



**SOARING!**



**CENTERED . . . and**

**Centered and Soaring Training Conference  
Presented by Rev. E. Stanley Ott, Ph.D.  
([vitalchurchesinstitute.com](http://vitalchurchesinstitute.com))**

**November 1, 10:30am - 8pm, Nov 2, 8:30am -12:15pm  
FPC, Lewistown, Montana**

**Sponsored by Yellowstone Presbytery  
and  
Synod of the Rocky Mountains  
(Your Per Capita Dollars at Work)**

# We are Delighted to Welcome Stan Ott back to Yellowstone Presbytery!

## E. Stanley Ott

M Div. Ph.D. pastor, author, trainer

**E. Stanley Ott is a gifted pastor and rare in today's mainline pastors according to Princeton's John Stewart**, "He carries in his pocket a doctorate in organizational theory, in his head a fine-tuned theological perspective, and in his pastor's heart an evangelist's passion."

Now, Stan Ott, Ph.D. is president of **Leading Moments, LLC** and founder of **Vital Churches Institute**, ministries dedicated to the revitalization and renewal of congregations and the mainline church. Stan has experienced, created and taught the processes that grow congregational vitality to hundreds of congregations, dozens of presbyteries through the programs equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12) known as the **Acts 16:5 Initiative** and the **Barnabas Leadership Group**. He is also the Teaching Pastor of the Vienna Presbyterian Church in Vienna, Virginia and served congregations in Pittsburgh and Indiana.

His degrees are from Georgia Tech, McCormick Theological Seminary, Purdue University, (Ph.D. in Organizational Design). Stan and his wife, Dr. Anne Marie Ott, are the parents of 3 adult children, and have 4 grandchildren.

### **Vital Churches Institute ([vitalchuresinstitute.com](http://vitalchuresinstitute.com))**

***"The Vision of the Vital Churches Institute is to lead the transformation of the mainline church." E. Stanley Ott, Ph.D, President and Founder***

- **Building One Another ([buildingoneanother.com](http://buildingoneanother.com))**

A podcast and devotional: "Our heart is to encourage your heart and to encourage you to encourage others. We touch on many topics of life, love and leadership to encourage your trust in Jesus as you take whatever adventure our Lord has given you and as you encourage others on their adventures of faith life."

- **Acts 16 Initiative ([vitalchuresinstitute.com](http://vitalchuresinstitute.com))**

The acts 16:5 Initiative is a three-year Leading Moments program designed for pastors and their lay-leaders to lead their congregation to new levels of vitality, whether there congregations are large or small, floundering or flourishing.

- **Barnabas Leadership Group ( <http://www.barnabasleadershipgroup.com>)**

The Barnabas Leadership Group is a two-year Leading Moments program to grow the soul-care and leadership capacity of Christian leaders.

### **Publications**

- *Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church* (Eerdmans)
- *Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams* (Eerdmans)
- *The Vibrant Church: A People-Building Plan For Congregational Health* (Regal)
- *The Joy of Discipling: Friend with Friend and Heart with Heart* (Zondervan)
- *Vision for a Vital Church* (Vital Faith Resources)
- *Small Group Life* (Vital Faith Resources)

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Please Note: Please be generous in giving to the Free Will Basket for Friday's lunch as well as the Free Will Basket for Conference Expenses.

## Word—Share—Prayer

**READ:** I Thessalonians 2:1-12

**2:1** For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain. **2** But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. **3** For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, **4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. **5** For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. **6** Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. **7** But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. **8** So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

**9** For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. **10** You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. **11** For you know how, like a father with his children, **12** we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

**REFLECT:** What kind of ministry inspired this vital disciple-growing church? List or underline every practice you see the Paul's team doing.

**RESPOND:** From this passage, jot down one practice of encouraging people to grow disciples that you would like to work on in your own life.

**REQUEST:** Jot down prayer requests that you and others may have.

**Word-Share-Prayer** is for use with small groups, committees, ministry teams, and boards. The texts are deliberately a bit short so that groups, Ministry teams, and committees with limited time can still "*be the people of God before doing the work of the people of God.*" For small group meetings, a longer section of text may be used or just more time spent discussing each segment.

For many team and committee meetings, we follow a 7-7-7 format - 7 minutes for individual Bible Study, 7 minutes to share one insight per person and 7 minutes to pray for one another. If we use these sheets for a regular one and one-half hour Bible study, then the biblical passage could be a bit longer and our schedule would be the **Word**-30 minutes, **Share(sharing)** of lives (blessings and prayer requests)-45 minutes and **Prayer**-15 minutes might be a breakdown.

For a ministry team/committee allow 7-7-7 minutes (plus or minus) format. If the group is larger than 12 to 14, you may find it easier to break into groups of three, four MAX, at least for the sharing of prayer requests and praying for one another.

1. Give every person 5-7 minutes to work on it in *silence* (we don't have people do them as "homework" since many will fail to do so).
2. Spend another 7 minutes or so asking people to briefly share one insight. If the group is larger than 12 - 14, break into groups of 3 - 4 to ensure each person can speak/contribute, be listened and save time. Many will never speak in a large group.
3. Ask for one-sentence prayer requests. Ensure each person is heard. Spend more time on this if someone in the group is in real distress about something. Otherwise, just a sentence or so per person as we want to lift one another up specifically but haven't the time for more sharing... unless we are willing and time allows. After doing this a few times, most teams are often willing to spend more time in this Bible study portion of the meeting simply because we discover work to be more focused on true priorities and more efficient and Christ-like in the rest of the meeting.

Pray for one another out loud by name, giving everyone the complete freedom to pray in silence if they prefer.

Hope this is useful for you... praying for you and your congregation to experience the transforming presence of our Lord in new ways.

With joy – Stan

Link to many Word-Share-Prayer sheets for your session, committee, group, team on a variety of scriptures <http://www.vitalchurchesinstitute.com/pages/word-share-prayer>

**Centered and Soaring - Spiritual Renewal in Challenging Times**  
 E. Stanley Ott  
**Yellowstone Presbytery 11/1/19**

**Word-Share-Prayer** – I Thessalonians 2:1-10

See <http://www.vitalchurchesinstitute.com/pages/word-share-prayer>

The Christian faith is a lifestyle to be lived before it is a program to be run.

Acts 16:5 The churches grew in faith and in numbers daily

The times they are a' changing - Bob Dylan 1964

What are we to do? Be Centered and Soaring – there is no magic bullet but we do see real vitality in congregations living the Christian lifestyle just as we see in I Thessalonians 1 where the faith was contagious.

In times of rapid change, what you know can mis-direct you (Robert Dilworth)! A new day will take a real humility (a teachable spirit) and a willingness to risk by trying new in your personal life and in your congregation's life.

Some things that may be outside your comfort zone. Are you more interested in protecting your comfort zone or seeing fresh vitality?

On Youtube, watch the Samsung Ostrich – Centered and Soaring – and read Isaiah 43:31

**Centered and Soaring**

- I. The Concept of Transferable Concepts
- II. Leaders Make Vision Shifts
- III. The Three Commitments as Transferable Concepts
- IV. Leading People Without Losing Them
- V. Take the Adventure the Lord had for You

**I. What is a transferable concept?**

A transferable concept is an idea that may be passed from generation to generation (biologically parent-to-child or relationally friend-to-friend) without losing content.

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. II Timothy 1:5

What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others also. II Timothy 2:2  
 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. I Thessalonians 1:6-8

Do you have a way to express your grasp of basic Christian concepts in ways that you can pass them on to others and they may be transferred again and again?

Transferable concepts are themselves a transferable concept. Work to express in transferable ways what you pass on through sermons, teaching and conversations. More work? Sure. Worth it? Very!

## **II. Leaders Lead Vision Shifts** (Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming your Church)

- 1] Shift from your present hopes for your congregation's future to the high expectation that God has a vital future for your church.

*Today's church frequently demonstrates little genuine excitement about the future. The future vital church will expect God to act in fresh ways to inspire discipleship and meet the needs of people.*

Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire!  
 Catherine of Siena

“...But this (pressure on us) happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 2 Corinthians 1:9

I will build my church – Jesus Matthew 16:18

MAKE A FAITH SHIFT – For you and your congregation.

- 2] Shift from merely running programs to implementing a vision for ministry.

*Today's church frequently uses a program model for ministry. The future vital church will create and modify ministry programs in accord with its vision (its purpose and the principles of ministry).*

Vision is seeing what God wants to do through you! James R. Tozer

Some congregation's visions:

We exist to know the heart of God. Baylife - Sunnyvale

Filled up, poured out. Trinity Presbyterian, Anchorage  
 To make God smile. Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian, San Diego  
 Becoming like Christ, together, for the world. Vienna Presbyterian

Your congregation's vision? Yours?

See BuildingOneAnother.com Episode 19 Great minds have purposes

However immense, powerful, wonderful and extraordinary you may know Jesus Christ to be, he is more immense, more powerful, wonderful and extraordinary than anything you have or are or will imagine. So, when you think of vision for your life and your church, dream big!

The first shift called for a faith-shift. The second shift calls for a vision-shift!  
 The third shift calls for balance!

3] Shift from a maintenance mentality to a sustaining and advancing vision.

*Today's church frequently runs last year's programs over again. The future vital church will sustain present program and advance with new ministry in accord with the needs of people.*

Bless and Add

### **III. The Three Commitments Vision: A Robust Vision**

A growing commitment to Jesus Christ  
 A growing commitment to the Body of Christ  
 A growing commitment to the work of Christ in the world

The Great Commandment (Love the Lord your God with all your...)  
 The New Commandment (Love one another as I have loved you...)  
 The Great Commission (Go into all the world and make disciples...)

(A three-dimensional vision: Doxological, Koinonial, Missional)

A transferable concept

Many ways to express the three commitments including:

A growing love for the Lord who loves us  
 A growing love for the people God gives us  
 A growing love for the world to which God sends us

A growing faith in the Triune God  
 A growing hope for the people of God  
 A growing love for the world



## A growing commitment to Jesus Christ

This about knowing and loving a Person, not merely following a code of conduct.

### Transferable Concepts for a Growing Commitment to Jesus:

- Touching Jesus – growth in faith
- Devotional life - Bible study and prayer
- Prayer Covenant – praying for one another
- Word-Share-Prayer – being the people of God

Of course, many more transferable concepts may be placed here.

**Touching Jesus** – personal trust in, faith in and the following of Jesus

A transferable concept

**Devotional life** – Prayer and Bible study in one’s private life.

A transferable concept

**Prayer Covenant** - prayer for one another

A transferable concept

Ephesians 3:16-19 and other scripture is helpful for this.

**Word-Share-Prayer** – a way to be the people of God before doing the work of the people of God. Just note how-to-use handout.

A transferable concept

### Transferable Concepts for a growing commitment to the Body of Christ

- People Eyes - see through the eyes of Jesus
- Friends of road and heart – growth in friendship
- Hospitality and friendliness – make room 4 love
- Growing disciples – intentional faith formation

Koinonia – fellowship means trusted relationships

**Receive People eyes** — Seeing people through the eyes of Jesus

A transferable concept

Youtube: Every life has a story... if we bother to read it.

Jesus saw the needs of others through his people eyes.

They are caught as much as taught.

Talk about them constantly – in stories, illustrations etc.

## Grow Friends of the Road and Friends of the Heart

### A transferable concept

John 15:14 “I have called you friends...”

Carl George: “The congregation paradigm describes most of North American religions and it’s failing. Why? Because it’s not prepared to cope with the quality of turmoil people are experiencing in their personal lives.” We need friends!

<https://www.swnsdigital.com/2019/05/why-the-average-american-hasnt-made-a-new-friend-in-five-years/>

## Hospitality vs friendliness

### A transferable concept

Friendly: how are you? Hospitable: will you come into my life?

Hospitality is a lifestyle to be lived.

The Emmaus Meal - See <http://www.vitalchurchesinstitute.com>  
login: username: Emmaus password: hospitality

Hospitality is making room for love – Glenda Hoffman

What would a congregation be like where just 20% of the people had people eyes, practiced hospitality (come into my life) and the Emmaus meal?

## Hospitality in worship

First Impressions – Mark Waltz  
(Creating a sense of “WOW”)

The Mystery Visitor  
Ship-of-fools.com  
Shipoffools.com

### *Mystery Worshipper*

1. Tell us about the building & your experience of parking and entering.
2. Who led the service? How full was the sanctuary?
3. Did anyone welcome you personally?
4. How would you describe the pre-service atmosphere?
5. Was the worship stiff-upper-lip, happy clappy or what?
6. How long was the sermon? 1-10, how good was the preacher?

7. Which part of the service was like being in heaven?
8. And which part was like being in...er..the other place?
9. What happened when you hung around afterwards looking lost?
10. How would you feel about making this church your regular (10=ecstatic, 0=terminal)?
11. Did the service make you feel glad to be a Christian?<sup>[SEP]</sup>

### **Growing Disciples** (spiritual direction, mutual encouragement)

#### A transferable concept

What strategies does your congregation use for growing disciples?  
Do you, personally and intentionally, encourage others – children and/or adults to grow as disciples of Jesus?

I Thessalonians 2 Growing disciples is lifestyle to be lived before it is a program to be run.

Growing Disciples requires three ingredients:

1. Relationship
2. Content
3. Time

Micro Groups (Groups of 3-5) is a way to actually encourage others – and yourself – to grow as disciples of Jesus.

Chuck Miller: “Discipleship is reproducing in others what the Spirit of God is doing in you and enabling them to reproduce it in a third generation.”

Micro Groups offer a new approach that combines relationship, content and time.

Current CE programming is more about belonging than growing. Belonging is good. We just want to grow too.

The Principle of Multiplication and micro groups:

#### A transferable concept

Discipleship Essentials – Greg Ogden

The Bible GPS – Kobus Genis

Apprenticeship with Jesus – Gary Moon

The Good and Beautiful series – James Byran Smith

You may use any good study of scripture for a micro-group

What to do during an hour of micro-group time:

Word (scripture study) – Share (lives) – Prayer (for each other)

Launching a micro-group system of growing disciples

1. The BSBS Principle: Build Slowly Build Solidly
2. The Principle of Multiplication: start large end small – start small end large.
3. Who are the potential leaders?
4. Recruitment, training, deploying (Be in or lead a triad yourself)
5. Follow through – sustaining the multiplication of new groups.

Remember the With-Me Principle! Get together with a friend, get a third person and go!

Growing disciples of oneself and others is a lifestyle to be lived for all of us. Who then who is your Lydia, your Timothy?

Be strong, be of good courage and do it! II Chronicles 28:20

Which of these transferable concepts of a growing commitment to the Body of Christ will you pursue?

**Transferable Concepts for a Growing Commitment to the Body of Jesus (the church):**

- People Eyes - see through the eyes of Jesus
- Friends of road and heart – growth in friendship
- Hospitality and friendliness – make room 4 love
- Growing disciples – intentional faith formation

**A growing commitment to the work of Christ in the world**

**See yourself as “sent.”** A transferable concept

As the Father sent me, even so, I send you! John 20:21

Sending is a sending to ministry. It may or may not mean a change in location.

The Halverson Benediction: Wherever you go, God is sending you, wherever you are, God has put you there, He has a purpose in your being there. Christ Who indwells you has something He wants to do through you where you are. Believe this and go in His grace and love and power.” Richard C. Halverson

Our first step in becoming a vital congregation *is not* the invention of programs to represent our church in the community and world. As significant as those programs may be, the deployment of people who consciously understand that they represent Jesus Christ quite literally in every place they go is our first and continuing step.

So maybe it takes 10 – 20 % of active church people to sustain the organization of the church – yet we are all called to do the work of Christ in the world: Sent!

### **Transferable concepts for a growing commitment to the work of Christ in the world**

- People Eyes - see through the eyes of Jesus
- The Missional Mandate
  - Show up – the compassion of Jesus
  - Speak up – the good news of Jesus
  - Stand up – the justice of Jesus
- Integrate Faith and Work

#### **People Eyes** A transferable concept

**he Missional Mandate:** Show Up, Speak Up, Stand Up - apply to o the BOC too – all three all the time – not a matter of location i.e. both gathered and scattered.

See Luke 4:18-19 Jesus practices all three!

#### **Show Up** – Offer the compassion of Jesus A transferable concept

Stretcher-bearers – Mark 2

We are to have staying power in the alarm moments of other people’s lives. Oswald Chambers

See BuildingOneAnother.com episode 19

#### **Speak Up** – Bear witness to Jesus A transferable concept

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. I Peter 3:15

Rehearse your 100-word Jesus Story (five sentences or so)

When did you first become aware of God and of the person of Jesus and or what does Jesus mean to you?

#### **Stand Up** – Stand up for what you believe to be right. Justice.

A transferable concept

Care Enough to Confront – David Augsburger

Start with your own life

As you get involved in justice matters work to sustain your connection to Jesus and to the people of God.

## **Integrate Faith and Work** A transferable concept

“The maximum impact of the church of Jesus Christ in history in the world is not the impact of great and eloquent preachers, or denominations, or church hierarchies, or even popes, or priests, or cardinals, or all of the programs that the church has invented. The maximum impact of the church of Jesus Christ is the influence of the aggregate of believers where they are between Sundays. The measure of the effectiveness of a local church is not when the sanctuary is full on Sunday morning, and the programs are in operation. The measure of the effectiveness of the church is what’s happening when the sanctuary is empty, the parking lot is empty, and the programs are not in operation, and people are scattered all over a metropolitan area, penetrating all of the organizations and institutions of that area, because where they are Christ is - in them. You are the church.”

Richard C. Halverson

Work – work with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women.  
Ephesians 6:7

MadeToFlourish.com  
nehemiahproject.org

Vanderbloemen.com/  
Books by Patrick Lencioni

### **Summary: Transferable Concepts of the Three Commitments**

A Growing Commitment to Jesus (doxological)

- Touching Jesus – growth in faith
- Devotional life - Bible study and prayer
- Prayer Covenant – praying for one another
- Word-Share-Prayer – being the people of God

A Growing Commitment to the Body of Jesus (koinonial)

- People Eyes - see through the eyes of Jesus
- Friends of road and heart – growth in friendship
- Hospitality and friendliness – make room 4 love
- Growing disciples – intentional faith formation

A Growing Commitment to the Work of Christ in the World  
(missional)

- People Eyes - see through the eyes of Jesus
- The Missional Mandate
  - Show up – the compassion of Jesus
  - Speak up – the good news of Jesus
  - Stand up – the justice of Jesus
- Integrate Faith and Work

#### IV. Leading People Without Losing Them A transferable concept

“The present system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets!” W. Edwards Deming

Lead others as you: Transferable concepts

1. Remember bless and add
2. Use the 10/90 Rule – ministry is 10% planning what to do and 90% planning how to do it in order to keep your people with you!
3. Remain Persistent
4. Use the with-me principle. Get a buddy with you
5. Encourage Makrothumia – show grace to one another

Makrothumia – makro (long) thumia (temper)  
The opposite of a short temper

It is the grace of getting along

Love is a willingness to be frustrated – Bernard Harnik – a willingness to give up what you want to affirm someone else.

(The 75% Rule – Corey Widmer)

#### IV. Take the Adventure the Lord has for You! A transferable concept

Ben Johnson: take the adventure the Lord has for you!

Remember you are running with a champion – Jesus!

“I will build MY church!”

Be Centered and Soar!

**Change or Die** – the reality of the complacency problem  
A transferable concept

Why do people resist new ideas for their own lives and for their church?

Turf – “Don’t mess with my domain.”

Change = loss. I like it as it is.

Exhaustion... I’m too tired to mess with it.

Complacency. “I’m used to it.”

In Deep Change, Robert Quinn argues given the choice between one's own deep change as a leader or the slow death of the organization, nine out of ten choose will slow death!

In Change or Die, the posed question is if you knew you were going to die but a change in behavior would save you, nine of ten choose death.

Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Luke 19:17 ESV

### **Choose to be the one in ten!**

Peter Wagner of the old church growth movement of many years ago spoke of two requirements for a growing congregation:

1. The pastor has to want it and to be willing to pay the price.
2. The people have to want it and be willing to pay the price.

What price? Money? Perhaps – but more likely the price of the willingness to risk, to fail, the price of the sheer effort required.

The one in ten is willing to pay the price – of personal effort, of risk, of whatever is required to advance the work of Christ.

### **Be aware of WIGs and Whirlwinds!**

WIG = **Wildly Important Goal**

Whirlwind – life's consuming busyness

The Four Disciplines of Execution by McChesney, Covey

### **Decide What to Do – as a person and as a team**

Are the three commitments, or some expression of them, a framework you are willing to use? If not, what is the vision that will define you and your congregation?

Which transferable concepts appear most fruitful now for you?

See the summary of the transferable concepts.

Limit your next steps – choose one transferable concept from each of the three commitments and decide how and perhaps with whom you will do it.

Prioritize those three transferable concepts. Go home and do the first one – and ask yourself how to transfer the transferable concept to someone else.



**Layering** – Adopt transferable concepts for your own life and offer them to others at a pace you and others can absorb.

**Get with those who cheer you on!**

Life and ministry can be exhausting. Sometimes our spirits wear down.

Practice transferable concepts such as the devotional life, hospitality, a face-to-face group, your stretcher-bearers, etc.

**A “PS” – Notice the Three Commitments are an expandable Framework.**

Here in an example of such an expansion:

A Growing Commitment to Jesus (doxological)

- Touching Jesus – growth in faith
- Growth in character – both faith and practice
- Devotional life - Bible study and prayer
- Prayer Covenant – praying for one another
- Worship – praying with one another
- Word-Share-Prayer – being the people of God
- Other spiritual disciplines

A Growing Commitment to the Body of Jesus (koinonial)

- People Eyes - see through the eyes of Jesus
- Friends of road and heart – growth in friendship
- Growing family life and other relationships
- Hospitality and friendliness – make room 4 love
- Growing disciples – intentional faith formation
- Face-to-Face Groups – small and micro groups
- Generosity – serve with your gifts and give of your substance

A Growing Commitment to the Work of Christ in the World (missional)

- People Eyes - see through the eyes of Jesus
- The Missional Mandate
  - Show up – the compassion of Jesus
  - Speak up – the good news of Jesus
  - Stand up – the justice of Jesus
- The Missional Cycle – Reach-Grow-Send
- Integrate Faith and Work

**Also notice the Three Commitments apply to the whole congregation.**

A Growing Commitment to Jesus (doxological)

- The Ministry of Worship and Music
- Prayer Team

A Growing Commitment to the Body of Jesus (koinonial)

- Discipleship – Adults, youth, children – team or teams
- Deacons – care and service
- Leadership – Session, Staff, Trustees, Planning Team, Nominating Committee
- Generosity (stewardship) team

A Growing Commitment to the Work of Christ in the World (missional)

- Missions Ministry Team (short-term and mission support)
- Justice Team
- Evangelism Team

This may be edited in accord with a particular congregation's ministries.

Youtube – Stuck on an Escalator – take action!

**Take the adventure the Lord has for you!**

## 12 Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church<sup>1</sup>

E. Stanley Ott

### Shifts Concerning Vision and Expectation

1] Shift from your present hopes for your congregation's future to the high expectation that God has a vital future for your church.

*Today's church frequently demonstrates little genuine excitement about the future. The future vital church will expect God to act in fresh ways to inspire discipleship and meet the needs of people.*

2] Shift from merely running programs to implementing a vision for ministry.

*Today's church frequently uses a program model for ministry. The future vital church will create and modify ministry programs in accord with its vision (its purpose and the principles of ministry).*

3] Shift from a maintenance mentality to a sustaining and advancing vision.

*Today's church frequently runs last year's programs over again. The future vital church will sustain present program and advance with new ministry in accord with the needs of people.*

### Shifts Concerning Ministry to People

4] Shift from an emphasis on friendliness to a ministry of friendliness and hospitality.

*Today's church frequently works to be friendly. The future vital church will uphold friendliness and hospitality.*

5] Shift from assuming discipleship to developing discipleship.

*Today's church frequently assumes members are disciples. The future vital church will lovingly and intentionally develop discipleship.*

6] Shift a primary emphasis on the communal life of the church to a balanced emphasis on the communal and missional life of the church

*Today's church frequently emphasizes the gathered state of the church (meetings, usually in the church building.) The future vital church will balance its emphasis on ministry in the gathered state with ministry in the scattered state (home, community and workplace).*

### Shifts Concerning Congregational Program

7] Shift from an unchanging worship format to a ministry of worship and music responsive to the variety of needs present in the congregation and the community you are trying to reach.

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<sup>1</sup> © 2001 E. Stanley Ott Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2002).

Today's church frequently worships in a traditional way. The future vital church will blend the great worship and sacred music of history with new expressions of worship and music while sustaining the essential worship distinctions of its denomination or communion.

8] Shift from primarily audience-oriented programming (e.g. worship services, classes) to a balance of audience-oriented ministry and face-to-face ministry (e.g. small groups, one-one-one spiritual direction).

*Today's church frequently runs mostly audience-oriented programs. The future vital church will balance audience-oriented programming with face-to-face groups.*

9] Shift from getting established groups to add new people to adding new groups.

*Today's church frequently expects new people to join established groups. The future vital church will grow by sustaining old groups and adding new groups.*

### **Shifts concerning the practice of leadership**

10] Shift from a "leader-using" ministry to a "leader-developing" ministry; from committees to ministry teams.

*Today's church uses leaders. The future vital church will use leaders and develop leaders.*

11] Shift from a controlling leadership to a permission-giving leadership.

*Today's church frequently is permission withholding. The future vital church is permission giving where it comes to ministry while holding to central values and convictions.*

12] Shift from a pastor-centered/officer-centered ministry to shared ministry among pastor, officers and people.

*Today's church frequently accomplishes ministry primarily by pastors and church officers (elders and deacons). Pastors, officers, and the people of God share ministry in the future vital church. Pastors and officers become the permission-giving "equippers" and "senders" of every person to ministry.*

## *Worship as an Entry Point*

The mainline church has classically thought of its worship services as the primary point of entry for new people. While they have typically been referred to as visitors, the term “guests” is more hospitable. Today people are often drawn first to other entry point events and groups before ever experiencing a congregation’s worship service, however the worship service is still a significant entry point for many congregations.

Enhance the effectiveness of your worship service as an entry point with the following:

### **1. Work on friendliness and hospitality.**

#### **Friendliness**

Most congregations think they are friendly – and they are to those already on the inside. It isn’t unusual for a visitor/guest to discover no one makes eye contact with him or her, no one smiles, no one introduces himself or herself. A greeter at the door may be friendly, but everyone knows they are supposed to smile. A greeter doesn’t usually make a lasting personal connection with guests.

You can enhance your friendliness by training your people. Tell them to smile – at everyone! Tell them never to harrumph and say, “I’ve been a member here 40 years,” when a person innocently asks, “Are you new here?” Teach them to assume both the new person and even many long-time members don’t know your name (even if you think they should).

A fun way to do this is by teaching the simple, “Welcome, I’m glad you’re here.” On a Sunday morning ask the congregation to stand (which can be amusing for those who only stand to sing), face one another, and take turns saying, “Welcome, I’m glad you’re here.” Have fun with it. Ask them to say it to everyone when they are on church grounds – old friends and complete strangers.

A year later, do it again. This time add the phrase, “I hope you feel welcome.” “Welcome, I’m glad you’re here. I hope you feel welcome.” Once again have them practice during the service and offer the same guidance to say these words to old friends and total strangers. It is amazing how it loosens up a congregation – and helps the guest actually feel welcome.

#### **Hospitality**

Friendly is “Hi how are you – I hope you feel welcome.” Hospitality goes further asking, “Would you come into my life?”

“Liz and I are going for a cup of coffee. Will you join us?” “Jim and I are going to grab a bite to eat. Please come with us.” We call such a practice “The Emmaus Meal.” For more information go to [http:// www.VitalChurchesInstitute.com](http://www.VitalChurchesInstitute.com) username: Emmaus, password: hospitality.

From: Three Keys to a Missional Congregation (Acts 16:5 Initiative) © 2012, 2017 E. Stanley

When people are welcomed into the private lives of those who are “inside,” such as those who attend a worship service, then the group becomes a genuine entry point for new people.

## **2. Attend to the welcoming aspects of your facilities.**

Is there marked parking for guests (“guest parking”) as well as for the physically challenged?

Are there clear signs in every entry that guide people to child-care, the sanctuary, the fellowship hall, and the church offices?

Is the lighting up to today’s brightness? Public buildings today (banks, restaurants, malls, libraries) are bright and cheerful. Older buildings are often dimmer. Just a few more lights or more wattage can make a huge difference in creating a physical sense of welcome.

Are the entry areas and the bathrooms updated in wall and floor covering?

Do you have a first-rate sound system – speakers, microphones and so on. With the tech available today there are ways to improve the audio of just about any gathering space.

## **3. Ask someone to be a Mystery Worshipper.**

The British website <http://www.Ship-Of-Fools.com> hosts an interesting section called “The Mystery Worshipper” wherein people who visit a congregation are invited to upload to the website their observations about the experience. Checkout: <http://www.ship-offools.com/mystery/usa.html>

Ask someone (or more than one) you know who has a good spirit, is unknown to the congregation and can be objective to visit your worship and give you feedback. The questions the Mystery Worshipper answer are on the next page – feel free to edit them for your purposes.

### *Mystery Worshiper*

Tell us about the building and your experience of parking and entering.  
 What was the name of the service you attended?  
 Who led the service?  
 How full was the sanctuary?  
 Did anyone welcome you personally?  
 Was your pew or seating comfortable?  
 How would you describe the pre-service atmosphere?  
 What were the exact opening words of the service?  
 What books did the congregation use during the service?  
 What musical instruments were played?  
 Did anything distract you?  
 Was the worship stiff-upper-lip, happy clappy or what?  
 Exactly how long was the sermon?  
 On a scale of 1-10, how good was the preacher?  
 In a nutshell, what was the sermon about?  
 Which part of the service was like being in heaven?  
 And which part was like being in...er..the other place?  
 What happened when you hung around after the service looking lost?  
 How would you describe the after-service coffee?  
 How would you feel about making this church your regular (10=ecstatic, 0=terminal)?  
 Did the service make you feel glad to be a Christian?  
 What one thing will you remember about all this in seven days' time?

#### **4. Study the book *First Impressions* by Mark Waltz.**

Mark contends we have only ten minutes – from the time a guest drives on or near the church property or meeting place until they are seated in the sanctuary to create a sense of “WOW!” Often by the time the guest figures out where to park, where to enter the building, what to do with kids, they arrive late to the sanctuary, find the pews in the back full, and finally sit with a sense of “whew” instead of a sense of “Wow!”

In vital congregations, guests decide to visit again before they know who the pastor is or have even seen the pastor. The spirit of the congregation and the ease of entry into the gathering of God’s people says, “Relax among us and be welcome.”

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## Valuing Diversity: The 75% Rule

2013/06/27 By [Greg Smith](#)

Corey Widmer, associate pastor for outreach at Third Presbyterian Church (Richmond, VA), recently [wrote about](#) something known in his congregation as the 75% rule. He explains:

*When we gather together to worship on Sundays, everyone should be happy with no more than 75% of what is happening during the worship service. Why such a strange rule? Because we realize that in our culturally diverse congregation, if you are happy and comfortable with more than 75% of what is going on, it most likely means that your personal cultural preferences are being dominantly expressed. So we've decided that no one cultural form will be dominant and everyone will be equally unhappy with the worship!*

### So What?

Congregations with one service or with multiple services all with similar styles can never satisfy the varied demands of a diverse constituency with all elements of each service nor should striving toward such be considered ideal. Determining how best to construct worship in ways that are consistent with the congregation's identity while also being respectful of the cultural and theological diversity of those present is a challenge.

What does worship planning look like in your congregation?

Who is involved?

What is the basic process?

How do those outside the formal process have opportunities to share their thoughts?

If your congregation values diversity and in doing so knows that certain elements of each service will resonate with differing constituencies, how well do you think this message is communicated to all worshipers.

[sowhatfaith.com](http://sowhatfaith.com)



## Word—Share—Prayer

**READ:** Genesis 12:1-6

**12** Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

**4** So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5** And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan

**REFLECT:** When God challenged Abram and Sarai with a great adventure, what do you think when through their minds – and the minds of those who went with them? How do you think they felt? What hopes and fears?

### **RESPOND:**

1. As you or your congregation face a new adventure, what goes through your own mind, your own hopes and fears?

2. God's purpose and commission to Abram, Sarai and their *descendants* includes “*that you will be a blessing.*” How may the Holy Spirit want to bless – others, communities, all nations... - through YOU? Through your community of disciples? Through our presbytery?

**REQUEST:** Jot down prayer requests that you and others may have.

**Word-Share-Prayer** is for use with small groups, committees, ministry teams, and boards. The texts are deliberately a bit short so that groups, Ministry teams, and committees with limited time can still *"be the people of God before doing the work of the people of God."* For small group meetings, a longer section of text may be used or just more time spent discussing each segment.

For many team and committee meetings, we follow a 7-7-7 format - 7 minutes for individual Bible Study, 7 minutes to share one insight per person and 7 minutes to pray for one another. If we use these sheets for a regular one and one-half hour Bible study, then the biblical passage could be a bit longer and our schedule would be the **Word**-30 minutes, **Share(sharing)** of lives (blessings and prayer requests)-45 minutes and **Prayer**-15 minutes might be a breakdown.

For a ministry team/committee allow 7-7-7 minutes (plus or minus) format. If the group is larger than 12 to 14, you may find it easier to break into groups of three, four MAX, at least for the sharing of prayer requests and praying for one another.

1. Give every person 5-7 minutes to work on it in *silence* (we don't have people do them as "homework" since many will fail to do so).
2. Spend another 7 minutes or so asking people to briefly share one insight. If the group is larger than 12 - 14, break into groups of 3 - 4 to ensure each person can speak/contribute, be listened and save time. Many will never speak in a large group.
3. Ask for one-sentence prayer requests. Ensure each person is heard. Spend more time on this if someone in the group is in real distress about something. Otherwise, just a sentence or so per person as we want to lift one another up specifically but haven't the time for more sharing... unless we are willing and time allows. After doing this a few times, most teams are often willing to spend more time in this Bible study portion of the meeting simply because we discover work to be more focused on true priorities and more efficient and Christ-like in the rest of the meeting.

Pray for one another out loud by name, giving everyone the complete freedom to pray in silence if they prefer.

Hope this is useful for you... praying for you and your congregation to experience the transforming presence of our Lord in new ways.

With joy – Stan

Link to many Word-Share-Prayer sheets for your session, committee, group, team on a variety of scriptures <http://www.vitalchurchesinstitute.com/pages/word-share-prayer>



**Yellowstone Presbytery "Centered and Soaring Conference" with Dr. Stan Ott**

**FPC Lewistown November 1 and 2, 2019**

Your input is important to us! Please fill out and return with name tags at the registration table at end of conference

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

1. How would you "sum up" the Centering and Soaring Conference with a short quote that we could share with other congregations?

2. What did you find valuable and why?

3. In your personal life, what areas do you need to grow in as a disciple?

4. What areas of resourcing might your session and church community need?

5. Suggestions for further sharing of ideas & partnering? We are ONE in Christ and stronger together.