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Pastoral Ministry Approach

My pastoral call is to find a church with which I share a sense of mission, value and passions (outlined below) for God's glory. My expectation is that God would connect me to a church community in which I find empowerment, favor and influence to lead, serve, equip, challenge, encourage and inspire the community to be disciples of Christ and ambassadors of His gospel.

Here is a summary of six key characteristics of my approach to pastoral ministry:

Prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit. It is my deep-rooted conviction that I have little to offer, and nothing of real lasting value, outside of the work that Christ does through me by His Holy Spirit. I'm a product of God's grace. I am using His gifts, preaching His word, and relying on His strength and wisdom. His Holy Spirit mediates all of this and so I need to look to Him for counsel and power. He's not someone that I just *needed (for salvation)*, He is someone that I need every hour. I believe that the prayer-life Jesus calls us to is one of audacious, relentless persistence. I can sometimes be easily distracted from this, but it remains something that I know is of great importance in my life and ministry. (See Luke 11:5-13)

Loving the church like Christ loved the church. Ephesians 5:25 commands *husbands* to love *their wives* in the same way that Christ loved the church. Jesus's love for the church was servant-hearted, sacrificial, deeply loving/relational, and had/has the best interests of the church in mind. Pastors are to take the same cue from Jesus as they serve and lead the church.

Love, in the church context, is best expressed in relationship. The more that a pastor can develop meaningful relationships and rapport with the body of believers, and the more that he can empower other leaders to do the same, the more effective his ministry will be in all aspects. (visioning, counseling, preaching, pastoral care, accountability.) While I am still growing in what it means to "do relationship" effectively with 300+ people- I know a part of the answer is raising up other relational shepherds in the body. Relational leadership is a passion and a big part of how I am wired. That has been a strength for me in ministry in the various contexts I've served in.

Grounding all of Christian living in the gospel: The gospel is not an evangelism tool. We need to continue to immerse ourselves in its truth as believers. We need to preach it to each other and preach it to ourselves. Gospel sharing (stories, confession and gospels pictures) needs to be something that happens in all of our relationships and gatherings, not just from the pulpit or from our teachers. The gospel should continue to inspire awe and gratitude and a growing love for Jesus.

While I think you might be hard-pressed to find an evangelical pastor who would disagree with these statements, I also think there is a range of effectiveness of how churches keep the gospel “in front” of their people. In my own faith journey, I have seen how I have come from understanding the gospel as “the right answer” to understanding faith, to growing a deep rooted conviction and passion in the ongoing centrality and power of the gospel for us and the world.

Clarifying vision

I have been involved with countless classes, conferences and readings that focus on the importance of the clarity of vision and direction. And yet it’s clear to me that there are many things that can “muddy” a clarity of vision and direction in churches. Jesus provided two Great Commandments and the Great Commission which provide a simple and clear vision for disciples to follow. I believe that the role of pastoral and church leadership is to use language, pictures and methodology that is contextual to their local church and surrounding community to live the commandments and commission out. Conformity and closeness to Christ and his image is the goal.

Cultivating a healthy leadership culture.

- 1) **Leaders practice and model Christ-like values and initiatives:** Leaders live out what they have agreed that Jesus says are important to healthy discipleship, the work of the Kingdom, and the practice of the church they serve in. Christian leadership should strive to echo the words of Paul: “Follow me as I follow Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1) Leaders in a given church context should emulate their church context’s expression of Christ-following.
- 2) **Loving and empowering relationship with leaders and the greater body:** The congregation needs to know that leadership is listening, invested and acting out of a conviction of what is God’s best for their church. Leadership needs to be freed and empowered in their leadership. This can be a delicate balance in ‘congregational’ churches but I believe that a healthy balance can be found, and so I strive for that.
- 3) **Like-mindedness among the leadership through relationship-building and teambuilding:** “Like-mindedness” does not mean agreeing on everything. It means creating an environment of trust and respect centered on the certainty that we share a passion and intention to live out God’s mission for us. I often describe good leadership as giving “empowerment with accountability,” I think this contributes to the building of trust and respect. My track record shows that I am someone who values collaboration in leadership, visioning and mission.
- 4) **Leaders reproducing leaders:** Jesus’ Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is for disciples to make disciples. This commitment to growing and developing others into conformity and closeness to Christ should be a mark or readiness of leadership among Christians. It should be an expectation and norm in the culture of a healthy church

Holistic discipleship

These are the things that are central to my approach to discipleship in the church:

- 1) **Developing a clear and compelling vision and process for disciple-making:** I discussed this in the **Clarifying Vision** section above but I revisit it here to say that this is foundational to an effective disciple-making model. I'll add here that an overarching vision for disciple-making should help shape and bring alignment to the various ministries, communities and efforts of the local church.

- 2) **Emphasizing that *right belief and right practice are symbiotic and indispensable:***
Martyn Lloyd Jones *"I spend half my time telling Christians to study doctrine and the other half telling them that doctrine is not enough."* We live in an age and culture that can diminish the importance of this relationship between Christians believe and practice. It's a reciprocal relationship: it's not just that belief shapes behavior. Behavior shapes belief. It is important to me to help people see the value of both.

- 3) **Equipping the saints for the work of the ministry:** This is the call from Eph. 4:11-12. In many churches, there is a steep learning curve in helping people reframe their understanding of staff and leadership as not just being the ones that *do* the work of the ministry, but equipping the rest of the body to be doers according to God's design. It is only when this happens well that a church can live out its fullest expression of Jesus' mission for it.

- 4) **Moving ministry outside church walls and off of the church calendar:**
I don't mean that the goal is to do this *entirely*- there is value in church-wide ministry opportunities and approaches to discipleship. But the ultimate goal is to see people also embrace discipleship as an "other six days" reality. God has placed each person in a unique home, neighborhood, workplace, relationships to reflect His glory to those around them.

- 5) **Discipleship through "Mutual Disciple-making" relationships**
Over sixty times, the New Testament uses "one another" language and body imagery to communicate the inextricable interdependence of believers with each other in the walk of discipleship. This finds expression in such things as whole-church gatherings, small groups, discipleship pairings/triads, mentoring and co-mentoring relationships, and sub-communities in the church. It is my belief that the more intentional we become in equipping people to do biblical "one-anothering" well with each other, the more effective we will be at making disciples.

A note for Fort Langley Evangelical Free Church: It's no simple task to try to provide an all-encompassing sense of one's pastoral approach in a document like this! One mentor/friend who gave feedback on this document repeatedly noted that I could give more examples of these different aspects of my approach. Keeping this document appropriately brief prevents me from doing so but I trust that my experience and history at FLEFC has provided at least some insight into many of these

areas. I do look forward to the possibility of an interview where I can answer questions relating to my pastoral approach and what this has looked like in ministry! Thank you for your consideration.