

Core Values

<i>Contents</i>	PAGE
Leader's Guide	2
Interview:	
CLIMATE CONTROL	3-4
Assessments:	
AUDIT YOUR PERSONAL MINISTRY VALUES.....	5
THE GOOD VALUE TEST	6
DISCOVER YOUR CHURCH'S VALUES.....	7
Case Studies:	
AUDIT YOUR PERSONAL MINISTRY VALUES.....	8
CHAPTER AND VERSE	9
Devotionals:	
WHOSE CHURCH IS THIS?.....	10
THE WELL-OUTFITTED CHURCH	11
How To Articles:	
VALUES CLARIFICATION	12
CHRIST-CENTERED MINDSET	13
Activities	
MASTER CRAFTSMAN AT WORK	14
WALKING OUR TALK.....	15
Resources	
FURTHER EXPLORATION.....	16
Sample Retreat	17

CORE VALUES

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Leader's Guide

How to use "Core Values" by BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS in your regularly scheduled meetings.

Welcome to BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS: Your Complete Guide to Leadership Training. You've purchased an innovative resource that will help you develop leaders who can think strategically and biblically about the church. Selected by the editors of Leadership Resources/Christianity Today International, the material comes from respected thinkers and church leaders.

BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS is not just another program. Each theme contains materials on the topic you choose—no tedious program to follow. The materials work when you want, where you want and the way you want it to. It's completely flexible and easy to use.

You probably already have regularly scheduled meetings with board members or with other committees or groups of leaders. BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS fits easily into what you're already doing. Here's how to use BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS at the beginning of a board meeting or committee meeting:

1. Select a learning tool. In this theme of "Core Values," you'll find multiple types of handouts from which to choose:

- ◆ interview
- ◆ assessment tools
- ◆ case study
- ◆ devotionals
- ◆ how-to articles
- ◆ activities
- ◆ resources
- ◆ sample retreat

2. Select a handout. Suppose, for example, you have decided that your board or team needs to assess its understanding of church membership. There are three assessment options in this theme: "Audit Your Personal Ministry Values" (p. 5), "The Good Value Test" (p. 6), and "Discover Your Church's Values" (p. 7). From these options, select the one that best fits what you want to accomplish.

3. Photocopy the handout. Let's say you selected "Audit Your Personal Ministry Values." Photocopy as many copies as you need—you do not need to ask for permission to photocopy any material from BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS (as long as you are using the material in a church or educational setting and are not charging for it).

4. Prepare for the discussion. We recommend you read the Scripture passages and identify key discussion questions. How will you apply the principles to specific decisions your church is making?

5. Lead the discussion. Most handouts can be read within 5 minutes. After you have allowed time for reading, begin the discussion by asking one of the provided questions. Be ready to move the discussion to specific issues your church is facing.

Most BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS handouts can be discussed in 15 or 20 minutes (except the Bible study, which may take longer). Your board, committee, or team will still have plenty of time to discuss its agenda.

Need more material, or something on a specific topic? See our website at www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

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CORE VALUES

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Climate Control

Values for a healthy church atmosphere.

Galatians 5:22–26; 1 Thessalonians 5:12–18

Values, like the wind, are invisible. But underlying every decision a church makes is a value, which affects the climate of a congregation. Three pastors—Gary Fenton, pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama; Randy Frazee, pastor of Pantego Bible Church in Arlington, Texas; and Gary Simpson, pastor of Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn, New York—discuss how biblical values contribute to a healthy church atmosphere.

As you attempt to create an environment in which people grow spiritually, what dials can you adjust?

Gary Simpson: I want to create a climate in which it is okay for people to try new things and fail. Some time back a few young people asked if they could play a song in worship. There was a drummer, and the drummer was loud. It was the most horrible musical presentation I have ever heard. But I don't think I heard one negative comment; people knew it was important for the young people to try.

Randy Frazee: When I came to the church, it had gone through four years without a senior minister and had lost two-thirds of its members, two-thirds of its weekly finances, and had dropped from twelve to one full-time staff.

This was the first time it dawned on me there was such a thing as corporate low self-esteem. When I came to the church, we set the mission of the church as seeing individuals transformed through their relationship with Christ.

GARY SIMPSON**RANDY FRAZEE****What else can poison the air?**

Simpson: Too much success. Having enough money to do everything you want. Too much ego in a congregation is just as dangerous as low self-esteem. A congregation can forget that God is part of the picture.

Frazee: Another toxin is insufficient communication. When communication breaks down, all sorts of evil emerges.

What happens when communication breaks down?

Frazee: Trust goes.

Gary Fenton: Those who do not receive communication come to one of two conclusions: either you didn't want them to know, so you're trying to control the information; or you were too undisciplined to get it to them.

How should church leaders deal with the unhealthy aspects of a church's personality?

Frazee: Many people want their agenda to be the agenda of the church. We had a major problem about six years ago with political action movements being established in our church. I finally had to say, "Our principle objective is not political reform. We are not going to jeopardize our evangelism by developing a political platform." ➤



Climate Control *continued*

What cultural factors affect the health of a church community?

Fraze: It is difficult to create genuine community in the suburbs. Its wealth has created independence. People hunger for community, but it's on the other side of a glass wall.

Another problem is the fragmentation of the American lifestyle. People either have to devote their lives around the life of the church, which few do, or try to manage several worlds—work, school, sports, music, family, church—that do not connect.

They come to church, and it's like going to Six Flags Over Texas. People are at the event with others, but they don't know anybody. Church often gives the appearance of community and excitement, but in reality, true, biblical community doesn't exist.

Fenton: The work place is now the source of community for most people. It's the provider of income, health care, and a number of social events each year. At work people are interested in your health, because if you are not well it impacts their lives.

Gary Fenton

How do church leaders reshape these environmental values?

Fraze: We either have to restructure our paradigms or accept the cultural model that says we are isolated people with cash—we pile people in on Sunday morning, give them some suggestions, and let them live in isolation.

Fenton: The need for connection is why there is a returning to some of the traditions in worship. While everything is changing in our world, it's comforting to know that the same words spoken at our great-grandparents' baptism in 1890 were spoken at ours, "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Although their parents may have never been baptized, I am finding that younger couples, especially after the birth of a child, want to connect with a historic community of faith. They do not want to know church history or denominational history, but faith history—knowing that I am part of something that was before me and will be after me.

Discuss

1. What is the difference between the virtues in Galatians 5 and biblical church values? Where do they overlap?
2. Some of the values discussed in the interview include good communication, true community, and a spirit of entrepreneurship. What are some of our explicit church values?
3. How has one of our values recently shaped a big decision or formed the basis for a new program?

CORE VALUES

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Audit Your Personal Ministry Values

Determining what really counts.

Matthew 6:19–21; Ephesians 5:8–10

Use this tool to discover what you think is important about the ministry you serve. Rate each of the core values below from 1 to 5 (with 5 as the highest).

1. Godly servant leadership	1	2	3	4	5
2. A well-mobilized lay ministry	1	2	3	4	5
3. Bible-centered preaching/teaching	1	2	3	4	5
4. The poor and disenfranchised	1	2	3	4	5
5. Creativity and innovation	1	2	3	4	5
6. World missions	1	2	3	4	5
7. People matter to God	1	2	3	4	5
8. An attractive facility	1	2	3	4	5
9. Financial responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
10. The status quo	1	2	3	4	5
11. Welcoming visitors	1	2	3	4	5
12. Cultural relevance	1	2	3	4	5
13. Intercessory prayer	1	2	3	4	5
14. Sustained excellence/quality	1	2	3	4	5
15. Fellowship/community	1	2	3	4	5
16. Evangelism	1	2	3	4	5
17. Strong families	1	2	3	4	5
18. A grace-orientation to life	1	2	3	4	5
19. Praise and worship	1	2	3	4	5
20. A Christian self-image	1	2	3	4	5
21. Social justice	1	2	3	4	5
22. Committed Christians (discipleship)	1	2	3	4	5
23. Giving/tithing	1	2	3	4	5
24. Counseling	1	2	3	4	5
25. Civil rights	1	2	3	4	5
26. Christian education (all ages)	1	2	3	4	5
27. The ordinances	1	2	3	4	5
28. Equal rights	1	2	3	4	5
29. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

—AUBREY MALPHURS

Excerpted from *Values-Driven Leadership*, by Aubrey Malphurs (Baker 1996).

Discuss

1. Write down all the core values—but no more than 12—that received a rating of 4 or 5. Rank these according to priority by placing the number 1 in front of the highest, 2 in front of the next highest, and so on.
2. Compare your answers with the group. What are our key differences?
3. How can a “heavenward” focus, described in Matthew 6: 19–21, influence what is most important to us?

CORE VALUES

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The Good Value Test

Is your church building the right foundation?

1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Jude 20

As you discover your church values, how can you know if they are the right ones? A good value should meet at least seven criteria:

- | | Our Values |
|--|--------------------------|
| <p>1. It is biblical. Can you find this value in the Bible? If not, does it agree with the Scriptures? All of a ministry's values must find their source in Scripture or not differ from it. The fact that you cannot initially find biblical support does not mean that it does not exist.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>2. It engenders passion. Does this value touch people's emotions? Passion is associated with the emotions but also with the intellect. If people are passionate about a value, they must be intellectual about it too. It stirs something inside that is not soon forgotten. It must also be inspirational; it must move people to action. In some way, big or small, a good value affects the decisions and relationships within an organization.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>3. It is shared. Do others agree with and hold to the same value? That means others in the organization have chosen the value as theirs. Shared values are the key to common cause. People who minister in a common cause commit strongly to the ministry and its activities.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>4. It is constant. Will this value stand the test of time? More important, will people strive to live for this value twenty-five, fifty, even one hundred years from now? Core beliefs must remain intact.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>5. It can be expressed clearly. Does everyone understand this value? If those who select an organization's values are not clear on them, then those within that organization who are expected to embrace those values will be lost. The way to discover the clarity of a belief is to see if you can write it down.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>6. It is congruent with other values. Does this value contradict another core value? Are there any values that fail to line up? Sometimes an organization may include values that unknowingly cancel one another when they are realized in the actual ministry context.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>7. It can be implemented. Can you realistically implement the value? An individual or organization must be able to implement every value embraced. It is so important that key beliefs be congruent and clear. These kinds of values have great potential for realization.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

—AUBREY MALPHURS

Excerpted from *Values-Driven Leadership*, by Aubrey Malphurs (Baker 1996).

Discuss

1. How do our core values measure up? Which meet these criteria?
2. What values need to be changed?
3. How does 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 help us evaluate our current values?

CORE VALUES

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Discover Your Church's Values

The nitty-gritty of what we believe.

Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Hebrews 13:20–21

The following questions will help you and your team discover and clarify your church's core ministry values. First, try to answer the questions yourself. Then discuss the answers as a group.

1. Where do you invest your time in this ministry? Why?
2. Where do people invest their money in this organization? Why?
3. What are people within and outside this ministry saying about it?
4. What is it about this organization that excites you? (What stirs your emotions?)
5. What attracts people such as yourself to this ministry? (Why are you here?)
6. When people brag about this ministry, what specifically do they brag about?
7. What do you and others admire most about this ministry? What do you admire least?
8. If you are a leader, why are you in a leadership position? What would cause you to resign?
9. As a member or an employee of this organization, what would cause you or others to leave?
10. Name one or two changes that would make this a better ministry. What would you not change?
11. If God would grant you one wish for this organization, what would it be?
12. What is most important to this organization (its bottom line)?
13. What are this ministry's core values?
14. What are your ministry core values? Do they agree or disagree with the ministry's core values?

—AUBREY MALPHURS

Excerpted from *Values-Driven Leadership*, by Aubrey Malphurs (Baker 1996).

Discuss

1. What generalizations can we make about our ministry's core values? Are they in sync with what is assumed by everyone on the leadership team?
2. What value do we need to change? How should the group go about doing that?
3. To discover God's will for our ministry, corporately pray the prayer in Hebrews 13:20–21.

CORE VALUES

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What Do We Value?

Clarifying what undergirds our ministry.

Matthew 28:18–20; James 1:22–25

The Case The board members of Parkway Church quickly dispersed after their two-hour planning meeting. The board had reached an impasse on four issues: 1) whether to scrap vbs and replace it with a summer sports outreach; 2) hiring a part-time worship team leader; 3) purchasing a video-projection system; 4) and taking on a sister-church in the Ukraine.

As Ron, chairman of the board, walked across the parking lot, he stopped at Walt's car to offer a few thoughts about the meeting: "I'm as concerned as the next guy about reaching our community for Christ. But we can't jeopardize what God has given us. We can't ask too much of our people with the economy the way it is. Besides, we might have an uproar if we didn't hold vbs this year."

When Alex, the newest board member, pulled out of the church parking lot, he called his wife to let her know he was on his way: "Rhonda, this church will never go anywhere. Some of our leaders value playing it safe. They're more worried about losing the support of the older people in our congregation than reaching the lost."

What Would You Do?

- ◆ How does a church handle conflicting values? Which should take precedence?
- ◆ What is the difference between Bible-based values and culture-based values?

What Happened When he got home, Ron, the board chairman, spent about ten minutes leaning back in his office chair staring into his bookshelves. Finally, he leaned forward and scrawled on his yellow legal pad: "What values currently drive our ministry decisions? What values should drive our ministry decisions?"

Shortly after that, the board decided to ask Ed, a member of Parkway Church who worked as a consultant for the city planning commission, to guide the board in working through its issues.

At the next meeting, Ed led the board to identify three options for each of the four decisions under consideration. Then, he asked board members to discuss the underlying value or values of each option. Next, the board tried to evaluate the validity of each value. Two hours and fifteen minutes later, the board made decisions about the vbs program and the video-projection system and postponed a decision on the other two issues.

The pastor then suggested getting the board together to pray about the core values by which the church should operate. Eventually a list of core values was added to the church's vision statement.

—STEVEN D. MATHEWSON

Discuss

1. Often churches struggle to balance the need to reach out with the need to develop spiritually mature believers. What are the values underlying each, and how can they be reconciled?
2. How can we educate our leaders and congregation about our core values?
3. What does James 1:22–25 teach us about how to measure our priorities?

CORE VALUES

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Chapter and Verse

Is Sunday school biblical?

2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:33–40

The Case Sunday school had grown stale and less than effective. Sunday mornings with multiple services in a crammed building did not lend themselves to quality time for children. Teachers finished the Sunday school year with a groan not a shout. The recruiting team for the fall’s teachers entered the summer discouraged: “We’ll never recruit the teachers we need.”

Two leaders from the recruiting team attended a midwestern conference for leaders of children’s ministries and came back saying, “We can do this better than we used to.”

But they suggested a radical idea: move the primary Christian nurture of our children from Sunday morning to another time slot.

What Would You Do?

- ◆ For many churches, Sunday school is integral with Sunday morning. What are the biblical values underlying Sunday school?
- ◆ How would you implement a new time slot for an old program?

What Happened

The children’s nurture ministry team worked hard in early summer and suggested a new approach: Mustard Seed Café every Thursday for 150 minutes in the late afternoon and early evening. This time would allow quality Bible time, worship time, fun and craft time, and a common meal. We started the fall with no Sunday school and introduced Mustard Seed Café in mid-fall.

The results have been overwhelmingly positive. More adults are involved than ever were on Sunday mornings. Children get a more holistic experience. Children invite friends whose parents might be wary of “Sunday school” but are open to something fresh and fun. There has been one down side: Not all families adjusted to this, so we still offer limited Sunday morning programming, but not in a graded, comprehensive way. We also offer two levels of age-appropriate worship for children.

—JAMES D. BERKLEY

Discuss

1. What cultural expectations of church do we have? What are the biblical values supporting them?
2. How do we find the best ways to assimilate children into the full life of the church?
3. What do 2 Timothy 3:16 and Psalm 119 say about one of the church’s primary values? How does our programming promote this value?

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Whose Church Is This?

Boiling down the purpose of the church.

Luke 19:10

Read *The Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).*

Comprehend Why does the church exist?

Ask that question to a variety of people, and you'll get a spectrum of opinions. Ask a pastor, and he may say: "It's the people of God, brought together to worship, to grow, to witness and serve." To a lonely widow: "It's my one lifeline to sanity. I don't know what I'd do without my church to hold on to!" To the parents of young children: "In our hectic, off-kilter world, we need a good place for our kids to find values, to grow up with something to believe in." To a teen: "Hey, this is where my friends and I can kick back and be mellow. I feel accepted here—even challenged."

Ask the question to a weary lay leader, and you may hear: "I suspect the church is where committees go to spawn subcommittees."

Why does a church exist? Consider what Jesus said to his about-to-be church: "Go, and make disciples ..." and what Jesus asked the Father in prayer on behalf of the church: "that they may become completely one, so that the world may know" that the Father loves them (John 17: 21, 23).

God has a plan, and it involves the church and is not about church for church's sake. God's plan is about gathering as many people as possible into the kingdom of God, and the church is God's goofy, ungainly, counterintuitive means to that end. The church, of all things, exists to point the way, to steer the outsider in, to save the lost, to proclaim God's glorious reign—that more citizens may be naturalized in God's kingdom.

Yes, in God's benevolent economy, the church does provide a place of solace, a hotbed of godly values, a stage for spirited worship, an organism of relationships, and all the bountiful benefits Christians enjoy. But the church isn't the church so that we Christians can experience those perks. The church is the church so that other people can meet Jesus Christ and be captured by the Spirit and be incorporated into the kingdom for eternity. A church exists, like Jesus, "to seek out and to save the lost." The church is not in the business of coddling the cozy but rather of finding the fallen, and will inconvenience itself in order to reach the other. The church exists to do what Jesus valued—and did, himself.

—JAMES D. BERKLEY

- Discuss**
1. If a neutral observer were to carefully watch our church for a month, what might he or she say about our core values—what drives our congregation?
 2. Does this view match what we say are our core values? How do we express our true values?
 3. What one thing can we work to change in the next three months to give greater value to the task of reaching the unsaved?

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The Well-Outfitted Church

We've been given all we need to do the job.

1 Corinthians 12:1–12

Read *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7).*

Comprehend Amid massive pines and majestic peaks, backpacking in Yosemite National Park served as a week-long running parable for the youth groups I took camping. We trekked in groups of 8 to 16. On the first morning, we'd get outfitted. One pack, personal gear, water bottle, and sleeping bag per camper. A tent and poles for every two. A propane stove, extra fuel, cooking gear, and freeze-dried meals for every four. Matches for the group, along with bulk-water containers, a shovel, food-hanging rope, and a group first-aid kit. We were well supplied, provisioned with all we'd need for the week.

Then we'd hit the trail at Tuolumne Meadows. It was all uphill the first day and a half. Within a mile, we learned a lot about stamina and character, packing ability, and the fit of new boots. Within three miles, all I'd preached previously about packing light became remarkably obvious, and people began shifting loads. Cooking pots would exit an exhausted hiker's pack and end up on the pace-hastener's back. Working together and stopping all too frequently to doctor hot spots about to become blisters, we'd finally drag into our first night's campsite beside clear Cathedral Lake—and emerge days later in Yosemite Valley.

But what would have happened to the party if, deciding my pack was just too heavy, I'd tossed the cooking stove in the bushes along the trail? What if another had jettisoned Tuesday's chili-mac dinner for four? And another a tent? Surely we were tempted to litter the trail with the weight we bore, but it would have been foolish and even dangerous to discard the items so carefully distributed by a wise guide. We would have gotten to a meal with no food to eat or stove to heat, or been caught in a storm without the shelter of a tent. Foolish it would have been to hoard or lose or ignore the equipment given.

That's what we learned about spiritual gifts.

An extremely intelligent Guide has carefully outfitted each church, knowing what lies on the trailhead. Every church is equipped, through its members, with every spiritual gift it needs to reach out and thrive. Each believer carries those gifts among his or her personal gear of talents and experience, and those gifts are meant for the whole.

—JAMES D. BERKLEY

- Discuss**
1. What is it that you bring personally to the life and ministry of this church—your God-given contribution? Examine the lists in Scripture (1 Cor. 12:1–31, Eph. 4:11–13, Rom. 12:6–8) and determine where each fits in.
 2. Are the gifts of the Spirit—the equipment for ministry—generally used, hoarded, or ignored in our church? Why?
 3. What is the relationship between our gifts as a body and the values we espouse? What role do gifts play in helping to shape our values?

CORE VALUES

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Values Clarification

How the early church dealt with undisciplined rumblings.

Acts 15:1–34; Nehemiah 5

Like the jet stream, cultures are always shifting, but changes are usually slow, almost indiscernible. You can't see your church's cultural jet stream, but it affects your leadership—rain or shine. To lead people to reach their community with the gospel, you have to know which way it's blowing. Notice how Jesus coped with the jet stream of culture in his ministry.

There are occasions when a community of biblical people must make landmark decisions. We are not speaking of decisions about budgets, buildings, and elections, but directional decisions, upon which the future of the church hangs.

The Jerusalem church had to make several, such as the day it burst out of the upper room and, for the first time, preached the gospel in the streets. Or the day Peter convinced the church the gospel should be preached to Gentiles. Everything changed! Again, a directional decision was required at the famous Jerusalem Council when they wrestled with the question of the criteria for salvation with Gentiles in view. Should Gentiles be circumcised and forced to obey the law of Moses?

How was this decision made?

Scripture indicates there was an enormous rumbling among Jerusalem Christians. It is not a stretch to suggest that house-meetings all over the city were paralyzed by discussions that threatened to divide people who had worked hard to find affinity in Christ. The rumbling might have ripped the church apart if the apostles and elders had not decided to pursue a strategic conclusion:

First, the issue needed definition. Adversaries expressed themselves and offered opinions. Then Peter recounted his Caesarea experience when the Holy Spirit expressed power in unmistakable signs: “He [God] made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles]. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?” (Acts 15:9–10).

Second, Barnabas and Paul told “about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them” (Acts 15:12).

Third, someone had to synthesize the issues and match them with Scripture. That was James' job. And he did it well, concluding with these words: “it is my judgment that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” Decision made. The conclusions of the church were broadcast by trusted leaders. The result: outlying congregations were encouraged. Soon after, the burgeoning church enjoyed another burst of growth.

The process behind this decision seems clean; the conclusion held the majority of people together and freed the church to get on with its mission. The keys: the courage to confront, the ability to state the issue clearly, the focus on experience and the appeal to Scripture, and, finally, trusted leaders and a majority of people who understand that clarification of values and convictions is better than the undisciplined rumbling and speculation that destroys and neutralizes.

Nothing has changed: The same need exists in each community today.

—GORDON MACDONALD

Discuss

1. What key decision is our church or ministry currently facing? What describes the atmosphere surrounding the decision: hopeful excitement or undisciplined rumbling?
2. How can the process from Acts 15 be applied to our situation?
3. Often conflict arises because values underlying a decision have not been clarified. How does a church community arrive at consensus about its core values?

CORE VALUES

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Christ-Centered Mindset

How to create want-to, can-do workers.

1 Corinthians 12:27; 1 Corinthians 13

Any discussion about core values as they related to church volunteers must begin with a distinction between a volunteer-management mindset and a Christ-centered ministry mindset. A volunteer-management mindset evaluates the church's needs and finds someone willing to take on the task, with little or no regard for the gifts, talents, or passions of the individual.

A Christ-centered ministry mindset, however, makes every effort to discover a person's unique gifts and calling, and to encourage each person to serve where God has equipped him or her to do so.

A ministry mindset starts with the assumption that a local church already has all the gifted people it needs to accomplish the ministries God intends it to have right now.

To reorient your church mindset starts by assessing how the church currently relates to the people who serve there: First, does your church communicate that it really trusts lay people to accomplish the ministry? Trusting people means allowing them to fail. Accountability is often learned by experiencing the impact of "what I didn't do."

Second, what happens when no one's gifts or passions seem to match what needs to be done? When you must ask people to do something outside their interest, it is important to remember that people serve in the church out of their faithfulness to God, not out of obligation. Service to Christ will always be a combination of faithfulness to Christ and stewardship of our gifts. The goal, however, is to grow toward a gifts-based ministry, where people serve out of their gifts and passion. At times that means church leaders must be willing to let a ministry die.

Here are five principles to remember when working out your values with church volunteers:

- 1. Discover members' spiritual gifts.** People keep commitments better when they're in the right ministries.
- 2. Work God's plan.** The gifts of available workers should determine the types of ministries you operate.
- 3. Appoint a church matchmaker.** A director of lay mobilization matches people with service opportunities.
- 4. Accountability is learned.** Trusting means letting people fail sometimes.
- 5. Match authority and responsibility.** This gives workers power to succeed.

The right people in the right places for the right reasons communicates to your church, your neighborhood, and the world that Christ lives in and through every person. Indeed, gifts-based ministry is ultimately the fulfillment of the Great Commission: God's people living out their discipleship in ways that proclaim that the Savior changes lives.

—SUE MALLORY

Discuss

1. Why is 1 Corinthians 13 wedged between chapters 12 and 14? What specific principles can we draw from Paul's command to "put on love" as part of the clothing for Christ's body (Col. 3:14)?
2. Creating a church where people serve out of their gifts and passions sounds ideal, but what does our church do when there is no one to staff the nursery?
3. How does our church structure communicate the value we put on volunteers? Are most of our opportunities on committees and boards or in ministry positions touching people's lives?

CORE VALUES

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Master Craftsman at Work

How God shapes our souls.

2 Corinthians 4: 7–12; Hebrews 13:20–21

We grow in the values of the kingdom symbiotically—that is, by cooperating with the work of God in our lives. Here’s an activity, done best in a relaxed setting, to sharpen our awareness of what God is doing to shape us into the image of Christ.

Materials needed: A five or ten-pound block of red or brown clay (available for under \$10 at most art supply stores); washbasin and several old towels; string; CD player and CDs; candles, trays.

Preparation: Before the activity begins, take the clay, and, using a string, cut it into two- or three-inch blocks. Put them on a tray where people won’t see them.

Begin: Ask people to sit at round tables in groups of three or four, or at one long table. If you wish, you can place lit candles at each table to set a worshipful mood. As the people gather, perhaps after opening worship, explain that you are going to lead them in an activity that has to do with God’s shaping of our lives. Ask people to close their eyes and to reflect on the work of God in their lives as you read passages from Scripture. As they settle into their seats, turn on soothing music, such as Handel’s Water Music.

Read: After a moment, begin reading aloud the following passages (or ones similar) over the background music: Genesis 2:4b–7; Genesis 1:27–28, 31; Genesis 2:15–17; Genesis 3:1–19; Psalm 103:13–14; Isaiah 45:9–10; Jeremiah 18:1–6; 2 Corinthians 4:7–12. Read at a leisurely pace, and allow for a few moments reflection between each passage.

Lesson: When finished reading, ask the participants to leave their eyes closed while opening their hands in a gesture of receptivity to God. Tell them you are going to place an object in their hands; then, have a helper take the tray and put a lump of clay into each person’s hands. Say, “I invite you now to open your eyes, and to mold silently an object that represents what God is doing to shape your life.”

Allow a few minutes, then explain, “When you have finished, please place your object on the trays on the table at the front of the room. A basin is on the table, and you are invited to come when you are ready to have your hands washed.”

You can perform the washing yourself, taking the person’s hands in yours and dipping them in the basin, then towel them dry. If there are many participants, have a second basin where an elder may also wash hands. You may wish to continue playing soft music.

Wrap-up: After people return to their seats, ask for volunteers to explain the shape of their clay. Other questions may include: What have you observed about how God works in people? Rather than focusing on the hard ways God molds you, consider God’s creativity and love towards you. How have you encountered those aspects of God in your life?

—RANDY WORKING

CORE VALUES

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Walking Our Talk

What's really important.

Matthew 7: 24–27; Acts 2:42

Values are determined not by how we talk about them but what we do about them. The same is true for church values. This activity will help sift between your spoken and true values.

Materials needed: Large pieces of paper (2-3 for each group), markers, and masking tape.

Step 1: Ask individuals to sit in groups of three or four, and then to appoint someone to be the group scribe. Have each group process the following questions:

1. What are some values that are popular for churches to espouse, whether or not they are effective in living them out? (For example, values popular in recent years include being seeker-sensitive in worship and being relevant.) You may want to refer to the list of values from the assessment on page 4. Make a list of 10-12 on one sheet.
2. Of the above values, which are important to our church? Circle any or all values that describe the way our church acts. Examine each value and discuss what the church or ministry understands this value to mean. Is there a clear enough explanation of our values to prevent misunderstanding?
3. How many core values do we have? A rule of thumb is if there are more than six, they cease to be core (or central). Number the values our group thinks are our church's core values. On one of the sheets of paper, make three columns. List our core values in one column, place their refined definitions in the second column, and the last column will be filled next.

Step 2: Once you have finished, come together as a group and present your values, and compare them with the other groups. You may want to create a master list once you agree on a set of core values. Discuss the following:

1. How should each core value be lived out in the group participating in this exercise? How are they expressed in our church's ministries? In the last column, write several specific ways this value is and can be expressed.
2. In our group or church, who is the best example of each value? Why was that person chosen? How can his or her story highlight that value in the life of our church?

Step 3: The final step is to create an action plan. Here are some questions to keep in mind as you strive to incorporate values into the regular operations of the church:

1. Are our values known? Conduct an informal survey of various groups (board, staff, new members, etc.) to see how many they can name and explain, or hold a church business meeting to share a report of the groups finding with the rest of the church.
2. Are our values budgeted? When we establish an annual church budget, how are our values displayed in our financial allocations? Consider a values assessment as a part of the budget process.
3. Do our values determine our programs? What have we recently said "no" to based on our values? What have we recently said "yes" to based on our values?
4. How do we evaluate our performance against our values?

—WAYNE SCHMIDT

CORE VALUES

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Further Exploration

7 resources to help define and live out your church values.

1. Advanced Strategic Planning by Aubrey Malphurs.

Focuses on how change affects planning for ministry. See chapter 4, “Discovering Core Values.”

2. Becoming a Healthy Church by Stephen A. Macchia.

A good overview on what constitutes church health. The ten characteristics are, in essence, values.

3. Habits of the Heart by Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, et al.

A classic on American values and how they are manifested in everyday life. See Chapter 2, “Culture and Character: The Historical Conversation,” which shows how culture shapes our values.

4. Leadership Journal—Special Issue on “Church Atmosphere.” (Winter 1999).

This publication, a practical journal for church leaders, devoted an issue to “Church Atmosphere,” which focuses on church culture. Read this issue online for free: www.leadershipjournal.net, click on “Archives,” scroll down and click on the issue. You’ll find a list of articles that relate to understanding your church culture and how to minister effectively within it.

5. Leader to Leader Frances Hesselbein & Paul M. Cohen, editors.

A collection of articles from contributors to Leader to Leader magazine, a publication of the Peter Drucker Foundation. Written by Jim Collins, chapter 24, “Aligning Action and Values,” gives help in making sure what your church says is a value is reflected in the way your church acts.

6. Rethinking the Church by James Emery White.

This takes every aspect of how a church functions and forces the reader to check his or her assumptions. This will help traditional churches think through why they “do church” the way they do.

7. Values-Driven Leadership by Aubrey Malphurs.

Shows the relationship between personal and corporate values, and values and leadership. Clearly defines biblical and healthy ministry values and clarifies the role of leadership in shaping the process.

CORE VALUES

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Sample Retreat Schedule

How to create a weekend retreat on the theme of “Core Values”

BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS expands easily into a retreat format. Here is a sample retreat schedule you may follow for the “Core Values” theme. The purpose of this retreat is to move board members and ministry leaders to begin examining the underlying values that shape and influence the overall structure of the church and its ministries.

Friday Evening

- ◆ 8–8:45 P.M. Opening Devotional: Begin the weekend with “Whose Church Is This?” a devotional on page 10 about our foundational value as Christ’s body. Photocopy and pass out the devotional or use the handout as your notes for the opening talk.
- ◆ 9–9:45 P.M. Break-Out Session: Conduct the activity on page 14, “Master Craftsman at Work,” and follow the instructions given in the handout. As you close for the evening, pray that God would use the weekend to help your church or ministry evaluate current values or begin to cultivate new ones.

Saturday Morning

- ◆ 9–9:15 A.M. The morning session will be spent using two assessments to help your group with the fundamentals of understanding and evaluating values. The afternoon session will be spent in an activity designed to give you a snapshot of your ministry’s values and how to incorporate them after the weekend is over. Set up the first assessment by explaining its purpose and your hopes for the rest of the retreat.
- ◆ 9:15–10:15 A.M. “Discover Your Church’s Values” on page 7.
- ◆ 10:15–10:30 A.M. Break.
- ◆ 10:30–NOON. “The Good Value Test” on page 6.
- ◆ NOON—Lunch.

Saturday Afternoon

- ◆ 1–2:30 P.M. Session 1 of “Walking Your Talk” on page 15.
 - ◆ 2:30–2:45 P.M. Break.
 - ◆ 2:45–4:15 P.M. Session 2 of “Walking Your Talk.” Make sure the last few minutes are spent in quiet reflection. Pray sentence prayers of thanksgiving for what God has done during your time together.
- Close the weekend by challenging your team members to pass on to others in the church what the group discovered during the weekend. You may want to create an action plan to communicate your discoveries in a formal way to the rest of the congregation.

You can create similar retreat plans for any of the other BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS themes. Simply determine what you want to accomplish and select the handouts that support your objectives.