

Mo Siegel

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Dear Urantia Leaders:

In charting the course for the progressive evolutionary unfolding of the Fifth Epochal Revelation, it is only natural and wise for us to take some of our leadings from the best of the evolutionary religions. A recent gathering of 25 ministers from various denominations was sponsored by a philanthropic businessman from Texas. One similarity of all the ministers was that their churches had over 1500 families per church and were among the most flourishing in the United States. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what was healthy about the churches, what programs and patterns - what emphasis - was making these churches flourish.

The organizer of the meeting took the same approach that Tom Peters and Bob Waterman did in the classic business book, "In Search of Excellence." They decided they didn't want to see what was wrong with companies; they wanted to see what was right. Likewise, with the ministers, they spent two and one-half days concentrating on what they do right that excites the congregation and has built their excellent churches.

We were fortunate to have the organizer of the meeting be kind enough to allow us to print the notes of the meeting. When you read what the ministers said, it seems simple and straightforward, but we all know how easy it is to get lost in our day to day activities and lose sight of our vision.

I was very thankful for their clarification of the healthy patterns of their congregations and churches. A few critical points that stuck with me from all their comments were that the ministers and the congregations went about filling spiritual voids, healing hurts and maturing Christians, versus scalp hunting, tradition and events. There was a constant sense of "otherness" - caring about other people outside the church. One of their classic quotes was "The church is a service station, not a final destination". The ministers were urgent about their mission, had a simple doctrine, were very Christ-centered and concerned about other people's needs versus being egocentric. Interesting material, and I hope it proves useful for all of us in our work for the Fifth Epochal Revelation.



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The Entrepreneurial Church vs. the Fortress Church

What is the difference?

Taken from observations of 25 pastors of mostly entrepreneurial churches at a pastors forum sponsored by Leadership Magazine, April 24 - 26, 1984. An entrepreneur is defined as someone who shifts resources from less productive to more productive use.

1. Focus on contributions outside the church building.

- A. Concentration and focus is on strategy and results (filling spiritual voids, healing hurts, maturing Christians vs. scalp collecting, tradition, events).
- B. Focus on otheration. See those outside the church as people in need vs. people to be manipulated or "the enemy".
- C. Peter Drucker - "The evangelical church is successful because they have found a way to minister to people as individuals, not because they are Biblical fundamentalists."
- D. Money, real estate and doctrine are subordinate to mission.

2. Urgent about mission.

- A. Having a sense of urgency and necessity. "Not enough time, not enough facilities" vs. "What are we going to do to fill the time next Sunday?"
- B. Deeply committed emotionally. Have a high level of intensity about ministry.
- C. They have "for" ministries not so much "against" ministries.
- D. Having a clear mission allows:
 - 1. Focus and concentration.
 - 2. Selection of emphasis areas.
 - 3. Delegation and division of responsibility.
 - 4. Communication of a common mission.
 - 5. Not being dominated by the tyranny of the urgent.
 - 6. Opportunism. Able to jump in on short notice.

3. Equip the saints to do ministry.

- A. The professional staff and pastors are seen as an enabling, empowering and support system.
- B. The ministry of the church is "out there" in the streets. The church is a service station not the final destination.
- C. Jim Tozer - breaks down the mission of the church into twelve emphasis areas with each assigned to an elder.
- D. Preaching focuses on leadership - setting the mission and culture so that others do the work.

- E. They demand commitment and participation from the laity.
 - F. Call to action vs. call to study (study in order to equip not for its own sake).
 - G. Emphasis on obedience to God's will and personal calling not knowledge.
4. Simplicity about doctrine.
- A. Best shown by example:
 - Ray Stedman -- Expository preaching.
 - Milton Cunningham -- "Love Jesus, Trust Jesus, that's enough."
 - Mother Theresa -- "I see Jesus in everyone and I love Him."
 - B. Avoid highly complex doctrine and hairsplitting.
 - C. Focus on the issues which unite people rather than those which divide them (unity vs. uniformity). Accommodate pluralism (vs. one socio-economic group).
 - D. Tend to be mono-maniacs, fanatically dedicated to a few things.
5. Risk-takers vs. perfectionist.
- A. "Try it" mentality vs. academic mentality (purify it, protect it, preserve it).
 - B. More about doing it than naming it.
 - C. "The seminaries have the church by the throat and are choking it to death" -- Lane Adams
 - D. "The people the church is modeling on are the academicians. They work on external credentials. That's not for us."
6. Denomination is a foundation not a boundary.
7. The pastors are able to accept ministry personally.
- A. They find people to talk to and share the burden with.
 - B. They don't get isolated by a super-macho independent image. They are "real" vs. Sunday stage personalities.
8. Close to the customer.
- A. They are needs centered vs. ego centered (good Samaritan).
 - B. They find out what the need is by asking the congregants.
9. Pastors are leaders, not managers.
- A. They lead by example. They are willing to be examples personally ("If you've seen me, you've seen the Father.") They have a healthy egotism.

- B. They set a vision and culture ("Here's how things are around here. Here's what is unique about our ministry.")
- C. They don't simply see themselves as machine parts fitting interchangeably into a ministry and doing chores.
- D. They have a mastery over their own ego which allows others to minister vs. clinging to position and role. They can "let go".
- E. They are not devastated by criticism.
- F. They are able to tolerate failure.
- G. They don't run in and fix something the minute they find things are off course and someone says, "Who's in charge around here?"
- H. The pastor feels an intense sense of personal ownership.
 - 1. Many long pastorates by people who established their churches. They tend to build the church where they are rather than using a three year pastorate as a stepping stone to a bigger church.
 - 2. They are expansionists, not protectionists.

10. Today oriented vs. tradition oriented.

- A. Flexible - open to change. They stay fresh and don't get rigid.
- B. "Much of God's work gets done outside the traditional church."
- C. They welcome the para church and use their product (evangelism) vs. getting stuck on a "not invented here" syndrome.
- D. Their growth is not limited by the quality and ambition of their present staff. Willing to outplace or reassign their staff when they are not functioning or when they are made obsolete by a change in the size and nature of the church. People don't "own" positions.

11. Christ centered.

- A. "There is no hunger in the United States for denomination, doctrine or theology. There is a hunger for a personal Christ."
- B. They're not "ashamed of the gospel". Somehow they are not self conscious about being ministers and trying hard to be one of the boys.
- C. They're not fuzzy and ambivalent trying to be all things to all people. They take a firm stand on a few clear points:
 - 1. Authority of scriptures.
 - 2. Lordship of Christ.
 - 3. Forgiveness and service primary mission.