



NETFAX...Looking Back...Moving Toward the Edge

Launched in September, 1994, NetFax has delivered five years of ideas and issues related to the emerging 21st century church; the changing culture and context of mission and ministry; and the evolving nature of leadership now and in the coming century. This special expanded edition surveys some of the key learnings of the past five years and comes to you with our renewed commitment to keep moving toward the edge.

Vision and Values (#4) "Vision and values are important because they focus the energy of people on what they are really in business for...there are two parts to leadership: vision casting and implementation. The thinking that got you to where you are today will not get you to where you need to be tomorrow. The biggest human detriment to any organization is E.G.O....Edging God Out." (Ken Blanchard) "If there is anything I have learned over the years, it is to underestimate how often I need to re-ignite the vision...to consistently re-educate people why we are on the track we are on...why we do things the way we do. Of all the leadership issues, values are the toughest...what values drive your behavior?" (Bill Hybels)

The Critical Issue of Leadership (#50) "Effective leaders share five characteristics...they have a strong sense of purpose, a passion, a conviction of wanting to do something important; they are capable of developing and sustaining deep and trusting relationships; they are purveyors of hope and have positive illusions about reality; they have a balance in their lives between work, power, and family or outside activities; and they have a bias toward action and while not reckless, they do not resist taking risks." (Warren Bennis)

The Internet and the Church (#52) "The Internet is more about the transfer of information, ideas and knowledge than about technology. It is not about technology, it is about the Great Commission." (Walt Wilson)

Important Lessons from Peter Drucker (#75) "The mission comes first and the mission of non-profits (including churches) is to change lives. The function of management is to make the church more church-like, not to make the church more business-like. An organization begins to die the day it begins to be run for the benefit of the insiders and not for the benefit of the outsiders. Know the value of planned abandonment; you must decide what not to do. Focus on opportunities, not problems; most organizations assign their best resources to their problems, not their opportunities. People decisions are the ultimate control mechanism of an organization; that's where people look to see what values you really hold. The three most important questions are "What is our business?" "Who is the customer?" and "What does the customer value?"

What's Next for the Church (#86) "We now live in an age of discontinuity in churches... and discontinuity brings unintended consequences. We know a lot about change in the church but don't know much about discontinuity. The word congregation is being replaced with the word cause, churches are being organized around a cause instead of an institution. Pastoral allegiance is shifting from denominations to movements and networks. We are moving from western European cultural religions to more "made in America" religions. We have moved from an age of belief, or a universal assumption of God, to an age of unbelief." (Lyle Schaller)

Telling Stories and Today's Culture (#102) "I don't think the impact of storytelling has changed because stories are the basic medium of all moral communication. The question is 'What is the quality of the story you are telling? Does it have the force to stir the blood?' That's why the Bible is the only book that 'glows in the dark', because of those stories. People today say 'unless it touches me viscerally, existentially, experientially, I don't care. It may be as true as one plus one equals two, but it is meaningless to me.' Passion communicates. The story resonates and you are thinking about it after you leave, and the next day." (Max McLean)





HELPING CHURCH LEADERS TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

Practical Advice for Launching Ministry Teams (#103) “Don’t prejudge people... individuals we think are the key leaders often do not turn out to be those we can count on. Be careful not to isolate your teams from each other and the shared vision. Be prepared to make major adjustments in your pastoral style. Get out of the way of new leaders. Check regularly to see if your activities and strategies are linked to your vision.” (Dan Reeves)

Large Churches, Consultants and Global/Local Churches (#104) The challenges for large churches are to stay small while growing and to provide mechanisms or opportunities for people to connect relationally despite size. Another critical issue is succession planning... the need to prepare for the next senior pastor, to look beyond the leadership of the founding or long-term pastor. Leadership skill sets are changing from training or growth skills to reproductive or multiplication skills. Proclamation comes from the demonstrated power of a changed life and the leader’s right to be heard is earned through service and their life story. (LN Church Champions Network Editor’s Board)

Two False Assumptions (#106) “Non-customers are as important as customers, if not more important, because they are potential customers. Very few institutions know anything about the non-customers—very few know they even exist, let alone who they are. Even fewer know why they are not customers. Yet it is with the non-customers that changes always start. Consider the pastoral churches that have been growing so very fast in the US since 1980...they have done so because they asked, ‘What is value to a non-churchgoer’ and came up with answers the older churches had neglected.” (Peter Drucker)

Effective Leaders and Models of the 21st Century Church (#112) “Effective leaders in the churches of tomorrow will not be power-seeking controllers, but relation-building equippers and mentors. They will be people who know how to empower individuals by developing their skills, discernment, and faith-based accomplishments. The people they mentor will recognize an ongoing need for support and accountability. It is far from clear what the church in the 21st century will look like. Given the degree of social fragmentation, it is unlikely that any one model will prevail. Rather, we will see emerging a variety of models. Some of them may come as a great surprise, for they will contradict many things we have assumed as we extrapolate our church growth theories from just one impressive megachurch or promising new movement.” (Eddie Gibbs)

A Key Question for Leaders (#113) On building the initial leadership team, “The first thing, of course, is the CEO or the leader of the enterprise that we’re backing. We ask every CEO a simple question, *‘Is it more important for you to be the CEO of this company or for this company to succeed?’* That’s always a tough question for a person who wants to be the long-term leader of any enterprise.” (Floyd Kvamme)

Where Are the People Like Me? (#114) “Create a presence...find as many people as possible who will be there...people need to know they can count on a response. Create a culture..the tone, the standards. Develop role models...find people who personify the community you want to create...get commitment from people to welcome new visitors and recruit others...where there is life and a response, people will make the connections. What brings people back is dialogue and the connections. *The biggest question people ask here and on the Internet is ‘Where are the people like me?’*” (Jennifer Woodul, co-founder of Talk City)

Making Disciples Who Make Disciples (#116) “If you have eyes to see and ears to hear, you know that something is going on around the world. If you see a thriving church, you see a church that is making disciples rather than doing programs or getting decisions. Four shifts are affecting the making of disciples: from growing churches to growing people; from volunteers to servants; from a volunteer coordinator to some form of facilitator of lay mobilizers; and from control to permission-giving. If you are in control of your church, you’re going to kill it over the next 25 years. If you try to manage it, it’s over. Those days are gone.” (Bill Easum)





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Themes of the Emerging “Church on the New Edge” (#’s 118, 119) Community. In the church of the future, community is more than just making relationships or belonging in a small group. It is an expression of the Gospel. The church has nothing to show other than the exhibit of how we live in community with Christ in the center. Community is not an extra bonus; it is the essence of what Christians have to offer. Experience. People long to experience an intimate relationship with God. Experience now precedes and validates knowledge. People experience something first and their experience then creates the context for learning. The role of the leader in this setting is that of a guide and interpreter of experience rather than simply the deliverer of information. Mystical. The mystical nature of the emerging church is leading many churches to focus in three areas: an acknowledgement of people’s spirituality; an appreciation of mystery and wonder; and a return to the creative arts. Telling the story. Because there is a lack of universals in the emerging culture, there is little context or over-arching story for understanding and dealing with the issues of life and history. The Church has the story that is uniquely qualified to create an understanding of the where and when of human history. Telling the story is best accomplished through the use of stories but they are not the same things. Leadership. The new culture demands a new way of leading based on being rather than doing and a new set of leadership skills that involve: (1) being an extractor rather than the sole creator of the vision; (2) an interpreter of experiences in addition to imparting knowledge; and (3) an apostle who leads the community to engage, embrace, and transform the culture. The Missional Church. In addition to the questions of “What should we do” (program) and “Why should we do it?” (purpose), the Church is needing to ask a third question of identity, “Who are we?” In the missional model, the Church is a body of people who are fulfilling the Kingdom mission of impacting and changing the world, and the pastor’s role becomes that of apostle, poet, and prophet. (LN Young Leaders National Re-Evaluation Forum, Glorieta, NM, October, 1998)

Leading the Team-Based Church (#120) “I thought theological conformity was the most important characteristic in choosing staff, provided the individual was personally mature and emotionally healthy. What I learned instead was that one’s philosophy of ministry, or practical way of carrying out ministry, is really more important. A second unexpected learning was the strength of the value of trust. A team leader can do everything right and be absolutely trustworthy, but if perceived as not being so, it is just as damaging as if he or she were not trustworthy and the team will not pull together.” (George Cladis)

Building Catalytic Mechanisms (#124) “Mechanisms are the practices that brings to life what you stand for and stimulates change, forcing things to happen to reinforce your core purpose, values, strategies and operating practices. The ability to distinguish between that which should never be changed and what should be open to change is a key characteristic of great organizations. Catalytic mechanisms have five characteristics: they produce the desired end results but often in highly unpredictable ways; they distribute power away from the traditional centers and into the system; they have consequences; they help to accelerate the ejection of “viruses” or people who don’t share the core purpose and values of the organization; and they have an ongoing effect. (James Collins)

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