

1 Transforming the Treadmill Church for Sacred Mission



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VISION: To hear the midnight cry, "The bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him" (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

MISSION: Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3) to be glad, to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

13

VALUES: Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb's fine, clean and white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

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OVERALL AIM: Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to inquiring minds to prompt the following inquiries: "Are our feet on the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the Father" (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

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26 **PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY**

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28 This study aims to enhance the leadership skills of lay pastors.

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30 **OBJECTIVES/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH/THESIS**

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32 At the end of this study, lay pastors are equipped to accomplish Holy
33 Spirit directed goals **WITH** church members.

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35 **SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT**

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37 “Where there is not vision, people perish...” (Proverbs 29:18). If
38 your local church lacks a strategic plan, that is: if it does not
39 have a document with clear and memorable mission and vision
40 statements, which is supported by a work plan with goals, objectives,
41 tasks, expected results, persons responsible, milestones, due dates
42 and a budget aligned with objectives, and a system of accountability
43 and incentives; then don’t be surprised if the members use planned
44 church services as a stationary runner uses a treadmill. They may be
45 busy implementing programs and experiencing burnout but accomplishing
46 little for the kingdom of God as judged by Matthew 28:19-20 & 10:1,
47 7-8; Mark 6:7, 12-13 and Luke 9:1-2. Does this describe your church?

48
49 **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

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51 The treadmill church is led by entertainers who confuse productivity
52 with busyness. They claim to “...Feed and shepherd God’s flock...” (Acts
53 20:28, NLT) and point to the many programs the church multiplies like
54 leaves on a fig tree, except no fruit emerges (Matthew 21:19). The
55 treadmill church has too many people who are distracted (Luke 10:39-
56 43, NLT). Church membership increases by inter-church transfers and
57 braggadocio ellipses the true, pitiful, spiritual condition of the
58 congregation (Revelation 3:17). Sorrow and judgment waits for her
59 entertainers according to Jeremiah 23:1-2 and Ezekiel 34:2-10. This
60 background prepared the way for the study question that follows.

61

62 **STUDY QUESTION**

63 How can lay pastors develop church members for Christian service?

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65 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

66 1. **Lay pastors must be mission oriented people.** Two Scriptural
 67 examples follow. Prophetess Deborah was mission oriented when she
 68 took the lead from Barak who failed to carry out God's command to
 69 "Draw toward mount Tabor... [with 10, 000] men of the children of
 70 Naphtali and... Zebulun" (Judges 4:6, 1-10). Similarly, Caleb was
 71 mission oriented when he presented the faith-based, minority
 72 reconnaissance report to Moses and the congregation (Numbers 13:2,
 73 31-33). Mission oriented lay pastors follow divine guidance; they
 74 exercise faith and do NOT stagger at God's promises through
 75 unbelief (Romans 4:20). In other words, they match their strong
 76 rhetoric with unflinching faith and bold action, not depending on
 77 committee consensus and self-reported survey findings for decision
 78 making, allocation of resources and taking action.

79

80 2. **Lay pastors must use counseling to quiet the fears of the faithless**
 81 **and simultaneously depend on God for directions.** Israel's
 82 encampment "...Before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the [Red] Sea,
 83 over against Baalzephon" (Exodus 14:2) is used for illustration.
 84 Pharaoh and his war cabinet though it was foolish to release Israel
 85 from servitude (Exodus 14:5); therefore, they pursued the migrants
 86 (Exodus 14:6-8). Upon meeting them, "...The children of Israel
 87 lifted up their eyes and [saw] the Egyptians marched after them;
 88 and they were sore afraid..." (Exodus 14:10). The faithless and
 89 unbelieving mission doubters were unrestrained in their rebuke of
 90 Moses (Exodus 14:11-12); but he being certain of God's direction
 91 (Exodus 14:1-2) quieted the people by counseling them to "...Stand
 92 still and see the salvation of the Lord..., [assuring them that] the
 93 Lord shall fight for [them and they] shall hold... [their] peace"
 94 (Exodus 14:13-14)..Observe that Moses did not know about God's plan

95 while he quieted the people. Simultaneously pleading with God for
 96 directions, the word of the Lord came to him: **"Go forward"** (Exodus
 97 14:15). This is the hallmark of excellent church leadership:
 98 reliance on God for wisdom and directions and obedience to His
 99 seemingly impossible plan!

- 100
- 101 3. **Lay pastors must become comfortable tarrying before the Lord as**
 102 **they embrace His promises.** A few assurances follow: "...They that
 103 wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up
 104 with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall
 105 walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). "Fear not for I am with [you];
 106 be not dismayed for I am [your] God; I will strengthen [you]; I
 107 will help [you and] will uphold [you] with the right hand of my
 108 righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10). "...In returning and rest shall [you]
 109 be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength..."
 110 (Isaiah 30:15). "When you [pass] through the waters, I will be
 111 with [you]; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow [you];
 112 when [you walk] through the fire, [you shall] not be burned,
 113 neither shall the flame kindle upon [you]" (Isaiah 43:2). These
 114 promises, among other, comfort the hearts of lay pastors. God does
 115 not disappoint those who wait upon Him for He says, "Call upon me
 116 in the day of trouble [and] I will deliver [you] and [you shall]
 117 glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15). "Call unto Me and I will answer you and
 118 show you great and mighty things [that] you do not know" (Jeremiah
 119 33:3). Not surprisingly, Moses received additional instructions
 120 for going forward as he called and waited upon the Lord. God said:
 121 "...Lift up [your] rod and stretch out [your] hand over the sea and
 122 divide it and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through
 123 the midst of the sea" (Exodus 14:16). The Israelites journeyed
 124 safely through the sea to the other side and celebrated safe
 125 passage by singing, dancing and praising God (Exodus 14:21 through
 126 15:21) because their leader was a person of prayer, faith and
 127 obedience. Success is within your grasp if you have the right
 128 attitude!

129 4. Lay pastors must be exemplars of the work they desire members to
 130 perform. Congregations must observe in their lay pastors what Paul
 131 described as "...Press toward the mark for the prize of the high
 132 calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). Observational
 133 learning is powerful and as church members see the Gospel modeled,
 134 that is, lived by those who talk about it, active service
 135 expectations rise and become contagious to the point of
 136 establishing a critical mass: that is a point where most of the
 137 church understands the service culture and expectations and either
 138 follows suit in the path of service or leaves the congregation.
 139 Gandhi's counsel to us reads: "You be the change you want to see in
 140 the world." But to avoid oversimplification of living by example,
 141 observe the preparation required. "[...God anointed [Jesus of
 142 Nazareth] with the Holy Ghost and with power and... He went about
 143 doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God
 144 was with Him" (Acts 10:38). Similar to the early disciples, we are
 145 to pray, prepare our hearts and wait for the promised Holy Spirit
 146 and power before embarking on Christ's mission (Luke 24:49). Let
 147 it not be said of us: "...Do not [follow] their works for they say
 148 and do not" (Matthew 23:3), but rather, let us say: "Be followers
 149 of me, even as I... am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). We do well
 150 to remember that the religion of talk is no substitute for pure
 151 religion (James 1:27). "As the body without the spirit, [i.e., the
 152 breath of God (Genesis 2:7)], is dead, so faith without works is
 153 dead" (James 2:26). Lay pastors, let us put into practice those
 154 things that we expect church members to do because it will not
 155 profit us to say we have faith and not have corresponding works
 156 (James 2:14).

157
 158 5. Lay pastors must deliver sermons or tutorials that cover the gamut
 159 of doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction (2 Timothy 3:16).

160 If the model of church leadership follows a country club style of
 161 management, in which concern for people is high, but concern for
 162 productivity is low, then the congregation is fed too many "baby-

163 food," that is, warm and fuzzy sermons, which emphasize "cheap"
 164 grace and present God as a decadent lover too foolish to be either
 165 sensible or to hold high expectations of His people. Scriptures
 166 such as Jeremiah 2:21, Hosea 10:1 and Isaiah 5:1-7 can help focus
 167 lay pastors. Messages that lack emphases on knowledge, skills,
 168 attitudes and behaviors, which fail to emphasize and reinforce a
 169 culture of accountability, fruit bearing and missionary
 170 productivity among church members do little, if anything for the
 171 spiritual life of the church. The time has come for lay church
 172 leaders to recognize that the treadmill church is "Ever learning
 173 and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy
 174 3:7). Lay pastors and church leaders: "[You] shall destroy their
 175 altars, break their images and cut down their groves" (Exodus
 176 34:13; Deuteronomy 7:5; 2 Kings 18:4; 2 Chronicles 14:3 & 17:6).
 177 "Be watchful and strengthen the things, which remain, that are
 178 ready to die for I have not found [your] works perfect before God"
 179 (Revelation 3:2).

180

181 6. "Lay pastors must submit to a higher calling that transcends
 182 attempts to win the approval of congregants" (Galatians 1:10, New
 183 Living Translation, NLT). "For if the trumpet gives an uncertain
 184 sound, who shall prepare himself [or herself] to the battle" (1
 185 Corinthians 14:8)? "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a
 186 trumpet and show my people their transgression and the house of
 187 Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1). "Blow... the trumpet in Zion and
 188 sound an alarm in my holy mountain. Let ALL the inhabitants of the
 189 land tremble for the day of the Lord comes; ...it is [near] at hand"
 190 (Joel 2:1). "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast; call a
 191 solemn assembly" (Joel 2:15). Lay pastors must remember Jesus'
 192 warning: "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you; for so
 193 did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). This
 194 remembrance can help us pursue God's endorsement more than man's
 195 praise (John 12:43) for people will praise you when they think you
 196 are successful (Psalm 49:18), and earthly praise may have very

197 little to do with accountability, sobriety and urgency in your
 198 mental fabric. "...Darkness... covers the earth and gross darkness the
 199 people, but the Lord shall arise upon [you] and His glory shall be
 200 seen upon [you]" (Isaiah 60:2). In light of foreclosures, a
 201 spiraling 17% unemployment rate, recent illiquidity in financial
 202 markets, among other things, some "...Grove in darkness, ...[lacking
 203 prosperity and are] oppressed and spoiled... and no man [can] save
 204 [them]" (Deuteronomy 28:29). "They meet with darkness in the day
 205 time and grope in the noonday as in the night" (Job 5:14). "...Son
 206 of man, go... unto the house of Israel and speak my words unto them"
 207 (Ezekiel 3:4). "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,
 208 which shall never hold their peace day nor night. [You] that make
 209 mention of the Lord, keep **NOT** silence" (Isaiah 62:6). Do not be
 210 discouraged by the response of the brethren when you speak the word
 211 of the Lord for His promise still stands: "For I am the Lord; I
 212 will speak and the word that I shall speak [will] come to pass; it
 213 shall be no more prolonged. In your days, O rebellious house, will
 214 I say the word and will perform it..." (Ezekiel 12:25).

215
 216 7. Lay pastors must develop capacity to treat all people with dignity.

217 Jesus reminded us that the poor shall always be among us (Matthew
 218 26:11; Mark 14:7 and John 12:8), perhaps to remind us: "Don't be
 219 too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people..." (Romans 12:16,
 220 NLT). But while you adapt to ordinary people, you must also
 221 remember how to relate to others in other social standings. For
 222 Paul reminds us to "Render... to all their dues: tribute to whom
 223 tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to
 224 whom honor" (Romans 13:7). However, the apostle was not silent
 225 about divisions in the church (1 Corinthians 11:18) and the brother
 226 of Jesus took on this issue head-on when he invoked the following
 227 caution: "If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring,
 228 in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile
 229 raiment and [you] have respect to him that wears the [fashionable]
 230 clothing, and say unto him: 'Sit... here in a good place; and say to

231 the poor, stand... there or sit here under my footstool'; are [you]
 232 not then partial in yourselves..." (James 2:2-4). The lay pastor
 233 recognizes that "...God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34);
 234 "...[that God chooses] the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs
 235 of the kingdom, which He... promised to them that love Him" (James
 236 2:5). And to clarify our understanding of the poor that God has in
 237 mind, Jesus said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is
 238 the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Lay pastors, we have a
 239 responsibility to "...Obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures:
 240 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (James 2:8, NLT) and "Do to
 241 others as you would like them to do to you" (Luke 6:31, NLT).

242
 243 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: This study examined local church leadership.
 244 The focusing question asked: How can lay pastors develop church
 245 members for Christian service? Seven key points emerged. Lay
 246 pastors must: 1) Be mission oriented; 2) Quiet fears by counseling
 247 while waiting for God's directions; 3) Be at ease while waiting upon
 248 the Lord and resting in His promises; 4) Exemplify the Gospel
 249 preached; 5) Present sermons that span the gamut of doctrine,
 250 reproof, correction and instruction; 6) Obey a higher calling that
 251 transcends attempts to win people's approval and 7) Treat all people
 252 with dignity. Lay pastors, what leadership and management principles
 253 are you using to accomplish Holy Spirit directed goals with church
 254 members? Because it is of little redeeming value to engage in Bible
 255 study merely for information, subsequent paragraphs follow that make
 256 a practical application of the truths set forth here.

257 **DISCUSSION: WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?**

258 The thoughtless and unskilled lay pastor spends too much time on
 259 motivational speeches. And these are directed mostly to people who
 260 have heard the same messages repeatedly. One would have to assume
 261 that some congregations are either living in the Dark Ages or are
 262 functionally illiterate; thus rendering imperative the need to
 263 lecture. More emphasis on teaching and healing (Matthew 9:35) appear
 264 indicated. Therefore, let us give our lay pastors new directions for
 265 church leadership and management with updated job descriptions
 266 modeled after Ezekiel 34:11-16; Matthew 9:35 & Isaiah 61:1 or Luke
 267 4:18. The lay pastor has public service in the Synagogue (Luke 4:16)
 268 and the street (John 4:5-26) as well as private ministry made up of
 269 counseling (John 5:14 & 8:11), mentoring (Luke 22:32 & John 21:15)
 270 and guiding (Matthew 14:29). Souls are searching for forgiveness of
 271 sin and enduring peace; don't disappoint them! We have much work to
 272 do to equip lay pastors for expanded Christian service. One possible
 273 role, among others, for the ordained, Gospel Minister is membership
 274 and lay leadership development. This function might be carried out
 275 through mentoring, counseling, advising, teaching, reinforcing and
 276 incentivizing those willing to serve the cause of Christ.

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278

279 **CONCLUSIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

280 Solemn and momentous is the time in which we live. "The path of
 281 [people] who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are
 282 to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail
 283 of consulting the great Source of all wisdom-[Jesus Christ].
 284 Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be
 285 enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right
 286 from wrong, good from evil; they will approve that which God
 287 approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong
 288 principles into His cause" (Prophets and Kings, p. 31 in Christian
 289 Leadership, {ChL} 4.1).

290 "Those engaged in the work of God cannot serve His cause acceptably
 291 unless they make the best use... of the religious privileges they
 292 enjoy. We are as trees planted in the garden of the Lord; and He
 293 comes to us seeking the fruit He has a right to expect. [We are
 294 "...called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He
 295 might be glorified" (Isaiah 61:3)]. His eye is upon each of us; He
 296 reads our hearts and understands our lives. This is a solemn
 297 search..." (ChL 4.2). May the recording angel **NOT** describe lay pastors
 298 in these words: "The prophets prophesy falsely... and my people love to
 299 have it so..." (Jeremiah 5:31); "...The prophets prophesy lies in my
 300 name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke
 301 unto them; they prophesy unto you a false vision... [based on] deceit
 302 of their heart" (Jeremiah 14:14); "[The] prophets have seen vain and
 303 foolish things for [you] and they have not discovered... [the]
 304 iniquity... [of God's people]" (Lamentations 2:14) to call upon them to
 305 "...To turn from their wicked ways..." (2 Chronicles 7:14). Therefore,
 306 "TEKEL: [you have been] weighed in the balance and... found wanting"
 307 (Daniel 5:27).

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310 **CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

311

312 Lay pastors, "If any of you lacks wisdom ...ask God who give to all
 313 generously and without reproach and...[you will receive it]" (James 1:5
 314 & Matthew 7:7). A word of caution: "...Do not... ask with wrong motives...
 315 [to] spend what you get on your pleasures" (James 4:3, NIV). "Let
 316 each of [you] to whom are committed sacred trusts inquire [of the
 317 Lord]: "How do I meet the inspecting eye of God? Is my heart
 318 cleansed from its defilement or have [my] temple courts become so
 319 desecrated, so occupied with buyers and sellers that Christ finds no
 320 room [in my mind]?"

321

322 Lay pastors, "[you were] bought with a price; therefore glorify God
 323 in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians
 324 6:20). "[Do not permit] the cares of this world, the deceitfulness
 325 of riches and the lusts of the other things {to invade your mind and}
 326 choke the {Word of God that you become} unfruitful" (Mark 4:19)].
 327 [Effective church leadership requires fruit bearing]. The bustle of
 328 business, if continuous, will dry up spirituality and leave the soul
 329 Christ less" (ChL 4.3); therefore, practice self-denial, bear your
 330 appointed cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24 or Mark 8:34 or Luke
 331 9:23). "Sexual excess will effectually destroy a love for devotional
 332 exercises, will take from the brain the substance needed to nourish
 333 the system, and will most effectively exhaust the vitality" (The
 334 Adventist Home, {AH} 124.4). [Effective church leadership requires
 335 energy]. "...Every [person] that strives for [excellence] is temperate
 336 in all things..." (1 Corinthians 9:25). "Let your moderation be known
 337 unto all...; the Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5).

338
 339 Lay pastors, emulate Ezra and "...Set forward the work of the house of
 340 the Lord" (Ezra 3:8). Be a faithful minister of Christ after the
 341 order of Epaphras and Tychicus (Colossians 1:7 & 4:7). "[Be]... a
 342 faithful and [a] wise servant whom his lord... made ruler over his
 343 household, to give them meat in due season" (Matthew 24:45) [that
 344 your name can be] "...written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation
 345 21:27). Be motivated by the vision of the Psalmist: "Behold, how
 346 good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"
 347 (Psalm 133:1). Inspired and strengthened by this vision, do your
 348 appointed works, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the
 349 bond of peace," (Ephesians 4:3). "[Use any and all the gifts of the
 350 Holy Spirit, whether, apostleship, prophesying, evangelizing,
 351 pastoring or teaching] for perfecting the saints, for the work of
 352 ministry, for edifying the body of Christ till [the church] comes
 353 into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,
 354 unto a perfect [person], unto the measure of the stature of the
 355 fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13) for "Happy is that people

356 that is in such a case; [yes], happy is that people whose God is the
 357 Lord" (Psalm 144:15).

358

359 **Lay pastors, walk in happiness by obeying God.** Scripture says: "If
 360 [you] know [the] things [we have studied], happy are [you] if [you]
 361 do them" (John 13:17), but cursed are you if you perform the Lord's
 362 work deceitfully (Jeremiah 48:10), causing "...The [spiritually] blind
 363 to wander out of the way [of God]" (Deuteronomy 27:18) and "[not]
 364 continue in all things {that} are written in the book of the law to
 365 do them" (Galatians 3:10), which warns and benefits all doers (Psalm
 366 19:7-11). In contrast, "Bless the Lord..., you ministers of His that
 367 do His pleasure" (Psalm 103:21); sing with the psalmist, "My mouth
 368 shall speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless his holy
 369 name forever..." (Psalm 145:21) and as you "...Delight [yourself] in the
 370 Lord, ...[He] will cause [you] to ride upon the high places of the
 371 earth and feed [you] with the heritage of Jacob..." (Isaiah 58:14);
 372 "[To] give [you] the desires of [your] heart" (Psalm 37:4). Lay
 373 pastors, keep faithful to the higher calling and "Cast NOT away... your
 374 confidence, [it has] great recompense of reward" (Hebrews 10:35).
 375 "Be strong... and let NOT your hands be weak for your work shall be
 376 rewarded" (2 Chronicles 15:7). "The Lord [will] recompense [your]
 377 work, [that is, your labor of love], and a full reward [will] be
 378 given [to you] of the Lord, God of Israel, under whose wings [you
 379 have] come to trust" (Ruth 2:12). "...Behold, [Christ] comes quickly
 380 and [His] reward is with [Him] to give every [person] as his [or her]
 381 work [has been]" (Revelation 22:12). Lay pastors, be not
 382 disheartened by prior shortcomings or overwhelmed by the change that
 383 you may be required to make. Instead, cry out to God for knowledge;
 384 let Him hear your voice pleading for understanding (Proverbs 2:3) and
 385 the Lord will give you wisdom, knowledge and understanding for He
 386 keeps them in reserve for the righteous; He is a buckler to them that
 387 walk uprightly and preserves the way of His saints (Proverbs 2:6-8).