

MOVING FROM SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP TO UNLIMITED PARTNERSHIP

Creating a Church Culture that Releases
Marketplace Leaders into Kingdom Work

by Alexis Wilson

Article Summary

In churches across North America, both pastors and people are increasingly interested in how to end the image of the church as “sole proprietorship” - one person, often the pastor, doing ministry while others watch. If everyone could be involved, then the church would more model an “unlimited partnership,” with many obvious benefits, both to the church and to the surrounding community.

Further Reading

[A Collaborative Day for High-Capacity Leaders](#) by
Lloyd Reeb

[Permission Granted: Churches Giving Marketplace
Leaders the Green Light for Kingdom Impact](#) by Andy
Williams and Dennis Welch

[Four Models for Transforming Marketplace Leaders
into Kingdom Leaders](#) by Alexis Wilson

How Church Culture Affects the Role of Marketplace Leaders

“We are in a unique season of time. More than 10,000 Americans a day are turning 50, and it will be that way for the next nine years,” says Wayne Smith, director of Marketplace Success/Kingdom Significance Leadership Communities for Leadership Network. “This is the first generation that has 30 bonus years after age 50, and they are going to need help deciding what to do with those years. Even the world is recognizing how significant the difference is, including how to craft what comes next.” Forward-thinking churches are finding ways to

engage these people, encouraging them to pursue their passions, and thus exponentially increasing Kingdom-significant work.

To pursue such a ministry model, these churches are taking honest inventories of their culture, realizing that some changes must be made in the way leadership thinks and behaves. In order for marketplace leaders to be encouraged that their contributions are welcome,

in order for the concept of marketplace success to kingdom significance to take hold, in order for the church to move from being a sole proprietorship to an unlimited partnership, three cultural influences must be in place. These three influences—or influencers—make the change more probable.

“The concept must have a sponsor, an agent and an advocate,” Wayne says. “In most churches, the sponsor of the change is the senior pastor, who has to believe in and give permission for marketplace leaders to take the lead in ministry.”

The agent of change is the person in the church who drives the concept. The role can be filled by a release pastor, by members of the church staff, or even a lay leader. Whoever that person is, he or she must be giving dedicated, concentrated and deliberate time toward establishing and maintaining a model for marketplace leadership.

The third member of the partnership is the advocate of change. “This is a person within the body who has

influence and respect, and who with an endorsement will help vault the change forward,” Wayne says. “For all three of these people, there are some truths: People who are willing to process through change have a willingness to be positive, a willingness to be flexible and they are organized.”

With growing opportunities and more people becoming available for the work, the church’s opportunities to respond are immediate. “People are hardwired to find significance in life, or to live a significant life,” Wayne says. “This generation will engage in life, with or without us.”

The Senior Pastor Ideal

The senior pastor plays a crucial role as sponsor of the transition from sole proprietor to unlimited partnership. Churches that have adopted the model and begun making these changes have identified some key qualities of their leadership.

“Our senior pastor is wired as permission-giving, but I think his greatest character trait, and the one that makes this change possible, is his humility,” says Dave Geenens, a lay leader at **Indian Creek Community Church**, in Olathe, KS (www.indiancreek.org) who is president of AVP Nationwide Hospitality Services, a provider of hospitality-based services for the healthcare industry, and founder of Inhance Leadership, a premier executive consulting and leadership coaching company. “It’s not just spiritual humility—it’s also practical in terms of creating opportunities. It’s knowing not only that he doesn’t have all the answers, but also believing that other people can and do, and giving those people an opportunity to put their ideas forward and get engaged in ministry.”

“He is unconsciously humble, and just as important, he is mission-oriented. The allocation of resources in our church says



TOM BASSFORD



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so, too. He's not about populating the pews, but is about the people who are not there on Sunday and what we can do for them Monday through Saturday," says Indian Creek's Tom Bassford, who is director of Significant Matters, a not-for-profit ministry that focuses on networking those who want

to help with those who want help and the primary vehicle that Indian Creek uses to deploy marketplace leaders into missional service. "Being mission-oriented, or missional, makes sole proprietorship impossible. It wouldn't work. No one person can operate an entire mission."

Both Dave and Tom agree that the leadership of Indian Creek is also comfortable with a certain amount of risk. "In terms of stewarding resources, you absolutely have to steward risk," Dave says. "We have had to step out of our own skin. It's like a new relationship—you have to have confidence, faith, trust and humility. We have not succeeded at some things, but that hasn't slowed us down."

The senior pastor must also be willing to cede the platform and allow other people's stories to take center stage. "To accelerate the mission of a church, to really live out that you are missional, you have to be more strategic in telling the stories and you have to let the people in the trenches tell the stories. You also have to be more frequent in the story telling. That's how you create a greater groundswell," Tom says.

Before marketplace leaders will engage with a church, many must be convinced that the church understands the world in which they live. "Our senior pastor is contemporary and progressive, and people need to hear culturally relevant messages. That's what he delivers. In fact, back in the '90s he did a sermon titled, "What Would Howard Stern Say?" He shows people that he is in touch with where they live, which makes his message more relevant," says Larry Ray, a lay leader at **RiverTree Christian Church** in Massillon, OH (www.rivertreechristian.com). "The reality is—he doesn't change the *message*, but he does change the way it's *delivered*."

Church leaders with marketplace experience often make this connection to the people within their church. "There is an entrepreneurial streak in our leadership. Many have been in industry, so they understand the people in the congregation. The church is permission-giving, and our leadership believes that if God is leading someone into an area of their passion, then we should encourage them," says Tim Harvard, an attorney who serves as an elder at **Christ Chapel Bible Church** in Fort Worth, TX (www.cbcfamily.org).

Some churches have the culture of an unlimited partnership in their DNA, but that doesn't mean attention isn't given to the concept. **Heartland Community Church** in Rockford, IL (www.hearthland.cc) was founded by marketplace leaders, and they readily identify characteristics of their leadership that make the concept successful. What makes the model work is the humility of the pastoral staff, which allows them to set aside traditional pastors' roles and authority. "What we focus on is people serving out of their giftedness regardless of their education, title or position," says Gordy Smith, Heartland's director of adult ministries. "It takes humility to recognize others' gifts. Our lead pastor is humble and empowers others to do what traditionally has been the senior pastor's role."



The pastors empower the Rapid Response Team to serve at Heartland Community

That kind of loose grip on power is modeled from the top at **Pantano Christian Church** in Tucson, AZ (www.pantanochristian.org). "We are a church that gives everything away," says the church's outreach pastor, Dave White. "Our senior pastor modeled that by giving away authority and responsibility, and it trickled down to every level. As a result, our ministry has grown much faster because everyone has a role."

Finding the Leader Who Is Ready to Be a Partner

When the change from sole proprietorship to unlimited partnership begins to take hold, opportunities for ministry can increase considerably. “Churches are coming to realize that leverage is in the leaders,” says Bob Buford, chairman of the board of The Buford Foundation/Leadership Network. “They release latent energy to become active energy.”

Identifying the most likely inclined partners can present a challenge, and church leaders are utilizing many methods for finding these individuals. “There are people seeking significance, and finding them has to be done one on one. You have to be conscious of it in your sphere of influence. It’s all about personal contact,” says Dave Geenens. “It’s easier to sense people who are seeking significance. You can hear it in conversation and see it in what they are doing—or not doing—in their lives. Every person has to be approached differently. You have to give a man something that plugs in to who he is, but that takes time to find, and that only happens through personal contact.”

Heartland Community Church creates opportunities for watching people in leadership and seeing how they function on and with a team. “Finding these people comes from knowing them, being involved in their lives and then watching them in action,” says Gordy Smith. “We don’t have ‘committees’. They tend to imply longevity and power. Instead, we form task forces and assign people tasks, and then we get to see people exercise their gifts.”

Curriculum has guided a few churches through the process of identifying potential partners. “We have done a Kingdom Builders class so that we can mentor people through the process of finding their gifts and passions,” says Dave Piper, director of Halftime Ministries at Pantano Christian Church in Tucson, AZ (www.pantanochristian.org). “As a result, about 75 percent of the people are actively engaged in an area they didn’t know existed

before the Kingdom Builders Life Group. There is a Peru Life Group, which is focused on church planting and community building in a city in Peru. The man who formed this group had never done anything in ministry, but God took hold of him through Kingdom Builders. The class helps them to see who they are and how they are wired so that they can see what they are passionate about and how to move there.”



RIVERTREE RIDERS COMMUNITY GROUP

“We’ve enjoyed the Success to Significance classes, and we’re moving it to younger groups so that we don’t have to ‘convert them,’ but we have them prepped for later in life,” says Cliff Price, minister of pastoral care at RiverTree Christian Church. “We are constantly on the lookout for people who have the mindset for ministry, and identifying them is part of every staff person’s job description.”

Some church bodies are densely populated with potential partners simply because of the church’s culture. “Ours is a very contemporary church, so when you think about the demographic of the people who are drawn to this kind of church, they are the kind of people who are part of the community and are actively involved in its life,” says RiverTree’s Larry Ray. “Our Thrive groups, which compliment our community or small groups, include very culturally relevant opportunities, such as the RiverTree Riders, which includes 250 motorcycle riders. These are people who are finding creative ways to minister, and we need to support them.” Sometimes finding the right partner means defining who that partner is *not*, which to some might seem exclusive, but in many ways simply gives direction—it truly isn’t possible to be all things to all people at all times. “We wrestled with the idea of, ‘Who is the customer?’ Asking that question gives you a laser focus,” says Dick Gygi, a Nashville businessman

who is the former president of PlusMark Corporation, the worldwide market leader in Christmas gift wrap. Dick has been instrumental in mobilizing Halftime ministries at **Fellowship Bible Church** Nashville in Brentwood, TN (www.fellowshipnashville.org). “Our church has a culture that is externally focused, so our focus is to find people who have a margin of time and money to dedicate to creating new ministry opportunities. There are many people with passions, but not all of them have the kind of margin that is needed to create new possibilities.”

YOU FIND THE BEST EXPERTS, AND YOU EMBRACE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND PARTNER WITH THEM.

“The church is for everyone, but this idea of marketplace leadership is a laser approach to developing ministry, and realistically, not everyone is ready for that,” Dave White says.

“Defining a target helps you stay focused and set realistic goals. You have to take small steps, celebrate every move forward, and have a finish line.”

At Indian Creek, as the church has turned its focus to being missional, the leadership has struggled to identify what “subset” of people will most effectively be involved. “We have people at all stages of life. As a church leadership, we have to come alongside people who are missional on their own,” says Tom Bassford. “We have to focus on people whose responsibilities have decreased and whose margin has increased. They have less responsibility at home and work, and they have greater margin of time and treasure. Our church has a lot of traditional opportunities for most, but you can’t program for the marketplace leader, and you just can’t reach the two groups the same way.”

The Resulting Relationship between Church and Marketplace Leadership

As pastors release ministry opportunities to marketplace leaders, they often find kindred spirits. “Entrepreneurs have these same obstacles in the marketplace. They got to where they are because of what they could do. But at some point they have to

realize that in order to transition to an enterprise, they must share ownership of efforts. They have faced the same challenges their pastor is now facing,” says Indian Creek’s Dave Geenens. “This concept of marketplace leaders lines up with what’s happening throughout the United States. You hear all the time about outsourcing. Companies are outsourcing because they realize that’s the best way to get the work done. You find the best experts, and you embrace their knowledge and skills and partner with them. That really works for any entity, and it can certainly work for the church.”

In the midst of providing a blank canvas for these leaders to color on, churches can’t be afraid of giving some direction. “High-caliber marketplace people still need to be led. Most people don’t have a defined vision. We have to create opportunities that call leadership and talent out of people. Then we’re able to help them find opportunities. Too often passions become para-church ministries. We want people to see the church as an effective agent of change and a place where they can use their gifts,” says Heartland’s Gordy Smith.

“We bring people together under a number of subject matters—they are gathered by interests and passions,” says Larry Ray. “We want them to identify their passions and push in those directions, but there is wisdom in putting some framework around it.”

Marketplace leaders also have to be validated in their efforts, and not just those that are blatantly ministerial. As a marketplace person, I had a false sense that what I do doesn’t matter, and that drove me out the door of my church,” says Mark Bankord, chairman and directional leader at Heartland. “Then a pastor said to me, ‘Your work matters to God,’ and he meant not just how I did it, but that I do it at all. What I do, how I do it in the marketplace is not a function of the B Team. That freed me up in ways that are hard to describe.”

WE WANT PEOPLE TO SEE THE CHURCH AS AN EFFECTIVE AGENT OF CHANGE AND A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN USE THEIR GIFTS.

How Change Happens, and How It Doesn't

Transitioning from sole proprietorship to unlimited partnership requires focus, attention and deliberate action. Sometimes it requires changing course and accepting limitations. Without exception, it requires

concentrating on God's calling, both for the body and for the individuals involved.

IT'S OUR JOB TO PUT WORDS AND ACTION TO WHAT'S BURNING IN PEOPLES'S HEARTS. WE HELP BRING THE INVISIBLE TO VISIBLE.

"You don't find out what God's will is by staying on the mountain—you have to be out and see where God is moving. You have to be looking for

what God is doing in the hearts of the people he has called to himself, and identify with their resonance and rhythm," says Dave White, outreach pastor at Pantano Christian Church. "It's our job to put words and action to what's burning in people's hearts. We help bring the invisible to visible." He also says that you have to believe that God is at work in your people so that when you articulate a vision, it resonates with them.

Getting bogged down in administration can stifle change, which can discourage entrepreneurial spirits. Pantano found a way around some of these issues by actively deploying marketplace leadership. "We formed a Community Empowerment Team. Empowerment is a big word for us, and this team has been completely reshaped over the last four years. The team is made up completely of marketplace people. They have such a practical view of ministry. I've been frustrated by theoretical people—they see concepts but also roadblocks. With the marketplace people, there is no separation in the way they think," Dave White says.

Dave Geenens says that many new efforts begin by looking for a board of directors—people who talk about the work to be done, how to staff for it and how to fund it—when in fact what is needed is an executive team. "You need people who are going to do the work, share the load and move the effort forward," he says. You also have to be willing to try new things. "We started a Christian music hall and coffee house," he says. "It was funded by about 150 people from three churches. It didn't last, but we kept taking risks, though not in a silly sort of way.

You have to keep taking the risks because you only get so much critical mass working incrementally."

Few things will vault efforts forward faster than story telling.

"Saddleback did a study on what motivates people to action, and they found that it wasn't Rick Warren telling a story," says Dave White. "It was when someone like them, with the same fears and imperfections and reluctance, moves to excitement and success, and then shares his journey—that's what makes people move. You go with the goers, then you tell the story, so that people don't want to be left out the next time. Storytelling is the biggest culture changer there is. Culture change doesn't happen with a concept—it happens with a story, and then another story, and then another. We have to remember that we were given the ultimate example of this—the Bible is 75 percent stories."

"Your pastor has to understand this—we have 2,000 years of stories in the Bible. That's how God captured us. Sometimes the stories of what's happening in our congregation are more important than teaching," says RiverTree's Cliff Price.

"As we've committed to telling the stories, people then are mining for great stories," Dave White says. "All of this happens in the weekend services, and we give it significant time—one weekend, it might be 15 minutes out of the 30-minute teaching time, and sometimes it takes up all of the teaching time. It's great to be a church where what the people do preach our sermons."

"Stories tell more than sermons," says Pantano elder David Drummond.

"Stories bring an idea down to a level where people can see and say, 'I can do that!'"

Dave White says that capturing and presenting the stories well is crucial, and the church has chosen

CULTURE CHANGE DOESN'T HAPPEN WITH A CONCEPT - IT HAPPENS WITH A STORY.



Dave Geenens and Tom Bassford share a story.

STORIES BRING AN IDEA DOWN TO A LEVEL WHERE PEOPLE CAN SEE AND SAY, "I CAN DO THAT!"

to invest in equipment and resources to tell the stories in video and in live testimonies. While it is an initial investment, he says, telling the stories and doing so effectively brings in new resources.

Forward motion helps steward the change, and it's necessary even in churches that are inherently open to the concept of unlimited partnership. "Heartland was founded on the concept of marketplace leadership, so our people get it. When we started, however, some people checked out, but more people checked in. We've had to lead through change, even when it was good, accepted change."

The churches cited in this report are not exempt from obstacles that prevent their marketplace leaders from being released into kingdom work. The more commonly identified obstacles are:

- Clarifying the mission and communicating it well
- Busy people make time for something ... how do we make it this?
- Involving people from other churches
- Deploying latent time, talent and treasures
- Defining potential partners
- Catching people early in their lives
- Identifying opportunities
- Communicating the message that this is not about helping the church, but it's about serving others and helping each member realize what they were created to do.

Case Study: How Marketplace Leaders are Being Exposed, Engaged and iEntangledi

God planted a vision for marketplace leadership in Dick Gygi many years ago, and the Lord then took him on a purposeful journey toward his current work in Nashville. While the journey began many years ago, a convergence began when Dick attended a Halftime Summit in October 2005.

"I sensed that God was calling me to create enterprises that would fund ministry, and I also believed he was saying that I needed to find all the successful people I could to follow my example. I didn't know what it would look like—I just knew that it would be something that would be developed in

the marketplace to fund ministry. I had this deep passion to create enterprises that would fund kingdom work. It was linked to the idea of motivating others, and I believed then as I do now that the 'others' are in the church, but I think many of them need help seeing the connection between their work and the kingdom."

Fellowship Bible Church Nashville hosted a Halftime Summit in April 2006, and the leadership invited marketplace leaders to attend, hoping to spark passions and even ideas from the group. Although some great ideas emerged, there was no mechanism for moving them forward. In an attempt to find a way to incubate some of them, the church held a six-week class, but they realized that six weeks didn't begin to meet the need. "These guys didn't want to quit—in fact, they wanted more," Dick says. "We had some tools to challenge our thinking, but we needed an ongoing process to get ideas and people into action. If we kept doing these events and short-term classes, people might engage for the day, but they would go back to work and get busy. God was stirring in them, but we were catching and keeping them.

"I thought about what Bob Buford says—that long-term change only occurs over time in the community. I think that's true. If we were going to cause people to change, we had to find a way to walk together toward and through that change. We had to create a mechanism to walk deeper through the journey and engage them for a long period of time."

Dick had extensive experience with engaging company leaders, including more than 15 years with Leadership Roundtables, which are small groups of businesspeople, usually from family owned companies that don't have boards or think tanks. They met once a month to be each other's think tank. He had also been involved for more than 10 years with The Executive Committee, an international organization of chief executive officers, all from privately held companies.

Combining these ideas, he decided to charter Resource Leadership Roundtables in Nashville. The format would be that the group would meet in small group once a month with high-capacity executive talent to hold each other accountable, connect each other to resources and challenge each other to be better stewards.

It seemed to him that a similar approach within the church and utilizing tools from the Halftime model could be effective. With the help of the church's leadership, Dick identified some community leaders who were invited to join the Locker Room, a gathering of high-capacity marketplace leaders who are in the "halftime" of their lives. Each has margins of time and money, and all desire to be a catalyst for change in the lives of their peers. Eight men, including Dick, made a one-year commitment to the group, with Greg Murtha and Derek Bell as facilitators. (Greg is chief connecting officer for Halftime team. Derek Bell is the founder and president of Mosaic Trust, a literary agency and consulting firm that works with social sector organizations.)

"We are a small group made up of people with big ideas, who are in transition, but who aren't completely sure how to get from success to significance. Some of us have figured it out, some of us are in limbo, some are really good business people who could bring capital planning, strategic thinking and such to the table, but for all of us, God is stirring in our hearts."

Solid definition and long-term commitment were paramount to the group's success, Dick says. "We need to start up enterprises that put a stake in the ground. I had observed other groups that have champions for ideas, but there was no permanent, sustainable structure in the ground. Sustainability is the underpinning. The deliverable for us, walking together for 12 months, would be to create one or more enterprises, or found a self-sustaining nonprofit. Then if one of us goes away, the enterprise is still there. Ten years from now, it will still be engaging people in the work."

Another influence was at work in Dick's heart. At a 2006 Halftime event in Seattle, Dick met John Sage, founder of Pura Vida Coffee, a company that was funding many ministries. "John has such a passion for social enterprise. He was in it for seven years, and I really wanted to talk to him, ask him hard questions, and talk about the obstacles, like raising capital." {John Sage}

Meeting with John spawned the idea of bringing men like him to Nashville every month. "Hearing from people who were successfully doing what we want to do would inspire members of the Locker Room

and give them the courage to do what they are thinking about because someone else has already been down the road. So monthly, we bring a guest to the Locker Room to share an amazing story, and then we challenge Locker Room members to complete their own story of what God is challenging them to do."

Where to meet and how to ground the group presented challenges. Though Fellowship was integral to the concept, the Locker Room didn't need to "belong" to any one church, Dick says. "If you put a church name on it, it limits the interest of marketplace leaders in other churches, and it scares other pastors away." They secured a room in the corporate offices of Fitness Systems, an exercise equipment distributor. They have a training room on the second room of their building that has a great ambience—it's a locker room setting—but it doesn't belong to the group. A permanent home is forthcoming. "We need a place where people who have an idea can come meet with us. Using our vision and experience, we'll be a place they can come meet to find out if an idea is feasible. We need a war room where we can develop strategies, put up our homework and be able to study it."

Identifying who needed to be in the group happened organically, but not easily, Dick says. "We spent the summer of 2006 marketing the idea. We had a series of dinners at my home, working from a pretty good network of businessmen in our church, many of whom had gone through the Halftime Summit. We also had a few names on the list who were people in town we knew were in transition. We thought it would be easy to recruit, but it wasn't. These guys are already so busy, and they didn't want to take on anything else. They are engaged on boards, are often overcommitted, and they are already involved in ministry work. Many just didn't have the margin of time. We really had trouble finding the people who had enough margin of time and money, and who said God was stirring something inside of them.

"I asked one guy what he was passionate about, and he couldn't answer. That really bothered him. He realized that he had given to his business for so long that he didn't have anything else. When he sold his business, he didn't have anything. He was really depressed. I asked him to go to Africa and



JOHN SAGE

experience some third-world relief experience. He came back energized. His two-year plan includes moving his family to Malawi, although he's a little afraid to tell his wife."

Ultimately, the Lord provided men from six different churches, creating the kind of diversity Dick, Greg and Derek had prayed for. "That is a gift from the Lord. I couldn't have organized it that way. We asked for a one-year commitment, and they had to pay \$500 a month—we wanted them to have skin in the game. We have ended up with 10 people who have time and margin, and we have begun the journey to stirring our passions."

Locker Room meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month. The Tuesday gatherings are for Locker Room members only, but the night before, there is an informal gathering for members and their wives or even something open to the community. The group established a Web site, www.TNLockerRoom.org, to have a place to publish events, tell their stories and stimulate people to be engaged with them.

"To impact long-term change, we have to walk together and be accountable in community. If we can see one or two enterprises to come out of this, we'll celebrate, and they will be a catalyst for something more."

We're also prepping for the next generation. We realize there are people in business who are not fulfilled but who are not ready for the Locker Room. We often include these people in events that supplement the Locker Room gatherings. We know there are a large number of people who just don't have the margin for Locker Room but their motors are turning. We have a database of their names and we continue to communicate with them. If we are successful with 10 people, they will engage the people who are in the first half of their lives because those people need and want to be mentored."

Though the Locker Room isn't "owned" by a specific congregation, Dick says the church at large is absolutely the key to its success. "The church is where these people are hanging out, but they don't get the connection. If we work this through the local churches, we can inspire men to go back and make a difference. The churches we've engaged are entrepreneurial and have lots of potential.

Where a Changed Culture Can Lead

Churches that have transitioned to unlimited partnership are seeing their ministry grow both deep and wide. Marketplace leadership is attracting more marketplace leadership, and as a result, communities are experiencing greater kingdom impact.

"We have many projects, and we've created many partnerships, which are sustainable ministries that have grown out of projects," says Indian Creek's Tom Bassford. This spring, church members took part in, a one-day building project that resulted in the construction of three houses in the parking lot of the church. "Two went to the hurricane-affected Gulf region, and the third went to the Kansas City area to be used for a single mom needing transitional housing. Because of the project, a local bank contacted us about redoing a house in foreclosure, and it then went to the transitional housing program."

The idea for Help Build Hope came from two men who participated in a church collaborative day. Like everyone else, they had received a personal invitation to attend the day-long event. Though they generated the idea and have been instrumental in keeping it in play long-term, church leadership walked each step of the journey with them. "You



People of all ages came to participate in Indian Creek's Help Build Hope collaborative day.

have to understand that the opposite of control is not abdication," Tom says. "Too often the church gives blessing but not help. Lay leaders give hope to other lay leaders, but the church leadership still has to stay engaged and say to high-capacity leaders, 'How can we help you?' Instead of giving them policies and

procedures, you have to stay involved and tuned in. It takes rethinking the staff person's role—they are the empowerer of volunteers, not just a person there to execute church functions. We stayed engaged with these men, and a great sustainable ministry has resulted."

As often happens with ministry, those who are serving receive blessings equal to those being served. Such a situation happened for a member of Pantano Christian Church. "There is an orthopedic surgeon who has been through Halftime. He really believes that God led him to be a surgeon, and he is

been a blessing to our people, as well. We've seen changed lives."

A lay-led ministry growing at RiverTree Christian Church is called Born in Our Hearts. "The program began about five years ago when several couples who were involved in foreign adoptions met to share their stories and pray together. When one of the couples brought their child home, the other members of the group went to the airport to welcome them. They also prepared meals for the new parents," Cliff Price says.

The group has grown to include other annual gatherings, though the airport runs are still done. Born in Our Hearts is not just for RiverTree members (though most do attend the church). A monthly newsletter goes out to everyone involved involved provides updates, prayer requests, etc. "The church has 50 to 60 children who have been adopted from 13 countries around the world, and we have the flags of those countries on flagpoles outside of our church," Cliff says. "People drive by and think we're the United Nations or something. It's certainly a conversation piece and a way to talk about the work that our people are passionate about."

Tapping into the passions of its people became a focus as Heartland Community Church began finishing out its new location. "As we were building the church, there was a group of plumbers that worked after hours and on weekends to install the plumbing in the building," says Gordy Smith. "The interesting thing is the guy who organized this was the plumber who had our contract. He was actually taking money out of his own pocket."

Keeping such talented people on call seemed to be prudent. "We always have people who say, 'If you



HELP BUILD HOPE CHURCH COLLABORATIVE DAY

not prepared to give it up or even slow down," says Dave Piper, the church's director of Halftime Ministries. "For two to three years, he's been torn. It came to a head about a year ago on a house-building trip to Mexico. He really thought he was supposed to help a pastor in a poor neighborhood. The pastor and his wife wanted to set up a medical clinic—they needed simple drugs for simple problems. The doctor sat down with them and an interpreter. After a two-hour discussion, he decided he wanted to figure out how to make it happen."

Within two months, the land was donated and the clinic built, and within four months the interior was finished. He got exam tables, cabinets, everything needed to furnish the space. "He also decided they needed a way to have sustainable funds, so he set up a 501(c)3 and got the designation within four months, which is just unheard of. He is now president of Clinics Without Borders," Dave says. "A year later, it is fully funded and looking to replicate itself in other areas. We've watched the increase in God pouring his spirit into people. It's been an incredible blessing to the people in Mexico, but it's



Dr. Berghausen and his wife Consie, Dave and Pattie Piper, and Julio and Delia Meza, in front of Clinic (Clinica Nova) in Mexico

ever need anything, please call me.’ As a result, we formed SWAT Teams, 150 people, 10 people per team. When there is a need in our community, we call on them. One phone call, and the need is taken care of. It’s exciting to watch members of the body serve other members.”

Christ Chapel Bible Church in Fort Worth recently did the study from Willow Creek, “Just Walk Across the Room,” in all its small groups. “It was an exercise in teaching all of us as lay pastors to be intentional about sharing our faith with the people around us,” says Tim Harvard. “Part of the study was outreach to the community. There was a team that put together many different opportunities, from working at area schools painting teachers’ lounges and landscaping to serving at area ministries. It was a way for us to move our thinking into how we empower people,

and a way to get them thinking about how they can serve. It was another step in teaching people how to be the hands and feet of Christ.”

Sometimes we don’t have to build things—we just have to take part in them, says Pantano’s Dave White. “When we do that, we really give people an interesting view on God. Our Motorcycle Life Group took part in Make a Difference Day (created

by USA WEEKEND Magazine in partnership with Points of Light Foundation). People couldn’t believe we were from a church. So many times we heard, ‘I didn’t realize church could be like this ... I didn’t know *God* could be like this.’”

Staying focused on the potential result has guided many of these churches through the change and given them the courage and energy to overcome any obstacles. “Our church started with a call, not a strategy, and a bunch of courageous people,” says Heartland’s Mark Bankord. “We had to accept the blessing of a blank sheet of paper. We know that the enemy will attack us through stress, strife and misalignment of our spiritual gifts. By working through our giftedness, and not worrying about who

is from the marketplace and who is seminary-trained, we are able to grow as a body.”

“My job is to remove roadblocks so people can use the authority they have to do the job they need to get done. They in turn give it away,” says Pantano’s Dave White. “The idea is that the kingdom is about giving away. You just have to choose a system that empowers people to build. Our concept is: Look Up. Grow Up. Move Out. These are also our core values. When people are allowed to succeed, ministry extends to every activity in a person’s life and is not something that the church owns. In other words, you don’t have to be involved in ‘church approved/church generated’ activities in order to be doing ministry, and the ideas for ministry can come from anyone, anywhere.”

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from NIV translation.