

# HIGH-CAPACITY LEADERS FOR THE LONG HAUL

How to Develop a Sustainable Ministry for Building and Releasing Marketplace Leaders

*by Andy Williams*

## **Article Summary**

A group of American churches are innovating around the challenge of identifying, equipping and releasing marketplace leaders for **significant** ministry assignments—both inside and outside the church. In this paper you will explore **essential elements** for achieving a world-changing goal: Get marketplace leaders in the ministry game, and keep weaving values, people and systems together to ensure long-term viability.

## **Further Reading**

[Moving From Sole Proprietorship to Unlimited Partnership: Creating a Church Culture that Releases Marketplace Leaders into Kingdom Work](#)

By Alexis Wilson

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

By Alexis Wilson

[Permission Granted: Churches Giving Marketplace Leaders the Green Light for Kingdom Impact](#)

By Andy Williams and Dennis Welch

Sean Clouse knew someone from his church would call.

As part of the Land and Buildings division of a national corporation, Sean was an expert in commercial real estate and construction. Since his church at the time was in the middle of a building campaign, it would only make sense that someone there would solicit his advice along the way.

The call never came.

“I was in that church 20 years and no one asked my opinion even once about our building programs,” says Sean, now a member of **Indian Creek Community Church** in Olathe, KS (<http://www.indiancreek.org>). “As marketplace leaders who knew the business side, my colleagues and I could see the money that was being wasted and the flaws in the project. It was frustrating to watch.”

Marketplace leaders in thousands of churches nationwide could echo Sean’s sentiment. These spiritually gifted and well-trained leaders desire to do something for God’s kingdom and they want a significant role in the ministry game. Most aren’t looking to quit their jobs and join the church staff. But they don’t want to merely sit on the sidelines as spectators or take on menial tasks, while the “ministry professionals” tirelessly tackle more leadership challenges than they can handle. “We certainly don’t want to take anything over,” says Sean, who is part of a team helping Indian Creek’s leadership learn to identify



A few innovative American churches are finding ways to tap into the many spiritually gifted and well trained market place leaders in their midst.

marketplace leaders and tap into their wealth of expertise and energy. “We just want to see our churches do something bigger and better for God and we have some fresh views on how to move the church forward.”

Most church leaders would gladly enlist hundreds of people like Sean—if they only knew how to engage leaders like him at the deepest level and unleash them to become peak performers. In addition, these churches don’t want to go through that process with only a one-shot benefit. Most church staff members realize the eternal impact that would be released on their church and community if they could *continually identify* their church’s most gifted and motivated marketplace leaders, *equip them* in short order with the tools needed for ministry success and *turn them loose* to create and lead life-changing projects and programs. What they’re not sure about is how to do it—and keep doing it—over the long haul.

A small but growing number of innovative American churches are responding to the challenge of identifying, equipping and releasing marketplace leaders for *significant* ministry assignments—both inside and outside the walls of the church. Those churches are discovering that there are some essential elements for building a long-term, sustainable ministry and culture that will tap into the ready-to-lead latent energy residing in today’s churches. These church leaders have much wisdom to offer for congregations who are on the front end or in the thinking stages of this vital assignment: How do churches continually build and release some of the most high-capacity leaders in the church—whose vast gifts, skill sets, hearts and minds are lying dormant in a world of need and opportunity?

A variety of models are emerging with one common goal and theme: get marketplace leaders in the game, and keep weaving values, people and systems together to ensure long-term viability. This paper will explore some of those models in light of essential elements and must-have systems for building, growing and sustaining such a ministry. Bill Wellons of **Fellowship Associates** in Little Rock, AR (<http://www.fellowshipassociates.com>), a mobilizer of marketplace leaders puts it this way:

“Our best metrics as churches are not how many people are coming on Sunday, or how many small group leaders we have, or the percentage of people in small groups, or budget or staff numbers. It’s not even how many people we’ve equipped. Our best metric has to be, how many people are being used by God to do something for Him?”

### Essential ELEMENTS of Sustainability A Catch-and-Release Culture

Dave Piper believes he is fortunate to be part of a “releasing” church.

Dave was a success in business and a committed member of **Pantano Christian Church** in Tucson, AZ (<http://www.pantanochristian.org>), when God began stirring him to do something with more eternal return on investment. He knew he wasn’t alone. “In a church of a few thousand people, I knew there had to be hundreds who were going through the same experience and who wanted to do something significant for God,” Dave says. “Especially guys like me who have been plugging away in business. At some point they wonder if that is all there is to life.”



DAVE PIPER

Fortunately for Dave and other marketplace leaders at Pantano, the church was already established as an outward-focused, mission-driven congregation. But it had another building block its leaders believe is vital to the process—and rare in most churches. While most church staffs identify projects or programs they want to accomplish and then recruit volunteers to those initiatives, Pantano’s leaders are developing a unique “free enterprise” culture in which strong marketplace leaders are reached for Christ and identified—but then they are quickly released to do what God is calling *them* to do. Pantano’s leaders realize this is turning the norm upside-down, but they wouldn’t have it any other way. “It’s odd to me that the church, the biggest promoter of freedom in the world, often runs ministry like a Communist state and wants to control everything,” says Pantano associate pastor Dave White, himself a former marketplace leader. “As a church staff, it’s so easy to revert into the mode of thinking church is about us and what we

want to do, and not about the people in our church and what God is calling them to do. In most churches, pastoral ideas are the center of activity and everything revolves around that. We create hoops, guidelines and centrality that kills entrepreneurship instead of fueling it.”

Churches that are leading the way in mobilizing gifted marketplace leaders are creating a new, paradigm-shattering “release culture” that doesn’t try to hold the gifts and passions of marketplace leaders within existing ministry opportunities—or within the walls of the church. Fellowship Associates, for instance, is organizing everything it does around three focal points: Reach-Build-Release. “All three represent the concerns of God, and most churches have centered on the first two for years,” says Bill Wellons. “But our message is very simple for people: ‘Come to church... and get a job.’ Our Release ministry is all about coming alongside people to help them discover their God-given design and find their best-fit serving role inside or outside the church.” These pioneering congregations are forging a new way of doing ministry that they believe fleshes out Paul’s admonition to church leaders in a dynamic way:

*“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12, NLT)*

“We want to move from the *staff* being doers of the ministry to helping our *people* become the doers of the ministry,” says Pantano’s Dave White. “A church leader’s job is to build up people, and cut them loose to do the work. We want everyone thinking that way.”

IT’S ODD TO ME  
THAT THE CHURCH,  
THE BIGGEST  
PROMOTER OF  
FREEDOM IN THE  
WORLD, OFTEN  
RUNS MINISTRY LIKE  
A COMMUNIST  
STATE AND WANTS  
TO CONTROL  
EVERYTHING.



Run for Their Lives," a 5-kilometer race in Little Rock, AR to benefit inner-city children.

After completing Pantano's streamlined Kingdom Builders small group, a military leader in the church who was facing retirement determined God was calling him to be a teacher. So he got another degree and moved into a public school system that is starved for authentic, spiritual leadership. At Fellowship Little Rock, an oncologist and his wife began organizing the "Run for Their Lives," a 5-kilometer race to benefit inner-city children. In 2007, the run netted \$700,000 and drew 2,000 runners. In total, the couple has raised \$1.25 million dollars through the run, funded 50 scholarships and sent 1,100 inner-city kids to a Christian summer camp. "Almost none of these things have Fellowship Church's name on them," Bill says. "But that's not important. What pastor anywhere doesn't want that kind of thing to happen?"

Leaders in this mode of catching and quickly releasing marketplace leaders aren't naïve to the realities. They realize this approach represents a seismic shift in the way most churches operate—a shift that is going to require heart change at the very top of the leadership structure, buy-in throughout and likely even structural staff changes. "This is a shift from a top-down to a servant-leadership mentality," Bill explains. "This is often a cultural and structural issue." As Bill and others lead seminars around the country to help church staff and marketplace leaders maneuver this cultural shift, he finds that this approach is striking a chord. "It's not unusual for us to be in the middle of describing a culture where marketplace leaders are released for significant works of ministry, and one of the marketplace people will stand up and say to their

church leaders, 'Do you hear what these guys are saying? This is what we want,'" Bill says. "We realize it will be a scary shift in most churches. But releasing marketplace leaders is our calling. We really don't have a choice."

### Buy-in—And More—From the Top

Pete Chambers thinks he may have the model senior pastor when it comes to trusting marketplace leaders with significant, often entrepreneurial, ministry. A business owner and member of **Christ Chapel Bible Church** in Fort Worth, TX (<http://www.christchapelbc.org>), Pete was tapped by senior pastor Dr. Ted Kitchens to lead Christ Chapel into uncharted waters. Ted wanted Pete to mobilize some of the church's most gifted members for ministries that he and his staff will freely bless, but may never get their hands on. "We were beginning to determine that a lot of men like Pete weren't challenged by the church, and we needed to take another step," Ted says. "It's scary for some pastors to turn significant ministry over to these very gifted, entrepreneurial people. But we decided we didn't want to be afraid to let go. If we let go, we can see some remarkable things happen." Innovative church leaders who are releasing ministry to marketplace leaders can understand the trepidation their peers may experience. "Some pastors are very threatened by this and need to see it as, 'the people in my church work for me,'" says Tom Bassford, for 30 years a pastor and now the director of Significant Matters, a non-profit group that partners with Kansas City-area churches to serve in the community. "This is new to most pastors because you are tampering with their identity and how they are known. Some are not able to manage it well, and think 'I can't get my job done with volunteers.' But some are starting to realize they are here to serve those in their church who are moving out in ministry. We want the church to own the church."



TOM BASSFORD

Christ Chapel launched its mobilization focus with a Success to Significance (S2S) Summit, and challenged the market place leaders in the church to discover and use their gifts in different levels of service. They also gave Pete the green light to seek out other business leaders who were looking

for something more than current ministry opportunities might offer. While continuing to run his thriving business, Pete keeps his eyes and ears open for marketplace leaders who have an hour to give, all the way to a few “big fish” who could “impact an entire city.” Along with identifying those marketplace leaders, Pete also is using his own story to help them view their “charity work” differently. “Most motivated marketplace people have enough charity work going on, but it’s important to help them think about it differently,” Pete says. “I had a guy tell me, ‘I’m on eight different boards, but most of them mean nothing in the big picture. I would love to be on two boards that really make an impact in the kingdom.’” Over time, Pete anticipates running into more Christ Chapel members such as the attorney who was captured by the church’s fledgling work in Brazil. While keeping his law practice active, this marketplace leader has launched headlong into helping build orphanages in that impoverished country. “Being in the marketplace, I am in the perfect place to talk with



A marketplace leader at Christ Chapel helped build orphanages in an impoverished country while remaining active in his law practice.

guys who say, ‘I’m not finding fulfillment in business like I used to.’ That’s the perfect time,” Pete says. “When the timing is right, it’s like honey to them to hear how this works.”

However, Pete and other church leaders who are setting the pace in mobilizing their best and brightest know it takes buy-in—and much more—from

church staff and marketplace leaders. Mark Bankord, a former stock broker who is the founder and “Directional Leader” of the rapidly growing **Heartland Community Church** in Rockford, IL (<http://www.heartland.cc>), says this type of mobilization will require a deep heart change from both parties. “In most churches, there is clearly an ‘A’ team—the church staff that is doing ‘important’ ministry work—and a ‘B’ team—everybody else,” Mark says. He and a few others started Heartland in 1998, partly in response to the “contempt” and lack of trust they

saw in churches between church staff and marketplace leaders. “Marketplace people see ministry people as soft and ineffective, and they don’t realize how difficult it is to lead a healthy, well-functioning organization such as the church,” Mark says. “There is a danger that marketplace people can get in, thinking they could do it so much better. On the other side, ministry people have contempt for marketplace people and can tend to think they are something lesser spiritually.”

Heartland is doing its best to “defang” the A team/B team culture by operating out of a laser-focused, gifts-based culture that most marketplace leaders would recognize from effective business settings: identify the best person for the job based on their gifts, abilities and passions, regardless of title or position. Don’t presume a church staff person will lead everything, but don’t preclude them from leading if they are the best person for the job, either. This has resulted in Heartland assembling a team of 103 full- or part-time staff members; only three have seminary or theological training. When the church was recently searching for a teaching pastor, leaders identified someone from outside its current staff for the position. “If we’re not committed to these values of extreme trust and humility, another staff member could have said, ‘What am I? I’ve been here 8 years and you moved him into this over me?’” Mark says. “The culture here is that we give up territory where God calls and where the most gifted person can step in and do the job.”

This type of approach brings about another cultural shift—one in which church staff leaders view marketplace leaders through different lenses. “We must accept marketplace people as leaders—treat them as peers and not subordinates,” says Pantano’s Dave White. “When some initiative is identified, instead of going to the staff person, we may need to give it to a marketplace leader because they are the best leader, organizer or administrator for the initiative. In that scenario, a staff person might be under the leadership and direction of a marketplace person. But if they are the best person for the job, that’s the way it ought to be.” Marketplace leaders in churches that are moving

this direction agree. “You have to plan, prepare and implement ideas that come from all realms—not just from the pastors and not just the things they can pull off without involving marketplace leaders at a deep level,” says Sean Clouse, a software developer and business entrepreneur. “Don’t be afraid to grab some marketplace leaders and let them give the church guidance in strategy, leadership and accountability. These are the worlds we deal in every day.”

### A Streamlined Mobilization Strategy

It doesn’t take long to get in the game at Heartland Community Church.

New members or attendees who are ready to get involved at Heartland learn about their spiritual gifts during a 4-hour workshop—but they leave with much more than knowledge. “We tell them at the beginning of the workshop, ‘When you leave here tonight, you will leave with a place to serve,’” says Gordy Smith, Heartland’s pastor of adult ministries. Every ministry leader gives a very brief presentation at the workshop and participants are given the opportunity to talk and sign up for a ministry. The church experiences a 95% “engagement rate”—people who leave that night with a ministry task and team. “For some the more you know about spiritual gifts, the more hurdles there are to actually using them and serving,” Mark Bankord says. “The path to true understanding is a serving path, not a learning path. You have to get in the game to sense God’s presence in your service.”



Heartland Community Church offers a 4-hour workshop for new members to recognize their spiritual gifts and identify a place of service.

Heartland’s streamlined approach to engaging people in ministry illustrates a benchmark of innovators in mobilizing marketplace leaders: these churches have a strategy for mobilizing people, and they make it as easy as possible to be deployed. These church leaders understand that most marketplace leaders don’t need weeks of training; they just need to get their hands dirty in ministry—as quickly and with as little red tape as possible. Along with its four-hour seminar, Heartland has created a “My Life” strategy to identify and release marketplace leaders into serving roles as a vital part of their spiritual development. **RiverTree Christian Church** in Massillon, OH, (<http://www.rivertreechristian.com/massillon>) invites candidates searching for greater significance to a weekend retreat for an intense study of their spiritual gifts, abilities and passions. During the weekend participants develop a personal mission statement and identify a mentor to give them direction and hold them accountable for next steps. RiverTree has created a new ministry called “TrueNorth” around the task of mobilizing leaders into ongoing ministry roles—complete with a logo and golf shirts that team members wear to spark interest. “Creating an identity has been helpful,” says RiverTree’s Cliff Price. “It triggers a lot of conversation about helping people discover what God has called them to do.” Pantano reduced Fellowship Little Rock’s Kingdom Builders curriculum to 13 weeks, and also offers a 5-session small group and one-time events designed to identify marketplace leaders and get them going. “The purpose of all this is to launch marketplace people into ministry,” says Pantano’s Dave Piper. “If you create a bunch of hoops that marketplace leaders have to jump through, they will recognize it right away and run.”

Many churches are finding that one-time service or educational events with guest speakers are often the catalyst for identifying and deploying marketplace leaders into significant ministry roles. **Indian Creek** in Olathe, KS (<http://www.indiancreek.org>), has partnered with Significant Matters, a local non-profit agency that connects people with serving opportunities to ignite them to action. Along with regular local and global projects that get marketplace leaders

involved and often move them into ongoing ministry activity, the group mobilized 650 volunteers to build the walls for five houses in 3 ½ hours. The homes were then shipped to the Gulf coast to help victims of Hurricane Katrina. “People were amazed to see what they could accomplish in just a few hours,” says Significant Matters director Tom Bassford. “They wanted to know what the next project was going to be.”

Many leading churches are planning “ShareFest” community service events to bless the community, and to identify and release the latent energy of marketplace leaders. “These people are often like thoroughbreds in the stall, saying ‘Use me,’” says Heartland’s Gordy Smith. With a ShareFest leadership team of eight people—only one full-time staff person—35 people were enlisted as team leaders for a group of 2,180 people who served an incredible 14,683 total hours. With a ShareFest budget of \$175,000, Heartland members renovated two elementary schools, and refurbished the library and classrooms in a deteriorating neighborhood high school all in one week. “This wasn’t a project where people think, ‘I hope you appreciate how much I did for you,’” Gordy says. “Their response has been, ‘Thank you for letting me serve. It’s changing my life.’”

Leaders of **Fellowship Bible Church** in Brentwood, TN (<http://www.fellowshippnashville.org>) are engaging a specific segment of marketplace leaders—“Halftime” business people who are interested in exploring large-scale, entrepreneurial ventures that will eventually fund ministries. “Pre-game” events with guest speakers have been designed to generate interest in an ongoing small group known as “The Locker Room.” The group has hosted such speakers as John Sage, the founder of Pura Vida Coffee, and businessman Dale Dawson, who is spearheading self-funding and self-sustaining community ministries in Rwanda. Sage is a nationally known entrepreneur who launched his Pura Vida coffee company to fund charity work. Several hundred people have attended pre-game events, including a large group of college students from Belmont College’s social entrepreneurship program. As a result of the John Sage event, two Belmont students are helping a local ministry develop a

business plan. Some others who attended the event started a coffee company in Nashville to serve the Hispanic community. Another pair in the group formed the Brothers Pizza company, with a dream of donating 25% of profits to fund local ministries. “The biggest thing we’re seeing is that the Locker Room gives spiritual entrepreneurs a forum to hear, ‘You’re not crazy. It’s legal to do this, and we give you permission,’” says Fellowship Bible member Dick Gygi, the organizer of the Locker Room.

The national “Halftime” ministries, spawned by the efforts of Leadership Network founder Bob Buford in response to his book *Halftime*, has launched The Strategic Church Initiative<sup>1</sup>—an invitation-only, strategic alliance between the leadership of Halftime and no more than 10 churches. The participating churches must have senior pastor/key leadership buy-in, lay leadership involvement, a commitment to an external focus beyond their church programs and a willingness to implement strategies developed in concert with Halftime to discover and deploy leaders into service. Through the Strategic Church Strategy, churches:

- *Develop a sustainable ministry to identify and launch leaders into service*
- *Deliver high quality events and curriculum designed to move leaders towards service*
- *Discover proven methods for releasing leaders into service*
- *Deploy at least four leaders into service within the first year of implementation*

Whatever methods the innovators are using, they are in agreement that one size doesn’t fit all. It requires a variety of approaches to help identify marketplace leaders, point them in the right direction for serving and let them run. “There have to be multiple pathways to discovery and deployment,” Dave says. “Try this, read this book, let’s go to breakfast and talk about it one-on-one... You name it, we’ll try it if it will help get our marketplace leaders going.” One Pantano member attended the church’s Kingdom Builders small group, but he wasn’t all that enthused about it. “He said as he walked in the door, ‘I don’t know why I’m here, but I will give it a shot. I have

no idea what my passions are and I have never done anything for God in my life,” Dave says. By the end of the small-group experience, the man—a Spanish speaker from Peru—knew his gifts and had been connected with a team spearheading ministry efforts in Peru. “Now he’s passionate about Peru and is leading our mission efforts there,” Dave says. “Our lesson was, whatever tools you use, they are just that—tools for launching people.”

### **Celebrating the Success Stories**

RiverTree Christian Church leaders think their efforts to mobilize marketplace leaders will produce an occasional John Sage story. But what they really want to see is a full cache of “Rosalyn Cook” stories. Rosalyn is a former PTA parent who turned her hobby of clay modeling into a passion for sculpting. That passion is now reaping benefits for the kingdom, as Rosalyn sells sculptures and donates the proceeds, or contributes them to auctions that fund charitable causes. “A lot of stories you hear about marketplace leaders in ministry are about big things happening all over the world,” says RiverTree’s Cliff Price. “That’s great and we’re all for it. But one of the things we decided as a team is that everything doesn’t have to be big. We want to celebrate all of it.”

RiverTree has established a retreat model for getting successful marketplace leaders away for a weekend to focus on spiritual gifting and passions, and align those with ministry



RiverTree strives to celebrate both the big and small ministry endeavors that take place.

opportunities. As part of the model, there is a “commencement” ceremony following the retreat weekend and a reunion at the six-month point for retreat participants to reconvene, catch up on what God has been doing and celebrate the successes. At the commencement ceremony, participants outline what they think God is calling them to do and action steps to get there. The group records commencement speeches, and sends participants a “What we heard you say” package to keep the fire burning. At the reunions, participants give a synopsis of their progress. “There is an element of celebration and biblical goal-setting involved—driving a good feeling into action,” Cliff says. “We always have stories, and we want to celebrate every one.”

One lady at RiverTree decided to hand-make greeting cards, pray over them and give them to people in need. She has started selling the cards and donates the proceeds to kingdom causes. “It’s lighting her fire,” Cliff says. Another woman, a nurse, uses her skills on regular mission trips. Another woman initiated and led a Thanksgiving food drive that fed 500 people. Another negotiated a four-day work week so she could work at a local hospice. One of the original participants in RiverTree’s mobilization retreat now takes 10 weeks off work every year to lead international trips for Child Reach Ministries. “Somewhere in the mix of all those ‘small’ things, there is going to be a Pura Vida story or someone who builds a medical clinic in the Dominican,” Cliff says. “We’re going to hit some of those, but we want to celebrate all of them—the big and the seemingly small. We want to link people with God and what He is calling them to do, so they will both be happy.”

Churches who are out front in this type of ministry are employing a variety of ways to elevate the “real heroes”—including Sunday morning face time, video segments of ministry success, celebration banquets and networks of encouragement and accountability similar to RiverTree’s. “If we don’t celebrate these stories, people will not know who the heroes are and why we exist as a church,” says Fellowship Little Rock’s Bill Wellons. “You take one experience that God blesses, tell that story and light a flame one story at a time.” Fellowship highlights

ministry stories through “Around the Church in 80 Seconds” video segments. The church also regularly updates a bulletin board that shows all of the open ministry positions in the church and the core capacities required for that task. “When you highlight stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, people think, ‘I could do that,’” Bill says. “It gives them confidence.”

Storytelling and celebration are a major motivational tool for churches that are mobilizing their best and brightest—even those who might become a “missionary go-for,” as with a man at Pantano named Eric. After Eric determined his spiritual gifts are helps and encouragement and that he has a passion for the downtrodden, he did some “seismic testing” of his gifts at a local homeless shelter. Eventually, through hearing stories about a Pantano team that works in Mexico, Eric is now “joined at the hip” with the leaders of that ministry, says Pantano’s Dave White. “He runs all over town for those guys,” Dave says. Among many other things, Eric prepares the ministry trailer for trips, sorts equipment, does the banking—all behind the scenes. He eventually left his job to devote full time to being a “missionary go-for.” “He’s a good #2 guy, and he is having the time of his life,” Dave says. The key, according to Dave, is telling the stories and celebrating the successes. Not only do people in similar life stages with comparable gifts, abilities and passions get on board when they hear about the successes; additional ministry opportunities are created by leaders who step up to launch new initiatives. “Storytelling is huge because other people say, ‘I’m a doctor, too. I could do that. Maybe that’s what God is telling

me to do,’” Dave says. “If you don’t tell the stories, people just sit. When you release people and tell their stories, other people want to join in the fun.”

## SYSTEMS for Sustainability

Churches that are leading the charge in mobilizing marketplace leaders are discovering that ongoing, reproducible SYSTEMS need to be in place for this type of ministry to sustain itself over the long haul—particularly:

- 1) *Staff members who are able to relate to marketplace leaders and rally them to ministry assignments;*
- 2) *Assessment tools that will help marketplace leaders discover and deploy their spiritual gifts;*
- 3) *Curriculum that will give them the spiritual foundation they need; and*
- 4) *Opportunities to get in the game and exercise their gifts.*

### 1) STRATEGIC STAFFING

#### **Placement and empowerment of marketplace leaders on a church staff—both paid and volunteer**

Churches that are leading the charge in mobilizing marketplace people are taking varied approaches to building a team to lead their efforts. While a few have created a new release pastor position that is gaining credibility around the country, others are committed to utilizing volunteer marketplace leaders who can model the way. Still others are committed to filling their staffs with gifted people who have developed their leadership in the corporate world. Pantano, for instance, hired Associate Pastor Dave White and Halftime Ministries Director Dave Piper out of the marketplace—and want to duplicate that model many times over as its staff grows. “A seminary education can be irrelevant when it comes to leading and mobilizing strong marketplace leaders,” says Dave White, who has experience in both worlds. “Nothing against seminary trained staff, but balancing them with marketplace leaders on a staff is a very healthy thing.”



A team from Pantano Christian Church in Mexico.

Churches such as Christ Chapel in Fort Worth, on the other hand, find great value in elevating marketplace leaders who will stay in business and mobilize others from that vantage point. Lay leader Pete Chambers has continued to run his own business while devoting several hours per week to engaging businesspeople for possible ministry assignments. “Someone like Pete has a powerful story,” says Christ Chapel Executive Pastor Bill Egner. “He didn’t sell the company and walk away. That position is allowing him to do ministry, and that is a powerful message.” Pete sees the ideal staff person for this role being a layperson who is able to give 20 to 40 hours per week, and who isn’t creating a strain on the church’s budget. “That’s the ultimate platform, and it provides tremendous value,” Pete says. “That person is not coming from a staff position, but they are practicing what they’re preaching to the fullest.”

Some churches, though, are choosing to go the full-time staff route, with the new position of Release Pastor gaining some steam. “We need a platform to enable people to launch into the areas where God is calling them,” says RiverTree’s Cliff Price. “We are eager to staff a Release Pastor, and believe that could take things to a whole new level.” Only a few U.S. churches to date are known to have hired a Release Pastor, but many more are leaning that direction as church leaders consider how best to identify and release marketplace leaders who are ready to roll.

Whichever direction a church goes for staffing, front-edge churches are clear that this ministry won’t go far without a dedicated group of leaders who make it a top priority. Those same churches also caution against locking into one profile of a marketplace leader and staffing only to that profile. “We let everybody in the game at all levels,” says Heartland’s Mark Bankord. “We aren’t just thinking about the CEO who is in career crisis. Wherever marketplace leaders are, from ready to quit their job to 10 hours of margin to give, marketplace engagement for us is broad and wide and deep.”

On this front, Heartland regularly puts its money and effort where its mouth is. Mark

has developed a group of young leaders—a dozen or so 20-something staff members that he has entrusted with vital initiatives in the church. The group meets weekly to discuss their initiatives, challenge and encourage each other in open, honest dialogue. Heartland even empowered a group of high-school students to pursue their idea of planning “A Night to Remember,” a prom for special-needs high schoolers who otherwise likely wouldn’t attend such an event. Volunteers for the event helped the special-needs teens prepare for the big night—complete with donated tuxedos, prom dresses, manicures, a limousine ride and red-carpet walk. The church’s high school students were paired with a special-needs teen—with some surprising results. “We thought our high-schoolers might gravitate toward each other and leave our special guests alone at some point in the night,” Mark says. “But they were incredible—stayed with them all night and made sure they had the time of their lives.”

Some leading Marketplace Success/Kingdom Significance churches also are discovering that engaging marketplace leaders can’t be only a good ole’ boys’ club. Fellowship Little Rock has hired a full-time female staff member to walk through the discovery and release process with gifted women leaders. “This journey is often too intimate for a man to walk through it all the way with a woman,” says Fellowship’s Bill Wellons. “A man might be able to get them started, but at some point it’s going to go too deep.”



Heartland Community Church developed a group of young leaders to take initiative in planning community events.

## 2) SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

### Dynamic tools for identifying spiritual gifts and God-given passions

For many churches that are engaging marketplace leaders at the deepest levels, the process often starts with an assessment of spiritual gifts and passions. These tools help leaders learn how they are wired by God for ministry, and contribute to helping them find a good fit. Here are a few of the most popular tools used by the innovators:

#### Servants By Design™ Inventory<sup>2</sup>

A Fellowship Little Rock resource, the *Servants by Design (SBD) Inventory* provides a **Personal Profile Report** (<http://www.youruniquedesign.com/YUDHome.asp>) that will explain:

- *The core strengths and abilities of your wiring by God*
- *The way you go about doing things*
- *The lens through which you view life*
- *The things that motivate you*

The Personalized Profile Report gives leaders a better understanding of their God-given design, how to best relate to others with different designs and insights for finding the best fit in service. Also available is a SBD™ Companion Profile for learning more about the inventory and its benefits.

#### Halftime Experience

A Halftime Experience is a scheduled, on-site visit with creative, committed and effective Halftimers from around the country. The event is planned and led by the national Halftime ministry staff ([http://www.halftime.org/ht\\_experience.aspx](http://www.halftime.org/ht_experience.aspx)). Participants interact with experienced and effective halftimers and their spouses, observe firsthand the challenges and excitement of using marketplace skills to serve God, see in practice how God can mold successful people to His service and begin to chart a second-half adventure.

#### S.H.A.P.E. Resources<sup>3</sup>

Developed by Saddleback Church and pastor Rick Warren, a variety of resources—including a six-week small-group study,

DVDs, workbooks and personal stories—help participants find and fulfill their unique S.H.A.P.E., or unique blend of Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences.

#### Halftime Institute

The Halftime Institute, also administered by the national Halftime ministry staff ([http://www.halftime.org/ht\\_institute.aspx](http://www.halftime.org/ht_institute.aspx)), is an invitation-only, small-group event designed for high achievers who have experienced significant success in the first half of their lives and now have a deep desire to pursue eternal significance in their second half. The highly interactive experience offers both the personal insights of entrepreneur and author Bob Buford and the input of peers over a focused, two-day period. By the end of the process, participants create their own powerful second-half life plan.

## 3) STRONG CURRICULUM

### More spiritual in nature than practical how-tos

Church leaders that are setting the pace in marketplace engagement agree that strong business leaders don't need weeks in a classroom to prepare for getting in the game. Many of them have already received some of the best leadership training in the world through their jobs. What they need most is a spiritual focus for the "whys" behind giving their lives away in service. Leaders are also quick to point out there is no need for a church to develop curriculum from scratch. "Don't create curriculum in a vacuum," says RiverTree's Cliff Price. "If we were going to build our own curriculum, we would still be working on it. Find out where others have done something successful and tweak it to fit your setting."

In designing its curriculum, RiverTree leaders met with Pantano Christian staff to help formulate their plans and landed on a 48-hour retreat model. "We are sensitive to people's time commitments and we were apprehensive about putting together a 16 to 20 week commitment," Cliff says. "We call people to focus for 48 hours on what God is trying to tell you." The end result of the retreat for most attendees is often a big idea that God is birthing in their heart, and a traditional

business plan that explains how they are going to bring the idea to fruition. Some of the curriculum that other churches are using with success include:

#### **The Success to Significance Ministry Guide<sup>4</sup>**

Prepares ministry leaders to understand and teach the concept of Halftime and help those in midlife redirect their lives toward eternal significance. Based on the most innovative, best practices of churches around the country, this kit offers guidance on how to organize, promote and perpetuate a Significance ministry for boomers.

#### **The Success to Significance Work Book<sup>5</sup>**

Church leaders can use the *Success to Significance Group Curriculum* for adult Bible classes, small groups or an evening workshop. This six-session curriculum is packed with stories, teaching and reflection that will engage groups in discussion about a significant second half of life. Participants come away with a clearer sense of their unique calling and how to reorient their lives accordingly.

#### **Kingdom Builders**

Developed at Fellowship Little Rock, *Kingdom Builders* helps guide a man on his personal journey as he seeks the answer to three questions:

- *Who am I? (Design identity from God)*
- *Do I matter? (Importance to God's purposes)*
- *Where is my best fit? (Place of service or influence)*

The Kingdom Builders Field Manual is a church-based small group experience that enables men in the Halftime journey to take the next step in pursuit of God's calling in their lives. It is organized around 20 pre-designed sessions and includes several devotionals and practical projects.

#### **Woman on a Mission**

Kingdom Builders' *Woman on a Mission*, a 14-week study by Linda Slaton empowers women to become difference makers for God in the unique way He designed them to do so.

Through Bible study and guided self-discovery, women learn that God created them with gifts and life experience that make them useful to His purposes. Women explore their past accomplishments, wounds and work experience, and will discover their core values, passions, and spiritual gifts. By the end of the course, each woman articulates a personal Mission Statement and creates a "Mission Possible" plan for engaging in that mission.

#### **4) SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

For Bill Wellons of Fellowship Associates, the activity of the early church highlighted in Acts 13 is the perfect illustration of the kind of "unlimited partnerships" most churches need to facilitate. In that account, the church of Antioch identified Barnabas and Paul as called by the Holy Spirit for ministry, laid hands on them and sent them out. "They were willing to release two of their very best," Bill says. "Why? Their vision was to advance the kingdom of God, not just build the local church." Wellons realizes this may be a stretch for most church leaders, but a necessary one if they are to see marketplace leaders engaged in life-altering ministry. "How do you control that?" Bill says. "Don't you have to reorganize your whole church to do this new program? This is not a program, it is a different way of doing life and church. It's a journey. On this journey you have to come alongside some folks in your church, help them discover God's workmanship and works in them, get them aligned and empower them to do those works."

For Bill and other church leaders who are setting the pace in mobilizing marketplace leaders, these often-entrepreneurial, yet-to-be-created opportunities—as well as engagement in opportunities already defined by church staff—are possibly the most vital links in the equation. "The most important thing to make an entrepreneurial system work is opportunity," says Pantano's Dave White. "Most people will discover what God has called them to do if they have opportunity."

Some pre-determined opportunities at Pantano led an orthopedic surgeon in the church to create an entirely new ministry.

Although the surgeon had read books about marketplace leaders in ministry and had heard inspiring speakers on the topic, he wasn't sure where to plug in or how ministry would fit with his medical practice. "He told me, 'I'm called to this practice, and I'm not ready to leave it,'" says Pantano's Dave Piper. "I don't know if I can create the margin." The doctor went to Mexico on a house building trip, and asked a pastor's wife about her vision for the area. When she relayed her dream of free medical clinics in poor villages, "Clinics Without Borders" was born in the surgeon's heart. Within three months, he had secured land and a building, supplies and equipment. The doctor takes a quarter of his time to educate emerging doctors in the area, and provides funds for medications purchased locally. "The local people serve, and the clinic has created an opportunity in their culture," Dave says.



A group from Pantano Christian Church poses in front of a clinic born out of the Clinics Without Borders dream.

Bill Wellons places ministry opportunities into two categories—Limited and Unlimited Partnerships—based on a view of business “ownership.” He sees both as crucial to a church’s success in engaging business leaders.

### **Limited Partnerships**

In business limited partnerships, an entrepreneur in a new business venture gathers several partners who invest money in the venture. The originator of the company starts and runs the business, and the limited partners cash out at some point—with

monetary profits in hand. Limited partners don't set direction, lead, help run the business or give input—they just give cash. “That is the picture of a church member coming alongside a staff or pastoral leader to meet a need inside the church,” Bill says. “It's critical for the operations of the church.” Limited partnerships can include opportunities to serve inside the church, such as children's ministry, student ministry, small groups, worship, media, campus/facility and women's ministry; or they may be opportunities to serve externally in local community ministries or global missions. The common thread is that they are church- and staff-initiated opportunities. “This is the small group pastor saying, ‘Help me with this ministry by being part of a small group,’” Bill says. “These are essential for the health of the church.”

### **Unlimited Partnerships**

Churches that are engaging members in ministry are developing another category for “general partners”—seasoned leaders who want to invest their time, talents and treasures for God. They also desire to create the new ideas and lead the initiatives. Fellowship Little Rock calls these entrepreneurial endeavors New Frontiers. “We need to create an environment that encourages and empowers these general-partner entrepreneurs,” Bill says. “In this scenario, I want to come alongside you, help you discover your gifts and abilities and passions and empower you to advance the kingdom of God in ways He's telling you. It may be inside the church, but chances are, many times it will be outside the church.”

This process is similar to what happened with Chris Shewmake, a plastic surgeon who was motivated by Fellowship Little Rock's “Great Adventure” message series. He began working in Honduras to help children with deformities. He also turned his passion for teaching into an opportunity to help develop a medical school in Honduras and train doctors in new skills and procedures. Chris was even instrumental in building a video learning laboratory, where aspiring doctors can watch and learn from live surgeries. “The owner of a hospital there has told Chris he



Chris Shewmake from Fellowship Little Rock at the medical school in Honduras.

can use his surgical suites any time for free,” Bill says. “The Honduran government also paid for two crates of medical supplies. They have seen miracle after miracle by the power of God.”

Those and other unlimited-partnership opportunities are happening, according to Dave White, because staff leaders are figuring out their role in the process, and marketplace leaders are being released to assume their role. “The key is, don’t try to develop ministries and plug people into them,” Dave says. “Help them determine, ‘Where is God leading you?’ Then tell them to go for it.” In this scenario, Dave says, the staff’s primary job is one of cheerleader. “Our primary role is to cheer them on, release them and celebrate them,” he adds. “We give support and advice, but we are there to serve them in their ministry, not the other way around.” That reverses the traditional clergy/laity mindset and gives marketplace leaders the responsibility to “see the opportunity and seize the opportunity,” Dave says. “If things are operating that way, the church is reinventing itself as a truly empowering organization,” Dave adds. “It sends the message and creates the reality that we’re about activating you in what God told you to do.”

### A Clear View of Marketplace Engagement

Mark Bankord keeps a photograph on his desk that keeps his vision clear when it comes to engaging marketplace leaders. The picture, given to him by a friend of the church, was taken from behind a microphone, with a crowd of people in

front. The microphone represents a pastor or church leader, and the crowd is a church congregation. In the photo, the microphone in front of the pastor is crystal clear, while the faces in the crowd are blurred and out of focus. It’s a constant reminder to Mark and the Heartland staff of what they want to avoid when engaging marketplace leaders. “Usually, it’s about us as church leaders and what we want to accomplish,” Mark says. “Very often, the picture of the people we serve is fuzzy. But this is a constant reminder that it’s not about us and what we want to do or the vision we have for people. The focus needs to be on the people, their gifts and passions, instead of the church and your personal ministry of preaching and teaching. Their faces—their desires for ministry and full engagement—should be clear to us.”

A group of innovative churches around the country are navigating this fundamental shift in ministry—a shift that will require pastors and church staff to look in the mirror. “The first step—and the most difficult,” Mark says, “is for the senior leader to actually figure out his gifts, and begin operating out of those. What are the two gifts I must exercise because they are my primary gifts, and what are the two I must stop doing because they aren’t mine?” Mark concedes that this type of self-actualization on the part of pastoral staff requires an extremely safe church environment. But once it’s done, “marketplace leaders flock to that kind of reality,” Mark says. “Marketplace leaders know it already when a senior leader is operating outside of his gifts,” he adds. “If they were to see a senior leader come clean with that, they would rally around it.”

Such courageous reflection lays the foundation for every marketplace leader—maybe even every person in a congregation—to begin to discover their spiritual gifts and engage in significant limited or unlimited partnerships. According to Bill Wellons, this type of environment leads a church to reposition its ministry deployment strategy the way Fellowship has begun to describe it: “We say, ‘Marketplace engagement is for the young and old, male and female, simple and super, pioneer and settler’—anyone who has discovered who he is and is partnering with God to change the world.”



ANDY WILLIAMS

*Andy Williams is the Communications Manager for an insurance company in Omaha, NE. He is married to Lorrie, has three awesome boys, ages 12, 7 and 4, and is part of a network of organic churches in the Midwest.*



WAYNE SMITH

Leadership Network welcomes your response. The primary writer is **Andy Williams**. Editorial advisors were **Wayne Smith**, Director of the Strategic Church Initiative for Leadership Network and **Warren Bird**, Director of Research and Intellectual Capital Support for Leadership Network. Contact them via [Jan.Hopwood@leadnet.org](mailto:Jan.Hopwood@leadnet.org)

© 2007 Leadership Network (<http://www.leadnet.org>)

Want to find more resources like this one? For the most current listing of free and purchasable resources, some of which are distributed solely through Leadership Network, go to <http://www.leadnet.org/papers> (alternate: <http://www.leadnet.org>, then select “resources” then “downloads”) or call toll-free 800-765-5323 or 214-969-5950 outside the U.S. and Canada.

Leadership Network’s mission is to identify, connect and help high-capacity Christian leaders multiply their impact.

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

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.successtosignificance.org/church-models.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Fellowship Bible Church developed the Servants by Design™ Inventory and Personalized Profile Report in partnership with Transpersonal Technologies, L.L.C., which originated the process. These materials have been adapted, in part, from the Process Communication Model® developed by Taibi Kahler, Ph.D. in the early 1970’s.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pastors.com/en-US/SHAPE/ShapeResources.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.successtosignificance.com/extendedResources.aspx?ID=119>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.successtosignificance.com/extendedResources.aspx?ID=118>