

### Perspective - What we are facing:

The following are issues that are endemic in the church in America. We must be humble, diligent, courageous, and wise as we seek to bring corrective theological solutions to this profile. Think carefully and systematically through these facts - - prayer is essential.

1. Only 3 % of the churches in America (386,000)<sup>1</sup> are growing by conversion growth; people being redeemed, baptized, and becoming growing disciples in that local church.
2. Around the globe, Christianity is the fastest growing religion. There are approximately 4,000 churches begun per week around the world.
3. In America, we close 50+ churches per week.<sup>2</sup>
4. In any local church, 47 % of the people are highly resistant to change. 17 % are devoted to peace, don't make any waves. They always side with those who oppose change. The collective result is we face a 64 % opposition force in almost every church in introducing change.
5. Recent studies indicate that at least 19,000 churches are split or scarred by major conflict each year.<sup>3</sup>
6. The average pastoral tenure is about 4.3 years. The most effective ministry occurs between years 5.4 and 14.3 of a pastors tenure.<sup>4</sup> Think about this for a moment.
7. Less than 1 in 10 regular attendees of Christian Churches give 10% (3% in 2003) or more of their income to the LORD through the church.<sup>5</sup>
8. People say they believe in Truth. Yet, 2 out of 3 Adults and 4 out of 5 teenagers say that Truth is relative, there is no absolute Truth.
9. Fully one half of the people who attend a Christian Church on any given weekend are not Christian, that is, they do not trust in Christ alone for their eternal salvation.<sup>6</sup>
10. The number of 'regular attendees' in local churches that are absent on any given Sunday continues to increase. 10 years ago it was 2 in 10. It is now 3 in 10, soon to be 4 in 10. This means that if you have 500 'regular members', on any given Sunday you will have 30-40% of them absent. This is a clear reflection of 'values' when the absence is discretionary, that is, they choose to not attend in deference to another activity.

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<sup>1</sup> REV Magazine, January/February 2004, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.60.

<sup>3</sup> PeaceMaker Ministries Letter, December 2003, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Barna Research Group, September 25, 2001, [www.Barna.org](http://www.Barna.org) .

<sup>5</sup> Barna Research Group, May 19, 2003, [www.Barna.org](http://www.Barna.org) .

<sup>6</sup> Barna Research Group, October, 22, 2002. "Barna noted that half (49%) of the adults who are church members are non-born again individuals.



11. Every month, some 1,600 pastors in U.S. churches quit or resign from their jobs in order to leave the ministry (lost giving and replacement costs total over \$ 700 million annually<sup>7</sup>) and nearly 20 percent of clergy suffer stress or burnout (collectively this is 94,000 leaders or 25% of the churches in America), according to recently published reports and research studies.<sup>8</sup>
12. There is a famine of the hearing of the Words of the LORD (Amos 8:11). Only 4 % of Americans have a Theistic Worldview.<sup>9</sup> People say they believe in the Scriptures as the Word of God. But, when their shepherd seeks to make application to daily living and conduct, he is castigated, rebuffed, or worse, fired (cf. # 11). Culture not Scripture shapes many aspects of the church in America.

### **Process - For a time such as this. . . .**

Solutions will require the continuous **objective analysis** of Mission.

Solutions will require the development of **strategies and goals** to accomplish Mission.

Solutions will require **structures that equip all personnel** with the knowledge and skills to accomplish Mission, thrive, be effective, and find joy in ministry.

This is best accomplished through a Redemptive Learning Community. So, what is a Redemptive Learning Community? According to Peter Senge, a “learning organization” is an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. For such an organization, it is not enough merely to survive. “Survival learning,” or what is often termed “adaptive learning,” is important — indeed it is necessary. But for a learning organization, “adaptive learning” must be joined by “generative learning,” learning that enhances our capacity to create.<sup>10</sup> We add redemptive because we serve God and His people. Jesus came to redeem and He is Head of the church. We serve Christ and those who shepherd His people. We add Community because the church is by God’s design to live life in community.<sup>11</sup>

IgniteUS, Inc. provides the tools and mentoring to equip the pastor for a leadership role in this precarious, challenging, and significant journey.

**Summary** – What IUS provides the pastor and the church – **Analysis, Process, and Structure.**

### **Leadership – Transaction and Transformation**

***Transactional Leadership*** – is based on transactions or exchanges between leaders and their followers. The followers express a variety of basic self-interests like physical and emotional security. Leaders shape situations in which the followers accomplish the actions desired by the leaders in exchange for rewards that meet the followers’ needs. The transactions might include money for jobs, flattery, for

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<sup>7</sup> PeaceMaker Ministries, December 2003 Letter, p.1.

<sup>8</sup> The Charlotte Observer, Alban Institute, December 13, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Barna Research Group, [www.Barna.org](http://www.Barna.org), December 1, 2003

<sup>10</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, p. 14. Published in 1990, it provides an abundance of much needed guidance for a pastor in today's rapid change culture.

<sup>11</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together – A Discussion of Christian fellowship*. Harper - San Francisco, 1954, 122 pp.

loyalty, or votes for favors once in office. Transactional leaders tend to set up rules and standards to check for non-compliance and to maintain the status quo. These leaders rely on reactive tactics as they focus on power and politics.

**Transformational Leadership** – The transformational leader helps followers embrace a vision of a preferred future. Leaders inspire and empower followers to achieve new levels of personal and corporate performance. They encourage individuals and support innovative ventures. Followers gladly commit to a future they help create. Because transformational leaders are trusted and respected, followers tend to internalize the spirit and goals of the organization.<sup>12</sup>

### **The ‘Episodic Event’ approach to Leadership Development.**

There are no quick fixes for these issues. This has been the historical pattern, but it has produced only continuing frustration and decline.

Most efforts to address the crises faced by the pastoral community are built on the assumption that information alone produces solutions to these challenges. Consequently, a pastor may go to conference after conference, filling notebooks with the latest information from the most recent highly successful leader. But without a clear perspective on the nature of the system he or she is part of, the pastor returns home to the demands of life and ministry unchanged. We talk with many pastors and congregational leaders who have become discouraged and cynical. Although they frequently know the right things to do, they lack the ability to do them.<sup>13</sup>

### **Transformation – A Process. Be Transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

The axiom set forth by Peter Senge is most applicable here - - *Faster is slower.*<sup>14</sup> The church is an organization and an organism. Our goal is transformation. Therefore, we must apply systems, processes that will lead to lasting transformation not merely short-term or temporary diversions only to return to status quo. Another notebook or another conference is not the solution. A systematic process of personal and organizational transformation is the need of the hour.

Remember: personal transformation—becoming an effective spiritual leader—is an inside-out process of growing obedience to Christ. It is helped along by the presence of a safe community of coaches and peers who offer grace and speak truth, but most of all it calls us to a reflective life centered in the person of Jesus Christ. For the sake of your own personal health, for the health of your family, and for the health of your ministry, begin your journey of personal transformation now.<sup>15</sup>

### **Application to Ministry:**

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<sup>12</sup> Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2000, 186 pp. There is a work book companion to this book. These men compiled the content of this book as part of a longitudinal study in Houston TX as they worked with pastors and churches. This is hands-on real life reporting of the struggle of change in the church in America. The two types of leadership are at the very heart of effective leadership and transformation for the leader and the church.

<sup>13</sup> Jim Herrington, R. Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor. *The Leader’s Journey – Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass., 2003, 188 pp. This title takes the reader into the inner sanctum of the personal issue of transformation; first the leader, then the congregation. Each chapter includes very beneficial self-assessment questions for the readers reflection and response.

<sup>14</sup> Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, p.62.

<sup>15</sup> Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, pp. 12-13.

The Barna Research Group concluded that only 1 in 8 US Pastors is capable of leading the change process in a local church.<sup>16</sup> IUS has concluded that this number is 1 in 10. These statistics make clear the need for a credible Leadership Development Process that equips the pastor for the task at hand.

Is there a good time to begin? Yes. Now! Barna wrote *The Second Coming of The Church* in 1998. He concluded that the church in America had at best five (5) years to repent and launch a systematic and strategic effort to see God bring power and vitality to the ministry of the church in America. I offer his words from the introduction to that title as a challenge to each of you today. If not now, when? If not you and me, who?

America is at a turning point in its history. The decisions we make in the next few years regarding who we are and the values we stand for will seal the moral and spiritual fate of America for decades to come. The decadence and darkness of our nation are more profound than since the founding of this nation more than two centuries ago. The only power that can cleanse and restore this nation is the power of Christ. And the primary way in which that power is to be manifested is by Christ's followers serving God and humanity by being the church—that is, the true representation of Jesus Christ.

This is our time of testing. We must prove that we are what we claim to be, or we will certainly lose the platform to influence the world for Christ. That privileged position is already slipping from our grasp. Given the moral and spiritual demise of our culture, maintaining that position is not an insignificant challenge. And the sad truth is that the Christian Church, as we now know it, is not geared up to meet that challenge. Our situation is not hopeless, but it is urgent. Time is of the essence. Godly, strategic leadership, dedicated to the fulfillment of God's vision for America and His Church, is demanded.<sup>17</sup>

YOU are the Leader God has placed in the assembly you lead. You are there by His design. You must act and act now. The church needs transformation and Leaders who will lead that process. Gordon MacKenzie was the creator of the humor line of cards for Hallmark. He describes the incredible resistance to a new thing, to change, that he encountered in launching that project. He recorded his struggles in the book *Orbiting The Giant Hairball*. His thesis - - you must stay close enough to the ball to make a difference but don't get sucked down into the endless tangles of status quo. The epilogue (Paint Me A Masterpiece) is worth the price of the book. God is speaking to a child, the artist, about to be born. He is commissioning the child to make the canvas of his life a masterpiece of colors and hues, a portrait of brilliance. He is also speaking to you pastor. Listen to these words and **ACT**.

You have a masterpiece inside you, too, you know. One unlike any that has ever been created, or ever will be. And remember: If you go to your grave without painting your masterpiece, it will not get painted. No one else can paint it. Only *you*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> George Barna, *A Fish Out Of Water*, Brentwood TN: Integrity Publishers, 2002, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, Nashville: Word Publishers, 1998, Introduction, p.x.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon MacKenzie, *Orbiting The Giant Hair Ball – A Corporate Fool's Guide to Surviving with Grace*, New York: Viking, 1998.