

THE TRANSITION FROM LEADING TO DEVELOPING LEADERS A CHANGE OF MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY

The Current State of Leadership Development

A clear message has appeared as the North American Baptist Conference enters its' fourth year in the leadership development movement, frequently referred to as the Leadership Center initiative. Most of those in church leadership – both pastoral and lay – are skilled in *leading* but typically have invested little time or attention to *developing leaders*. As a result, it is often a scramble to find gifted, skilled and experienced leaders to expand ministries or provide truly effective leadership for needed new programs.

The position of *leader* by ministry staff and selected laity represents the current state of church leadership and has become, by default, the predominant ministry leadership philosophy. This philosophy is sometimes referred to as the *leadership culture* of the church, or perhaps the *DNA of the church* with respect to leadership.

It is widely acknowledged that leadership training is needed in the church, and in fact, there may be a number of developmental models from which to chose, but there are at least two difficult decisions that need to be made:

1. Settling on the leadership development model in which to invest your time and resources;
2. Clearly assessing the leadership development culture (the DNA, if you will) of your church.

Following a great deal of research, the first question has been answered for you. The North American Baptist Conference has adopted the Leadership Center Training Model, believing that it is the most comprehensive developmental tool currently available.

The second question – the leadership development culture of your local church – is a bit trickier. Assessing the leadership DNA of a local church has been lacking an assessment tool up to this point. A tool is offered here for your use!

Assessing the Leadership Development Culture Of Your Church

Ministry Opportunities in My Church

Leadership development, from a cultural perspective, places *at least* as much attention on the developmental needs of the emerging leader as it does existing ministry needs. In other words, leadership development is NOT about filling existing ministry holes, but IS about equipping believers to follow God's call into ministry, where ever He might lead them.

With this in mind, questions that might offer insight into the scope of ministry opportunities include:

- Has a compelling vision been cast that define ministry opportunities that emerging leaders might consider?
- Do we give emerging leaders real freedom to lead?
- Have job descriptions been created for unfilled ministry opportunities?

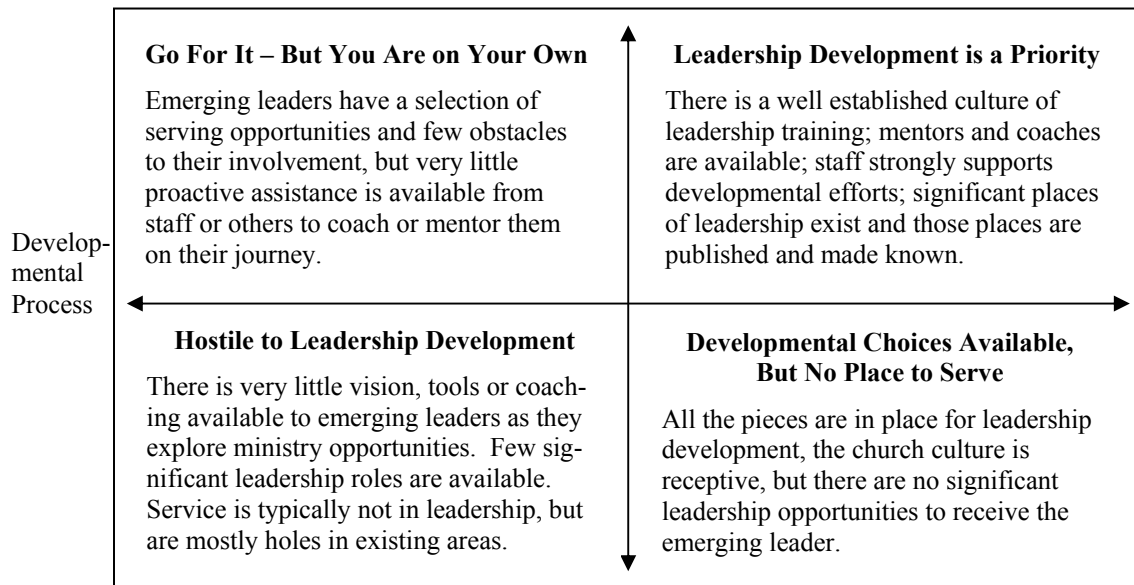
- Are serving opportunities exclusively within the church, or are other outside opportunities that align with the church’s mission also made available to emerging leaders?
- Does your church welcome emerging leaders interested in short-term, ‘exploratory’ ministry projects, for those who are unsure of God’s call but interested in investigating ministry options?
- Is your church staff on-board with the developmental process of emerging leaders and welcome them into their ministry areas, primarily for the leader’s continuing development? (A mentoring relationship may be what is called for here.)

Facilitating the Developmental Process

For those exploring leadership opportunities in ministry there may be speed bumps transitioning leadership skills and experiences acquired in the workplace and finding application in a church setting. To facilitate this transitional process:

- Is there a staff member who can walk along side the emerging leader as they consider what their future may hold in Christian service? (A coach/mentor relationship.)
- Are examples available of how others have made the move into ministry?
- Are there self-assessment tools available to the emerging leader to help him/her “see” their leadership skill and experience applied in another context – a ministry context?
- Is consideration given to the spouse of the emerging leader?
- Are there tools, books, tapes, or curricular resources available for research and study?
- Is there a coach to assist the emerging leader connect their current skill sets and experiences in the ministry context?

**The Developmental ‘Friendliness’
 Of Your Church**



Opportunity

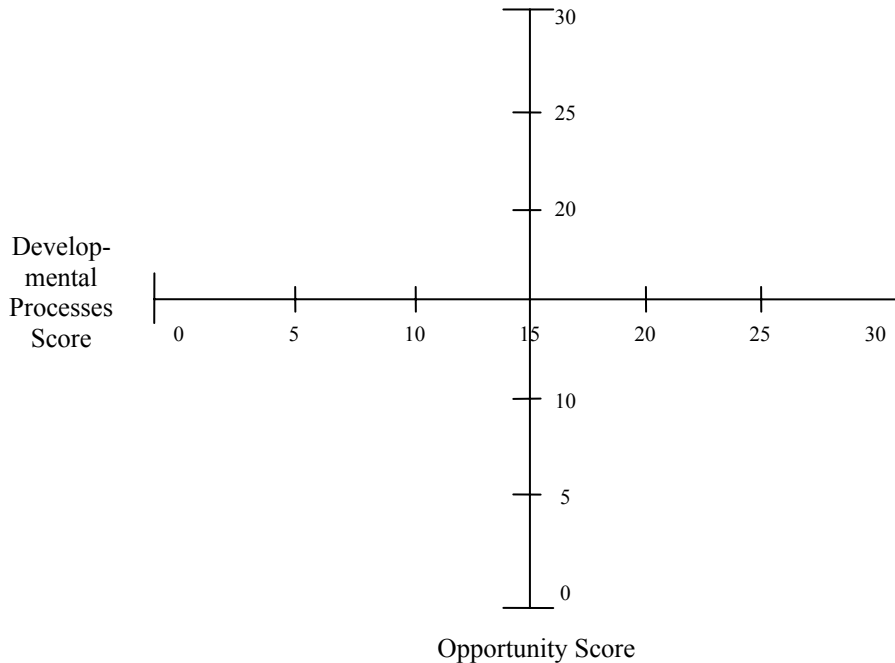
Assessment

The following Leadership Development Assessment* tool may be useful in helping you to identify how developmentally ‘friendly’ your church may be. Circle the number that reflects your church’s level of commitment in leadership Development Processes and leadership Development Opportunities.

* This tool is loosely based on a model presented in a white paper compiled by The Halftime Group, HALF|TIME, Leadership Network.

Developmental Processes:	Low	-----			High
1. As senior staff, how effectively do you communicate your commitment to leadership training and development to prospective emerging leaders or the congregation as a whole?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How effective are you in identifying prospective emerging leaders and encouraging them along their developmental journey?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Does your church make resources available to emerging leaders, e.g. curriculum, classes / programs, personal assessments, workshops, retreats / seminars to help leaders discover their gifts and passions?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Do you intentionally seek out developmental opportunities for your emerging leaders that align with their skills, giftedness, and passion?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Do you have mentoring and/or coaching support available to those seeking God’s leading in their spiritual formation?	1	2	3	4	5
6. As senior staff, how effectively do you communicate your commitment to leadership development to your church staff, and prepare them to support a church culture that incorporates leadership development of laity?	1	2	3	4	5
Grand Total Score	_____				

Developmental Opportunities:	Low	-----			High
1. Do you have a church culture that invites emerging leaders to feel free to step up to significant leadership responsibilities?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How extensive is your list of currently available defined leadership roles?	1	2	3	4	5
3. To what degree can your emerging leaders serve outside your church in the community or elsewhere in organizations with which your church has a relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Does your church culture offer non-staff leaders the ability to create unique ways to use their skills and passions to creatively enhance existing church ministries?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Are non-staff members encouraged to propose new ministry initiatives and find the support within the church to make these new ideas a reality?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Are there clear steps to follow for those who wish to step into ministry roles in positions of leadership for identifying service opportunities?	1	2	3	4	5
Grand Total Score	_____				



Create a hash-mark on each axis reflecting your score, then using lines at right angles to each other, draw a horizontal and vertical line to intersection. This will identify the quadrant into which your church falls with respect to leadership development ‘friendliness’.

Review the quadrant definitions to see where you might best invest your time and attention to address your church culture to enhance it’s leadership development friendliness.

COMMENT: If you find that your church culture falls into a quadrant other than the upper right one, this should not be a surprise to you. After all, for decades church leaders (staff) have assumed most, if not all significant roles of leadership, and perhaps congregations have expected the pastor to be the ‘leader’. *Leadership development* has not even been on the radar screen for most pastors and churches.

The result of following this model has placed the burden of leadership on a very few, and at times as few as one – the senior pastor. This approach to church leadership is not sustainable, nor is it biblical.

Each church will have it’s own unique conditions and receptivity to equipping others for service in positions of leadership. However, before changes can be made, it will be helpful to know the current state of the culture before launching off in a new direction. Hopefully this Assessment has offered some insight into your current state.