

Church Leader, this is how a church succeeds Monday through Saturday...

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Leadership Network *Advance*



Expanding On Our Faith, Works, and Economics Initiative

By Ron Edmondson, CEO

In my last LN Advance I tried to provide a little clarity around where we are and where we are going as an organization.

One of the areas mentioned was the issue of **Faith, Work and Economics**. It is a new issue for us, so naturally there were questions about it. I am not convinced these are the best terms to help the church get excited about this issue, but the need and potential are huge for Kingdom impact. Someone recently called it "incorporating the Gospel in all of life". I think my pastor colleagues will agree this is their goal, even if they do not fully understand how to help congregants live it yet.

As a business person, I quickly learned I had ideas and energies the church simply did not know what to do with. They loved me teaching Bible study or working in the preschool ministry (which are both needed and I enjoy), but they could not process all the ideas I had to advance the mission of the church. Frankly, I was not even invited to the meetings of discussion most of the time. I could find more outlets for my entrepreneurial insights outside the church than inside. Consequently, I served on dozens of nonprofit boards. I even ran for political office. (*Check out [my LinkedIn](#) profile for place where I served.*)

As a pastor, I tried to live this theme. I preached a missional living lifestyle consistently and tried to engage our church in such efforts. In our church plant we took well over 1,000 volunteers into our community to be the hands and feet of Jesus in practical ways every year. We once partnered with a local radio station to take over 800 people (half from our church and half from the community) into our schools on one day. We made physical improvements in every school in our community. We once partnered with the city for a major clean up after a disastrous flood. We launched the initiative in our church office parking lot.

In our recent established church, we partnered with our city to open a reading room in a mostly abandoned community center in a more difficult area of town. Church members decorated, provided books and volunteered to staff the room and read to children. We had people serving in schools every single day. (*I am convinced the main reason we could revitalize a church is that we got outside the walls of the church.*)

Most all my pastors friends believe in these type initiatives. What may be missing is how to turn these beliefs and even actions into city transformations, which ultimately open Gospel conversations and make disciples.

It really was not until I got to Leadership Network and began exploring this issue, listening and learning that I realized our programs were not always set up to allow this to happen organically. Our mission staff worked tirelessly to get us outside the walls of the church, but inside the church we often had a different approach. In fact, we tended to give people a checklist. Gather one hour, grow one hour, and serve one hour and you would have implemented our discipleship strategy. **Somewhere there was a disconnect** from the message in the pulpit and the desire of our hearts for the people in the pews to be on mission 24/7 in their work, home, school and community.

An underlying issue here, which is simply reality for churches and pastors, is the church must continue to support the work of the church. Most of our energies are spent just keeping things functioning inside the church; making Sunday happen - and Sunday comes around quickly every week. As a result, many times churches end up serving their building, the members, and programs to the extent that it takes away from really making Gospel transformations with people who may never attend. This is all part of the Faith, Work and Economics initiative.

How do we help churches connect the dots and be effective on Monday as it is on Sunday? What are the dots, which need connecting?

Certainly this is not a new issue and we are just one piece of this discussion. Many others have been stirring this conversation for years.

For example, pastors interested in learning more might check out [Made to Flourish](#) - a ministry, which has a large footprint in combining faith and work and also the book "**Work Matters**", written by founder Tom Nelson. (For more book suggestions, *The Institute of Faith, Work and Economics* gives their [list of top 10 books](#) on the subject.

Others have been approaching this issue from more of the marketplace perspective. There are many, but one example is *OS Hillman with [Marketplace Leaders](#)*. He has been in this space for decades. I remember reading some of his material when I was a small business owner trying to find ways to incorporate my faith and work. Hillman has been a great connector and resource for me personally. In fact, you might want to consider attending or sending some key leaders from the church to the upcoming [Culture Shapers Summit](#). They have a good reduced rate until **February 1st**.

Our sister ministry, [Exponential](#), has their theme for this year's conferences around the

faith and work topic. The theme title is **Made for More: Mobilizing God's People, God's Way**. There is still time to join them in Orlando or at one of their regional events. Todd Wilson and I are collaborating on a number of initiatives around this issue.

I believe with the right kind of information, ideas and leadership the Church can accelerate their efforts and better incorporate the Gospel into every area of life. We do not feel we are the solution here, but we want to use our influence and trust in the Church to partner with others to help. We have only just begun, but I feel it is a "next big" area for the Church and one we need to address as a part of our ministry.

Over the past few months, I have been making connections in this space in the ministry, academia and secular worlds. We are pulling together several small groups of influencers in the faith and work movement this year to listen, convene, collaborate and curate - which is what we do best at Leadership Network. The first of these gatherings will happen April 1 in our Dallas office. (*I would ask you to pray for us on this day.*) From here we will develop a plan of our own approach to help churches better incorporate faith and work into their ministries.

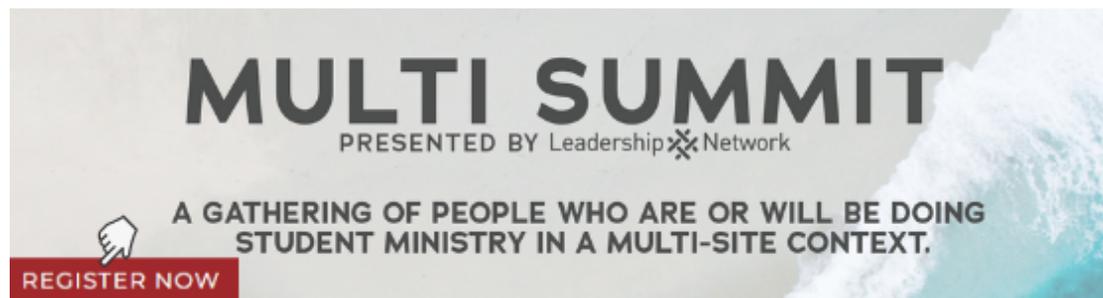
Again, we are in the beginning steps of a long journey. Stay tuned for more as we continue to address this issue.

In closing, I like to remind people Leadership Network remains very much a nonprofit ministry. Our win is the Church succeeding at its Gospel mission to make disciples. We must operate with a business mindset in order to be viable long-term, and we are making progress there too, but my heart's desire is to see the Church flourish, communities thrive and the whole land prosper.

Please let me know how we might serve you.

ps: It's tax time. For those in vocational ministry you know our tax structure can sometimes be more difficult. Here's a great and free resource from our friends at ECFA.

Ron Edmondson



Big data and the Church: Helping churches do five things amazingly well

By: Eric Swanson and Matt Engel

"Growth is dictated not by total resources available, but by the scarcest resource"
 - Justus vonLeibig

We've discovered that every church that is thriving and multiplying has become really good at five things.

If aligned properly, every cent a church spends can be accounted for in these five buckets. Every activity, program or campaign will be in service to this same quintet. The totality of the church calendar is subject to accomplishing the same five things. Every decision, tactic or hire points towards these five things. These five actions are very versatile. They can apply to children, students, millennials, seniors, single moms, mothers of preschoolers, 40-year-old men or widows. The better a church becomes in mastering just these five things the more impact this church will have in the world. These five verbs apply to churches of every denominational stripe and every style of church from purpose-driven churches to simple churches to house churches to missional churches to digital on-line churches. These five actions are particularly applicable to church plants. A new church that fails to reach viability has failed to reach efficacy in one or more of these five things. Every decades-old church that closes its doors for the final time has come up short in one or more of these five things.

So what are these five things?

ATTRACT, GET, KEEP, GROW and MULTIPLY

- *Attract* is simply making people aware that your church exists. (Even for churches that eschew the label "Attractional Church" still take missional actions they hope will attract people to their church).
- *Get* is about getting people in the door for the first time—whether for a weekend service or a special event.
- *Keep* is about our ability to get people back a second or third time. (People who attend a church just three times have a 60% propensity to make that church their home church). The cost of retention is much cheaper than the cost of acquisition. Keeping is about closing the back door.
- *Grow disciples* is about engaging people in your growth / discipleship model whatever that might be. For many churches the critical growth decision is to be part of a small group and to serve.
- *Multiply leaders* is about those people who have adopted the mission of the church as part of their personal mission. They multiply the mission of the church through their leading, giving, serving, inviting, discipling and advocating. It is the multipliers who play a critical role in attracting, getting, keeping, growing and even multiplying other people. We usually call these congregants "engaged."

[\(Click Here to Read More\)](#)

Things You Want to Know About

Opportunities and resources for you and your team

Next Level Pastors Leader Group

By: Ron Edmondson

There is a synergy of being in the room together with other like-minded leaders in fellowship and mutual learning. It was valuable to me as a pastor and I think we need this more, not less.

That's why I am hosting a group for lead pastors to help you get to the next level of growth in your church. We'll meet three times over the next year, for three days each time we meet. In between each meeting we will have calls to keep the growth and accountability consistent. The relationships, wisdom and understanding, and accountability you'll gain will be invaluable and impactful to your ministry and personal growth as a leader. There will be opportunities to discuss challenges you are facing in ministry and learn how to overcome them by the help of peers and mentors. There are still a few spots left.

Are you ready to achieve the next level of leadership and church growth? Click the banner below for more details.



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