study

The Outward Disciplines

- Simplicity
- Solitude
- Submission
- Service

The Corporate Disciplines

- Confession
- Worship
- Guidance
- Celebration

From *Ordering Your Private World*, by Gordon MacDonald

Memo to the Disorganized: “If my private world is in order, it will be because I am convinced that the inner world of the spiritual must govern the outer world of activity.” (p. 12)

“Sinkholes occur, scientists say, when underground streams drain away during seasons of drought, causing the ground at the surface to lose its underlying support. Suddenly everything simply caves in ...” (p. 13)

Memo to the Disorganized: If my private world is in order, it will be because I make a daily choice to monitor its state of orderliness. (p. 19)

“He [the Captain of the submarine] could anticipate an excellent performance from the people on the bridge. When things are in order there, the submarine is secure no matter what the external circumstances But there have been cases in which those procedures have been ignored, perhaps left unpracticed. Then there can be disasters And so it is with human life when there is disorganization on the ‘bridge’ of the inner world. The accidents that occur there have names like *burnout*, *breakdown*, or *blow-up*.” (p. 21)

Five Sectors of Ordering Your Private Life

1. Motivation
2. Use of Time
3. Wisdom and Knowledge
4. Spiritual Strength
5. Restoration

From *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit*, by Siang-Yang Tan and Douglas Gregg,

“God desires for [us] to walk in the Spirit day by day, year after year, for a lifetime, in order to grow up into Christ We can be converted to Christ in a moment, but growing up into his likeness is the task of a lifetime.” (p. 27)

“Some of the blessings of the Spirit-filled life are:

- Greater love and intimacy with God
- Exaltation of Jesus as Son of God and Savior
- Power and boldness to witness and preach
- Greater wisdom and faith
- Deep joy
- Release of spiritual gifts for ministry
- Victory over sin and temptation
- Effectiveness and power in prayer
- Quiet confidence during opposition
- Deeper trust in Scripture as the Word of God
- Renewed zeal for evangelism
- Fresh love of Christ and others.” (p. 21)

The I Timothy 1:5 Principle

(Excerpt from *Staying Well* manuscript, by Dr. Paul Leavenworth)

In Matthew 22:37-40, we are reminded of the all encompassing reality of love. Jesus said,

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (NIV)

Love God and love your neighbor. Brilliant! But not so easy to do. My struggles with the application of this passage has lead me to a careful study of the Bible concerning love which in turn has lead me to discover what I call the “I Timothy 1:5 Principle.” This passage says,

“The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” (NIV)

Francis Schaeffer calls love the “mark of the Christian.” It is to be the distinguishing characteristic of true followers of Christ. There are many ideas about what love is in our culture: “Is love a feeling?” “Do we fall in love?” [which means that we can fall out of love!] “If you love me, you would know how to meet my needs!” “Make love not war!” You have heard these uses of the word love and many more. What does love mean, what does it look like?

The Mark of the Christian – I Corinthians 13

Text: *“If I speak in the tongues of men and angels If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge ... if I have a faith that can move mountains If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, **but have not love, I gain nothing.**”* I Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)

Context: Love in the Bible

- God is love – I John 4:8
- God’s love is manifest in redemption – John 3:16
- Jesus demonstrates God’s love by dying for our sins – John 15:13
- We can love because God loves us – I John 4:19
- We are to love God with all our mind, heart, soul, strength – Matthew 22:37
- We have the fruit of the Spirit as part of our salvation – Galatians 5:22
- We demonstrate love through obedience to God – I John 2:5
- We are to love one another – I John 4:7
- We are to love our neighbors – Matthew 22:39
- We are to love the poor and needy – Luke 10:29-37
- We are to love our enemies – Luke 6:27

Definition: Love (agape) – “Christian love has God as its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in obedience to his commandments Self-will, that is self-pleasing, is the negative of love of God... Christian love is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with natural inclinations Love seeks the welfare of all (Romans 15:2) and works no ill to any (Romans 13:8-10), love seeks opportunity to do good to all (Galatians 6:10) ... [it is part of the] fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 6:22), [it

is the primary characteristic] of God (I John 4:8), [and is the primary means] for ministry (I Corinthians 13:1-3).” (adapted from *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, 1996, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Content: *“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”* I Corinthians 13:4-8 (NIV)

- Patient (makrothumia) – “long suffering”
- Kind (chrestotes) – “goodness of heart, serviceable, pleasant”
- Does not envy (zeloo) – “indignation, jealousy [to have what others have]”
- Does not boast (perpereuomai) – “to vaunt oneself, vainglory, brag”
- Is not proud (phusioo) – “to puff up, blow up, inflate [with pride]”
- Is not rude (aschnomomai) – “to act unbecomingly [at the expense of others]”
- Is not self-seeking (zeteo) – “to strive after, endeavor, desire [self]”
- Is not easily angered (orge) – “gradual, long lasting anger”
- Does not keep a record of wrongs (kakos) – “injurious, destructive [hurtful]”
- Does not delight in evil (adikeo) – “unrighteousness, to do wrong”
- Rejoices with truth (alethes) – “real, ideal, genuine”
- Always protects (stego) – “to cover, conceal, ward off, resist”
- Always trusts (pisteuo) – “to entrust, to commit to one’s trust”
- Always hopes (elpizo) – “favorable and confident expectation, happy anticipation of good”
- Always perseveres (hupomeno) – “to bear up courageously [under suffering]”
- Never fails (pipto) – “to fall, loose authority, or cease to have force [sufficient for the need]”

This is quite a list – maybe even a little overwhelming. A personal evaluation (see “The Mark of the Christian: Self-Evaluation Form” following) of these characteristics can be revealing and serve as a starting point for growth, transformation, and maturity.

Means to the Goal

The “I Timothy 1:5 Principle” has been especially helpful for me in this area because it reveals three personal components that are critical to becoming a loving person: a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Let us look at each of these components.

A **pure heart** (kathros) is an inner constitution (mind, emotions, and will) that is characterized by a purity that is “free from impure admixture, without blemish, spotless” This kind of purity comes through the transforming work of the Spirit through the “cleansing ... by the washing of water through the word ...” (Ephesians 5:26)

We must learn to allow God to transform us through the “renewing” of our minds (Romans 12:2). We do this by learning to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5). Paul states it this way,

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9, NIV)

Purity of heart is critical for the leader because it is the “pure in heart” who “will see God.” (Matthew 5:8) Purity is the pre-requisite for getting revelation from God. Revelation is essential for our own lives

and critical for our leadership. For without vision (“Godly revelation”) the people “cast off restraint.” (Proverbs 29:18)

A **good conscience** (agathos) refers to a sensitivity to the conviction of the Spirit so that we can obtain and maintain a conscience that is “good in its character or constitution.” It is that ability to be so in touch with God that all of our accounts are clear, above board, above reproach. We are “confessed up” (I John 1:9) and do not have worry that we will be discovered or exposed.

There is a difference between condemnation (Romans 8:1) and conviction. Condemnation is that vague sense that we have done something wrong, or “false guilt that plagues the insecure, or the false accusations of the enemy who is “the accuser of our brothers” (Revelation 12:10).

Conviction is a clear (if we are willing to hear from God) sense that we have violated one or more of God’s standards revealed in the Bible. The purpose of conviction is always redemptive and transformational. It is through the confession of our sin that we experience “forgiveness and cleansing.” Biblical confession might involve reconciliation and/or restitution if our sin has hurt others and/or taken from others things that belong to them.

We need to prayerfully seek God through the Scriptures and when appropriate wise counsel so that we truly repent of our sin so that we can be transformed. Complete confession/repentance is critical in establishing and maintaining a good or “clear” conscience. Unconfessed sin leads to future vulnerability (see II Corinthians 2:10-11) to temptation. A good conscience helps us to maintain integrity in life and ministry.

A **sincere faith** (anupokritos) refers to a faith that is “without hypocrisy.” Our lives reflect in attitude and action that which we believe. We are congruent – “what you see is what you get.” The author of Hebrews describes faith as “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (11:1) because we have discovered and have the opportunity to discover again that God is loving, sufficient, and faithful to his promises.

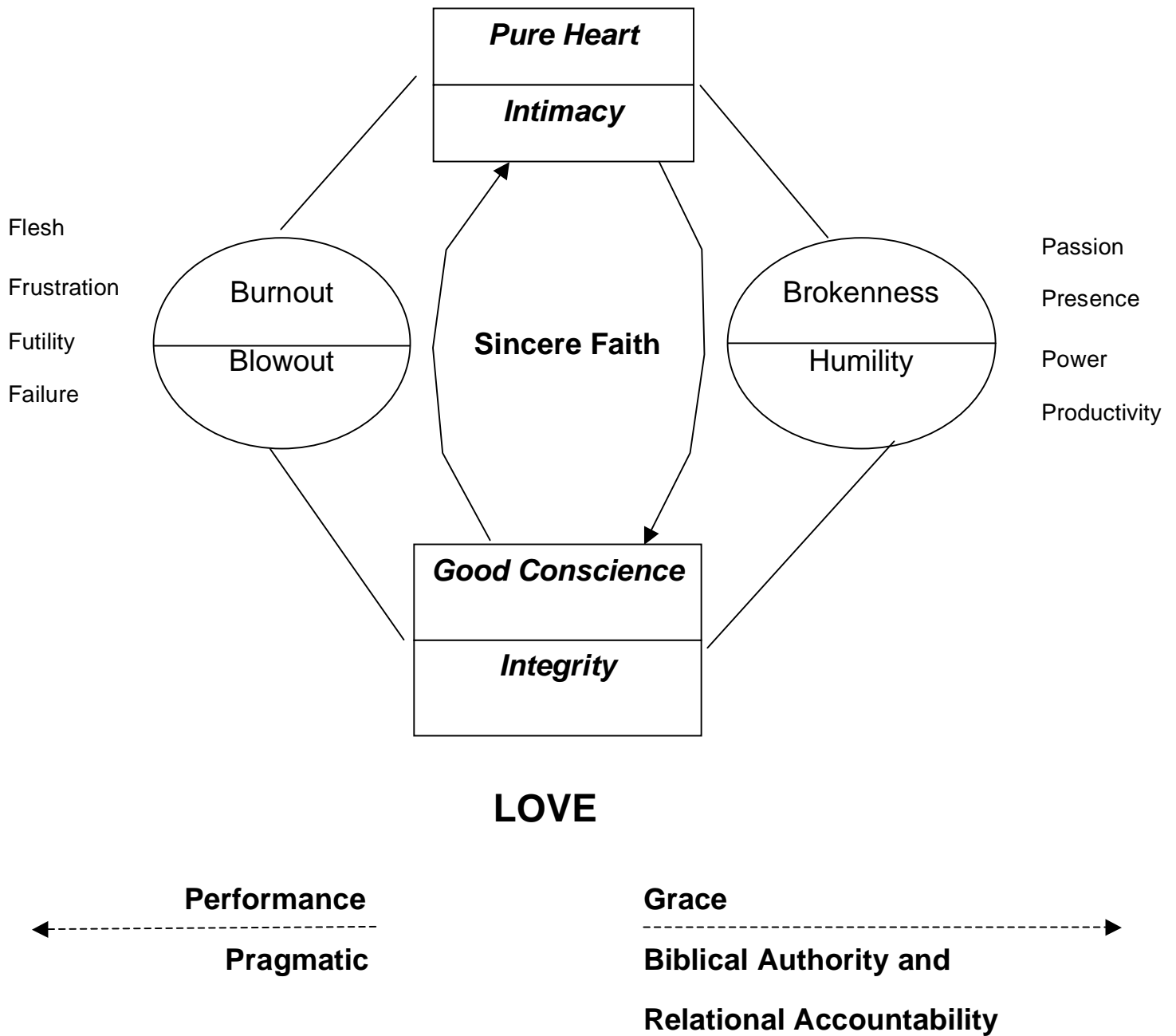
Sincerity of faith is critical for our growth, transformation, and maturity. We must learn that following Christ is not a “formula” but a “faith relationship.” We grow from “faith to faith ... because the righteous live by faith.” (Romans 1:17) Without faith we can not please God.

The I Timothy 1:5 Principle can be pictured as follows (see Diagram 1). The cultivation of love through a pure heart, good conscience, and a sincere faith will eventually produce a person of passion where the presence and power of God will produce kingdom results in and through their lives and ministries. For those who do not cultivate these qualities they will eventually become fleshly people who experience frustration, futility, and minimal fruit in their lives and ministries.

Those who move toward passion, presence, power, and productivity will be motivated out of grace and submitted to Biblical authority and accountable to others. Those who move toward the flesh, frustration, futility, and failure will be motivated by performance and pragmatism resulting in burnout and/or blowout.

This is a process involving a long haul cultivation of relationship with Christ. It is not a formula or “self-help” program but an “abiding in Christ” resulting in radical transformation over time. For those who learn how to apply the I Timothy 1:5 Principle in their lives and ministries there is the promise of freedom and fruitfulness.

Diagram 1: The I Timothy 1:5 Principle



The Mark of the Christian (I Corinthians 13:4-8)

Self-Evaluation Form

Self-Evaluation: Please circle the number that best represents your practice of the following characteristics of love.

1 – weak 2 – inconsistent 3 – average 4 – consistent 5 – strong

Characteristic:	Rating:				
1. Patient (“long suffering”)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Kind (“goodness of heart, serviceable, pleasant”)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Does not envy (“indignation, jealousy {to have what others have}”)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Does not boast (“to vaunt oneself, vainglory, brag”)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Is not proud (“to puff up, blow up, inflate [with pride]”)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Is not rude (“to act unbecomingly [at the expense of others]”)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Is not self-seeking (“to strive after, endeavor, desire [self]”)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Is not easily angered (“gradual, long lasting anger”)	1	2	3	4	5
9. Does not keep a record of wrongs (“injurious, destructive [hurtful]”)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Does not delight in evil (“unrighteousness, to do wrong”)	1	2	3	4	5
11. Rejoices with truth (“real, ideal, genuine”)	1	2	3	4	5
12. Always protects (“to cover, conceal, ward off, resist”)	1	2	3	4	5
13. Always trusts (“to entrust, to commit to one’s trust”)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Always hopes (“favorable and confident expectation, happy anticipation of good”)	1	2	3	4	5
15. Always perseveres (“to bear up courageously [under suffering]”)	1	2	3	4	5
16. Never fails (“to fall, loose authority, or cease to have force [sufficient for the need]”)	1	2	3	4	5

Book Reviews

***The Next Christendom*, by Phillip Jenkins**

Jenkins describes world Christian demographics and concludes that the center of Christendom is rapidly moving south toward Asia, Africa, and South America and away from Western domination and control. There are currently about 2 billion Christians worldwide with about 800 million living in the West (Europe and North America). By the year 2025 the numbers in the West will stay about the same (or decline) while the numbers in the south will increase by about 50% to about 1.8 billion. The phenomenal growth of the Southern Church is characterized by a commitment to the authority of the Bible, gospel preaching, indigenous worship, lay leadership, signs and wonders, church multiplication, and compassion for the needy. As the Church in the South continues to grow it will gain more influence in traditional Western denominations (and newer networks concerned about missional Christianity) causing the church in the West to participate in the next Christendom or be left behind in plateau/decline.

***Velvet Elvis*, by Rob Bell**

Bell uses the example of a “Velvet Elvis” painting stored in his basement “behind some bikes and suitcases and boxes” to illustrate that each generation has to “rethink faith and the Bible and hope and love and everything else [in the context of] the endless process of working out how to live as God created us to live.” (p. 11) Just as the “Velvet Elvis” had its day and now is stored in the basement, so other forms of faith expression have served their course and may not be relevant to new generations and new social contexts. From this premise, Bell uses the frame work of creating art to describe his own process of faith expression in “six movements” entitled jump (flexibility and mystery), yoke (difficulty and discovery), true (logos and story), tassels (success and peace), dust (performance and grace), new (transformation and kingdom), and good (creation and good news). For Bell, faith is not so much making sense out of life as it is learning how to live life abundantly in community so that others may see “a better way” that may lead them to Jesus.

***Hit the Bullseye*, by Paul Borden**

Borden tells the story of transformation of American Baptist churches in Northern California through establishing a program for accountability for both faithfulness and fruitfulness in local church leadership. Prior to the implementation of this strategy in 1997 there were 229 churches with only 37 (or 16%) of them growing. By 2002 (after five years of implementation) there were 215 churches with 155 (or 72%) of them growing. Average attendance had increased from 100 to 188, mission giving had grown by 1.2 million dollars, and baptisms had increased from 800 to 6,000 per year. The basic principles that drove this turnaround were: 1. fruitfulness is as important as faithfulness; 2. what we count we value; and 3. accountability is a basic requirement for change and must be based upon objective measurement.

***Invading Secular Space*, by Martin Robinson & Dwight Smith**

Robinson and Smith describe the changing world that the church must adapt to if it is going to be effective missionally. They describe seven fundamental convictions that they believe are necessary if the Church in the West is to survive and thrive: 1. the Church is called to share in the mission of God; 2. despite the Church’s weaknesses/failures, it continues to occupy a central position in God’s intentions for the world; 3. the Church in the West is in deep crisis; 4. the Church in the West is called to rediscover its life and witness; 5. the re-imagining of the Church can only take place around the centrality of its call to mission; 6. the Church has encountered such challenges in the past; and 7. it is possible for the Church to be recast to meet the challenges of our age, and that there are signs that the future

church is emerging. They believe it is possible to “cheat history” and for plateaued church organizations to break through to missional effectiveness if strong spiritual leadership is established.

LeadershipNext, by Eddie Gibbs

Gibbs describes the changes taking place in the church and the type of leadership needed for effective mission as post-modernism is rapidly replacing modernism as the dominant worldview in the West. He describes the reshaping of the church as: 1. being shaped by mission rather than by self-serving growth and defensive isolation; 2. being shaped by the community suggested in the Trinity rather than by privatized and individualistic agendas; 3. establishing the inseparable connection between worship and witness rather than focusing on one to the exclusion of the other; 4. recognizing rich and colorful diversity of creation and our responsibility to be stewards of the earth; 5. taking up an incarnational approach that emphasizes the living out of the doctrines we believe; 6. reaching out to the lost and needy with unconditional love rather than judgment and condemnation; 7. committed to the transformation of individuals and communities rather than self-help; and 8. committed to Great Commission discipling rather than decision-making. The leader who will serve effectively in this reshaping church reality will: 1. join their vision to the dreams of others; 2. connect and combine rather than divide and conquer; 3. strive to overcome mutual problems rather than common enemies; 4. create a sense of community that embraces diversity; 5. establish coalitions of committed leaders and constituents to achieve common purposes; 6. encourage active constituents to assume responsibilities at every level; 7. join with other leaders as colleagues, not as competitors; 8. nurture potential leaders, including possible successors; 9. renew and build broad-based democratic institutions instead of creating dynasties and oligarchies; 10. demonstrate authenticity through consistent dedication to goals that transcend their own egos; and 11. demand serious sacrifice first from themselves and only then from others.

Church Planting Movements, by David Garrison

Garrison conducted research on church planting movements (CPM's involve “rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches”) that are emerging in Asia, Africa, and South America. He discovered ten universal elements in the CPM's he studied: 1. prayer; 2. abundant gospel sowing; 3. intentional church planting; 4. scriptural authority; 5. local leadership; 6. lay leadership; 7. cell or house churches; 8. churches planting churches; 9. rapid reproduction; and 10. healthy churches.