Local Church Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development

A Resource for Committee Members (2011)

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THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MISSION STATEMENT
To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE
VISION STATEMENT
“We envision faith communities where all God’s people are welcomed at table, nurtured and transformed to be Christ to others in the world.”

OUR CHALLENGE
Let’s Get Growing:
More People, More Young People,
More Diverse People

OUR CORE STRATEGY
All Things New is an invitation for the Virginia Conference to live into a new reality for mission. This invitation is twofold: first, we are invited to plant 250 faith communities in the next 30 years and second, we are inviting our existing churches to become renewed.
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Nominations and Leadership Development

Result Expected:
Christian spiritual leaders are identified, developed, deployed, evaluated and monitored to carry out the congregational ministries that fulfill the mission of making disciples and transforming the community.

Qualifications for Job:
**Spiritual gifts:** servanthood, exhortation (encouragement), wisdom and discernment

*Experience, Skills:* Individuals show evidence of a growing Christian spiritual life and willingness to engage with others in biblical and theological reflection about the mission of the church. Individuals with work experience in human resources, job recruitment, and personnel management. Individuals show evidence of nurturing others.

Structure
The pastor shall be chair of the group, and a layperson shall be vice-chair who may represent the committee at meetings of the church leadership team. There shall not be more than nine people on the committee, and one person shall be a young adult. (*The United Methodist Book of Discipline* 2008, ¶ 258.1.c)

Responsibilities:
• Lead/teach the congregation God’s plan for using gifts, skills and experience that already exist in order to accomplish the mission God has for the congregation.
• Develop and track a system for helping individuals discover their spiritual gifts, name their skills, interests, knowledge, and experience.
• Invite people to positions of spiritual leadership, receive their responses, and provide training and support for these individuals.
• Present a nomination list to the charge conference for a church council chair, a committee on pastor (staff) parish relations, a board of trustees, a committee on finance, a lay member to annual conference and a lay leader. Work throughout the year to name other leaders for the ministry that fulfills the mission of the congregation.

Resources:
*Getting started*
• Meet together as a committee soon after your election by the charge conference to plan your work. Engage the committee in Bible study and theological reflection to understand the work of discerning and articulating God's call to individuals for ministry and leadership.
• Read *Job Descriptions and Leadership Training in the United Methodist Church, 2009-2012*. The first 18 pages describe a leader development system.
• Read the *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2009-2012: Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development* for detailed agenda and responsibilities.
• Explore resources for helping Christians understand their God-given gifts and the connection of gifts with a call to ministry.
• Build a congregational culture to link God's call with equipping and deploying people into ministry.
• Check existing records of potential leaders; update these and gather additional information.

People and Agencies
• Current leaders can identify others who show interest and aptitude for their job or team. Community resources can help with training. Consider ways people and businesses in your community can partner with the church to fulfill ministry goals.
• Infoserv answers questions and provides current information about United Methodist resources, programs, and staff services.
• General Board of Discipleship, P.O. Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003; (877) 899-2780; www.gbod.org.
• Virginia Conference Office of Leadership and Inclusivity, PO Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058; (800) 768-6040; www.vaumc.org.

Web and Print
• Each One a Minister: Using God’s Gifts for Ministry, revised edition by William J. Carter
• Discovering God’s Vision for Your Life from Stephen Ministries
• Equipped for Every Good Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church by Dan Dick and Barbara Miller Dick
• Faithful Leadership: Learning to Lead With Power by Thomas Hawkins
• Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2009-2012: Nominations and Leader Development.
• Interpreter magazine. Every congregation receives copies for leaders.
• Job Descriptions and Leadership Training in the United Methodist Church by Betsey Heavner
• Laity Resources including tools for leader selection (link: www.gbod.org/laity)
• Lay Speakers Discover Spiritual Gifts by William J. Carter
• Let the Children Give: Time, Talents, Love and Money by Delia Halverson
• Local Church Officer Job Descriptions --includes 38 positions suggested in the Book of Discipline of the UM Church (link: www.gbod.org/localchurchjobdescriptions)
• Rediscovering our Spiritual Gifts and Gifts Inventory by Charles V. Bryant
• Selecting Church Leaders: A Practice in Spiritual Discernment by Chuck Olsen and Ellen Morseth
• Spiritual Gifts inventory on www.umc.org

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More Pointers on Lay Leadership Selection: Additional Resources That Complement the Small Membership Church Guideline

by Julia Kuhn Wallace

Welcome to the fourteenth article in a series designed to enhance the use of the Small Membership Church Guideline. Ideally, this Guideline will be shared among your church leaders, read, discussed together, and utilized to strengthen ministry.

Here are some added leadership suggestions in working with laity to enhance your use of this resource in your small membership church.

Imagine a husband and wife talking in the car on the way home one Sunday morning from church:

   Don: They asked me to serve on the Nurture team.
   Sue: Why you?
   Don: Don't know ... Told me they were desperate to get the position filled.
   Sue: What do you need to do?
   Don: I was told there wasn't anything difficult about the job — anybody could do it.
   Sue: Then tell them to go ask "anybody."

Does this scenario sound familiar? Today's laity tend to be active, yet often confused about what the church expects from them in terms of leadership. Volunteerism is down while people say they want to participate in service that has meaning. This is why it is crucial that congregations take very seriously the time and talents of individuals and invite them (not coax or con them) into service. While people may be interested in faithful discipleship, they do not need another job to do!

If you are serving on the lay leadership area of your small church (or a pastor giving guidance to this area) look over the following material and adapt it to your setting.

Effective Invitations

Your "Lay Leadership Invitation to Serve" must have the following elements to be successful.

1. **Take the time.** The lay leadership group in the congregation has taken the time to understand the leadership roles the congregation has identified as vital to ministry. They begin to discern the qualities needed in a specific leadership opportunity and also list special characteristics necessary.

2. **Pray.** Consideration of leadership is always a matter of prayer. It is never a forced choice or putting someone on the spot. The lay leadership group makes filling leadership a matter of prayer and also asks the congregation to also pray for the specific roles needing to be filled.
3. List potential leadership. A good lay leadership group lists and investigates all "leads." Because you want the best person for the position, it takes time and energy to know the people available and their gifts for ministry.

4. Visit and invite! Throw away the "we're desperate" appeals or the "I'm standing on the church steps to catch you" approach. Simply call people you want to invite to consider leadership and ask when you can visit them to discuss service in the church. Make an appointment — don't talk on the phone about it. Go to their home. Explain the position and what it entails. Answer their questions. Be direct and let them know why the committee chooses them for consideration. Don't press for a yes or no on the spot. Ask them to pray about it for a week. Pray for the person and their discernment before leaving.

5. Check back! Return to their homes to hear your leadership candidates' responses in the time you agreed. Remember an honest no is better than a half-hearted yes. Always thank them for their consideration whatever the decision.

6. Support the person. Beyond their decision to serve or not, leadership candidates deserve our support. Leaders are developed. Move beyond "yes ... thank you" to "yes ... you can depend on us." Leaders need encouragement and training. The job of lay leadership isn't finished when you have your leadership list filled. Stay in contact with the persons you invited to serve and make sure their time of service is a positive, growing one.

Eight Indicators of Healthy Lay Ministry

What do small churches that have healthy lay ministry have in common?

1. The pastor actively supports lay ministry.
2. There is an organized process that empowers people to develop ministry.
3. The lay leader is a "point person" for the pastor and for church members.
4. The laity direct ministry (as much as possible). This is our church, not just the pastor's.
5. Gift discovery is expected.
6. Leader development is high priority.
7. The path for lay involvement is easy to explain.
8. Lay ministry flows through the church into the community.

A small church that respects and uses these eight indicators will find that ministry is well developed and sustainable. The mission of a church is enhanced when people work together. Leaders in the church, members of the congregation, and people in the community will benefit from your hard work and dedication to discipleship when you develop a healthy lay ministry based on these keys!

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REQUIRED LOCAL CHURCH OFFICES TO BE FILLED BY THE NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

All references are to the 2008 The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church

ELECTION OF LEADERS BY THE CHARGE CONFERENCE (¶249, page 164)

The Charge Conference shall elect upon recommendation of The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development of each local church on the pastoral charge, or by nomination from the floor and by vote of each such local church, at least the following leaders:

1. Chair of the Church Council
2. The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development
3. The Committee on Staff – or Pastor-Parish Relations and its chair
4. A chair and additional members of the Finance Committee; the Financial Secretary and Church Treasurer (if not paid employees)
5. The Trustees
6. Lay Member(s) of Annual Conference
7. Lay Leader(s)
8. Recording Secretary

Special attention shall be given to inclusivity. All offices and chairs may be shared between two people except: trustee, officers of the board of trustees, treasurer, lay members of annual conference, member and chair of the committee on staff- or pastor-parish relations.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL (¶252, page 167)

Function: Administrative agency of the Charge Conference: responsible for providing for administration, mission and ministry of the local church. Receives budget recommendations from Finance Committee and establishes budget; receives from Staff – or Pastor-Parish Relations (S/PPR) Committee its recommendations for compensation of pastor and staff and sends the Church Council's recommendation of appointed staff compensation to the Charge Conference.

Membership: Size determined by Charge Conference, shall be at least 11 persons plus the pastor(s). Shall include the following, but is not limited to them:

- Chair of the Council (shall be entitled to attend meetings of all boards and committees of the church unless specifically limited by the Discipline; ex-officio Finance Committee)
- Lay Leader (ex-officio Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, PPR Committee, Finance Committee)
- Chair/Representative of S/PPR Committee
- Chair/Representative of Finance Committee
• Chair/Representative of the Trustees
• Church Treasurer (ex-officio Finance Committee)
• Lay Member to Annual Conference (ex-officio S/PPR Committee, Finance Committee)
• President/Representative of UMM
• President/Representative of UMW
• Representative of UM Youth
• A young adult representative (VA Conference definition – 18-35 years of age)
• The pastor (s)

**Meetings:** At least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings. The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

**COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (¶258.1, pp. 178-180)**

**Function:** “Identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian spiritual leadership for the local congregation.”

**Membership:** Not more than 11: up to nine elected persons in three classes plus pastor and lay leader. One elected member shall be a young adult (18-35); one or more may be youth. All must be full members of the local church. New class either nominated by the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or from the floor for 3-year terms.

**Officers:** The Pastor shall be the chairperson. A layperson elected by the committee shall serve as the Vice Chairperson (often the Lay Leader).

**Other:** Retiring members shall not succeed themselves. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. Vacancies in leadership positions during the year are filled by election of the church council. The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development can make recommendations to fill those vacancies to the council.

**STAFF-/PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE (¶258.2, pp. 180-184)**

**Function:** See “Duties of the Committee” in *2008 Book of Discipline*, ¶258.2g (1 – 16)

**Membership:** Composed of not fewer than 5 nor more than 9 persons elected in three classes, representative of the total charge. The lay leader and one lay member of annual conference are members. One elected member shall be a young adult (18-35); one or more may be youth. Members of the committee shall be full or associate members of the local church. The pastor is not a member of the committee, but should
be present at each meeting except when he/she voluntarily excuses himself/herself. In those charges where there is more than one church, the committee shall include at least one representative and the lay leader from each church.

Meetings: The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor or the district superintendent. The committee shall meet in closed session and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

Other: No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. Members of the committee shall be able to succeed themselves for one three-year term.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES (¶258.3, p. 184; ¶2524-2550, pp. 717-2551)

Function: Subject to the direction of the Charge Conference, the board of trustees shall have supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by the local church.

Membership: Shall be composed of not fewer than 3 nor more than 9 persons. It is recommended that at least 1/3 be laywomen and 1/3 be laymen, of legal age, and at least 2/3 shall be members of The United Methodist Church. No pastor is a voting member of the trustees unless elected as a member. Trustees shall be divided into three classes of equal size; trustees may succeed themselves. Trustees elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer (if needed) from the membership of the board by January 30 of the next calendar year. Chair must be a member of the local church.

Meetings: Shall meet at the call of the Pastor or of its chairperson at least annually, with notice to each trustee and to the pastor at a reasonable time prior to the appointed time of the meeting. A majority of the members of the board of trustees shall constitute a quorum.

Other: The Board of Trustees shall not prevent or interfere with the pastor in the use of any of the property for religious services or other proper meetings, or permit the use of said property for religious or other meetings without the consent of the pastor.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE (¶258.4, pp. 184-187)

Function: Compiles the annual budget and submits it to the church council, and develops and implement plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget
adopted by the church council. According to instructions from the church council, it administers the funds received.

**Membership:** Committee is elected annually by the charge conference upon recommendation by the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development or from the floor. The committee does not have a set number of members, but includes the following: Chair of Finance, the Pastor(s), a lay member of Annual Conference, the Church Council chair, chair of S/PPR (or a representative), a representative of the trustees selected by them, Stewardship Chair, Lay Leader, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Church Business Administrator, and other members as the Charge Conference may determine.

**Other:** The positions of treasurer and financial secretary should not be combined and held by one person. The two persons holding these two positions should not be immediate family members.

**LAY MEMBER(S) OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE (¶251.2, pp. 165-166)**

**Function:** Primary focus in linking the local church to the connectional United Methodist Church and God’s worldwide church. Represents the laity of the congregation in annual conference sessions, report to the congregation and interpret actions of the conference. Shares information from the annual conference through the year.

**Membership:** Elected annually along with an alternate. The alternate will serve in the event that the lay member ceases to be a member of the charge or cannot serve for any reason. Must be a member of the church for at least 2 years and have been an active participant for at least 4 years preceding their election except in a newly organized church.

**Other:** One lay member to the annual conference (if there is more than one) serves as a member the following local church leadership groups: church council, finance, and S/PPR. This person shall report to the local church council on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible, but not later than 3 months after the close of the conference.

**LAY LEADER (¶251.1, pp. 165)**

**Function:** Primary focus in linking the local church and community. Interprets the actions and program of the annual conference and the general church to the congregation. Communicates the vision and needs of the local church to the annual conference and general church. The lay leader fosters awareness of the role of the laity of the congregation, models discipleship through involvement in study and training, advises the church council of opportunities and ministry needs, and keeps the laity
informed of training opportunities. The lay leader is to meet regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and needs for ministry.

**Membership:** Elected from the membership of each local church. In instances where more than one church is on a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church.

**Other:** One lay leader (if there is more than one) serves as a member the following local church leadership groups: church council, finance, nominations and leadership development, and S/PPR. It is recommended that the lay leader serve as the lay member to annual conference.
Every church I have been called to serve has come already equipped with lay leadership. In some cases the pre-existing leadership was really quite good. In other cases the lay leadership proved to be weak and ineffective. Often lay leadership has been problematic and a central issue to address in helping churches reverse their trend of dwindling numbers and lessening community impact, and to help it become healthy and growing.

The reason for such differing experiences is that most churches fail to develop lay leaders. Instead they fill positions dictated by the governing rules of the congregation. It is less about giftedness, spirituality, the call of God on one’s life and leadership development, and more about filling slots so a full slate of candidates can be presented at the congregation’s annual meeting. When it is more about filling positions and less about spiritual discernment and growth, the church suffers from a leadership gap.

The Necessity of Developing Lay Ministry and Lay Leaders for a Church to Transform and Grow

Pastors of churches are almost always looking for ideas, ministries, plans, programs, books and articles; just about anything we can find that might help us grow our church. Some want to grow the church out of a theological understanding of the scriptural mandate for sharing the gospel with a lost and dying world. Others seek to grow their church from a desire to be seen as successful.

Let’s face it; you have probably never attended a conference that featured as the keynote speaker a pastor of a tiny and struggling church. As much as we try to deny it, we often see bigger as better. Still others have a sense of urgency to grow the church because of a sense of impending doom; a sense that the church will soon die from a lack of growth.

Whatever it is that drives us, a vast majority of pastors are seeking to grow their churches. But, a small minority of us who are serving growing churches. Though we may be working hard at finding and implementing evangelism and church growth programs, it is a fair generalization that what we are doing is not working. The lack of results suggests we need to try something else. Business as usual is not a good idea.

Invest Time and Energy in Lay Leader Development

For several decades those in the church growth business have been telling us that a church will not grow beyond a certain size with only a pastor providing leadership. For the church to grow, more people need to be included in ministry and leadership.
Developing lay ministers and lay leaders is easy to desire, but very difficult to produce. The difficulty lies in the truth that we pastors are already completely swamped just trying to maintain the status quo. We are busy working to keep the ship afloat. The idea of adding leadership development to an already full schedule is ridiculous. Most of us would tell you that, “I am doing more than I can do already.”

This dilemma exposes one of the great challenges of doing church transformation. To do what needs to be done to grow a healthy church means we must make some difficult choices about what we will do and what we will not do. Before we can choose to invest time and energy in lay leader development we must choose to no longer do some things. These are difficult choices because we may enjoy doing what we are presently doing and may be very good at it. There are excellent chances that if we stop doing these, some church members may become very unhappy with us and will feel free to share their concerns with us and anyone else who will listen. (I am being nice here.)

**Qualities to Look for in Church Lay Leaders**

There is no way to list all of the qualities needed in a leader. Some qualities are just a part of who they are, and some leadership skills can be learned. When looking for lay leaders in the church I suggest that the last filter you apply is education; what they know. Just as when we hire paid staff, the last thing we look at is education.

Unfortunately many churches make the mistake of asking that all applicants for a position possess a certain degree. Education is good. Degrees are great. I have one; from several different schools. But when it comes to what we are looking for in a paid or lay leader, education is one of the few things we can provide after the hire. The others are what I call “tangible intangibles.” If you have the qualities we are looking for, we can teach you the skills to do the job. Some of the “unteachable” things we are looking for in leaders are:

- A deep abiding love for God
- An unquenchable desire for people to come to know and love God
- A love for people
- Willingness to give much while receiving little in return
- To be spiritually growing
- A pleasant personality (Plays well with others)
- Willingness to take chances (Will run with scissors)
- Is a self starter and doesn’t need a lot of supervision
- Mature social skills
- Fully supports the mission and vision of the church
- Biblically literate
- Seminary education – gee, that would be nice

**Mentoring and Coaching in the Process**

Having found a person or some persons with the qualities of leadership listed above, the pastor begins the process of leadership development. The pastor must evaluate the strengths and weakness of the potential leader and begin a process of moving them forward. This process will almost always include mentoring and coaching. To develop a
leader in the life of a church, the present leader(s) must pour their lives into those they are developing.

Because most of us pastor-types have spent many years in the formal educational system, we tend to attempt to provide lay leadership development in a classroom situation. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having some leadership classes for potential leaders. But, for the process to be as successful as possible, other forms of educating leaders must be provided. Among those I would highly recommend are mentoring and coaching. The mentoring/coaching process is less like a classroom experience and more like a friendship. You must spend time together. You will come to know, understand, accept and trust each other. You will have many teaching moments as you share life and share ministry together. This process provides opportunities for hands on learning and on-the-job training.

Allow Lay Leaders to Minister and Lead

The final difficulty that must be addressed if lay leaders and ministers are going to be developed is launching people into ministry. The launch phase is difficult because of a fear of not being prepared to lead and do ministry. This fear is often shared by both the “launcher” and the “launchee.” It is not unusual for the pastor and the layperson to fear that the layperson doing ministry or taking on a position of leadership will not do it as well as the pastor would. The stark reality is that doing ministry is not rocket science and lay people are usually quite capable in caring for others. The lay minister or leader may do the work a little differently than the pastor, but most of the time different does not equal wrong; just different.

In the context of the ongoing relationship, the work of the lay leader can be reviewed, any needed corrections can be made, and any new skills that need to be developed can be addressed. Not doing something perfectly or even doing something poorly is not enough to keep us from developing leader in the church. It is a process. It is sometimes a long-term process. But, if we are going to grow our churches, it is a process that we must begin.

Important Things to Know

Bill McConnell is a Ministry Associate with The Columbia Partnership. He is pastor of Legacy Christian Church in Harrison, OH, a church leadership coach and church transformation consultant. He is available for speaking and coaching with church leaders and congregations.

The Columbia Partnership is a non-profit Christian ministry organization focused on transforming the capacity of the North American Church to pursue and sustain Christ-centered ministry. Travel Free Learning is a leadership development emphasis of The Columbia Partnership. For more information about products and services check out the web site at www.TheColumbiaPartnership.org, send an e-mail to: Client.Care@TheColumbiaPartnership.org, or call 803.622.0923.

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Volunteer Expiration Dates
By Dan Pezet

Expiration dates are on all sorts of things and for good reasons. We can find them on loaves of bread, gallons of milk, and egg cartons. Expiration dates are on our driver’s licenses, professional certifications, and even the President of the United States. These dates make sure things stay fresh, maximize effectiveness, and give us an opportunity to evaluate the need for change. And these are great reasons to put expiration dates on volunteer positions in the church.

Sometimes we put someone in a position and leave them there until they are used up. When volunteers are excited about doing good work for God, they begin like a freshly struck match. Their flame and energy are intense. Too often, though, we leave them burning in one spot for so long that their flame can sputter and die. Expiration dates can protect us from burning out volunteers.

Rotating fresh people into positions can achieve maximum effectiveness. Baseball coaches know how many pitches their pitchers can throw before they start getting tired. They have a whole crew of pitchers that they rotate in to keep them fresh and effective. Rotating volunteers in the church setting is just as important. It keeps the ideas fresh and the energy level high.

Rotating volunteers can also keep programs from getting stuck in ruts. In baseball, there are some situations when a left-handed pitcher can be more effective than a right-handed pitcher. The same is true in church work. Sometimes we need to change things to achieve our mission. Establishing a culture of rotating volunteers helps the church to be more prepared when changes become necessary.

Expiration dates are a form of checks and balances. An approaching expiration date is a wonderful opportunity to evaluate and to redirect. Every four years, we have the opportunity to evaluate the needs of our country as we decide who should be the President of the United States. When volunteers stay in one position too long, it becomes difficult to make necessary changes.

We tend to resist expiration dates because it is easier to let someone stay in one spot than it is to find and train a replacement. But it is well worth the effort. As leaders in the church, it is our duty to help people find meaningful ways to serve. And using expiration dates to allow more people to rotate into places of service gives the church community a broad expression of faith.

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Getting Christians Up From Their Pews:  
Growing Lay Leadership in the Church  
By Marta W. Aldrich

(UMCom) -- "Whom shall I send and who shall go for us?" That haunting question from Isaiah 6 echoes in churches everywhere as pastors and staff longingly prod, plead and wait for lay leadership to emerge. Unfortunately, Isaiah’s answer of "Here I am; send me!" is heard all too infrequently, often sending a struggling minority of overworked leaders spiraling toward disillusionment and burnout, sometimes leading them even to abandon the church.

Inability to replenish the lay leadership is easily one of the top reasons churches wither and die, as well as "the major thing that burns out church shepherds," says Dr. Bob Whitesel, a lecturer, author and consultant on church growth and evangelism. "The church is like a large ship," he says, "and this is the fracture below the surface that is draining the energy out of its people."

In his book "Growth by Accident, Death by Planning: How NOT to Kill a Growing Congregation" (Abingdon Press, 2004), Whitesel identifies leadership training and prayer as the most common practices that lead to church growth. "One thing leadership training does is acquaint people with what's required for a task," he says. "Once they understand what's involved, they will usually say, `That's not so hard. I can do that. `"

Oddly, as a church grows, a tendency is to move leadership training to the back burner " which contributes to a plateau in growth and eventually a reversal, Whitesel says.

He urges an ongoing leadership training program and suggests starting with an "Introduction to Leadership" course one evening a week over 10 weeks to let people explore their gifts and learn about church needs. Large churches can develop their own courses using leaders from local organizations, businesses and other vibrant churches. Smaller churches can band together from within their district or judicatory for such programs.

But its best, says Whitesel, for the pastor not to lead such workshops. "If the church has more than 100 members, it’s probably beyond the pastor’s skill " and many lay people will view the pastor as having an agenda," he says. Holding such workshops at the church, not at a retreat center or elsewhere, usually increases attendance. And always promote it as a "no strings attached" opportunity. Wait and see what gifts and opportunities resonate within each individual. "We shouldn’t be prodding and pleading," says Whitesel. "We should be informing and training."

Moses understood the value of producing a new leader. He worked to position Joshua to take the mantle of leadership guiding God’s people into the Promised Land. Jesus trained the 12 disciples to continue and expand his ministries. The Book of Acts is filled with examples of "best practices" as the church began to sprout and grow. Today’s church continues the quest for leadership.
There are different kinds of leaders. The "natural" ones are easy to spot and gravitate naturally toward challenges and positions of responsibility. "Situational leaders" step up if a need presents itself but no leader emerges. But it is the "undeveloped leader" that falls in the majority. They may have a gift, but often they don’t realize it and sometimes even deny it when made aware of their potential. They shy away from leadership roles or prefer not to rock the boat. But it is this group that represents the greatest untapped leadership potential within the church and society. And it is this group that responds best when reminded of God’s lengthy list of unlikely recruits that includes Abraham, Moses, David, the 12 disciples and the Apostle Paul.

"I don’t believe leadership is born. I believe leadership is built," says Gary Minor, a lifelong United Methodist and leadership coach to corporations, government entities and organizations. In the church, he says, the leadership is already in place and just waiting for permission to surface. Most members already have developed leadership skills and talents whether in business, school, various boards and foundations, local charities, Little League, scouting, their homeowners association or any number of civic organizations.

The first step is to communicate clearly what the needs are. Be clear on exactly how your congregation operates. Some rely on people to step forward and volunteer for leadership roles. Some ask people individually. "If you grew up in a wait-to-be-asked congregation, then start attending a volunteer-type congregation, it can be frustrating if you don’t know this church does it differently," Minor says.

The senior pastor also must clearly and frequently articulate the vision of the church. "As the senior pastor goes, so goes the congregation," says Minor. "If the pastor does not define where a congregation should go, then it usually doesn’t go anywhere. The lay leadership won’t pick it up. There’s an unspoken belief this is the pastor’s role."

Surveys that assess gifts and talents work well as long as a church follows up and actually uses them. Matching needs and gifts is key. "I like to think of leadership in the church in terms of calling," says the Rev. Lovett H. Weems Jr., director of the G. Douglass Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. "There’s a sense that all Christians have a calling to leadership. There’s a calling from God but also a calling from the church."

Weems suggests several ways to develop lay leaders. Programs of spiritual growth such as the Disciple Bible study encourage personal reflection and nudge Christians toward service. "When people listen to their heart and where they believe God is leading them, it’s logical for them to take the next step on their spiritual journey and become more involved," he says.

Pastors and other church leaders also must search for clues as they interact with members. For instance, someone who became animated when a subject arose or asked a particularly probing question about a program during a meeting. "It becomes a
way of thinking, a way of listening with a spiritual ear," says Weems, who calls the process "being open to the burning bushes God puts in front of us all the time."

The Rev. Lyle E. Schaller, a respected author on church development, warns the United Methodist Church has some inherent structural hurdles to building lay leadership at the church level. Denominational emphasis on funding and other things falls flat with churchgoers and distracts pastors from more urgent church-level tasks.

"We need new and younger leadership, particularly those comfortable with change and doing things differently," he says. "People are seeking to serve in churches that feed their spiritual hunger. Their motivation is not funding the denomination."

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**VIRGINIA CONFERENCE CORE STRATEGY**

*All Things New* is a core strategy to help the Virginia Conference live into its vision of having “faith communities where all God’s people are welcomed at table, nurtured and transformed to be Christ to others in the world.” Approved by the 2008 Annual Conference, *All Things New* centers around two invitations:

1. **An Invitation to Plant** that focuses on the goal of planting 250 new faith communities in 30 years in the Virginia Conference; and

2. **An Invitation to Harvest** that focuses on the strengthening and renewal of the existing churches of the Virginia Conference.

Both of these invitations are extended through the desire to change the culture of the Virginia Conference from focusing on the loss of members to fruitfulness and multiplication by reclaiming our heritage as a missionary movement of the Holy Spirit. To achieve the goal of cultural change, ministries of the annual conference are in the process of evaluation and alignment with the desired outcome of leadership development. A “covenant of the willing,” the intention of All Things New is to assist churches that desire to grow as they are renewed and/or as they help to form new faith communities.

The primary focus of *All Things New* will be the establishment of 250 new faith communities in 30 years. This focus, however, will not be the sole basis of *All Things New* as an invitation to strengthen the ministries of our existing faith communities will be shared. If the seeds of 250 new faith communities are to be sown, the present reality of many churches of the Virginia Conference must be strengthened. Existing congregations must be committed to grow where they have been sown as part of the body of Christ. In addition, *All Things New* invites our conference, our churches, and all who are affiliated with these churches to make a commitment to pray with an open heart and mind to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and further, to be obedient to these promptings, which will be absolutely necessary if 250 new faith communities are to be established in 30 years. Specific recommendations are made that will equip all levels of conference leadership to work jointly toward the goal of beginning new faith communities and renewing existing faith communities. It is our belief that seeds of the future are in the fruit of the present. It is our understanding that fruitful and multiplying Christian communities of faith are evidence of the activity of God’s Holy Spirit at work in the world.
**All Things New** is:
1. A proclamation of faith in the abundance of God’s grace through Jesus Christ
2. A reclaiming of our United Methodist heritage as a missionary movement of God’s Holy Spirit
3. A vision for spiritual renewal through an invitation for all churches to be fruitful and to multiply

**All Things New** includes a vision of what a transformed culture of fruitfulness for the Virginia Conference could be. This transformation would be seen in the ways that resources and training are offered for both new faith communities and existing faith communities. Some of the gifts of this new culture include:

- Focusing on the joy and desire of the Master rather than the desires of the servants
- Helping everyone be accountable
- Causing investment in those congregations who do the most with their gifts
- Inviting all faith communities of the Virginia Conference to live into a new reality where abundance and fruitfulness are the expected outcomes of faithful discipleship
- Inviting all faith communities of the Virginia Conference to become Five Talent Churches that demonstrate their faithfulness through multiplication of disciples. A Five Talent Church is distinguished by its fruitfulness and not its size. A church of any size can be a Five Talent Church (refer to An Invitation to Harvest, Action Step One to learn more).
- Changing the focus of the Virginia Conference from worrying about the loss of members to the joy of meeting the risen Christ in our growing Commonwealth

The desired culture change points to some shifts required to live out the vision statement of our conference: “We envision churches where all God’s people are welcomed at table, nurtured, and transformed to be Christ to others in the world.” Some of these major shifts include:

- From spreading resources and attention too thin to focusing on key strategic areas
- From protecting the present to transforming the present
- From serving the institution to reclaiming the mission of the institution
- From investing first in buildings to investing first in leadership
- From competition to synergy among churches, “new” and “existing,” e.g. any church can become renewed
- From investing in those that are not multiplying to investing in what is working
- From swapping disciples through transfers of church membership to making new disciples through professions of faith
DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR TRANSFORMATION
Characteristics of Effective Leaders on Virginia Conference
Common Table Boards and Commissions

The stated goal of *All Things New* is to change the culture of the Virginia Conference in order to move toward greater fruitfulness and multiplication. Leadership development has been identified as the key to achieving this goal. As we continue to live into the vision of leadership development as emphasized in *All Things New*, the Common Table has adopted the following list of desired traits and characteristics for leadership. These expectations will guide our ministries as we work toward the development of transformational leaders across the Virginia Conference who will help our conference to live into a future that is different from the past.

The desired traits and characteristics for effective leaders on Virginia Conference Common Table boards and commissions are:

- Evidence of fruit in areas of current ministry focus
- The capacity to create or catch vision
- A willingness to take responsibility and finish tasks
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Engaging in presentation style and adept at facilitating discussion
- Ability to identify and link resources
- Ability to relate to the people of the region they will be resourcing
- Future-oriented and willing to encourage others to celebrate the past while moving toward the future.

As leaders within the Virginia Conference, we expect that everyone will come with a willingness to learn and to understand the Conference Vision and *All Things New*, our Wesleyan heritage, and the Virginia Conference structure and organization.

A primary responsibility for Common Table-related program board and commission members is to be trained to lead, co-lead, or assist in training events and serve as resources to the local church. This change of focus will give board, agency, and commission members permission to stop developing programs and instead focus on leadership development.

In order to assure that all conference leaders are knowledgeable of Conference strategies, priorities, and expectations, Conference Leadership Orientation events will be held each year. Attendance at this event is expected of newly elected leaders for all program and administrative boards, agencies, and commissions.
Virginia Conference Board of Laity
CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LAY LEADERSHIP
IN THE CHURCHES OF THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

Because lay ministry has been instrumental in the spread of the gospel from the earliest times and especially in the establishment of The United Methodist Church, and because God, through baptism and confirmation, continues to call each believer into ministry, the Virginia Conference Board of Laity lifts up the crucial importance of lay ministry and urges lay people to take this call seriously, committing themselves to grow in faith and ministry. We thank the pastors who commit themselves to leading lay people to discover and develop their ministries and who partner with them in this great adventure of faith and discipleship.

These standards for Lay Leadership provide a vision of what the laity of the church are called to be and do as they live out the church’s mission of bringing people into fellowship with God. Like the Standards for Clergy Leadership in the Virginia Conference, this list is not exhaustive but expresses the current priorities of the conference. Each lay leader and pastor is responsible for presenting and interpreting this vision to their Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and to their congregation.

This document is intended to:
1) Assist the local church Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development in selection, training and evaluation of church leaders.
2) Help current leaders evaluate their own leadership as they plan for continued growth.
3) Help potential leaders as they consider their response to an invitation to leadership.
4) Be lifted up before the congregation as a goal for all disciples to work toward.

This document recognizes that all Christians are on a journey of faith and discipleship, and that no one meets all these standards. As such, we accept them as goals and call ourselves to continue to work toward the vision. Leaders model - at home, at work/school, and in the world, as well as at church -- what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ:

PRIMARY COMMITMENTS

- Leaders recognize that commitment to Jesus Christ is the foundation for all leadership in the church, and that commitment to God’s will is the beginning of all vision.
- They recognize making disciples of Jesus Christ as the primary goal of the Church and of individual Christians.
- They see those who are closest to them - their family and friends - as the front-line arena for their ministry/service, and commit to give them the best of themselves rather than the left-overs.
CHARACTER

- Leaders seek to respond to conflict as Jesus did - directly, openly, and responsibly, treating others with respect and always seeking justice, healthy accountability, and reconciliation.
- They recognize the importance of character and seek to become people whose lives are marked by integrity and compassion, and who treat others with respect regardless of their race, gender, social status, theological viewpoint, or any other human difference.
- They intentionally pursue spiritual growth and renewal of body, mind and spirit, setting aside time to deepen their relationship with God and to grow in faith and discipleship.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

- Leaders are determined to be servant-leaders, seeking the good of the kingdom rather than their own power and status, and making decisions based on the good of the whole Church rather than their own preferences.
- They listen to God, to the community, to their congregation, and to others of differing viewpoints, as well as to their own hearts as they discern visions and set goals for their church’s future and ministry.
- They are future-oriented, willing to take risks as they encourage others to celebrate the past while moving toward the future.
- They partner with their pastors -- praying for, supporting and encouraging them, and dealing honestly and openly with difficult issues.
- They seek to identify, nurture, encourage and support leadership in others.

AREAS OF DISCIPLESHIP

- Leaders seek to grow in all areas of discipleship.
- They commit to regular, frequent participation in worship and study, and to grow in giving, service, and prayer.
- They recognize tithing as the traditional standard for giving and commit to grow toward or beyond tithing.
- They support the ministries and programs of the local church, district, conference, and general church, in order to more effectively accomplish the mission of the Church.
- They seek to understand and interpret the Methodist distinctives: history, tradition, beliefs, worship, structure, and vision.
- They are committed to discovering, developing and practicing their spiritual gifts, and to encourage others to do the same.
- They are committed to hands-on service in and beyond the local church, meeting the practical and spiritual needs of others in the church, the community and the world.
BASIC DENOMINATIONAL RESOURCES

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* and *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*. Can be purchased from Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com)

**Virginia United Methodist Advocate**
Official newsmagazine for the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church. For more information about subscribing, contact Peggy Cribbs at 1-800-768-6040 or (804) 521-1100, ext. 110, or e-mail advocate@vaumc.org.

**Interpreter Magazine**
Official magazine for United Methodist laity and clergy who are actively involved in their local churches. *This is the vehicle through which local churches share ideas and learn about the church’s national and international programs and ministries.*
Publisher: United Methodist Communications Inc., PO Box 320, Nashville TN 37202-0320, by phone at 1-888-346-3862 or www.interpretermagazine.org


www.umc.org – The website of The United Methodist Church

www.umccalltoaction.org - The UMC Call to Action Report

www.umvitalcongregations.org – UMC Vital Congregations

www.vaumc.org – The website of the Virginia Conference

InfoServe: An Information Service of the UMC. Phone: 1-800-251-8140 or www.umc.org > “Our World” InfoServe
Selected Leadership Development Resources

**Books**

**Church Leadership** by Lovett Weems, Jr. Publisher: Abingdon Press, 1993. Available from Cokesbury ([www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) or 1-800-672-1789) or Abingdon Press ([www.abingdonpress.com](http://www.abingdonpress.com) or 1-800-251-3320).


**Creating a Volunteer-Friendly Church Culture** (Group’s Volunteer Leadership Series, Vol. 1) by Marlene Wilson, General Editor and Author. Publisher: Group Publishing, Inc, 2004. Available from Cokesbury ([www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) or 1-800-672-1789) or Group Publishing ([www.grouppublishing.com](http://www.grouppublishing.com))


**Leadership Essentials: Practical Tools for Leading the Church** by Carol Cartmill and Yvonne Gentile. Publisher: Abingdon Press, 2006. Available from Cokesbury ([www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) or 1-800-672-1789) or Abingdon Press ([www.abingdonpress.com](http://www.abingdonpress.com) or 1-800-251-3320).

**Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit** by Lovett Weems, Jr. Publisher: Abingdon Press, 1999. Available from Cokesbury ([www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) or 1-800-672-1789) or Abingdon Press ([www.abingdonpress.com](http://www.abingdonpress.com) or 1-800-251-3320). Has a downloadable study guide for groups.

**Recruiting Volunteers** by Dan Entwistle; Adam Hamilton, Series Editor. Publisher: Abingdon Press, 2007. Available from Cokesbury ([www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) or 1-800-672-1789) or Abingdon Press ([www.abingdonpress.com](http://www.abingdonpress.com) or 1-800-251-3320).


The Equipping Church Guidebook by Sue Mallory and Brad Smith. Publisher: Zondervan, 2001. Available from Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com or 1-800-672-1789) or Zondervan (www.zondervan.com)


Studies

Serving from the Heart: Finding Your Gifts and Talents for Service
A ministry development resource from The UMC Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, for Sunday school, small groups, retreats. Help adults discover their unique gifts and talents for service, the inspiration to serve, and a way to connect with service in your church community. This 4- to 8-week study leads adults through assessing their spiritual gifts, talents and abilities, resources, individual style, dreams and experiences - all adding up to a unique ability to serve God and neighbor. The leader kit includes easy to follow lesson plans for either eight 45-minute sessions or four 2-hour sessions. The
enhanced CD-ROM included in the kit makes leading convenient and creative with overhead slides, posters, music and leader training video from the ministry staff at Church of the Resurrection Also available in a youth version. Available from Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com or 1-800-672-1789) or Abingdon Press (www.abingdonpress.com or 1-800-251-3320). Leader Kit ISBN# 0687081076, Participant Workbook ISBN#0687081173.

Leadership from the Heart: Learning to Lead with Love and Skill
*Leadership from the Heart*, also from The Church of the Resurrection, is a ten-session small group program that explores what it means to be a leader in the church community. Each class session is built around head, heart and hands - background content, group sharing and action steps. Issues include servant leadership, spiritual disciplines, maturity, spiritual gifts, calling, God's purpose for your life, transformation of individuals and community, team building and team leading. The Leader kit includes plans for ten sessions, the student book content and a DVD with 10 video segments to open each class session. Available from Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com or 1-800-672-1789) or Abingdon Press (www.abingdonpress.com or 1-800-251-3320). Leader Kit ISBN# 0687053501, Participant Workbook ISBN#0687053609.

Each One a Minister: Using God's Gifts for Ministry by William J. Carter. *Each One a Minister* begins with a 6-session study of Ephesians. Carter engages the reader in discovering the meaning of church, ministry, and gifts, from the early church up to the present. As a follow-up to the Bible study, readers and study groups look at ways in which God’s gifts are practical as well as spiritual. Four ministry categories, closely connected to the congregational primary task (receive, relate, equip, send), are identified; and Scripture readings, activities, and ways to implement specific ministries are suggested. Designed to encourage individuals to discover God’s call to ministry in their own lives, *Each One a Minister* leads us toward practical ways to use our gifts in ministries in our congregations and in our communities. For clergy, lay leaders, study groups, and others seeking to identify and use their gifts in meaningful ways. 2002. ISBN# 0-88177-375-1. Available from Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com or 1-800-672-1789) or Discipleship Resources (www.discipleshipresources.org)

Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts and Your Spiritual Gifts Inventory by Charles V. Bryant. With a subtitle of “Building Up the Body of Christ Through the Gifts of the Spirit,” Charles V. Bryant identifies 30 spiritual gifts and shows their value for the church. The Spiritual Gifts Inventory has 160 questions, a scoring grid, and lists of biblical references. This workbook helps readers ascertain their spiritual gifts such as hospitality, intercessory prayer, and leadership. This helpful inventory helps one understand, affirm, and confirm their gifts of the Holy Spirit. Available from Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com or 1-800-672-1789) or The Upper Room (http://www.upperroom.org or 1-800-972-0433). Book ISBN# 0835806332, Inventory ISBN# 083580819X.

Spirit Gifts: One Spirit, Many Gifts by Patricia Brown. Spirit Gifts is a dynamic group experience that builds community as participants share together in study, reflective
exercises, discussion, worship, prayer, music, and group activities. The Leader's Resource includes: program helps, session guides, teaching/presentation pages, charts, spiritual gifts survey answer sheet, definitions of spiritual gifts, prayers, promotional materials and more. Leaders choose the 4-12 week approach or weekend option. (Leader’s resources ISBN# 0687008573, Separate Participant’s Workbook #0687008581) Available from Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com or 1-800-672-1789) or Abingdon Press (www.abingdonpress.com or 1-800-251-3320).

Articles
