

COMING OFF THE BENCH:
COACHING THE LEADERSHIP TEAM TO LEAD

AT
REFUGE CHURCH IN PERRY, GEORGIA

BY

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DEDICATION

In Memory of William Dwain Thomas

Father and Friend

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For twelve years I was honored to be the pastor at Refuge. As a founding pastor, I have experienced that rare love and admiration that comes from seeing something through from its birth. I am honored to have had the opportunity to do this project with the family of Refuge. Thank you to the Leadership Team for your time and willingness to help fulfill this dream. The faculty and staff at McAfee School of Theology have allowed me to grow, learn and develop without forcing me into a mold or tradition; for this I will be eternally grateful.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER	
1. I WAS A BENCH WARMER	1
The Comfort of the Bench.....	1
The Lasting Effect of the Bench.....	2
A Great Ballpark	3
Who is on the Team?.....	4
The Culture of the Ball Club.....	6
Spring Training	8
Definitions.....	9
Changing Positions.....	10
This is a Game Changer!.....	11
Let the Bench Go Cold	11
2. NEW TEAM DEVELOPMENT	14
Historical Background.....	14
Biblical Foundations of Leadership.....	23
Special Focus of Leadership	33
Process of Evaluation	39
Summary	43
3. THE PLAYBOOK.....	44
The Ball Park	44
The Community of the Ball Park	46

	Page
The Coach.....	50
Issues on the Team	51
Developing a New Game Plan.....	54
Summary	62
4. DISCOVERIES FROM SPRING TRAINING	63
Warm Up	63
First Inning, Discovery Phase	71
Second Inning, Dream Phase.....	73
Third Inning, Design Phase	76
Fourth Inning, Destiny Phase	77
The Final Score	79
Summary	83
5. A NEW SEASON.....	85
Transition on the Team.....	85
New Team Vision.....	87
New Positions.....	91
Summary	93
APPENDICES	95
A. INFORMED CONSENT.....	95
B. LETTER TO LEADERSHIP TEAM.....	99
C. PRE LEADERSHIP TEAM SURVEY	100
D. POST SURVEY LEADERSHIP TEAM	101
E. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	102
F. POWERPOINT USED IN INITIAL MEETING	103
G. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER	104
BIBLIOGRAHPY	106

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. What brought you to Refuge?.....	61
2. What made you decide to be in leadership?.....	62
3. How satisfied are you with your ministry?.....	62
4. What is your most rewarding experience at Refuge?	63
5. How is your relationship with members of the LT?	64
6. What is the strongest ministry at Refuge?	65
7. What makes Refuge unique?	65
8. Following the Spring Training, what is best at Refuge?.....	74
9. How satisfied are you with your ministry following the Spring Training?.....	75
10. How have relationships changed during the Spring Training?.....	76
11. What is impact on Refuge from this Spring Training?.....	76
12. Change in ministry mentality.....	82

ABSTRACT

BILLY D. THOMAS SR.
COMING OFF THE BENCH: COACHING THE LEADERSHIP TEAM TO LEAD
AT REFUGE CHURCH IN PERRY, GEORGIA.
Under the direction of ROBERT N. NASH, Ph.D.

Benchwarmers exist in the local church as much as they exist in baseball. There are those who enter the church with dreams of doing great ministry, but who soon find themselves sitting on the bench watching the game. They have accepted a relationship with Jesus Christ, joined a local fellowship and discovered comfort on the bench.

I was catapulted off the bench when I became the founding pastor of Refuge Church in 2004. In the beginning I was the coach, pitcher, and catcher, as well as the water boy. Nevertheless, during the last ten years Refuge has become a wonderful fellowship. The purpose of this study evolved as individuals joined Refuge with a desire to be on the team and I was unsuccessful in bringing them into the game.

The study was designed to establish a strategy for leadership development at Refuge. I not only wanted to create a leadership development process, but also to enact a functional change in all of the leadership roles. A leadership team (LT) structure does exist at Refuge, but this has generally consisted of persons who held a position, but have not been trained to develop their ministries.

Amazing things have been accomplished during the first ten years of Refuge. By focusing on these accomplishments, the Leadership Team can begin to see the potential of the future. By using the Appreciative Inquiry model, the LT can enhance its ability to lead by evaluating its gifts and assets as well as those of the congregation, and by articulating a vision for the church in light of these gifts and assets.

This ministry project endeavored to answer two questions concerning the LT at Refuge:

1. How can individuals be equipped, empowered and encouraged to understand their competency as leaders of specific ministries at Refuge through an Appreciative Inquiry Model project?

2. What alterations in leadership style can the Pastor employ to empower the LT to perform their ministries at Refuge?

The empowerment process was difficult for the pastor who has held the primary leadership position at the church for ten years. Therefore, the pastor was a participant in the leadership training sessions and personality studies to assist in this process.

The project used a qualitative study method of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). With this method of study, this project attempted to develop a new culture of leadership at Refuge by instituting a training protocol for the LT. Leadership Team members participated in an Appreciative Inquiry Summit (Spring Training) for four weekends. During this time they experienced a personality inventory,

attended group training events, read one book and participated in a personal coaching session with the pastor.

CHAPTER ONE

I WAS A BENCH WARMER

I have always loved baseball. Some of my fondest memories of growing up centered on the great American pastime. I enjoyed being a spectator, but I always wanted to play. I was very young when my father introduced me to the Little League in our city. I was so excited to get on a team, get my uniform and then my hat. My father took me to the store and purchased my glove, bat, cleats and everything else needed to be in the game. I was ready. I looked the part. I had the uniform and I remember cheering my team on year after year, from the bench.

The Comfort of the Bench

I was the bench warmer. I claimed to play for many years, when in fact, I was nothing more than the bench warmer. I cheered my team on as we won game after game. The coach would put me into the game for an inning or two; in fact, two was the maximum that I can ever remember playing. As the years passed, I tried to blame the coaches for not teaching me, my parents for not buying the appropriate equipment and even the sun for not shining on the days that I wanted to play! It was my own fault, however; I became comfortable on that bench. It was on the bench that I was able to drink my cokes and eat my candy bars, for strength, in case I was given the chance to play. It was also on that bench that I stopped trying to lose weight so I could actually run the bases or

swing the bat so that I could hit the ball. That bench became the death of my destiny.

Benchwarmers exist in the local church as much as they exist in baseball. There are those who begin with dreams of doing great ministry, but who soon find themselves sitting on the bench, watching the game. They have accepted a relationship with Jesus Christ, joined a local fellowship and find that they have become comfortable on the bench. They cheer on their team; they even wear the hat and shirt to show their support. However, when the ball is in play, they find themselves watching instead of participating in the game.

The Lasting Effect of the Bench

The life I live today is built on the experiences that I have encountered for the last fifty years. As the founding pastor of The Refuge Church (Refuge), I recognize that I carried into the church planting process experiences that would affect the foundation. After ten years of experiencing personal burnout, missteps, and mishaps, the time has come for a transformation in the way the church does ministry. The transformation is not just for Refuge as a church, but also for the leadership of the church.

I was catapulted off the bench when Refuge began. In the beginning, I was the coach, pitcher, and catcher, as well as the water boy. There was a time that I looked like a one-man team trying to do it all—at least, that is how it looked from my eyes. As members came in and tried to accept leadership, they were unsuccessful because I had become so accustomed to playing the game by myself that I failed to comprehend the need to empower them.

I entered the Doctor of Ministry program with a desire to obtain the necessary knowledge to establish a strategy for leadership development at Refuge. I not only wanted to create a leadership development process, but also to enact a functional change in all of the leadership roles. I intend to fulfill all of my expected pastoral leadership roles at Refuge; however, there must be a strategy for equipping, empowering and encouraging leaders. Without a strategy for leadership development, leaders would be unable to function in their leadership roles if the pastoral position became vacant at Refuge.

A Great Ballpark

Refuge began in 2004 as an Assemblies of God church plant. Refuge is located in Perry, Georgia, a community of 10,000 residents and in a county of 150,000 people. There is a military base approximately ten miles away and therefore there is constant transition within the community. Perry is a blue-collar community with a small town perspective that has traditionally been opposed to growth. Refuge is in the county outside of city limits. Therefore, building and growth have only required county approval.

Since its inception, Refuge has completed four building programs and currently owns facilities located on ten acres that can accommodate 250 people. Refuge presently has an average attendance of 150 people on Sunday mornings. Refuge has a family friendly atmosphere and in ten years has not experienced any serious conflicts. Most who attend enjoy the services, support the church financially and appreciate the hour and half that they spend there on Sunday morning. For many pastors this would be a dream position, but I am

aware that I will not remain in the role that I am presently serving forever; this forces my dream into a nightmare when I realize the lack of functional leadership within the fellowship.

Refuge, like many other local churches, has many good people sitting on the bench. Some members have a desire to be in a leadership role, but fail to truly understand the sacrifice or commitment that is required in a position of leadership. The majority, however, enjoy watching the game from the stands. The Leadership Team (LT) structure at Refuge consists of those who are in professional and lay leadership. Some people on the LT wear the shirt and hat and even hold a glove; but generally they are hoping the ball does not ever fly in their direction. The LT are faithful to meetings but seem unclear in their understanding of their leadership roles. When there are leadership challenges in their ministries, they often refer them to the pastor or simply ignore the situation. Again, the LT consists of good people who love God, their church, and their pastor; they simply do not know how to lead their ministries.

Who is on the Team?

The LT consists of twenty individuals, including church staff (pastor, minister of music, youth pastor and children's pastor), deacons and their spouses, as well as those who lead respective departments and ministries. Only seven have had formal training past high school. There has been a lack of professional training among the leadership team. In the first ten years, more time was given to construction of facilities than training of leaders.

Education and training for positions of ministry must become a priority at

Refuge. Due to lack of coaching, the LT has struggled to experience wins as they endeavored to recruit teams and participate in the game and the result is discouragement, frustration and despair. The LT goes through an emotional turmoil when they feel that their ministries are not progressing because the bench is simply too comfortable for people and they have failed in their efforts. The LT often find themselves dejected and so they return to the bench as well. These emotions have transferred into the fellowship and developed a culture that is not inspiring a winning attitude.

William Hull in his book *The Disciple-Making Pastor* develops the reasoning behind the establishment of conviction for change of this nature. He writes, "If the disciple-making pastor intends to get commitment from Christians, he must build convictions. A clearly understood objective produces sustained conviction."¹ Therefore, the coaching must begin with a conviction from the pastor of the value of Refuge to the Kingdom of God. According to Hull, "once the Christian has the big picture, he will need resources to join the cause."²

Conviction will establish the vision for leadership at Refuge. John P. Kotter states, "A great vision can serve a useful purpose even if it is understood by just a few key people. But the real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or activity have a common understanding

¹ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 112.

² Ibid., 112.

of its goals and direction.”³ With a common conviction and vision, there can be a leadership change at Refuge that will change the culture of the church.

The Culture of the Ball Club

Samuel Chand in his book *Cracking Your Church's Culture Code* explains that culture is “the personality of the church or nonprofit.”⁴ The personality of the church is not something that is written on paper and posted on a sign as a vision or mission statement: “Vision and strategy usually focus on products, services, and outcomes, but culture is about people -- the most valuable asset in the organization.”⁵ It is the culture of the fellowship that changes when feelings of inadequacy and frustration exist. Chand explains the positive signs of a good culture:

A strong, vibrant culture stimulates people to be and do their very best and reach the highest goals. Spiritual leaders point the way forward, but they invite meaningful participation from every person at all levels of the organization. Together, they work hard toward their common purpose, and they celebrate each other's accomplishments every step along the way. Trust is the glue that holds the organization together and gives it the strength it needs to excel.⁶

If Refuge is going to create a culture as described by Chand, there must be adjustments in leadership training, changes that encourage the LT to be vibrant and goal oriented. The LT members need encouragement and team building exercises. The LT must feel that they are participating in a game that

³ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), p. 85.

⁴ Samuel R. Chand, *Cracking Your Church's Culture Code* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

has a common vision or goal. This project seeks to develop a plan that will equip, empower and encourage the LT to fulfill the ministry that God has given them. Coaching the leadership team through the spring training model of this project will empower them to take ownership of their present ministries. Numerical growth is not the concern; rather, the concern is the attitude of ownership embraced by the leadership. Analyzing something by observation is difficult. Therefore, leaders will be establishing a meeting agenda and plans for their ministry. This will be examined through personal coaching as well as pre- and post-surveys to assist in reaching the conclusions.

While I aspire to see everyone at Refuge fulfill the destiny that God has for them, I am focusing this project on the development and training of the LT so that they may be encouraged to give time to their individual ministry teams, creating a sustainable and rewarding ministry at Refuge. The purpose of this qualitative study will be to develop a new culture at Refuge by initiating a training procedure for the LT that will equip, empower and encourage them to cultivate and lead their respective teams. LT members who desire training must commit to participating in personality inventories, surveys, group training and personal coaching over a four-week period. Participants will explore their personality traits, talents and ministry gifting through a “Spring Training” process. This will fulfill the two research questions of this project:

1. Can the LT be equipped, empowered and encouraged to understand their competency as leaders of specific ministries at Refuge through an Appreciative Inquiry Model project?

2. What alterations in leadership style can the Pastor employ to equip, empower, and encourage the LT to perform their ministries at Refuge?

Spring Training

Participants must commit to the entirety of the “Spring Training” event, attending all practices and participating in all functions. Participants will commit to the following procedures:

1. An informational meeting to discuss the process and invite all members of the LT to participate. The training will be for four consecutive Friday night and Saturday mornings. Each person that chooses to participate will do a pre-evaluation of their leadership mindset to compare to a post-evaluation during his or her post-interview.

2. A session on *Christian Lifestyle Concepts Seminar* led by Dwayne Barnes using the DISC behavior assessment tool. Dwayne Barnes is a certified Behavioral consultant that conducts staff and congregational seminars in Georgia. He is ordained with the Assemblies of God and has been an instructor in the Georgia School of Ministry. He holds certification through *The Institute for Motivational Living* in New Castle, Pennsylvania. The DISC tool interprets four different behavioral traits: dominance, inducement, submission, and compliance. Each person has the opportunity to explore his or her own natural talents and abilities.

3. A session on *Where I Fit in the Ministry* conducted by Leon Reece that focuses on practical training for church ministry. Reece is a Doctor of Ministry graduate of McAfee School of Theology and presently serves as the Assistant

Vice President for Professional Studies at Point University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Reece has also served as Senior Pastor in an Assemblies of God church.

4. Each person will read the book *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ* by Bruce Bugbee. During the third session, this book will assist in the team building activities.

5. Participation in a ceremony of completion in the final session.

6. A post interview after the completion of all activities.

Because of the comprehensive nature of this training and because most of the LT is employed full time, dinner will be served each Friday night as will a continental breakfast on Saturday morning. Dates for the monthly meetings are set on the church calendar and other meetings can be scheduled individually.

The goal of this project is to develop the LT so that it is equipped, empowered and encouraged to cultivate and lead its respective teams; therefore, there will be modifications in functional roles. Members of the LT will be empowered to begin calling the plays. The coach is always watching the game; the coach's eyes are never off the team. However, the calls that are made on the field are made by the team captain and the players. For Refuge to develop this style of leadership, the roles and positions of the LT will have to be empowered.

Definitions

Appreciative Inquiry. According to the *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, "AI is based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well and these strengths can be the starting point for creating positive

change.”⁷ It also states that “AI, an approach to organizational analysis and learning, is intended for discovering, understanding, and fostering innovations in social organizational arrangements and processes.”⁸ As a study method, AI will assist in the discovery of what has worked well at Refuge to determine the approach for the future.

The AI Summit (Spring Training) is an organized time to implement the processes of AI and fulfill four phases: discovery, dream, design and destiny.

Leadership Team. Seventeen members of the *Leadership Team* participated in the Spring Training. Team members must have been an official member of the church for at least six months, faithfully support the church and be actively involved in a ministry. Each member of the LT is responsible as a couple with their spouse or on his or her own of leading a ministry at Refuge. The ministries that were represented in the Spring Training were Senior Adults, Women’s Ministries, Children’s Ministries, Music Ministries, Boy’s Ministries, Outreach Ministries, Nursery, Sound and Technology, Hospitality, Pastor and Elders.

Changing Positions

Because the pastor of Refuge has served for ten years as the only pastor of the church and, because the tradition of the Assemblies of God focuses primarily on pastoral leadership, the transfer of leadership and the empowerment

⁷ David L. Cooperrider, Diana Whitney, Jacqueline M. Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders of Change* (Bedford Heights, OH: Lakeshore Publishers, 2203), p. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

process will be the most difficult on the pastor. For this reason, the pastor will be a participant in the leadership training sessions and personality studies. The pastor will have to accept that the new position is in the dugout and not only on the field. When the pastor coaches from the dugout, the LT will understand that it has the ability as a team to play the game.

This is a Game Changer!

This type of game change can be difficult. There will be questions, frustrations and even the possible loss of leaders. Chand explains these changes in the following way:

Many leaders focus on changing the external in their church world, but changing a culture rivets our attention on the deeper internal issues: relationships, values, and other matters of the heart. To be a good pastor or team leader, it isn't enough only to think through what you're going to do. You must also take time to consider all of the contingencies and write a comprehensive transitional plan.⁹

Five areas are foundational to this process of team development: the vision of Refuge, ministry territory, team compatibility, personal well-being of the leader; and open communication. If these five areas strengthen throughout the process, then every member of the LT will trust that the modifications will result in greater ministry success.

Let the Bench Go Cold

This change in leadership style will be a challenge for the pastor and leadership team, as well as for the larger church. Even a leader like Moses had to learn to approach leadership through team ministry. In Exodus 18, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, confronted him and demanded that Moses adopt a team

⁹ Ibid., 154.

ministry approach to leadership of the people of Israel. This biblical story serves as a foundation for the transition in leadership style at Refuge, providing a biblical basis for a new vision. The hope is to experience a transformation in leadership approach that will be as successful as the one that Moses experienced in Exodus 18. This transition and transformation will be one that changes the role and influence of the pastor. It will impose personal transformation on every level of the fellowship. It will enable the LT to move from the bench to the field in a process by which they have been equipped, empowered and encouraged. As they embrace their full potential as leaders, then the foundation of Refuge will be strengthened and the church will be much more successful in its ministry efforts.

The greatest variable in this project is the human variable. Human beings are most successful when they understand themselves to be engaged in work that is significant and for which they are uniquely qualified. In simple terms, they must understand themselves to be participating in something for which they have been destined. The LT must understand that its destiny as a team is to lead the church to accomplish its vision.

A yearning to succeed emerges when the focus of the human variable is fixed on destiny. Psalm 138 is a powerful psalm that stands in marked contrast to Psalm 137. The transition between the two psalms is striking in that Psalm 137 speaks of the silence of Israel when it was unable to sing praises in the midst of its captivity while Psalm 138 expresses joy in the midst of worship and praise for all that God has done. Two different cultures reflect in these two Psalms, modeling the reality and possibility of transformation and reversal of

attitudes and perspectives. The end of Psalm 138 draws attention to the source of change. Verse 8 states: “The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.”¹⁰ Our destiny is God’s purpose. The Lord will fulfill His plan because He loves us. Refuge is His church and He will not forget the work of His hands.

¹⁰ All scripture citations are from the English Standard Version (2001) unless otherwise noted.

CHAPTER TWO

NEW TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Chapter One presented the need to develop a training program for the Refuge LT that is experiential, both for the team and for the pastor/researcher. Refuge is an Assemblies of God church and the professional clergy have led the AG historically. The change that is being proposed will be one that empowers the LT to embrace an appreciative inquiry approach to leadership that empowers them for ministry and that moves the team beyond the traditions of the Assemblies of God in theology and leadership which it followed in its first ten years.

Historical Background

The Assemblies of God (AG) developed from the Apostolic Faith Movement founded by Charles F. Parham. According to Gary B. McGee, an influential historian of the Assemblies of God tradition, Parham “assumed the title ‘Projector of the Apostolic Movement’.”¹¹ Parham, a self-proclaimed leader of the Pentecostal movement, began as a Methodist minister influenced by the Wesleyan holiness theology. The Wesleyan holiness theology helped to form the doctrinal foundation of the AG. Parham left the Methodist Church and formed a new organization in 1895 following his personal experiences with divine healing

¹¹ Gary B. McGee, *People of the Spirit: The Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2004), 52.

and what he considered the biblical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

During the first few years, Parham encountered criticism as well as low attendance during his revival style meetings. Although discouraged, Parham continued in his meetings. In 1903, Parham traveled to El Dorado Springs, Missouri to speak. According to McGee, "There he prayed for the healing of Mary A. Arthur from Galena, Kansas. Her dramatic healing in one eye and other ailments drew immediate attention to his ministry."¹² With a renewed vision, Parham traveled to Galena, Kansas to begin a series of meetings. McGee reports "the astonishing response resulted in over eight hundred converts, a thousand reputed healings, and several hundred baptized in the Holy Spirit with speaking in other tongues. The Apostolic Faith movement had risen to new life."¹³

Following the meetings in the Midwest, Parham moved to Houston, Texas to establish his headquarters as well as a Bible college. McGee noted, "Parham spent considerable time training his students on how to conduct street meetings and evangelistic campaigns."¹⁴ By 1906, the movement had reached a following of approximately ten thousand. The Pentecostal experience that Parham was teaching was prominently proclaimed in Topeka, Kansas, Houston, Texas and Zion, Illinois. Smaller cities were reporting revivals, but these three cities were the centers of training and leadership.

¹² Ibid., 56.

¹³ Ibid., 56-57.

¹⁴ Ibid., 57.

During 1904-1905, Wales experienced the same style of Pentecostal revival. Joseph Smale, pastor of the prestigious First Baptist Church in Los Angeles, made the journey to Wales to meet with Evan Roberts, the leader of the Wales revival. When he returned to the United States, his first message in the pulpit brought great dissention. Larry Martin states, "his first Sunday sermon was 'The Great Welsh Revival'. The service lasted from 11:00 a.m. until 2:15 that afternoon".¹⁵ The church board asked Smale to leave his pastorate. Smale founded another church, First New Testament Church, in the same vicinity and continued to preach and pray for a Pentecostal experience in Los Angeles. Other churches in Los Angeles began to associate with Smale and pray for this same experience. Many of these were African-American churches.

The history of the Assemblies of God began to develop with the move of William J. Seymour to Houston, Texas. Seymour, an African American, was born in Centerville, Louisiana, to former slaves who raised him as a Baptist. Seymour had moved with his parents to Memphis and Indianapolis looking for work. It was during the time that Seymour lived in Indianapolis that he was converted. Larry Martin states that, "this life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ marked the beginning of a new pilgrimage for Seymour."¹⁶ Eventually Seymour moved to Houston, Texas and attended a church pastored by a worker of Parham's. Seymour received access to Parham's Bible College. At the Bible College, he listened to the lectures, but had to sit apart from the other students because of

¹⁵ Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour and a history of the Azusa Street Revival* (Pensacola, FL: Christian Life Books, 2014), 122.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

his race. A group from one of the African American churches influenced by Smale in Los Angeles visited Parham's school and heard Seymour preach. In 1906, Parham went to Los Angeles as the new pastor of the African American church. Therefore, it was Seymour who linked together Smale in Los Angeles, Parham in Houston, Texas and the Pentecostal revival that gave birth to the Assemblies of God.

Seymour faced opposition to his message and was removed from the church he was pastoring. He did not leave Los Angeles, but continued to preach and teach in local homes with the congregants. Pentecostal revival began to break out in local homes with people testifying that they had been healed and were speaking in other tongues as a physical sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to McGee,

Word of these events traveled quickly in both the African-American and Caucasian communities. For several nights, speakers preached on the porch to the crowds on the street below. Believers from Hutchins's missions, First New Testament Church, and various holiness congregations prayed for the Pentecostal baptism. Finally, after the front porch collapsed, the group rented the former Stevens African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church at 312 Azusa Street in early April. A Los Angeles newspaper referred to it as a 'tumbledown shack.'¹⁷

The revival continued and the reports spread across the nation. People began to travel to Los Angeles from many states as well as Canada and Europe. The revival movement was labeled a Pentecostal movement, McGee noted that,

¹⁷ Ibid., 59.

“Most who visited the mission came to receive the empowerment of Spirit baptism and be equipped with new languages.”¹⁸

An interesting phenomenon of these early revivals was that race was not an issue in the Los Angeles churches. McGee shares that “For a short time, African Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians, and others prayed and sang together, creating a dimension of equality that allowed men, women, and children to have fellowship collectively and participate in the worship as led by the Spirit.”¹⁹ After testimonies spread concerning the revival in Los Angeles, Parham traveled there in a desire to combine the ministries from Houston and Los Angeles. When Parham arrived, he was so offended by the mixture of races that he disassociated himself with Seymour and the Azusa mission. Parham’s prejudice and the prejudice of other Anglo-American participants in the movement forced the first separation in the Pentecostal church.

In April of 1914, a meeting was held at the Grand Opera House in Hot Springs, Arkansas. At this meeting, “over three hundred Pentecostal believers had gathered to consider moving beyond just spiritual unity to a limited measure of organizational unity, a church organization with legal standing.”²⁰ Those that gathered were Caucasian, but they invited a choir from an African-American church to sing. The purpose of this meeting was to secure the unity of ministry at home, declare doctrinal unity, begin Bible training and help support overseas

¹⁸ Ibid., 61.

¹⁹ Ibid., 61.

²⁰ Ibid., 108.

missions. These were the desires that led to the founding of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. As the AG has continued to define itself as a fellowship, it has also developed an organization for the future of the fellowship. Margaret Poloma states, “The Assemblies of God has primarily a congregational form of government which allows for self-determination, a trait that is jealously guarded by local churches and pastors.”²¹

The purpose of the meeting was for unity. William Molenaar states, “Believing that Christ would soon return, Assemblies of God founders stressed the importance of unity. In a 1914 article, Founding Chairman E. N. Bell warned readers “We have no time for strife or contention,” because “the coming of the Lord is close at hand.” Bell instead encouraged Pentecostals to “work in love, unity, and peace for our Master.”²²

Within a few months individual AG districts began to form across the United States. Ministers were establishing churches to be part of the AG and revivals continued as the movement spread. The movement grew from the Pentecostal revival that inspired emotional excitement and increased faith. However, because of the lack of training, many ministers did remain in local pastorates for long durations. Many congregations did not experience a discipleship or leadership coaching as most of the ministers had received no

²¹ Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 9.

²² William J. Molenaar, *Christian Unity: A Founding Principle of the Assemblies of God, Assemblies of God Heritage Volume 34* (Springfield, MO: The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 2014), 57.

training. This left many of the new churches facing doctrinal struggles as well as emotional fanaticism. All they understood was that they were experiencing something new and wanted to move forward. According to Glenn Gohr, “they would say things like, ‘We don’t want to go back into an old, dead organization like we came out of.’²³

The AG continued to grow in spite of the doctrinal conflicts, breaks over race relations and other struggles that would plague the new organization. The national headquarters met challenges as it moved from Findley, Ohio to St. Louis, Missouri and eventually in 1918 to Springfield, Missouri, where it is located today.

The leadership of the AG desired that it not be a denomination, but a cooperative fellowship. For this reason, many different styles of worship, understandings of scripture and personal preferences can be found integrated into the foundation of the AG. According to Poloma, “Menzie’s has observed a number of changes in Assemblies of God ritual that have occurred since World War II. The basic pattern of worship noted above continues, but there are now wide variations.”²⁴ The Sixteen Fundamental Truths of the AG is the doctrinal foundation of the cooperative fellowship: sixteen scripturally beliefs to which all affiliated churches agree. An affiliated church or a credentialed minister must

²³ Glenn Gohr, *Reflections of Hot Springs: Dollie Simms Was There, Assemblies of God Heritage Volume 34* (Springfield, MO: The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 2014), 17.

²⁴ Poloma, 186.

accept this doctrinal statement. The fact that most members in any local AG church have no concept of these truths is problematic.

When a minister attempts the written exam for credentials as an AG minister, the first requirement is to write down the sixteen truths with scriptural evidence. Knowing this, most have endeavored to memorize the truths before the exam. It is through this credentialing process that the AG maintains accountability in the local church. For the church to be affiliated, it must have a credentialed AG pastor. The church therefore affiliates as a cooperative fellowship church by agreeing to the fundamental truths; however, the minister is accountable through the credentialing process. Consequently, by the constitution and bylaws the minister automatically becomes the chair of the board, ex-officio member of every committee and final authority on most decisions.

The system has worked for over a hundred years. The AG has grown exponentially during that time. McGee states, "Over the years, the benefits of cooperative fellowship became more apparent. The scope of ministries also enlarged to encompass Jews, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other language groups, as well as those who were deaf and blind."²⁵

Each local AG church is different. As McGee writes, "The diversity of ministries, personalities, and creative methods enriched the growth of the Assemblies of God."²⁶ That diversity rests in the personality of the local pastor.

²⁵ McGee, 260.

²⁶ Ibid., 260.

The pastor exhibits the personality of the church. One of the greatest challenges is the difficulty for any pastor to be the authority as well as the personality of the congregation. Therefore, short pastoral tenures have been prevalent in the local AG churches. Often the pastor bears the weight of the church obligations, a reality that often leads to burn out and exhaustion.

The AG experienced transformation with the election of Thomas F. Zimmerman as General Superintendent in 1959. Zimmerman served for twenty-six years (1959-1985) and is the longest serving superintendent in the history of the AG. He was a kind, generous man who was open to talking with those who were preparing for ministry. He left a tremendous legacy within the AG.

During Zimmerman's tenure as Assistant Superintendent and then as Superintendent, he worked to establish colleges for training ministers as well as laity in a Christian atmosphere. Zimmerman assisted in the establishment of Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri as a liberal arts college of the AG. It was Zimmerman's view of denominational involvement that included a new awareness of training laity. McGee quotes Zimmerman as stating,

I see the denominational structure as providing a support system for the local church. Among the supports are materials and programs which help the church accomplish its ministries. I believe the denominational structure should provide an overall umbrella for the church, while at the same time remaining fluid enough to allow for a variety of expressions of ministry.²⁷

The Assemblies of God began a revolution in education in the early 1980's. The development of Christian-based colleges for those who wanted biblical training to

²⁷ Ibid., 360.

minister in the private sector provided a new opportunity for the church as a whole.

Thirty years have passed since Zimmerman began the shift in mindset of the AG towards the laity. During this time, there have been those who have opposed the idea, most of them coming from the “old Pentecostal” tradition. There is a new mindset within a new generation of ministers: they see laity as the ministers in the local church. For this reason, training is going beyond the professional ministry in the Bible college to include the training of laity in Christian liberal arts colleges and now in the local church.

Thomas Trask, Superintendent of the AG from 1993-2007, made the following statement in the fall 1998 edition of *Enrichment Journal*, the minister’s journal for the Assemblies of God:

We can't expect laity to take on ministry in the church until they are trained. Wise leaders will invest themselves in others to multiply ministry leaders. Jesus gathered the Twelve around Him and poured himself into them. The Twelve in turn poured themselves into others, and the multiplication factor took place. Pretty soon there was a whole army of people doing the work of the Kingdom, doing the work of ministry.²⁸

For this to become a reality, the historical fashion of the pastor leading the church must change. For this change to develop, the church must look to the Old and New Testament for new insight.

Biblical Foundations of Leadership

There are two facets taught in scripture concerning the training of the laity for leadership: equipping and empowerment. For a Pentecostal church to make

²⁸ Thomas E. Trask, “Mobilizing Laity in Ministry,” *Enrichment Journal*, 2008, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/199804/008_ask_the_supt.cfm (accessed April 11, 2015).

a change of this nature, the laity must be coached and equipped spiritually as well as educationally. Combining the two will bring a change in self-image of the laity as well as development of the local church. Those that hold to the pattern of the church being pastor-led will struggle with this new idea.

Some in the fellowship believe the traditional view that God will choose an individual to lead and fulfill the vision of the ministry. They have used examples of characters from the Old Testament: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Saul, and David. In each of these, God did choose an individual to lead. However, every one of them surrounded themselves with others to complete the work that God had given them. Noah had his family. Joseph had teams to fulfill the work during the famine. Saul and David had full courts and armies that helped to get the work accomplished. Moses had to assemble leaders before he failed. No one individual has ever been able to accomplish the full vision of God alone. Jesus himself, being fully God, assembled a group of disciples to fulfill His ministry. He understood the power of gathering a team around him to perpetuate the movement that he inaugurated.

In 2013, my father-in-law asked me to come to his house. He had been attending Refuge for about three years. Being a retired pastor, he had experienced some of the struggles that he was observing in my ministry. As my wife and I sat in his house waiting for him to get to his point, we wondered whether it was health, finances or some other situation that caused him to call for this meeting. When he began to speak, I was not prepared for what he had to say. He got to the point very quickly when he told me that I was the problem with

Refuge. He claimed that I was trying to do everything myself, was burning out quickly and not trusting the leaders to do the work. His comments stunned and hurt me, and I began to grow angry. We were completing our third building program and had experienced small but continual growth. Financially, we were doing better than most churches and I simply did not see the problem.

As I drove home after the meeting, I began to reflect on the words that he had said. My anger subsided long enough for me to think through what he had said. I attempted to pray. I realized that it was my own human response of defensiveness that caused me to react in the way that I did, I had to force myself to turn to scripture for answers to my dilemma. It was at that time that the story of Moses and his father-in-law Jethro became a shaping story for me and for Refuge.

Two stories emerged for me from Moses' life where he is presented with possibilities for leadership empowerment, one by his father-in-law and one by God. Exodus details the story of Israel's departure from Egypt. Supernatural miracles had taken place that prompted Pharaoh to allow Israel to escape from captivity. The plagues had affected everyone. Moses had continued to follow God and finally Israel gained freedom after four hundred and thirty years (Exodus 12:40). Great celebrations continued to take place as God led by cloud and fire. The crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus 14 created an even greater commitment of the people to their leader. God was doing a great work through Moses. Moses had the vision that God had given. The people experienced miracles

through Moses. Israel was marching forward, following Moses who was following God.

With the establishment of a new ministry, it is customary to experience miracles in finances, healings, and material provision. With a new ministry, a level of faith and expectancy appears to influence these types of miracles. Just as with Israel, success sometimes comes early to a new ministry as it embraces its newfound freedom. However, after the celebration of these initial successes, the daily operation of ministry begins. By Exodus 18, Moses appears, not as the supernatural miracle worker, but as the burned out leader of a growing ministry.

The story of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who brings his wife and two sons back to him at the summit of Horeb, the mountain of God, can be read in Chapter 18 as well. Moses shared with him all the great things that God had done for Israel. Jethro celebrated with Moses and recognized what God had done. The following day Jethro observed a situation that was of great concern. He knew all that God had accomplished for Israel, but he also saw that Moses was trying to do more than humanly possible. It was here that Jethro gave his advice to Moses:

The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws." Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good.

You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. Now obey my

voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace” (Exodus 18:13-23)²⁹

Moses was stunned. As Dennis Olson points out in his commentary on Numbers, “When Jethro counsels Moses to appoint additional leaders to assist him, Moses does not seem to realize there is any problem until Jethro tells him.”

³⁰ This was the way that I felt when my father-in-law confronted me. He pointed out a problem that I did not see. Transformation is only possible when the leader recognizes the problem or challenge, accepts its reality, and determines to repair it.

The result of this exchange between Moses and Jethro is profound: “So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said” (Ex. 18:24). This was not my exact response to my father-in-law. My understanding of this style of leadership had not yet developed. I was still embracing the assumption that God gave the vision to one man; therefore, one man had to be responsible.

²⁹ All scripture citations are from the *English Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.

³⁰ Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers*. (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1996), 62-63.

Numbers 11 provides another account when Moses faced circumstances that demanded that others should be empowered to lead. Israel was complaining about the circumstances that surrounded it. The people felt that Moses had led them out of Egypt even though they would have been better off if they had stayed in Egypt. According to Olson, "Numbers 11:4 begins with a rabble or disorderly mob stirring up the people's desire for meat and other foods they had enjoyed in Egypt."³¹ The greatest difference in this account is that God himself speaks to Moses and gives similar directions:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone" (Nu 11:16-17).

Moses is not just appointing leaders but God is taking some of the Spirit (spiritual authority) that is on Moses and sharing it with seventy elders. This action enabled the enhancement of their leadership skills in ways that benefitted Moses and that assisted in the attainment of God's purposes as well.

The circumstances surrounding this development were extremely different from the experience with his father-in-law. In Exodus, Israel had made honest requests for needs that it hoped to fulfill. In Numbers, Israel is complaining and endeavoring to force God to do what it wanted. Moses was also in a different state. In Exodus, he was simply doing the ministry and did not realize that he

³¹ Ibid., 64.

needed help. In Numbers, he was burned out and complaining to God. Moses cried out to God and said:

Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness (Nu. 11:13- 15).

Moses was pointing out all the complaints as being against him. As stated above, he says, “have I,” “Did I,” “Where am I,” “I am not able,” “if I,” “that I may”. The “I” was the focal point of Moses’ complaint to God. It was the complaint of Israel; it was what the complaint was doing to Moses personally. It was so serious that he would ask God to take his life. When ministers allow complaints of the church to become personal, they find themselves engaged in ministry alone. Such solitary ministry can lead to failures spiritually, morally, and physically.

It is worth noting that Parham, who was credited earlier in this chapter as one of the founding authorities on Pentecostal doctrine, separated himself from Seymour and others over race relations. It was in 1907 in San Antonio, Texas that he and another man were charged with sodomy. He maintained his innocence and the charges were eventually dropped. McGee states: “Ironically, the ‘Projector of the Apostolic Faith Movement’ spent the last two decades of his life in obscurity with a few thousand loyal followers.”³² The historical and biblical

³² McGee, 66.

truth maintains that a team becomes necessary for leadership as well as accountability in the ministry. There is safety in numbers.

Israel was acting very differently in the accounts as told in Exodus and Numbers. The response of God was also extremely different. Olson states an obvious difference between these two stories:

What has happened between these two texts is that God has established the covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. Before Sinai, Israel was like a newly adopted child who did not yet know the rules of the household. God, the divine Parent, bent over backwards to satisfy the legitimate needs of an Israel immediately out of Egypt. But by the time we reach Numbers, the people of Israel know their responsibility and is answerable for its relations to God.³³

The complaints of Israel in Numbers 11 began a repetitive rotation in which Israel complained, God became angry, Moses interceded, and God stopped the punishment. Numbers 1-10 had been a time of great celebration and contentment. It was only as chapter eleven unfolds that this complaining and the anger of God became habitual.

Olson explains the change as “the refusal to be satisfied with the gifts God has given that leads the rabble to stir up a mood of disgruntled dissatisfaction among the Israelites.”³⁴ While Moses determined the complaints were directed at him, the complaints were actually against God. As Moses observed these complaints, he then began his rant to God. Moses, in his solo act of ministry, had become dissatisfied with what God had done for him also. Olson explains the situation:

³³ Olson, 63.

³⁴ Ibid., 65.

The problem is that Moses feels alone in his responsibility, which weighs heavy upon his shoulders. The stress leads him over the edge. Moses appeals to his special and intimate relationship to God so God will grant the favor of putting Moses to death, separating him from the Israelites and from God.³⁵

God responds quickly to Moses' cries with the instruction to appoint the seventy leaders. After the appointment of leaders in the book of Exodus, the question had been raised as to where those leaders were at the time. Olson states that:

One rabbinic interpretation, troubled by this new appointment of seventy elders, concludes that the first group of seventy elders in Exodus was killed by divine fire in the first rebellion at Taberah in Num. 11:10-3. That left Moses to rule alone, and so God appointed a new group of elders. However, it is more likely that these stories are simply alternate traditions.³⁶

What took place with the first leaders cannot be confirmed. The only conclusion is that Israel was complaining, Moses wanted to die, and God stepped in with a solution.

The solution in Numbers 11 states that God was going to take some of the Spirit (spiritual authority) of Moses and place it on the chosen seventy:

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it (Numbers 11:24-25).

The exact meaning of the Spirit's work is unclear. Olson writes, "Leaders and prophets often have a special spirit that sets them off as rulers or guides for

³⁵ Ibid., 67.

³⁶ Ibid., 67.

the community.”³⁷ There are multiple times within scripture that the Spirit of God comes to groups and individuals. In the Pentecostal tradition, most would begin at Acts 2 and continue through the New Testament for references to the Spirit of God being given to human beings. This would be considering the Spirit as an internal, personal experience. The Spirit in the book of Numbers is the same Spirit of God, but in a different context. The context for the Spirit is for service to the people of God.

The Spirit that was on Moses that was to be transferred to the seventy was very likely obtained at the burning bush experience:

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt (Exodus. 3:1-10).

There are two points to consider in this scripture. First, Moses responded, “Here I am” and then God responded, “I will send you”. The work of God’s Spirit

³⁷ Ibid., 67.

requires both responses. The Spirit of God is often referred to as fire in scripture (Acts 2:3-4, Isaiah 4:4, Matthew 3:11-12, Luke 3:16-17, and I Thessalonians 5:19). Here it is possible, once again, that the depiction of fire is the Spirit. Moses responded affirmatively, God called him, and he experienced the fire of the Spirit to fulfill the service that God had called him to do.

The leadership of the seventy is a pattern within Jewish custom. Olson points out that “In the New Testament Gospel of Luke, Jesus sends out a group of seventy evangelists to assist him in his mission to preach and to heal (Luke 10:1-20).”³⁸ Now that the Spirit of God was working not only in the leader, but also in those that have been given the spirit of leadership through the leader, the ministry of the New Testament was progressing.

Special Focus of Leadership

There are multiple expressions of the Spirit living in and guiding individuals in the New Testament. There is a belief in the Pentecostal tradition that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, manifests in the life of believers at the beginning of the Church, in the book of Acts, chapter 2. It was then that the Holy Spirit came with tongues of fire and sat upon those gathered together in prayer. Those gathered had just experienced Jesus’ ascension and were anticipating His return. As they were waiting and praying, an experience took place such as never before:

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And

³⁸ Ibid., 67.

they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:2-4).

Many have read this as a description of the Pentecostal experience of the manifestation of tongues (spiritual language), but there was more to this experience than often depicted. It was through this type of experience that Peter received the ability to stand up and preach on that day. Acts 2:41 states that over three thousand were added to the Church that day because of Peter's ministry.

The Holy Spirit experienced on the day of Pentecost was the spiritual authority from God. It was also the Spirit that was on Christ that he promised to believers. It was also the Spirit that was on Moses that was shared with the seventy. It is also the same Spirit that is given to leaders and pastors. It is the same Spirit that can be imparted to empower leadership to do the work of the ministry.

In *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, Jurgen Moltmann explains the foundational purpose of the church:

The church has its true being in the work of Christ. That excludes an independent ontology of the church and permits merely the account of the history of Christ's acts. He works through 'Spirit and Word' (the mention of the Spirit before the Word is surprising in a Reformation catechism but is correct in view of the breadth of the Spirit and the abundance of the Spirit's gifts).³⁹

For the Spirit to work affectively within the church, the laity must be empowered and coached to do the ministry. As the coaching and the Spirit work in unity,

³⁹ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church In The Power Of The Spirit*. (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1977), 69.

together they enable the church to progress in the direction God intends.

According to Richard Dresselhaus, the Apostle Paul declared the complete work of the church in Ephesians 4:11-13:

In this passage the apostle Paul challenges spiritual leadership to so equip the body of Christ that each member is prepared to see life as a holistic opportunity for ministry and service. Here then is a job description for every authentic, dedicated, and sincere spiritual leader. Pastor, this is what we are to be about. We are equippers. Facilitators. Motivators. Vision casters. Enablers. It is our calling to empower God's people for works of service.⁴⁰

In examining Ephesians 4:11-13, Dresselhaus states, “What is the united purpose for the offices of leadership? The clarity and simplicity is profound: ‘to prepare God's people for works of service.’ That's it. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers have one assignment.”⁴¹ Ephesians 4:11 gives to us this list of offices of professional ministry. This is the fivefold ministry.⁴² The fivefold ministry gifts were given to the church in order “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). If the leader is serving in one of the fivefold ministry gifts, then the purpose of service must be for the fulfillment of this verse. The Apostle Paul goes further in chapter four explaining how to fulfill this calling. It is after he had described what the life would exemplify that he finally says, “And do not grieve

⁴⁰ Richard Dresselhaus, “The Long Reach of Laity,” *Enrichment Journal*, 2008, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/199804/008_ask_the_supt.cfm (accessed April 13, 2015).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² There are some that question whether all five ministries are available today, but that is not for this discussion. I accept that this is the fivefold ministry gifts that were given at that time.

the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). This means that you grieve the Holy Spirit by your sin. For a leader in the body of Christ, the greatest sin is the sin of disobedience. In Romans, Paul addresses the sin of Adam when he says, “For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.”⁴³ It is understood that Paul is asserting that everyone was born into sin because of Adam and that by Christ all can be made righteous. As leaders, we are in disobedience and grieving the Holy Spirit by not equipping the laity to fulfill the work of the ministry. Dresselhaus said, “When spiritual leadership empowers God's people for works of service, the body of Christ is built up in unity, knowledge, and maturity so that its impact in the world will be profound.”⁴⁴

Change in church is difficult. Change in clergy is difficult. Yet, change in the church and among the clergy is necessary. The key to this change is a change in the mindset of the church and the minister. Paul instructed us towards this change in the book of Romans,

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and

⁴³ Romans 5:19.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (Romans 12:1-8).

Paul instructs believers in three things: first, to renew their mind for the discovery of the will of God; second, to not think that they are more important than they are; and third, to understand that everyone has a place in the Kingdom of God. Understanding these three instructions is essential for the renewing of the mind.

In Reggie McNeal's, *The Present Future*, there is a comparison of the old and the new reformation. The new reformation is the releasing of people to do the ministry. McNeal writes, "The last Reformation moved the church closer to home. The new Reformation is moving the church closer to the world."⁴⁵ As the church is moving closer to the world, there is a necessity of being Spirit led. The leadership of the church has the ability to be equipped, empowered and encouraged. However, it is only by the leading of the Spirit of God that any church will ever be able to fulfill this vision.

The New Testament is the story of the church. In the midst of that story, you find the stories of many characters as well as individual churches with their diverse characteristics, some of which church leaders will want to retain and some of which they will not want to retain. Perhaps the church at Philippi serves as the best model for Refuge. Acts 16 explains the foundational history of the church at Philippi. During Paul's second missionary journey, he had experienced

⁴⁵ Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 43.

a supernatural vision of a man from Macedonia that instructed him to change his course and go to Macedonia. Paul, Silas and Timothy traveled to Macedonia following the leading of the Spirit. Philippi was the first city that Paul visited on this trip. Paul met Lydia who was a worshipper of God and heard Paul speaking. She believed, was baptized, and became a leader in the church at Philippi. Following the conversion of Lydia and her household, Paul had another supernatural experience. He cast a demon out of a girl used to make money for her owner. With the loss of income, they brought legal charges against Paul and Silas and had them placed in prison.

At midnight, Paul and Silas were in jail singing and praying as an earthquake erupted. The jail doors were broken and the chains that were holding them fell off. The jailer supposed that they were gone, but they were still there. The jailer accepted Christ, he, and his household were baptized. Paul and Silas went free and they left Philippi after encouraging the new converts.

Few ministries begin with exemplary conversions, demons cast out of children, earthquakes shaking and jail doors opened. Without question, Philippi made an impact as a church. Not only did the church at Philippi make an impact on the city, but also it made an impact on Paul. Paul's attitude about the church at Philippi was different from his attitude about the other churches to which he related.

Calvin J. Roetzel stated in his book, *The Letters of Paul*, that "The relationship between Paul and the Philippian church remained warm, supportive,

and affectionate.”⁴⁶ The mutual love and support between Paul and the church was evident by the support that the church sent to Paul and the joy written in this New Testament letter. Roetzel said, “In spite of the competing claims, the internal strife, and the external threats, there is a genuine warmth and human tenderness in Philippians that is refreshing when compared with the bitter clashes in Galatians and 2 Corinthians.”⁴⁷

Process of Evaluation

Using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) method, I will be evaluating the approach to leadership at Refuge over the last ten years. The intention is to encourage the participants by identifying what is working well at Refuge and to equip, empower and encourage them to further their individual ministries. Paul essentially models an AI approach to leadership in that he looks to the future by sharing with the church at Philippi what they have done correctly. Four theological foundations from the book of Philippians provide the foundation for this approach and can assist in the development of a new mindset in each participant:

First, I am full of joy that we are partners together.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my

⁴⁶ Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*. (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2009), 122.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 125.

imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel (Philippians 1:3-7).

In his commentary on *Philippians*, Gordon Fee writes, “He now indicates the basis of his joy, which serves as further reason for his thanksgiving: their partnership (*koinonia*) in the furtherance of the gospel.”⁴⁸ As Paul shared his joy for the church at Philippi, he fully understood that they were partners together with Christ in sharing the gospel. Similarly, for this project to be successful there must be a feeling of comradeship between the pastor and the LT. The LT must know that the pastor is proud of them and appreciates them. The LT must understand that this is not something just for the pastor, but it is something that they are doing together.

Second, we must accept that this project is not only about Refuge Church’s Leadership Team:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-4).

When the LT is working together with one common goal, that goal must be the goal that God has given. Therefore, the goal of the project is never about the individuals on the LT, but for those that they will lead. Fee states, “The cure is the same for all: in humility before God, each of us putting the interests of others ahead of our own, rather than constantly looking at the other to supply our

⁴⁸ Gordon Fee, *Philippians* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 47.

needs.”⁴⁹ As changes take place in the mindset of every participant, it is anticipated that a servant attitude will be manifest.

Third, no one has yet achieved the final goal.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained (Philippians 3:12-16).

The goal that will be instilled is not the goal of attaining a summit, but being more like Christ. As Fee says, “In context the ‘there’, of course, is not heaven or reward as such but the final prize of knowing Christ even as Paul himself is known.”⁵⁰ The goal of this project is to mature and grow in Christ. Leadership is developed by following after another leader. Each leader must be displaying the goal of becoming like Christ. For this mindset to be established, everyone must forget those things that were not successful and concentrate on the things that lead us toward the goal. The goal is the fulfillment of the vision that God has given to each of us.

Fourth, keep the mind’s perspective focused on the characteristics of the Spirit.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is

⁴⁹ Ibid., 89.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 153.

anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me--practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:7-9).

Fee wrote:

There is nothing else like verse 8 in Paul's extant letters. It reflects a world with which the Philippians were familiar before they had ever become followers of Christ and friends of Paul; for although some of these words are common stock in Jewish wisdom, they are especially the language of Hellenistic moralism. In effect Paul tells the Philippian believers to take into account the best of their Greco-Roman heritage, as long as it has moral excellence and is praiseworthy.⁵¹

In the AI summit, the LT will be looking at accomplishments and the talents that have already resourced Refuge. Theologically, Paul is encouraging the church at Philippi to look at their past and take those accomplishments that were good and build upon them to become more like Christ. Even before the church at Philippi had come to the knowledge of Christ, they had successful moral accomplishments. Paul is encouraging them to reach into the past and see how God had been working in them already.

The objective of the changed mindset is that it becomes more reliant upon the Spirit of God than upon the flesh. When the mind is reliant upon the Spirit of God, there is peace that will guard every circumstance that is experienced. When this peace takes over the mind, the mind begins to view the world differently.

Paul ended the letter to the church at Philippi with a common conclusion that he had used in other letters, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Philippians 4:23). Paul was intent on tying the letter together about the

⁵¹ Ibid., 178.

grace of Christ. Every chapter had a facet of the personality of Christ, his plan, his humility, his righteousness and his provision. The letter was written with the intent of encouraging the church at Philippi to continue in the faith and to finish the course. Only when the grace of Christ is experienced as well as demonstrated will this be complete.

Summary

This project will utilize an Appreciative Inquiry approach to build upon the best practices of the Assemblies of God tradition and of the best practices of Moses and Paul in building a team approach to leadership. Utilizing this approach allows the researcher to concentrate on the positive issues involved in the foundation of the AG as well as Refuge. With full understanding that there are negatives in both areas, the positive reinforcement will develop a hope and desire for future.

Moses experienced the contribution of his father-in-law and was able to organize the laity to fulfill the vision given by God. With this same intensity, this project will endeavor to learn from the similar experiences and develop the LT to take the leadership initiative of their prospective ministries. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi of the positive things they had accomplished; this project will point to the positive accomplishments of the first ten years of Refuge as building blocks toward a significant future of shared leadership.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLAYBOOK

Chapter Two developed the historical, biblical and the theological foundation for the development of leadership at Refuge. The history of the Assemblies of God, and the pastor's own personal experience, and biblical interpretations that relied on historical studies confirmed the need for change in the style of leadership of Refuge.

Chapter Three will look at the context of Refuge and how that context affects the future of the church. The culture of Refuge mirrors the culture of the community; therefore, the change proposed is a change that affects the attitudes of the LT not only in the church but also in the community. The hope is that this program will be a life-changing experience for all participants.

The Ball Park

Refuge is an Assemblies of God church in Perry, Georgia. Refuge was founded in January of 2001 with four members: my wife, our two children and me. The church began with no financial or membership support from other churches or the AG. The history of the AG in Perry had begun over fifty years prior to the founding of the church. Because of the constant failure of previous church plants and the significant financial investment, the executives of the fellowship made a decision that no church would be planted in Perry. In October of 2003, I requested permission to allow my family to plant the church with the

agreement that we assumed all responsibilities and financial obligations.

Believing that it was a call from God to plant this church, we began preparing for what would be required of us.

After the initial launch of a church plant, there are recommended processes that ensure that the church plant will flourish. Having had this training in church planting as well as having been a mentor for church planting boot camps, I understood the challenges and the process. With no money and no support, we simply skipped them all. I accepted a job outside of full-time ministry for the first time in twenty-five years to support my family. The AG owned a two-acre piece of property purchased on a handshake between two older pastors many years before. As the presbyter for the section, I was asked to go to Perry and sell the property.

When I stepped on the property with my wife, I told her that God spoke to me to plant a church on this property. The district had a financial obligation of \$21,000 on the property and I received a bill for that amount the week following my decision to plant the church with no support. There was a dilapidated double wide trailer on the property that had been deserted and abandoned. After a month of cleaning, we put out a small sign and began having prayer services in the living room. There was no advertisement or publicity, though there was much prayer and faith. Word of mouth began to spread and soon a small congregation of about twenty people had assembled. At the end of the first year, there was no space in the double wide trailer. All walls were removed that were not structurally necessary. Discussion began to surface concerning the possibility of

building on the property. There was not enough money to pay a pastor; but we had no choice, as there were no facilities available to rent. We began our first building program in October of 2005. Within eight months, we had completed our first building which was dedicated in the summer of 2006. This building was five thousand square feet with a sanctuary that would seat one-hundred, a coffee shop, offices, restrooms and nursery. The church had sacrificed and built with a belief that this facility would last for many years. Within twelve months, there was an understanding that we had only begun with the building process.

The church has progressed through four building programs since January of 2004 and presently has over fifteen thousand square feet in the main facility. Refuge owns over ten acres of land. The present facility is a sanctuary that will seat 250 and that includes classrooms, offices, youth sanctuary, and fellowship hall. Located on the property is a separate children's facility, two houses used as rentals as well as a large storage garage and pavilion. The value of all property ten years ago was approximately \$22,000. The appraised value of the present property is \$1.6 million. There is an indebtedness of only \$420,000. The rent from the trailers makes over half of the payments.

The Community of the Ball Park

Perry, Georgia is the county seat for Houston County, Georgia. Houston County comprises three cities: Centerville, Warner Robins and Perry. Fourteen smaller communities complete the county. Warner Robins is the largest of the three cities and the surrounding communities are included in statistics for Warner Robins. Houston County is just south of Macon, Georgia. Because Perry is

located just two hours north of the Florida border, the weather is warm and there is normally no snowfall during the winter months. The city of Perry has approximately twelve thousand people within the city limits. Houston County has approximately one hundred and forty thousand people. Refuge is located outside of the Perry city limits in the county. The Church is approximately two miles from the Perry city limits, but is referred to as “the church way out there”.

Perry is an old southern town that has chosen stability over growth. The former mayor retired at the age of eighty-one after serving for twenty-one years. He passed away only five months after his retirement from failing health. At his retirement, it was announced that he was the longest serving elected mayor in the state of Georgia. Change is not something that happens often in Perry. The establishment and survival of a new church is rare. Refuge is the only surviving church established in the last ten years other than a single United Methodist church plant. Many have attempted. Most new churches lasted approximately one year. Most people did not think Refuge would last more than six months.

As Refuge has continued to grow, it has not experienced the anticipated numerical growth. The AG is different from many other denominations in that it counts Sunday morning attendance and not membership. The official membership of Refuge is forty-eight. Ages of members range from newborn to eighty-five. There is no age group that can be considered numerically dominant within the congregation; there is equal representation of all ages.

Of those that attend on Sunday mornings, less than fifteen percent have attended college and less have graduated from college. A significant number of

those that attend that did not complete high school. The four-man board is made up of two men that finished high school, and one who went into the military one who has a college degree. The absence of formal education can prove difficult in obtaining credible jobs. Warner Robins Air Force Base is located ten miles from Perry. The Air Force Base has been a source of employment for many. With recent cuts and layoffs, even government jobs have become insecure. Refuge is a blue-collar church with many living paycheck to paycheck.

The mission statement of Refuge is “To share the Love of Christ with Middle Georgia.” This has been the guiding theme of the church since its inception. The faithfulness of the congregation for outreach and the willingness to give towards the needs of the local area has helped to influence the attitude toward the church of those in the surrounding area. Being a community church has proven to be a valuable asset to Refuge. Opportunities have opened for Refuge to be involved in community services and holiday festivals.

It has been a challenge for Refuge to overcome the stigma that is often associated with Pentecostal churches. Despite its ten years in Perry, the church faces questions about snake handling. Most AG churches are not extremist in their beliefs, practices or worship services. There is none that handle snakes. Many that attend the services comment that it is not what they expected. Refuge does have a strong, exuberant worship service. There are hymns incorporated into every service. The focus of most AG churches is the same as any other Protestant church with a focus on introducing people to Jesus Christ and promoting the work of Christ in the immediate area and around the world.

The AG is considered a fellowship of local churches. Therefore, it is a choice by the local church to affiliate with the local district and become an AG church. Refuge is located in the Georgia district with offices in Macon, Georgia. The congregation of Refuge consists of people from many different theological and denominational backgrounds. Refuge has members that have had previous worship affiliations with Baptist, Nazarene, and Episcopal, Catholic as well as other Pentecostal fellowships. As an AG church, there are sixteen fundamental truths (biblical doctrines) established by the AG by which a local congregation agrees to abide.⁵²

⁵²[http://agchurches.org/Sitefiles/Default/RSS/AG.org%20TOP/Fundamental%20Truths%20\(cond\).pdf](http://agchurches.org/Sitefiles/Default/RSS/AG.org%20TOP/Fundamental%20Truths%20(cond).pdf) accessed December 18, 2016

Assemblies of God Fundamental Truths Condensed. These are nonnegotiable tenets of faith that all Assemblies of God churches adhere to. This list is derived from the official Statement of Fundamental Truths.

1. WE BELIEVE...The Scriptures are Inspired by God and declare His design and plan for mankind.
2. WE BELIEVE...There is only One True God—revealed in three persons...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (commonly known as the Trinity).
3. WE BELIEVE...In the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. As God's son Jesus was both human and divine.
4. WE BELIEVE...though originally good, Man Willingly Fell to Sin—ushering evil and death, both physical and spiritual, into the world.
5. WE BELIEVE...Every Person Can Have Restored Fellowship with God Through 'Salvation' (trusting Christ, through faith and repentance, to be our personal Savior). [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]
6. WE BELIEVE...and practice two ordinances—(1) Water Baptism by Immersion after repenting of one's sins and receiving Christ's gift of salvation, and (2) Holy Communion (the Lord's Supper) as a symbolic remembrance of Christ's suffering and death for our salvation.
7. WE BELIEVE...the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a Special Experience Following Salvation that empowers believers for witnessing and effective service, just as it did in New Testament times. [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]
8. WE BELIEVE... The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is 'Speaking in Tongues,' as experienced on the Day of Pentecost and referenced throughout Acts and the Epistles.

There is no financial obligation from the local church to the district or national office. The only agreement is the acceptance of the Fundamental Truths of the AG.

The Coach

Since Refuge is an affiliated church, Refuge's Senior Pastor is credentialed through the AG. As a credentialed minister, there is a financial obligation for the pastor to pay his tithes to the district office. Every local church

9. WE BELIEVE...Sanctification Initially Occurs at Salvation and is not only a declaration that a believer is holy, but also a progressive lifelong process of separating from evil as believers continually draw closer to God and become more Christlike.

10. WE BELIEVE...The Church has a Mission to seek and save all who are lost in sin. We believe 'the Church' is the Body of Christ and consists of the people who, throughout time, have accepted God's offer of redemption (regardless of religious denomination) through the sacrificial death of His son Jesus Christ.

11. WE BELIEVE...A Divinely Called and Scripturally Ordained Leadership Ministry Serves the Church. The Bible teaches that each of us under leadership must commit ourselves to reach others for Christ, to worship Him with other believers, to build up or edify the body of believers—the Church and to meet human need with ministries of love and compassion.

12. WE BELIEVE...Divine Healing of the Sick is a Privilege for Christians Today and is provided for in Christ's atonement (His sacrificial death on the cross for our sins). [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]

13. WE BELIEVE...in The Blessed Hope—When Jesus Raptures His Church Prior to His Return to Earth (the second coming). At this future moment in time all believers who have died will rise from their graves and will meet the Lord in the air, and Christians who are alive will be caught up with them, to be with the Lord forever. [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the AG]

14. WE BELIEVE...in The Millennial Reign of Christ when Jesus returns with His saints at His second coming and begins His benevolent rule over earth for 1,000 years. This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel and the establishment of universal peace.

15. WE BELIEVE...A Final Judgment Will Take Place for those who have rejected Christ. They will be judged for their sin and consigned to eternal punishment in a punishing lake of fire.

16. WE BELIEVE...and look forward to the perfect New Heavens and a New Earth that Christ is preparing for all people, of all time, who have accepted Him. We will live and dwell with Him there forever following His millennial reign on Earth. 'And so shall we forever be with the Lord!'

is self-supporting and autonomous. Services and activities are at the discretion of the local church pastor and board.

The founding pastors' job description continues to expand. There are times that a founding pastor is more a father than a pastor. Many look to the pastor for many of life's decisions. As a founding pastor, I have found it to be difficult to distinguish the line between spiritual pastor and earthly father.

The role that I presently serve is that of senior pastor. In the AG, the senior pastor is the chair of the board and serves as the final authority in most capacities of ministry. I have heard other pastors say that this is one thing they like about being in the AG, but I have found that it can prove difficult in the development of leaders. A pastor with authority can often misunderstand authority as power. Power can become a detriment to the fulfillment of leadership in the local congregation. As chair of the board, multiple decisions can be left up to the pastor. With the decisions come the responsibilities and with the responsibilities come the performance of duties. Therefore, a deficiency of leadership develops in the congregation. The pastor can become the authority and the one main source of labor.

Issues on the Team

There are many challenges that Refuge is facing internally as well as externally. Internally, the challenge is in development of roles and responsibilities. One of the greatest challenges is shifting the leadership team from the assumption of titles only to active leadership roles. Many on the team are fretful about making decisions; they do not want to take responsibility or

simply do not know how. Therefore, one of the greatest challenges is the development of leaders who are not afraid of their roles.

Refuge has had difficulty in connection to the local community, primarily the stigma of being a white Pentecostal church. There have been numerous efforts at outreach and community endeavors. There is little response from the follow up. The local community has not connected by participating in the normal Sunday services. This does not mean that ministry is not taking place. All outreach and community efforts are ministry-focused and individuals reached even if they are not attending church.

The immediate surrounding area of Refuge is multi-cultural. It has been a challenge to overcome the perception that Refuge is a “white church.” There are many who consider this “their church” and “their pastor,” but they have never entered the door of the church. One woman who lives across the street from Refuge would ask that the windows be opened so that she could hear the services, but would not step inside because she considered it a “white church.” She did attend for our dedication service in honor of “her pastor.”

One man who lived directly across the street from the church passed away. I was called to minister to the family and to officiate the funeral. I was told that the man considered me his pastor and yet he had only walked through the door of the church one time; he was an alcoholic and the day he visited the church, he was intoxicated. He entered the door in the middle of the service yelling “preacher, preacher.” I knew who he was and he simply wanted me to know that his friend had died. I was able to pray with him in the aisle of the

church that day. Many in our church were alarmed when he entered and actually had attempted to draw firearms. He did not want to come to the church, but wanted to know his preacher. This attitude seems to be prevalent in the local area. They want to know the preacher, not the church.

Refuge has a non-geographical congregation. Many of those that attend the church on a regular basis travel over ten miles. Some travel over thirty minutes to attend services. There are numerous churches in Houston County. To attend a chosen church you will drive past various other fellowships. Most that attend Refuge will drive by multiple churches just to attend. The church sits on a piece of property that is easily accessible from two counties and four cities or towns, but few people with a city zip code attend. Refuge was able to obtain demographic profile obtained from Percept Group.⁵³ According to this profile, there is an anticipated population growth of approximately twenty-five percent in the ten-mile radius of Refuge in the next five years. The greatest growth will come from those ages eleven to thirty. Household income of the immediate area is approximately \$30,000 per year; therefore, Refuge should expect young families with initial jobs. The families in this immediate area have children under the age of seventeen and they are looking for a church to offer social activities as well as marriage and family counseling.

According to Percept, only 2.7% of people in the area would be considered Pentecostal; over 30% have no faith involvement of any style.

⁵³ Percept Group, "The Refuge Church, 100 Todd Road, Perry, Georgia 31069: 10-mile radius," Ministry Area Profile 2012, ID# 260182:260182.

Therefore, Refuge must reach this population without the emphasis of the traditional Pentecostal traditions.

Refuge is a viable church with a great future. There are obstacles to address and changes that will develop. Remaining consistent in doctrine and practice as a Pentecostal church while also reaching people will be a significant challenge. This has not been a traditional pattern within the Pentecostal church. Perception is that if you keep the Pentecostal doctrine, you fail to be relevant to the needs of people. Refuge must change this thought by becoming relevant while maintaining doctrinal truths.

As the founding pastor, I would like to believe with some confidence that the last ten years have progressed appropriately. Hindsight is always accurate. I acknowledge errors have been made in leadership. As the ten-year anniversary was celebrated, I found myself looking back at the short history. There were successes to celebrate and questions that were still unanswered. Change does not come easily to this community; but it is possible, and my hope is that Refuge can be an agent for change in this community.

Developing a New Game Plan

Methodology

Two questions that this project will endeavor to answer:

How can individuals be equipped, empowered and encouraged to understand their competency as leaders of specific ministries at Refuge through an Appreciative Inquiry Model project? What alterations in leadership style can the Pastor employ to empower the Leadership Team to perform their ministries at Refuge?

The project used the qualitative study method of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). As an applied research project, these two questions develop through the experience of a Spring Training (Appreciative Inquiry Summit) for the LT. The purpose of this project will be to give the LT the equipping, empowering and encouragement that they need to develop the ministries that they are presently leading. This project not only equips and empowers the LT, but also will encourage them to move forward in their ministries.

I discovered the ministry research hypothesis during a class with Michelle Garber and Brett Younger in the Doctor of Ministry program at McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University. Younger asked the class to quickly summarize on paper what we hoped to accomplish in our project. I wrote the following:

I believe that the Leadership Team in Refuge Church has the abilities, talents and calling to fulfill the ministries of the Church. They have become dependent upon the pastor over the course of time and have felt that they were not trained or responsible. For this reason, they have been willing to say that they are not capable and therefore not willing to complete the ministries that they are called to. They choose instead to rely upon the Pastor and allow him to make the decisions and to do the majority of the work.

With this project, I desire for the Leadership Team to feel that they have been trained and equipped, therefore they will be willing to step up to the plate and accept their place of ministry. This will not only be good for the Pastor and Church, but it will be good for them as well to feel accomplished and successful in their lives and calling.

The truth is, I believe in these people and want to see them succeed.”

Therefore, the ministry hypothesis is that, through proper training, equipping and empowerment, the Leadership Team at Refuge will succeed in leading their various ministries.

Spring Training began for the LT in the summer of 2015. There was an informational meeting on June 7, 2015 for all those serving on the LT to learn about the Spring Training. The Leadership team received a schedule and overview of the process and a full understanding of the time commitment that would be necessary. The team would spend four weekends (Friday night and Saturday morning) together in the month of July. There would be Friday night dinner and a Saturday continental breakfast. Of the twenty-one people who attended the meeting, seventeen signed consent forms and agreed to the schedule. There were two couples that did not feel that they would be able to fulfill the time requirements or had other obligations. Both couples verbally confirmed to everyone that it was not personal and that if it were under different circumstances, they would participate. This number included the pastor who did not do the pre-or post-survey.

The seventeen received copies of the book by Bruce Bugbee, *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ*, and were encouraged to read it over the next month. They then received the Pre- Leadership Team (PLT) survey to ascertain their present feelings about leadership and ministry. The PLT survey examined how they came to Refuge as well as how contented they were with their present ministry relationships and ministries.

The pre survey revealed that most of the team attend Refuge because they were invited by a friend or were searching for a new church. The primary purpose of joining the LT was involvement. Most wrote of a desire to be involved in the church and felt they were expressing this desire by being on the LT.

Satisfaction with ministry was as high, even if they believed that there was much more to do. Their satisfaction came from the feeling that as part of the LT they were part of the decision making process.

There was a great deal of discussion about their love of the pastor and his family as reasons for attendance. Given this reality, it is possible that many want to be a part of the LT to be close to the pastor and fulfill the desire to be in the inner circle. Many want to be in the inner circle of decision-making and desire to move from decision to activity. The Spring Training endeavored to take the LT from a desire to be in the inner circle to action on the front line of the ministry.

The Spring Training consisted of multiple levels of structural resourcing. Each member received the book, *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ* by Bruce Bugbee to read during the process and invited to experience four individual weekends with an assortment of activities:

Weekend One

The first weekend Dwayne Barnes guided members through a self-discovery about their individual gifts.

Dwayne Barnes is a behavioral consultant with Christian Lifestyle Concepts located in Hampton, Georgia. The seminars use the DISC survey tool to help individuals better understand themselves and their ministry. The brochure for Christian Lifestyle Concepts states, "Each of us has his or her own way of thinking, feeling and acting. But only a few of us really understand our particular behavioral style and how it interacts or conflicts with others." This

seminar will assist the LT in learning their own style of ministry and therefore being able to work with others on the team and in their ministry.

Weekend Two

The second weekend, the dreaming phase, Leon Reece taught on *Where You Fit in the Ministry*.

Leon Reece, Assistant Vice President for Professional Studies at Point University in Atlanta, Georgia who is also a Doctor of Ministry graduate of McAfee School of Theology, was our instructor. Reece allowed the team to dream about their place in ministry. Developing from the first weekend of discovery, Reece articulated a plan for future ministry

On Friday, July 17, Reece began his session with the following statement; “Leadership in the church boils down to one question, are you going to be a positive or negative leader, are you going to serve or be served?” With this statement, Reece began to transform the mindset of the LT from sitting to serving. This weekend proved beneficial as Reece spoke on a very practical level. Reece was willing to answer questions and allowed the LT to see that their present mindset had preempted them from the fulfillment of ministry.

Weekend Three

The third weekend was spent with the pastor in group activities that used drawing and pottery to discover their future. Following the first weekend of discovery and the second weekend of dreaming, this was a weekend of designing their future and building the team.

In an effort to progress from the last two weekends, this weekend was spent developing the relationship with the team. On Friday night, the team began by each receiving a piece to a puzzle. There were four different puzzles represented in the individual pieces. They had to move around the room to other members to discover where their piece would fit. In contest fashion, the puzzle completed first won a small prize. There was no plan for who received each piece, in order to encourage the development of new relationships. Much excitement and competition took place.

Following the puzzle activity, each member was given a large sheet of paper on which to draw his or her ministry. It was a perceptual idea of how they saw their present ministry and where they would like to see their ministry move in the future. To my amazement, this proved difficult for some. There were actual questions of what their ministry looked like. It is difficult to draw “being a part of the group” when it is supposed to reflect ministry. This activity needed extra time as individuals began to dream and envision ministry for the future.

On Saturday morning, the team was to meet at Refuge to travel to a surprise activity. After meeting at the church and eating a continental breakfast, the group traveled to the *Peach Palette* in downtown Perry, Georgia. *Peach Palette* is a pottery-painting studio where individuals paint pottery. A private session had been scheduled for the LT to paint coffee cups. This was something that many in the group would have never done. When announced, many began to question and state that it was not “manly”.

There were actually dual purposes in this session. One was to build team and one was to think outside of the church walls in a creative fashion. Some of the men struggled with the process until we arrived and began. The entire team became enthralled with the process. The instructions were to paint a coffee cup that represented their place on the team. Each was given a blank pottery coffee cup and all the paint that they desired. Everyone sat at one long table where they could observe each other and paint. As the pastor, I also painted my coffee cup. As I looked at my own piece, I realized that I had everyone on the team represented on my own individual cup. It was my desire that I be nothing more than a support to them as they progressed in ministry.

The painting session lasted over two hours. When the cups were completed, the cups were left to be put into the kiln and then I would pick them up to present to each member at the final meeting.

Weekend Four

The fourth weekend would be a time of celebration of the destiny of the LT. Following the discovery, dream and design phases, weekend four was celebrating and reviewing the future.

The dates of the fourth weekend changed because of scheduling conflicts. After a discussion with the entire group, the sessions were moved to Wednesday and Thursday night. These were the final sessions and were spent developing plans and looking at the process that had just been accomplished.

The fourth session was extremely emotional for the team. They had grown close during this time and there was announcement just prior to the Spring

Training that I had accepted a national appointment with the AG as Senior Director of U.S. MAPS, a division of the U.S. Missions. When the project began, everyone anticipated that I would retire in Perry, Georgia. This final session made this project more important than had been anticipated. With the resignation of the pastor, this team was going to accept the leadership roles and begin the process of selecting a new pastor. The comradery that built during this project would prove to be the greatest gift that Refuge would ever receive.

During the Wednesday session, the team spent time discussing each of the sessions that they had processed. Each one discussed what they had learned and how they had changed. In the final hour they were given a post interview that they completed. The Thursday session was a graduation from the summit. They received their coffee cup and a time of prayer and spiritual renewal took place. This was a very important developmental time as the pastor was sending them forward to do what they had been developing over the last four weeks.

Following the Spring Training, I met with each member of the LT privately to discuss their ministry and all that they had learned. I knew that they had an opportunity to share their thoughts publicly with the group, but wanted to give them opportunity to privately discuss the summit as well as to express their thoughts on leadership and their ministry. A schedule was arranged so that each team leader could come to Starbucks, have a cup of coffee, and share his or her opinions in a private and comfortable environment. This session took place in a public place so that the pastor was not meeting with members of the opposite

sex in private and also to keep the session from becoming too emotional.

Summary

Refuge had progressed for ten years without a significant structural change in the leadership. To allow Refuge to develop for the future, there must be a change in the structure of leadership. The pastor must be willing to release the LT into ministry as well as the LT to accept leadership and responsibility for their ministries. By equipping the LT, a natural process of empowerment also occurred.

This qualitative project was to discover the abilities of the LT and equip them through a Spring Training (AI summit). The summit was accomplished with pre-surveys, gift and skill assessments and four two-day sessions of developmental training. Evaluations completed from the pretests and post interviews. The summit was developed with a desire to equip, empower and encourage the LT. Each session was developed according to the process of an AI summit. Those who were willing to progress through the summit found out about themselves, how to put their natural talents to the establishment of ministry at Refuge and how to become a team.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCOVERIES FROM SPRING TRAINING

This chapter provides an overview of the Spring Training process at Refuge Church by evaluating the pre and post surveys as well as describing the provided sessions. Each session was specifically established to follow the AI Summit agenda. The sessions provided a succession of training that would allow the LT to become equipped, empowered and encouraged.

To raise excitement and encourage participation, the LT had been in dialogue and consistent discussion for the months leading up to the implementation. It was during this discussion that the LT discovered that the pastor would be leaving for a new position immediately following Spring Training. An open dialogue and meeting with the LT and the pastor was an apparent necessity between the two parties. Even after being given the option of ending the project, the LT felt that the training was still necessary. With the realization that they were going to be required to step into the leadership roles, the LT understood that the new circumstance actually demanded a greater desire to grow and learn.

Warm Up

During the morning worship service on Sunday, June 7, 2015, the congregation was informed that the pastor would be leaving at the end of July to accept a new position. After the announcement to the congregation, it was

anticipated that the LT would have more questions. The LT was already scheduled to meet that evening to discuss the project and to ask questions and to receive clarification on any concerns that they would have in the coming months. Of course, the pastor would also provide more information concerning the move than had been announced to the congregation.

With the clarification of all questions, the discussion turned to the project. The pastor decided that, if the LT did not want to continue with the project in light of the new transition, that that it would cease immediately. After very little discussion, the LT and pastor felt that this was going to be a wonderful time of learning, growing and a time of sharing with the pastor prior to the transition.

There were twenty-one people at the meeting. Seventeen of those persons, including the pastor, proceeded with the Spring Training program. Among the group were seven men and ten women. The ages varied from twenty-five to seventy-seven. The average age was fifty-four. Of the seventeen members, only three of them had been in the fellowship under five years. All members had attended other churches before attending Refuge and had worked in various capacities of leadership. Two had ministry credentials.

There was discussion concerning the approval process and all questions concerning Mercer University's IRB process were explained. An Appreciative Inquiry Summit was defined and questions answered. The schedule was presented and the participants signed the consent forms. The month of July would be dedicated to the Spring Training. This timetable gave everyone four weeks to plan schedules and make preparations for the Spring Training. Each

member was given a copy of Bruce Bugbee's book, *What you do Best in the Body of Christ*, to read.

Because of the late hour and the emotional day, the Pre-Leadership Survey (PLS) was emailed to each of the LT who had chosen to participate in the Spring Training. The PLS was formatted to allow members to express themselves and write out their answers. This approach was to assist them to express their own desires and thoughts. Many of them printed out the PLS and wrote their thoughts extensively. The majority of the responses were returned before the first meeting.

According to Creswell, a qualitative study requires that a question is posed that is "consistent with the emerging methodology of qualitative research, as a general issue so as to not limit the views of participants."⁵⁴ In an effort to fulfill this requirement, the questions were asked so that the LT could openly and freely express their feelings. The PLS proved illuminating as it revealed the desired purpose of participants for joining Refuge and the LT. The eight questions allowed the free expression of thoughts and opinions on leadership and Refuge. Seven of the answers could be classified into simplified answers. According to the AI Handbook, it is important to "identify those key themes that supported resident loyalty."⁵⁵ This was accomplished with the first seven questions. The eighth question was simply a list of three wishes for future personal ministry.

⁵⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 139.

⁵⁵ David L. Cooperrider, Diana Whitney, and Jacqueline M. Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders* (Bedford Heights, OH: Lakeshore Publishers, 2003), 145.

This question would provide a departure point for a private conversation with the pastor at the final session.

Table 1: What brought you to Refuge?

What brought you to Refuge?	personal invite	seeking a church	location
Answer	6	7	3

The first question, intentionally designed to ascertain the motivation for joining Refuge, simply asked how members of the LT discovered Refuge. The LT gave a variety of explanations, but individual responses essentially fell into three broad categories. The two largest categories included being personally invited or simply seeking a church, with a few individuals joining because of location. Significantly, most of the LT were actively seeking to find a church to consider their home church, a place to commit and to become involved.

One member commented, “Richard Russell invited us while doing some repairs to our house.” Another stated, “My friend visited Refuge when she was here with me when I was going through chemo after cancer surgery. As a result of her visiting the Refuge I started attending.” Both members became active workers at Refuge after being personally invited by someone.

Table 2: What made you decide to be in Leadership?

What made you decide to be in Leadership?	was asked	wanted involvement	felt called of God
Answers	3	12	1

The second question considered the motivation of involvement in the leadership at Refuge. One team member responded, “I consider the Refuge my home so I felt I needed to be a part in trying to help grow the church.” This

answer reflects the attitude of many. As part of the church, they felt that they needed to make a contribution.

Involvement in the ministry was the primary motivating factor. One commented that he or she, “wanted to serve God and my church.” Another simply stated, “To strengthen the ministries already in place. Also, felt as members we should be involved to help the current leaders.”

Most made the decision to be a participant on the LT because of their desire to be involved. Many of the LT did not see Refuge as simply a church to attend, but understood it to be their family. There appears to be a great desire in many participants to simply be a part of a family atmosphere. As part of the family, they desire to be involved in the activities of Refuge.

Table 3: How satisfied are you with your ministry?

How satisfied are you with your ministry?	very	basically	not
Answers	8	5	3

The third question gauged their satisfaction with their present ministry. The majority were at least satisfied with their present ministry. Only three of those surveyed expressed a negative feeling or were not satisfied with their ministry. Those members of the LT who were not satisfied were confused about what they should be doing in their ministry. This confusion and ambivalence toward their ministry foci validated the need for this Spring Training.

Some of the LT commented that they had questions about the development of their particular ministries. One stated, “I feel as if I’m at a standstill. Perhaps waiting for the next thing God has for me.” Another

commented, “I feel I am doing what God wants me to do and feel good about it.” These comments seem to reflect the majority of the group. Each of them desired to do what they felt God had called them to do at Refuge.

Table 4: What is your most rewarding experience at Refuge?

What is your most rewarding experience at Refuge?	asked to serve	outreach	worship
Answers	1	9	6

When the LT was asked about their most rewarding experience in ministry, the answers emerged out of their focus on their individual ministries. Three basic categories of response were given. Only one member expressed a feeling of reward of “being asked to serve”. One member said, “KidsQuest 2 years ago when the leadership team all worked together.” KidsQuest is an outreach for children that the Refuge participated in at that time. Other members of the LT felt that some significant cooperation within the leadership was needed at the time.

Members of the LT have their own individual ministries and therefore interpret their ministries as having the greatest impact on their own situation. The leader of the Senior Adults ministry commented, “While leading the RT’s (Recycled Teens), my time with them has been rewarding.” The member who oversees church meals finds “cooking” to be the most rewarding experience. The seamstress wrote, “Making costumes for the play.” Obviously, their satisfaction emerges from their individual callings and talents.

Table 5: How is your relationship with members of the LT?

How is your relationship with members of LT?	excellent	fine	poor
Answers	9	6	1

Question five asked them to consider the health of relationships among the members of the leadership team. Only one member stated that the relationship was poor. The exact answer was, “Too much jealousy and conflict.” This can be a feeling that becomes exposed when individuals are trying to discover their individual places in the ministry. If a member feels that someone has a ministry of greater importance or influence, jealousy and conflict can result. One member expressed the sentiment of the majority, “I think we have an excellent leadership team and I am confident they will be there if a situation should arise that I need them.” Those feelings continued with another member, “Love my church family, I look forward to seeing them.”

The responses to this question were reflective of the continued appreciation of family. Each member expressed the relationship in words and attitudes of family. There is a sense that, as family, the team will deepen its relationships and work together in all areas of ministry.

Table 6: What is the strongest ministry at Refuge?

What is strongest ministry at Refuge?	adult ministries	pastor	worship services
Answers	1	1	14

The sixth question concerned the strongest areas of ministry at Refuge. There were comments concerning the friendliness of the church, but the majority spoke of the Sunday morning worship experience. One member commented, “I

think the music worship team is the strongest, they are organized and do a great job.” Another stated, “The worship and sermons are really strong and led by God.” Another continued with the same idea, “The worship team does a great job.” It should be noted that the leader of the worship team did not make this particular comment.

As the pastor, I was concerned that many of the LT viewed the Sunday worship experience as the strongest ministry of the church. They expressed satisfaction in their particular ministries, but did not see theirs as the strongest ministry. If the Spring Training accomplishes its purposes, each member will begin to discover the strength of his or her particular ministry.

Table 7: What makes Refuge unique?

What makes Refuge unique?	pastor and family	family oriented	growing
Answers	5	9	2

The seventh question asked about the uniqueness of Refuge. The responses covered a broad spectrum. One said, “It’s unique because our pastor can have a church full of crazies and still keep it together.” As entertaining as this specific answer is, it reflected the majority of the answers. Many agreed that most unique characteristic of the church was this feeling of togetherness.

Many members of the LT expressed appreciation and fondness for the pastor and his family. There were many comments such as, “Its best is most of the time because of the vision that the Thomas family brought to Perry.” One member stated, “The Love from the people for the people. Most everyone truly feels loved and at home.” One of the most intriguing answers was, “I have never

felt like I was being judged by anyone.” Refuge has continued to be a friendly, family oriented church. The answers given by the LT reinforce this as the most unique attribute of Refuge.

An overall assessment of these responses was that the LT felt that Refuge was doing well and that its members had a sense of being family together. The answers re-enforced the belief that the leadership had enormous potential as a result of the training that was being proposed. Refuge would benefit as this sense of family expanded from the LT to the members of the church.

First Inning

Discovery Phase

In the first session on July 10, the LT gathered for dinner in the coffee shop. Each member was able to come in, pick up a meal and find a place to sit in the fellowship hall. A set of tables were prearranged in a large square so that everyone would be facing each other. After dinner, the LT was invited to get drinks and begin to make their way to the class room. The class room was set up with straight rows of educational tables facing the front since the first two sessions were going to consist of lecture style training. The session was designed to last for ninety minutes.

At 7:00 p.m. the meeting began and Dwayne Barnes was introduced. Barnes is a certified behavioral consultant with *Christian Lifestyle Concepts* in Hampton, Georgia. Barnes led the weekend sessions that were designed to assist the LT in discovering their natural gifts and personality style by using the DISC personality system. Barnes began by discussing the difference between

perceived strengths and reality of strengths. Barnes was open to full discussion as many were willing to share what their strengths were. As Barnes continued to develop the discussion, he began to ask why they thought certain strengths were actually their strength. Some of the LT found it difficult to identify their strengths and seemed to think that strengths were the result of titles and positions. Barnes was very clear that we did not develop strengths to our titles, but our strengths led us into our positions. Many were under the impression that what they wanted to be, they were. Barnes shared with them illustrations to express the reality that one's actual strengths were not necessarily the same as one's perceived strengths.

The DISC system is a personality system profile that allows the individual to illustrate his or her perceived strengths in contrast to his or her actual strengths. Barnes introduced this system to the LT and then presented them with paper copies of the DISC profile tool for them to complete. Following the distribution of the DISC profile tool, Barnes directed the LT through the completion. Completion of the tool lasted an hour and the time was complete.

On July 11 the team returned for a second session. After an opening prayer, Barnes shared a video with the class explaining the scoring and what participants were about to learn. There was a natural excitement in the air, as many in the room had never attempted anything of this nature.

After the video, the scoring began and questions emerged. The DISC profile attempts to define both one's perceived strengths as well as one's actual strengths. Participants questioned the results of their profiles quite openly and

seemed concerned that the differences between perceived and actual strengths were so significant. Barnes was patient and graceful to guide each member through their discovery of their natural strengths. As the pastor, I found my place at the back of the room and remained there to allow Barnes and the LT to talk openly about their results.

It was interesting to listen to many husbands say to wives, “I have told you that,” or many wives express to their husbands that they saw those traits in them. The post interviews revealed that this morning session was one of the most important sessions in the entire program. Discovering one’s natural talents and knowing one’s self better is the first step in leadership. Barnes shared a brochure that stated, “This seminar is especially designed to help your congregation understand themselves and therefore they can better understand others.”⁵⁶

Second Inning

Dream Phase

On July 17, the LT gathered for the second weekend. Leon Reece from Point University was the guest lecturer for the weekend. His purpose was to assist the LT with dreaming about its place in ministry.

After dinner, the group gathered in the classroom to begin the session. Following prayer, Reece began in an exciting upbeat style. Dwayne Barnes is a very composed older gentleman and Reece is a young, excited and very motivational speaker. It was interesting to watch the difference in the response

⁵⁶ Dwayne Barnes, Christian Lifestyle Concepts Seminars (Hampton, Georgia, 2015).

of the LT with the two different lecturers. With Barnes they were more reserved and with Reece they were excited and motivated.

Reece began the session by asking everyone to “look at the big picture.” He wanted to know what they saw as the “big picture”. He informed them that they were stewards of the gifts that God had given them. He invited them to open their Bibles to 1 Peter 4:10 and read the text: “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.”

Reece developed a message based on his perception of four different types of people that attend Refuge:

1. Hard: They just do not care.
2. Shallow: Seed fall amid impressive talk.
3. Weeds and thorns: Chafe among the world.
4. Fruitful: What we are supposed to be.

Reece pointed out that they must be prepared to reach everyone that comes to Refuge. Reece ended the evening with this statement, “Any position you hold in the Church is on loan from God.”

On Saturday, Reece planned to discuss leadership. He discovered that there were many questions that the LT had from the night before. Many of the team was still reflecting on the earlier sessions with Barnes and then integrating it with what he had shared concerning their use of their gifts. As a result of these sessions, they were learning that they had natural strengths and that God was expecting them to use them.

Reece responded with enthusiasm to each question. It was obvious that the LT had reached a level of understanding that they were going to have to step up to the plate and could no longer just sit on the bench. Reece began to answer questions concerning the pastor's departure. When one member said that the greatest need was to find a new pastor, Reece responded with "No, the greatest need is you learning your place of leadership." Reece progressed from the questions to the subject of transformational leadership. He stated that organizational change could only be accomplished through transformational leadership.

In the next session, Reece used Matthew 13:4-11 as his text:

"4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears let him hear." 10 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

He used this parable to discuss abuse of influence and how to understand the power given to them with the gifts that they had received. His session ended with looking at how they would progress with their natural strengths and how they could use them for the ministry that they were leading. Reece expressed his concern with people trying to lead without the natural strength to lead. He stated that, given their particular strengths, God could use them in ministry, even if it was not in a leadership position.

Third Inning

Design Phase

On the third weekend of training, the pastor reviewed and illustrated what the LT had learned in the first two weekends. In accord with the AI summit model, the group moved from the lecture style learning approach to a participatory model. In the first session, an assortment of pieces to four different puzzles was placed in front of each seat. Participants were encouraged to move from their seats and to begin completing the four puzzles with the other members of the LT. The first group to complete its puzzle won a small prize.

The team was helped to the realization that they all came from different points of view and all had different talents, but all fit together to make an interesting picture. Members who had not related with other members had to work together. They had to communicate with people that they had seldom communicated with before this meeting. This activity proved to be a great benefit for building team cooperation and communication.

After the puzzles were completed, members were given large sheets of brown paper and told to tape them on the walls. They were then given markers, colors, pencils and pens and invited to illustrate their ministry. In this way, they could visualize what they do at Refuge. Some struggled to illustrate their ministries and others illustrated ministries that no one else realized that they did at Refuge. This activity accomplished much more than simply helping each individual to visualize his or her personal ministry; it also helped many members of the LT to alter their views of other ministries and other members. It allowed the

LT to see their own ministries and the ministries of others. When the pictures were completed, the pastor asked the team to put the pictures in order of importance. As they began to work as a team, they realized that all pictures were equally important and all must participate.

On Saturday morning the team had been told that they would be traveling to an undisclosed location for an activity. Only the pastor and his spouse knew the destination which was the *Peach Palette*, a pottery painting studio in Perry, Georgia. The pastor had scheduled a private session for all seventeen members to come and paint coffee cups representing their place on the team. Many of the men voiced their displeasure with this activity, at least until they started painting. Everyone was given a cup and told where all the paint and stencils were located in the room. As they began to paint, seventy year old men, who were originally staunchly against the activity, began painting with considerable enthusiasm.

The Saturday morning session was a highlight for many in the group. It was the culmination of the first two weeks of training. As the LT painted, I was able to share with them and listen to their comments about what they were painting. Some painted with great creativity; others less so. It became evident that they were coming together as a team.

Fourth Inning

Destiny Phase

The final nights of the Spring Training would take place on July 29 and 30. This was going to be a difficult period since Sunday, July 26 was the pastor's

final Sunday with Refuge. Emotions were raw and this needed to be a time of healing for the fellowship.

On Wednesday night the group came together in the fellowship hall for dinner where they remained for the evening. The session focused on a discussion of Bruce Bugbee's book, *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ*. Passion for ministry was one of the topics of discussion. Bugbee states, "We have identified passion as the God-given desire that compels us to make a difference in a particular area of ministry or life where God is glorified and people are edified."⁵⁷ Discussion followed and the LT discussed the particular passions that they had discovered throughout the classes.

This session was the culmination of all of our prior discussions. One member brought up the quote by Bugbee, "Today, right before our eyes, God is placing ministry back into the hands of every believer across denominational and geographical boundaries."⁵⁸ Some members of the LT realized that the book reinforced all that had been discussed in the Spring Training. As Bugbee states, "For most of us, seeing as God sees requires a new way of thinking. Some of the perceptions we have of God, the church, and who we are will not help us to find our unique ministry contributions."⁵⁹

On Thursday night, the LT returned to a formal dinner that functioned as a graduation and commissioning service. The dinner was an emotionally difficult

⁵⁷ Bruce Bugbee, *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 81.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

event as the LT and the pastor realized that this was their last session together. Immediately following dinner, the LT completed the Post Leadership Survey. After this was completed, the pastor was able to share with the team his joy and appreciation for all they accomplished. It was a time of encouragement and commitment. The end of the session was devoted to presenting the coffee cups that they had made during the previous week and sharing in a time of prayer and commitment to Refuge.

The Final Score

Thirteen members of the team agreed to complete the Post Leadership Survey. The four that did not participate included the pastor, his spouse and one couple that indicated they were grieving the departure of the pastor. Six questions were prepared in the same style as the Pre Leadership Survey. The members that completed the survey were able to respond with full statements and allow their emotions to reflect in the survey. Of the six questions, two were for discussion in the private meetings with the pastor and four were intended to gauge the results of the Spring Training.

Table 8: Following the Spring Training, what is best at Refuge?

Following this project, what is best at Refuge	Talents	Love and Family	Nothing
Answers	4	9	0

The first question on the Post Leadership Survey was in direct correlation to the seventh question on the Pre Leadership Survey. Participants were asked again about their opinion of what is best about Refuge. Answers indicated a shift from love and appreciation for the pastor and his family to love for the church body and the sense of family. The Pre Leadership Survey had made no mention

of individual talents. There were five on the Pre Leadership Survey that stated that the pastor and his family were the most unique or best attribute. At the Post Leadership Survey, there was no mention of the pastor or his family. The individual members had begun to see their own ministries as ones that strengthened the church. This result was a direct result of the Spring Training.

One member stated, “Best of Refuge is the variety of talents and abilities we have.” Another said, “The best part of the Refuge is the people.” This was a significant statement as they were seeing that they could now take leadership of their ministries. Another commented, “The Leadership Team and the overall mission of the church.” No longer was the pastor a focal point for the ministries of Refuge. Only a single comment concerning the pastor appeared on any team members’ post survey. One simply wrote at the bottom of the survey, “Thank you Billy for a great foundation for us to build on and to fulfill your dream for the Refuge.” One member who had identified “visitors and family” as the best characteristic of the church in the Pre Leadership Survey changed his or her response in the Post Leadership Survey to, “The Leadership Team and the overall mission of the church.” Obviously, many members of the team had experienced a shift in perspective.

Table 9: How satisfied are you with your ministry following the Spring Training?

How satisfied are you with your ministry following ST answers	Completely	Most	No
	10	3	0

The second question was in direct reference to question three on the Pre Leadership Survey. When asked about their level of satisfaction prior to Spring Training, eight were completely satisfied, five were mostly satisfied and three

were not satisfied. At the end of the Spring Training, ten were completely satisfied and three were mostly satisfied. Obviously, this was a significant shift as several changed their answers from the Pre-survey to indicate a higher level of satisfaction. Even those members of the team who did not take the Post Leadership Survey had indicated on the Pre-Leadership Survey that they were at least mostly satisfied. Therefore, satisfaction with ministry rose considerably.

One member commented, “I am very satisfied with my ministry, our team is united and all work to lead the congregation into the presence of the Lord.” Another stated, “The Leadership Class gave me a better understanding of my total ministry.” Another member stated, “I have discovered what my true ministry is.” One member of the LT who experienced significant transformation during the Spring Training shared, “The Leadership class gave me a better understanding of my total ministry. It opened new doors for me.” The excitement that was shared in the comments from the LT provide ample evidence that Spring Training allowed them to grow and develop in new areas of leadership.

Table 10: How have relationships changed during the Spring Training?

How have relationships changed during the Spring Training answer	Better	Same	Worse
	11	2	0

The third question on the Post Leadership Survey reflected on the relationships between and among the LT. On the Pre Leadership Survey nine had responded that their relationships were excellent, but seven stated that these relationships were fine or poor. Following the Spring Training, there was an increase in the satisfaction level of the relationships between the LT. Ninety percent of the members felt that the Spring Training had a positive effect on the

relationships among the LT. As one member stated, “My relationships have grown to a new level. We are all getting stronger as we all take on new rolls.”

One member stated, “I learned a few things about them (other team members) and hope friendships and cooperation deepens.” Another responded, “I definitely feel more comfortable around them, more open.” There was one response that exemplified the feelings that were expressed verbally: “I feel that going through this project as a group has created a bond to a large majority of the group.” The deeper relationships that were built during this time provide a foundation for better interaction within the LT.

Table 11: What is impact on Refuge from this Spring Training?

What is impact on Refuge from this Spring Training answer	Outstanding	Some	None at all
	12	1	0

The fourth question was in reference to the impact that the Spring Training had on Refuge. The LT was given the opportunity to respond honestly and without regard to repercussions. These answers were not going to be read before the departure of the pastor.

All but one member responded that the impact of the Spring Training on Refuge was outstanding. The one that responded “some” felt that Refuge was already outstanding. One member responded that the impact of Spring Training created “Unity and more equipped leaders.” Another stated, “The potential can be incredible if just a few use what they learned and teach others.” One said, “I believe the impact is huge, we have been equipped and trained so our ministries will grow to God’s glory.”

One member wrote what was expressed verbally by many of the LT: “This couldn’t have come at a better time. Now the leaders are bonded together, to become stronger, and to help the Refuge to grow.” As one of the other members clarified, “Great impact if we all do our part.” The LT have had the opportunity to develop a lasting bond between them and to learn how to develop their ministries. They will become stronger as each one of them embraces their leadership role more fully.

Summary

The goal for an AI summit (Spring Training) is to make sure that the desire for positive results manifests naturally. There is always the possibility that the results might not be as positive as one would desire. The Appreciative Inquiry Handbook states:

AI has achieved remarkable results in the areas of productivity improvement, efficiency, and performance. However, the “goal” of the process is to create highly *improvisational organizations*. These are organizations that, according to Frank Barrett, demonstrate consistent strength in four key kinds of competence: affirmative, expansive, generative, and collaborative. In the end, these four key areas of competence are expanded through ongoing application of the skills applied during Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny.”⁶⁰

The ongoing application of the training will be essential in the future for Refuge. Obviously, the Spring Training had significant impact.

The Spring Training utilized the AI summit approach with the qualitative method of research. The four separate two-day sessions offered to the LT were effective and the experience was positive for all that participated. The training

⁶⁰ Cooperrider, p.181.

provided by the two guest lecturers was both inspiring and deeply thought-provoking. The team experienced significant transformation and, as a result, it was better prepared to assume leadership after the pastor's departure.

CHAPTER FIVE

A NEW SEASON

Each new season brings new players and new staff. It is not uncommon for a team to come to a new season with a new coach. It is uncommon for a team to find itself without a coach as it enters into a new season. This was the context in which the LT of Refuge Church found itself as Spring Training came to an end. It now had to assume leadership itself even as it searched for a new coach.

Transition on the Team

If anyone had suggested to me when I began this project that I would leave the church prior to its completion, I would never have believed them. It was my complete intent to do this project to help establish the ministries of Refuge for the future, a future that I planned to spend with them. We had refinanced our home, made some major changes to our financial situation and were beginning to make plans for retirement in fifteen years from Refuge. My plans are not always God's plans. As it turned out, this project was not intended to make things better for me at Refuge; this project was undertaken in order to make Refuge a better church for the Kingdom of God.

The Spring Training approach was developed so that the LT would be

equipped, empowered and encouraged to exercise its ministry gifts. When the pastoral transition was announced I was concerned that this goal would not be fulfilled. My concern was that some would leave immediately and others would refuse to participate. Of the twenty members of the LT that came to the first meeting, two couples did not participate in the Spring Training. Both of the couples that did not participate resigned Refuge on the pastor's final day. Those that did participate remained at Refuge until a new pastor was voted in. The attitude that was embraced by all of the LT was one of ensuring the continuation of the church into its next stage of ministry and the coming of a new pastor. There was a concern for the transition, but the desire to begin to lead was obvious. One could believe that this project was prearranged in the knowledge that there was going to be a transition.

Larry Osborne states in his book *Sticky Teams* that "good undershepherds never forget that they work for the Chief Shepherd, not the sheep."⁶¹ It is my opinion that at the beginning of this project I honestly did not understand the role of the undershepherd to The Shepherd. Refuge is God's church. I had been used as the pioneering pastor and had worked to build a great church, but at times I had forgotten that it was not my church. This was God's church, and He was going to use His people to continue His work. I did not work for the sheep, I worked for God. Therefore, as His servant, I would go where he desired and He would be in full control of my life and His church.

⁶¹ Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 53.

New Team Vision

The changes that took place with this project will have a lasting effect on Refuge. Osborne states, “I’ve been in ministry long enough to know that what goes on behind the scenes and in the hearts of God’s people has a huge impact on what goes on in our churches.”⁶² The change that had taken place in the LT would filter into the entire life of the church. Those leaders who were willing to become a part of the Spring Training were prepared and able to lead Refuge on to the next season of ministry.

During the final session, the LT was given a sheet of paper and asked to finish the following statement, “my vision of a team that works is. . . .” Sixteen people completed the statement. Of the sixteen participants, fifteen of them used some form of the term “achieving common goals.” Some simply said “same goals” and others “same purpose,” but all focused on the common goal. This was a change that had developed over the four week period. In the beginning there was much discussion about assisting in the building of individual ministries. At the end of the Spring Training, everyone shared a common goal.

Osborne uses sports as an illustration of what churches can look like in their leadership structures. He talks of solo track stars, golfing buddies, and then basketball teams. Osborne states, “Basketball is primarily a team sport, not a friendship sport. It requires working together, trusting one another, and sharing the ball. But unlike golfing buddies, members of a basketball team don’t expect

⁶² Ibid., 27.

that everyone will be best friends.”⁶³ The LT had transformed from solo track stars to a basketball team. Not everyone would be best friends, but the team would work together for the goal of a winning season.

Having gained the desired result of equipping, empowering and encouraging the LT, I discovered three questions that John Maxwell wrote about in his book, *Developing The Leaders around You*. Maxwell encourages the leader to ask the following questions: “What do they want? Do they have a way of getting what they want? Will they be rewarded if successful?”⁶⁴ These three questions provided a framework for this project. Through the Pre Leadership Survey I ascertained the desired results and needs of the LT. With the Spring Training, I gave them a way of achieving their desired results, and the reward would come in the results that would be achieved.

There were eight questions on the Pre Leadership Survey. The final question was one that allowed the LT to dream of its shared future and to make plans: “Make three wishes for the future of your ministry. Describe what your ministry would look like and how it would fit in the overall ministries of Refuge.”⁶⁵ The Post Leadership Survey asked in its final question if there were any changes to those desires. The change that took place offers evidence of the power of the process in the lives of its participants. In the beginning, many on the LT stressed

⁶³ Ibid., 65.

⁶⁴ John Maxwell, *Developing The Leaders Around You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 113-114.

⁶⁵ Taken from the Pre Leadership Survey.

personal abilities; in the Post Leadership Survey, the focus had shifted to the entire group and its abilities to affect change

Table 12: Change in ministry mentality

Pre Leadership Survey	Post Leadership Survey
I wish to have more wisdom and knowledge to teach the senior adults.	It is my desire for our church to reach the lost and help the poor in our community...
Continuing on doing things I can do.	We all take what we have learned and go with it.
We want to see the RT's (Recycle Teens) grow.	See more interchange between the different age groups.
To have funds to continue the improvements on the sound system.	I have learned how to better communicate with people.
All men at Refuge involved with Men's ministry.	I have been given the tools to better communicate and understand others.
People willing to help.	My drive to serve God has grown intense.

The LT shared its responses in individual meetings with the pastor at a local Starbucks on July 27 and 28. In these sessions, team members discussed any aspects of the Spring Training that they did not feel comfortable sharing with the group. Each member was scheduled to meet for twenty minutes. After the first meeting it became obvious that this was simply not enough time; nevertheless, no one complained.

Each member openly discussed each session and what they had learned. The pastor asked where they were on the DISC profile and if they agreed with its conclusions. At the end of the conversation, they were all asked if their desires for the church at the beginning of the Spring Training had changed. Each member was asked to share one word that would describe what they had learned and how it had affected their ministries. Answers included boy's ministries, life skills, people, children, encouraging, leader, service, care, and people edified,

connecting, hospitality, helps. The LT contained all that was needed for progress of ministry at Refuge.

The final piece for the LT was the completion of the Focus Group Questions. These questions were simply in reference to the effectiveness and process of the Spring Training. One of the questions asked if the LT believed that the purpose of equipping and empowering leaders was accomplished. It was a unanimous confirmation that it was accomplished.

The question with the most intriguing replies simply asked if the LT member's vision had changed during the Spring Training. Fourteen of the seventeen responded affirmatively and many went on to explain that it had changed greatly. Not only did they feel that they had been equipped, empowered and encouraged, but their vision had changed.

According to John Kotter, "Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future."⁶⁶ With the change in vision of a majority of the LT, a new season had begun. It can be noted that the unity and vision of the LT had become congruous and therefore the work would be done as a team.

Kotter states, "Over the past decade, I've observed a dozen companies as they tried to create effective visions for change. From that experience, I conclude the following: developing a good vision is an exercise of both the head and the heart, it takes some time, it always involves a group of people, and it is

⁶⁶ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 68.

tough to do well.”⁶⁷ The vision for the future of Refuge would come from the head and the heart. The head had developed with the understanding of the other members’ ministries and the heart was established in the unity that was displayed. There was no doubt, the LT of Refuge had a vision and was moving forward, even without a coach.

New Positions

Osborne states, “Healthy teams have great teamwork. There’s little role confusion, and everyone knows what the ultimate goal is.”⁶⁸ The final goal of the Spring Training would be in the clarification of the LT’s individual roles. This was completed during the private session. Each member referenced back to the pastor what their job was and how they were going to engage it to achieve a common goal. Knowing one’s position and understanding where you fit on the team can be the determination of success for the team. As Spring Training progressed, each member was thinking about their ministry. On any baseball team, the individual players are playing for the team win. Yet, each player plays their individual position to the best of his or her ability. If the catcher and the pitcher change positions in the middle of the inning, the win will be in doubt. Therefore, the members had to understand their individual roles and how they would be contributing to the team’s success.

The departure of the coach was a crucial factor that complicated the understanding of role distribution. The members of the team began to talk in the

⁶⁷ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁸ Osborne, 101.

final session of the need to begin to fulfil the tasks of the coach until a new coach was selected. They indicated their acceptance of the challenge when they began to talk of the need to delegate tasks more effectively. This realization offered evidence that the LT was prepared to take the leadership of Refuge and move forward.

The LT were asked to read Bruce Bugbee's book, *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ*. This book was a basic diagram of Spring Training. At the end of the book Bugbee addresses the leader:

Let's be honest. Speaking leader to leader, we have recruited people to serve and then criticized them for not performing well. Oftentimes we did not train them. In many instances we did not give them adequate feedback. It is very likely, and maybe even probable that we never took the time to ask them if and how God might be leading them to serve. Let's face it, we had some slots to fill, and all we were looking for were some people with a pulse who were warm and willing.⁶⁹

Many leaders of churches have faced this scenario. There is a job to fill and all that is needed is a willing vessel. Spring Training as undertaken in this project transformed the LT from willing vessels to equipped, empowered and encouraged leaders. The LT developed a new vision for and accepted its roles in that vision. The entire team affirmed that Spring Training would be useful for future leaders.

John Maxwell tells the following story:

There is a story of a tourist who paused for a rest in a small town in the mountains. He went over to an old man sitting on a bench in front of the only store in town and inquired, 'Friend, can you tell me something this town is noted for?' 'Well,' replied the old man, "I don't rightly know except

⁶⁹ Bugbee, 141-142.

that it's the starting point to the world. You can start here and go anywhere you want.⁷⁰

By embracing their gifts and new roles, the LT could look forward to a bright future for Refuge. Spring Training was over and a bright future was ahead.

Summary

The circumstances surrounding the departure of the pastor made the Spring Training an interesting four weeks. The LT was able to hold its emotions in check, thus allowing the Spring Training to be seen as positive for future development. This Spring Training could be a tool that could be used in other churches with minor modifications.

The most influential change was in the pastor. The stakes were high, given the need to complete the project for the degree program and to prepare the LT for a future without his presence. With some considerable effort, the pastor was able to release his many tasks into the hands of the LT. As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, our ways are not always God's ways. There is a part of me that feels that God understood the necessity of releasing and the struggle that it would cause.

I have often wondered what would have happened to Israel if Moses had released leaders earlier in the journey. Moses' father-in-law had to educate him to change; my father-in-law had to prod me. My father-in-law participated in this Spring Training without the knowledge of the motivating factor. The reason I invited him on the leadership team was so that he could experience the

⁷⁰ Maxwell, 25.

development and release of the LT. The question that continues to haunt me: what if I had done it earlier? If this was part of the foundation of Refuge, where would Refuge be today? I cannot deny that this training has been an asset to the LT during this transition. Yet, I have to admit that it would have been of greater benefit if it had been developed and implemented at the beginning. It would be much better to implement earlier than to be prodded later.

Jim Collins makes one comment in his book, *Good to Great*, which seems appropriate for the future of Refuge:

We found instead that they *first* got the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats – and *then* they figured out where to drive it. The old adage ‘People are your most important asset’ turns out to be wrong. People are not your most important asset. *The right people are.*⁷¹

The Spring Training allowed an opportunity for the right people to get into the right seats. There is no doubt that the LT is built with wonderful people that have a desire to serve God. There is no question of the pastor’s struggle over whether or not to leave them. But, there is also no doubt that this project enabled Refuge make further progress along the journey with a team that is equipped, empowered and encouraged.

⁷¹ Jim Collins, *Good To Great* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 2001), 13.

APPENDIX A:
INFORMED CONSENT



COMING OFF THE BENCH:

COACHING THE LEADERSHIP TEAM TO LEAD

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what will be asked of you.

Investigator

The investigator for this research study is Billy Dwain Thomas Sr, B.A., M.Div. Equiv. Rev. Thomas is the Pastor of The Refuge Church of Perry, Georgia and a student in the Doctor of Ministry program at the McAfee School of Theology under the direction of Dr. Rob Nash. Rev. Thomas can be reached at 478-213-7729 or BillyThomasGA@gmail.com.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to establish a training program for the Leadership Team at Refuge Church. This study will implement a training program for those that choose to participate that are presently serving on the Leadership Team.

Procedures

If you participate in this study, you will be asked to attend a Leadership Team summit that will last for four consecutive Friday nights and Saturday mornings. During the four weekends you will be given opportunity for team building and training. There will also be opportunity for you to have individualized coaching with the pastor twice during this period. During this time you will be exposed to two outside instructors and your coach. You will be given a book to read and surveys to complete. You will end the four week period with a focus group to discuss the changes that you have discovered and implemented.

Potential Risks or Discomforts

There are no foreseeable risks associated with the study.

Potential Benefits of the Research

The summit and training will give insight into future ministry. The strengths of Refuge will be brought out and the ability to build upon them for the future. Your participation in this study will not help you in your own abilities, but also assist in the further of your ministry and Refuge.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, please destroy and dispose of any incomplete forms. It will be necessary to inform the investigator of your withdrawal for planning purposes. No questions will be asked concerning your decision.

Questions about the Research

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Billy Dwain Thomas Sr. at 478-213-7729 or BillyThomasGA@gmail.com. You may also contact Dr. Robert Nash at nash_rn@mercer.edu

Audio Taping

If you choose to participate in the focus group, there will be an audio recording which will be stored by the researcher for at least three years after project completion. This will be stored in a safe that only the researcher has access to.

Reasons for Exclusion from this Study

This project has been approved only for members of the Leadership team that are 18 or older.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Mercer University's IRB. If you believe there is any infringement upon your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Chair, at (478) 301-4101.

You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and these have been answered to your satisfaction. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this research study.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Rev.08/19/2010

APPENDIX B:
LETTER TO LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dear Leadership Team:

Over the last few years many of you have walked with me through the process of my Doctor of Ministry program at McAfee School of Theology. As I have continued to take classes in an attempt to develop Refuge, you have been faithful and supportive. I am now entering the phase of my Doctoral Project and am inviting you to participate with me.

The title of my project is *Coming off the Bench: Coaching the Leadership Team to Lead at Refuge Church in Perry, Georgia*. This project is specific for the Refuge Leadership Team. It is my desire to develop a leadership training program that will assist the LT in the development of their ministries.

This project will be open to everyone who is presently serving on the LT. We will be going through a four week summit on Friday nights and Saturdays during the month of July. This will be a time of team building as well as training for ministry.

My desire as your Pastor is to help you reach fulfillment in your ministries. As we look at all that God has done for Refuge, we will then look at the future and where we would like to be in five years.

If you are interested in participating or just want more information about the project, I will be conducting an open meeting on June 8th in the old sanctuary at 6:00 p.m. I hope you will consider coming to hear about the project and to see if you might want to be a part!

Chasing after Christ,

Pastor Billy Thomas

APPENDIX C:
PRE LEADERSHIP TEAM SURVEY

1. What brought you to Refuge?

2. What made you decide to become involved in Leadership at Refuge?

3. Looking at your present level of ministry; how satisfied are you with your ministry?

4. Reflecting on your ministry time at Refuge, what was the most rewarding experience you have had? Who was involved and when did this take place?

5. How do you feel about your relationships with the other members of the Leadership Team? Do you feel that you have confidence in them? Do they support you in your ministry?

6. When you think about our church, what do you think are the strongest areas? What things do we do really well? How do you define success in these areas?

7. When Refuge is at its best, what is that makes this church unique?

8. Make three wishes for the future of your ministry. Describe what your ministry would look like and how it would fit into the overall ministries of Refuge.

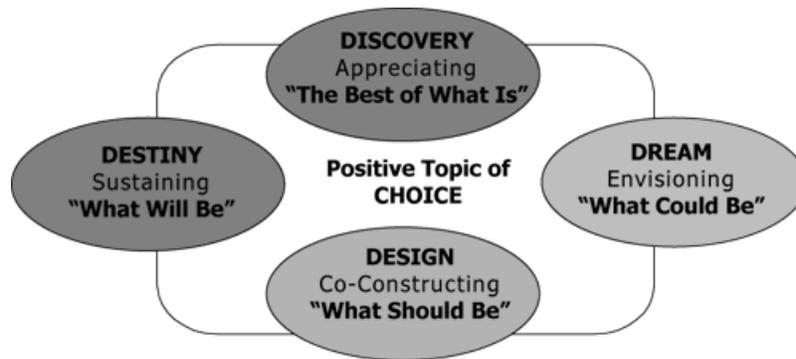
APPENDIX D:
POST SURVEY LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. Reflecting on your entire experience with this project, what do you believe is the considered to be the “best of Refuge”?
2. Describe in a few words how satisfied you are with your present ministry now?
3. What are two of the highlights of your ministry that you can build on for future ministry?
4. How has your relationships changed with members of the Leadership Team over the course of this project? Do you anticipate further change?
5. What do you believe is the impact on Refuge from this project?
6. At the beginning of this project you stated three wishes that you had for your ministry? How have they changed and what would they be now?

APPENDIX E:
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Describe the experience of participating in this project.
2. What were your expectations of the project before the first meeting? How did those expectations match the experience?
3. Did you enjoy participating in this project? Why or why not?
4. How difficult was the schedule of the summit?
5. Did you learn more about the ministry of the Leadership Team?
6. Did you notice any change in your style of ministry at Refuge?
7. Do you feel better connected to members of the Leadership Team?
8. The main purpose of the study was to train, equip and empower the Leadership Team at Refuge. Do you feel that this has been accomplished?
9. How is your vision of Refuge changed?
10. Do you believe that this project would be beneficial for new leaders at Refuge?

APPENDIX F:
POWERPOINT USED IN INITIAL MEETING



APPENDIX G:
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



*Institutional Review Board
For Research Involving Human Subjects*

12-May-2015

Rev. Billy Dwain Thomas
P.O. Box 25
McAfee School of Theology
Perry, GA 31069

RE: COMING OFF THE BENCH:COACHING THE LEADERSHIP TEAM TO LEAD AT REFUGE CHURCH IN PERRY,GEORGIA (H1504149)

Dear Rev. Thomas:

Your application entitled: COMING OFF THE BENCH:COACHING THE LEADERSHIP TEAM TO LEAD AT REFUGE CHURCH IN PERRY,GEORGIA (H1504149) was reviewed by this Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research in accordance with Federal Regulations 21 CFR 56.110(b) and 45 CFR 46.110(b) (for expedited review) and was approved under Category 6, 7 per 63 FR 60364.

Your application was approved for one year of study on 12-May-2015. The protocol expires 11-May-2016. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

Item(s) Approved:

New Application use of focus groups, surveys, and audio recordings

Please complete the survey for the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance. To access the survey, click on the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/k7CTT8R>

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ava Chambliss-Richardson".

Ava Chambliss-
Richardson,
M.ED., CIP, CIM
Member
Intitutional Review Board
Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance
Phone (478) 301-4101

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