



The Leadership Role of the Senior Pastor (Elective C)

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So, Why Should We Listen To This Easum Guy?

Bill Easum has a thirty year track record of growing congregations in two denominations. His last church, which he pastored for twenty-four years, grew to the largest United Methodist Church in South Texas. His record of "evangelization" and "social justice" ministries was acknowledged by Industrial Areas Foundation in New York as one of the finest examples in North America.

The past fifteen years, Bill has served as a consultant to congregations and denominations. In 1986 he founded 21st Century Strategies which in 2000 with Thriving Church Consultants and became Easum, Bandy & Associates (EBA) with his new partner Tom Bandy who offices out of Canada. EBA serves the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Bill has personally worked in over 500 congregations, some of which are the largest in the nation, and has taught hundreds of thousands of leaders.

Bill is the author of numerous best-selling books such as *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers*, *Dancing with Dinosaurs*, *Leadership on the OtherSide*, *Unfreezing Moves*, and *Beyond the Box*. His most recent book, written with Bil Cornelius, is titled *Go Big: How to Have Explosive Growth*.

A few of the areas in which Bill consults are church planting, multiple site congregations, demographics, local church consultations, church growth seminars, stewardship, lay ministries, social justice, small groups, spiritual gifts, postmodern ministry, small church dynamics, systems thinking and organizational transformation, strategic mapping, using the Ministry Audit, and leadership development, to mention only a few

Bill is a graduate of Baylor University, B.A., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, M.D., and Perkins School of Theology, S.T.M.

Section One: Introduction

I. The importance of the role of lead pastor.

Notes

- A. Nothing is more important in a church than the role played by the lead pastor.
 - 1. The lead pastor is the GPS for the entire congregation.
 - 2. As the lead pastor goes, so goes the church, no matter what size congregation. Every act of a leader sends ripples through the congregation.
 - 3. A congregation will not outgrow its leader.
- B. The effectiveness of the lead pastor in the 21st century will depend primarily on three things:
 - 1. How they care for themselves.
 - 2. How they lead those who lead.
 - 3. How they select and equip the lead team of paid and unpaid leaders.

II. The role of the lead pastor is undergoing a remarkable change at the close of Modernity.

- A. By the end of Modernity, the following ways of thinking about leadership have developed. Each of the following is a deathblow to both biblical and effective leadership today.
 - 1. Most pastors are thought of as "professionals" who perform the important ministries and convince the laity to do the minor ministry. Many job descriptions spell out the academic requirements.
 - 2. A clear distinction is made between those who are "ordained" and those who are "just a lay person." This distinction emerged when Clement invented the term "laity" as we know it and culminated in the dying gasps of Modernity in the 1970's and 80's.
 - 3. Most lead pastors are referred to as "Senior Pastor" and are often referred to as a CEO or COO whose role is more administrative than spiritual.
 - 4. Senior Pastors are thought of more as a "medicine man" than a spiritual director.
 - 5. More often than not, the descriptions of an effective leader leave the impression that only those with super human characteristics can lead.

6. The senior pastor has a job description with clear lines of responsibility and a labyrinth of ways to hold him/her accountable.
7. A clear chain of command and bureaucratic understanding of Staff relationships among staff exists.

B. Postmodernity is changing all of that.

1. The public no longer wants mediated expressions of faith that come from "professionals", nor do they want pastors to be administrative leaders who manage the institution.
2. Instead, they want spiritual leaders who can lead them into immediate, uncontrollable, personal expressions of faith. Healthy churches no longer want a "medicine man." Today they want a spiritual director who will walk with them on their journey of faith.
3. This is removing us far from the world of spiritual experts (clergy) and amateurs (laity). The church is no longer made up of two classes of people, clergy and lay. Now everyone is a priest with a ministry.
4. People no longer follow heroic leaders who do ministry, instead they look for team based leaders.

C. Leading a church in the 21st century will not be easy. Consider the many shifts occurring today that are changing the ways pastor's lead.

1. The shift from professional manager to spiritual leader requires:
 - a. An entirely different level of personal growth. A leader can't give what the leader doesn't have.
 - b. The lead pastor is to model what it means to be a Christian rather than to be a preacher. More time is spent on developing one's spiritual life every week than on preparing the sermon.
2. The shift from medicine man to spiritual director means:
 - a. Being in the presence of such leader enables one to enter into the presence of God.
 - b. Lead pastors no longer focus their attention on immature Christians nor waste time working with people who don't want to grow.
 - c. Lead pastors don't feel the need to fix the institution or cure all of the ills of the congregation.

3. The emergence of the priesthood of every believer requires:
 - a. A shift in the role of staff from doer to equipper.
 - b. Massive retraining of personnel.
 - c. Knowing how to hire and fire.
 4. The shift from a program driven church where staff do ministry to a community driven church will cause leaders to rethink the meaning of church life.
 5. Developing team-based ministries will require the end of the heroic leader.
- D. Welcome to world of the first century pastor.

Section Two: The Role of the Lead Pastor

III. The role of the senior pastor is different from anyone else in the congregation.

- A. The senior pastor is the "Keeper of the Vision (DNA)".
 - 1. This person focuses more on the big picture
 - 2. And the core key leaders, including paid staff, more than on the congregation itself.
- B. The less ministry the senior pastor does the healthier the church is. This is one of the major shifts effective pastors begin to make as soon as they can.
- C. If you are in a team ministry, the role of the senior pastor is team leader or as some put it "first among equals."
- D. The role of a lead pastor is to insure that all of the leaders reproduce themselves in the lives of other leaders. If leaders do nothing more than produce new leaders ministry will happen and the world will be changed.

IV. Three metaphors lay a solid foundation

- A. Shepherd
 - 1. John 21:16 "A second time Jesus said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep."
 - 2. Shepherds had three roles in Jesus' time.
 - a. To insure that the sheep were in a safe environment in which they could feed.
 - b. Grow for the sole purpose of reproducing more sheep.
 - c. And keep them mobile otherwise they would run out of food.
 - 3. The point for lead leadership:
 - a. Sheep beget sheep; shepherds do not.
 - b. Shepherds didn't feed sheep.
 - c. Sheep have to be mobile enough to move from pasture to pasture to find food. Shepherds lead more of a movement than an institution.

- d. They keep the sheep safe. This means not allowing the dysfunctional people bully, inhibit, and control the actions of the church.

B. Midwife

1. To provide an environment in which those who are spiritual pregnant can birth their gifts. The focus is on the need and gift of the person rather than the need and the desire of the church and its ministries.
2. They spend most of their time with people who are spiritual pregnant. They listen to dysfunctional people once, but once they discern they are not healthy, they tune them out from then on.
3. They never ask the expectant if they want to give birth. This new breed of pastors does not allow the church to decide if it wants to be in mission to the unreached. That is not an option just like birthing a nine-month-old baby in the womb is not an option. It is life and death.
4. They assist people on their spiritual journey rather than getting them to do what they want them to do. Midwives do not evaluate their effectiveness by what they achieve but by what those with whom they work achieve – do they birth or don't they?
5. The point for lead leadership.
 - a. Spend their time with those who are ready to serve.
 - b. They are spiritual directors who assist others in the birth of their ministry.

C. The Way

1. We were first known as "People of the Way," not "People of the Book." The early pagans did not know a group of people were Christians by what they taught or believed or the power of their arguments. They recognized them by how they lived. "These people actually love one another."
2. The Reformers and modern epistemology took us away from this incarnational apologetic toward a faith based on reason and propositional truth. So we argue more about how to interpret the Bible than how we are relating to one another.
3. We will learn more about leadership by watching what Jesus did than by memorizing Scripture.
4. Jesus never invited someone to do a job or perform a task. He invited them to come follow him. To join him on a journey.

5. The point for lead leadership.
 - a. Leaders spend a large portion of their time growing closer to Jesus and the way he spent his time rather than teaching Bible studies.
 - b. Leaders invite people to join them on a journey in which the love of the community known as the church is the primary apologetic to share with the world.
 - c. This means that leaders root out conflict and dysfunctional people and either transform them or show them the door.

D. I could sum up the role of leadership in three sentences:

1. Accomplish the mission.
2. Take care of your personnel.
3. Create new leaders.

V. Jesus left us the best example of what a lead pastor should do:

- A. Jesus spent his entire ministry reproducing his DNA (genetic code by which we mean, values, beliefs, vision, mission) in a small, but diverse group of future leaders. Small and diverse is the key. The Body must have many different cells doing many different things. The fact that he called such a diverse group of people shows his understanding of gift-based ministries and his desire not to clone himself.
- B. Jesus selected leaders on the basis of character and giftedness instead of representation, nomination, and election.
- C. He did not try to work with everyone and he did not treat all people the same.
- D. He singled out some people to take under his wing and disciple them.
- E. He taught us the mentoring rule of ten to twelve. Jesus concentrated his mentoring on no more than twelve people his entire ministry. Why should we think we could do any more?
- F. He was more concerned with multiplying his DNA than with personally adding people to the Kingdom. Ephesians 4:11 explains the role of the pastor. Our role is to equip those who will go and reach others.
- G. Jesus taught us that the role of leaders is to provide an environment in which others can grow to be disciples who make disciples.

VI. The role of the lead pastor

- A. How the lead pastor models ministry will determine the way ministry is done in a congregation.
 1. If the pastor models equipping, the leaders will equip themselves and others for ministry.
 2. If the pastor models doing, the leaders will let the pastor do ministry.
 3. If the pastor is a team player, the leaders will be team players.

- B. Roles of lead pastor
 1. Assists the core staff in becoming an effective team. The effectiveness of the lead pastor is not in what he/she does but in how they help the core paid staff develop and flourish as a team.
 - a. Chooses competent, self-starting, team playing staff and swiftly removing those who prove not to be team players.
 - b. Builds an effective team through relationships and equipping.
 - c. Embeds the DNA in the lead leadership team and insures that the DNA permeates everything done by the congregation.
 2. Models servanthood and the Great Commandment in all of his or her relationships.
 3. Identifies, recruits, equips, deploys, and coaches the core level of paid or unpaid leaders. Deciding who is core to the overall ministry is one of the major keys to leadership.
 4. Constantly coaches the core leaders. Helping staff succeed is a high priority. Stays out of their way and allows them to blossom.
 5. Keeps himself or herself spiritually fit. (Jesus was on vacation most of the time)
 6. Makes the decisions no one else wants to make.
 7. Turns the day-to-day management stuff over to others.
 8. Moves from delegation to empowerment. Delegation is getting them to do what you want to do. Empowerment is helping them to do what God created them to do.

9. Sees what God is doing in other places.
10. Makes the right financial decisions.
11. Embraces mistakes.
12. In relationship to the staff, the Senior Pastor,
 - a. Evaluates them. If the staff is team based, then staff evaluates the lead pastor also.
 - b. Challenges the staff to risk, learn, and fulfill their potential.
 - c. Empowers the staff to make autonomous decisions and to act creatively.
 - d. Provides the environment in which creative tension motivates staff to add value to the team.
13. Primary question to ask: "What are the two or three things I can give the church this year that will make the biggest difference. What can I set into motion this year?"

C. How the lead pastor spends time.

1. 50% of his/her time should be spent on him/herself and family. This means private devotion, exercise, family time, preaching, etc.
2. 40% of time should be spent on key paid and unpaid staff. This could include some ministry if it is for the purpose of mentoring.
3. 10% of time on all of the rest of what is normally thought of as pastoral work.
4. Prioritize your time.
 - a. Set your own agenda and follow your call.
 - b. Serve Christ, not the congregation.
 - c. Focus your attention on the key paid and unpaid staff.
 - d. Don't do anything someone else can be trained to do almost as good as you.
 - e. Since you are equipping rather than doing, you should never feel guilty for not doing everything.

D. Preaching

Preaching today is closely tied to all of the elements in the service

except in the black church. In all other settings, the entire service is the message, not just the sermon. The most effective preaching today seems to be story telling and testimonials by those who have been through what the message is about. One of the best ways to stay sharp on preaching is by talking with never churched people to see where the world is leaning. Watch television and movies to see what style of communication is popular. Books won't really help here much.

	Modern	Bridge World	Emerging
Speaker	Orator	Communicator	Sojourner
Content	Reason	Truth	Experience
Logic	Deductive	Inductive	Loopy
Role	Pious	Professional	Personal
Language	Clear	Music	Visual
Attitude	Efficient	Optimistic	Skeptical
Issues	Faith	God	Jesus
Offer	Morals	Advice	Hope

E. Process Time:

1. How much time do you spend each week in each of these areas?
2. Does equipping come natural to you or do you find it easier to just do the ministry.
3. "Will my legacy be a 'who' or a 'what'?" Am I going to manage an institution or equip and empower people?
4. Which occupies most of your time - caring for people or transforming them?"
5. Do you have a personal mission statement?

Section Three: Staffing Issues

VII. As the church grows, staffing becomes one of the most important things a pastor does

- A. A congregation's most important assets are the gifts, skills, and passion quotient of the paid and unpaid servants (staff). How a church staffs, and what it expects its servants (staff) to accomplish is one of the most important decisions church leaders can make. A mistake here throws out of balance everything else the congregation attempts.
- B. Staff is defined as both paid and unpaid servants. Both paid and unpaid servants are held accountable to the same standards with the only exception being the amount of time committed. So, I'll use the words "staff" and "servants" interchangeably.
- C. As a church grows in size, the role of staff becomes even more important.
 - 1. In churches under 150 in worship nothing is more important than how the lead pastor recruits and equips unpaid servants. The obstacle here is learning how to hold them as accountable as paid staff.
 - 2. In churches over 150 in worship nothing is more important than how the lead pastor begins to staff with paid people. Often the big challenge here is that the laity don't understand the need for paid staff, or the pastor has difficulty giving up control of all ministry, or simply does not know how to manage people.
 - 3. When a church reaches 500 in worship, the staffing issue is one of the primary challenges facing the lead pastor. More and more time goes into this group of people as compared to the whole church. New skills are demanded of the pastor and a willingness to allow others to receive the credit or the blame for their ministry. At this size it only takes one unaligned staff person to derail the entire progress of the church.
 - 4. As churches grow beyond the 800 mark in worship staffing issues tend to be spread out among all the core staff, paid and unpaid. It is not unusual for several paid staff to do the hiring and firing based on those who work within their area or responsibility. Often, this will be an Office Manager or Business Manager taking on the supervision of the office and maintenance people. Also, a normal switch is shifting hiring and firing to an Executive Pastor. Or in the case of multiple site congregations, the campus pastor is responsible for each campus staff.

VIII. The four primary roles of paid staff

- A. To create an environment in which leaders, at every level, are equipped and encouraged to replicate the DNA of the church through living out their spiritual gifts.
- B. To model and add value to the mission statement or core purposes/values of the church.
- C. To be an extension of the goals of the pastor and congregation (hopefully the two goals are the same)
- D. To loyally support all of the members of paid staff and in non-traditional church the unpaid staff

IX. The Basic Staff Roles

- A. The following positions are basic as a church grows.
 - 1. Lead Pastor whose primary responsibility is to guard the DNA, hire and equip paid servants, and insure that people are being equipped to join Jesus on the backyard mission field.
 - 2. Worship Leader who may or may not read music and who is responsible for gathering and equipping a team to be responsible for the entire worship experience including the music, graphics, lighting, sound, drama, arts, etc.
 - 3. Lay Mobilizer who designs and oversees a process that insures that everyone from the parking lot to the mission field is assimilated and grown into spiritual giants who exercise their gifts.
 - 4. Administrator who insures that everything and everyone in the support team undergirds and makes easier and more productive for the unpaid and paid servants in joining Jesus on the mission field.
 - 5. Outpost Leader's role is to understand and interpret the culture of the mission field to the staff, and to insure that every ministry of the congregation has a backyard mission component to it.
 - 6. Beyond these five basic roles, the remaining servants depend on the particular unique mission of the congregation.

X. How To Hire Staff

- A. Here then are the questions.
- B. Describe for me your spiritual journey. .
- C. How do you FEEL about our Mission, Vision, and Values

Statements (referred to from now on as church culture)?

- D. What gifts do you bring that would add value to our church culture.
- E. How would you go about adding this value?
- F. Those who make it to the end of the interview process are then interviewed by the appropriate staff.
- G. At the end of the interview process, the Senior Pastor tallies the interviews and lists the questions. If any one person says they could not work with this person, do not hire the candidate. If two or more vote NO, do not hire this person.
- H. Finally, the candidate is interviewed by the Personnel Committee. In most church structures this committee has the final word. This final word is a check and balance of the power of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor meets with the committee prior to the candidate doing so and shares with them the results of the interviews as well as a recommendation about whether or not to hire the candidate. In most well run organizations, if the Personnel Committee disagrees often with the Senior Pastor; the Senior Pastor is out of a job.

1. <http://education.gallup.com/>