

# MissionNorthwest

Resourcing and developing churches that connect people with Jesus Christ

## Leadership Learning Communities 2017 Reading List

### JANUARY

*Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger [Part One: Chapters 1 – 9] [Kindle \$9.99; Paper \$12.52]

Topic: Adaptive church leadership for a post-modern, post-Christian world in which there is no roadmap for leading through uncharted territory.

Description: Drawing from extensive experience as a pastor and consultant, Tod Bolsinger brings decades of expertise in guiding churches and organizations through uncharted territory. He offers a combination of illuminating insights and practical tools to help leaders re-imagine what effective leadership looks like in our rapidly changing world. If one is faced with mountains in ministry, then the canoes will need to be jettisoned in order find new navigational tools.

### FEBRUARY

*Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger [Part Two: Chapters 10 – 15]

### MARCH

*Growing Young* by Kara Powell [Part One: Chapters 1 – 4] [Kindle \$9.99; Paper \$13.50]

Topic: Understanding millennials with a view towards changing the church's approach in reaching out to this unchurched generational cohort. Based on exhaustive research conducted by the Fuller Youth Institute.

Description: Based on groundbreaking research with over 250 of the nation's leading congregations, *Growing Young* provides a strategy any church can use to involve and retain teenagers and young adults. It profiles innovative churches that are engaging 15- to 29-year-olds and as a result are growing--spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically. Packed with both research and practical ideas, *Growing Young* shows pastors and ministry leaders how to position their churches to engage

younger generations in a way that breathes vitality, life, and energy into the whole church.

## **APRIL**

*Growing Young* by Kara Powell [Part Two: Chapters 5 – 8]

## **MAY**

*Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* by Peter Steinke [Part One: Chapters 1 – 5]  
[Kindle \$11.69, Paper \$20.00]

Topic: Wisdom and practical advice for remaining calm as one leads changes that will result in improved church health and effectiveness.

Description: Anxious times call for steady leadership. When tensions emerge in a congregation, its leaders cannot be as anxious as the people they serve. This takes self-awareness and confidence to manage relationships and influence behaviors. Knowing how to deal with anxiety and how to work through complex challenges can lead a congregation to new insights, growth, and vitality. Anxious times hold not only the potential for loss but also for creation, important learnings, and changes that will strengthen the congregation. With this new book, internationally respected consultant Peter Steinke goes deeper into the requirements of effective congregational leadership.

## **SEPTEMBER**

*Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* by Peter Steinke [Part Two: Chapters 6 – Postscript]

## **OCTOBER**

NOTE: Each Region Pastor will need to discuss in advance with their LLC which book the group would like to study during October and November. Some high achieving LLCs may want to read both, but it's not an expectation. The Vader book should be selected for LLCs that need to be encouraged that the size of their church is far less important than the ministries and outreach they are leading. Others LLCs may want to wrestle with the enduring challenge of racism in American society. These should choose the Hart book.

*The Grasshopper Myth: Big Churches, Small Churches and the Small Thinking that Divides Us* by Karl Vaters [Part One: Chapters 1 – 7] [Kindle \$9.98; Paper \$12.98]

Topic: Churches of all sizes matter and therefore maximizing the effectiveness of the small church should be more important to us than nursing an inferiority complex.

Description: In this book Vaters makes the case that healthy churches do not grow under the guidance of disgruntled, demoralized pastors. It's time to stop being upset about not being wired to lead a large church and start discovering and enjoying who we are where God has placed you. Rather than using numerical growth as the primary indicator of success in ministry why not start looking at health as the primary indicator of success in ministry.

*Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* by Drew Hart [Part One: Chapters 1 – 4] [Kindle \$9.65; Paper \$10.16]

Topic: Responding to the challenge of racism by considering the insights of an evangelical African-American theologian.

Description: In this provocative book, theologian and blogger Drew G. I. Hart places police brutality, mass incarceration, anti-black stereotypes, poverty, and everyday acts of racism within the larger framework of white supremacy. Leading readers toward Jesus, Hart offers concrete practices for churches that seek solidarity with the oppressed and are committed to racial justice.

## **NOVEMBER**

*The Grasshopper Myth: Big Churches, Small Churches and the Small Thinking that Divides Us* by Karl Vaters [Part Two : Chapters 8 – 15]

*Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* by Drew Hart [Part Two: Chapters 5 – Epilogue]

## **DECEMBER**

NOTE: For December the Region Pastors will again need to confer in advance with their LLC which book selection to read. The Nouwen books is brief, devotional in approach, yet directed towards all spiritual seekers. The selected chapters in the Harney book encourage us to pray for lost friends who may be more open to embracing Jesus than we assume. Very practical and encouraging.

*Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* by Henri Nouwen [Kindle \$9.02 Paper \$0.51 used through Amazon. Tons of them!]

*Organic Outreach for Everyday People: Sharing Good News Naturally* by Kevin Harney [Kindle \$6.99 Paper \$16.99 ... however we can order them in advance for about \$10.00 a copy. Tons of used copies through Amazon, too.] [Chapters 6 – 9]

**Leadership Learning Communities  
Mission Northwest (ABC-NW)  
2016 Book List**

**January**

***Organic Outreach for Churches: Infusing Evangelistic Passion Into Your Congregation*** by Kevin G. Harney Kindle \$6.99 and Print \$15.02

**Subject:** Evangelism... Goes well as a companion resource with the Oikos emphasis. If a church were to combine the Oikos approach with Harney's ideas there could be an increase in numbers of new disciples in Mission Northwest churches each year. Each LLC participant should map out a plan for how he or she will implement ideas from the book in 2016. Pastors should be prepared to present their implementation plan during the February 2016 meeting.

*An Amazon Review: In a clever play on the word 'organic,' Harney is able to compare and contrast what true evangelistic passions means. It is not simply a job delegated to groups that label themselves evangelistic committees or mission teams. Neither is it just sending money or promising prayers to a distant community of need. Those are essentially add-ons, or artificial supplements, or inorganically modified methods of outreach.*

*In a nutshell, organic outreach is about infusing evangelistic passion in all ministries beginning with the leadership in any Christian organization. The need to obey the Great Commission needs to occur at every level, every domain, and in every heart of anyone who calls himself or herself a disciple of Christ.*

*What makes outreach 'organic?' Firstly, it is natural. Christians begin with moving away from their unnatural selves, but becoming new in Christ. Thus, all outreach begins with a new, natural self. Secondly, it is pervasive. A healthy plant has nutrients that flow through the entire organism. This is the same with evangelistic fervour. It should not be restricted only to one part of the body but the whole. Thirdly, it is good for general spiritual health both within and without the church.*

*Harney has updated the age-old evangelistic outreach into one that is most useful for the 21st Century. In asking for a widespread infusion of evangelistic passion, Harney writes from the heart for the hearts of the church people. He writes with an intelligent mind, to convince the minds of the people. He writes with an eye on practical applications. He wraps it up with a clear and simple gospel message that can be verbalized. All of these make Organic Outreach for Churches an essential read for anyone in leadership.*

*Great book to wake up the sleepy church that is self-indulgent. It is also a reminder that we are to be fishers of people, and not keepers of people in an aquarium.*

**February**

***The U-Turn Church: New Direction for Health and Growth*** by Kevin G. Harney & Bob Bouwer NOTE: This book is available in Kindle (\$9.99) and Print. However, there are tons of used copies for .13 plus \$3.99 shipping on Amazon. The copy I received cost \$4.01 total.

**Subject:** Church Transformation... This book was recommended by Pastor Rick Siemens from FBC Puyallup. He is taking his leadership through it. Church Transformation continues to be a major focus for Mission Northwest and this book approaches the subject with fresh insights and help. Regardless of a church's place in the transformation journey every pastor and church can benefit from the content in this book.

*A helpful review from Amazon states: The idea of a U-Turn essentially means moving from unhealthy to health, from stagnation to growth; from something aimlessness to purposefulness. It is no longer time to carry on business-as-usual for churches that are not growing. It is time to make a U-turn! This is the premise of the authors, that churches need to grow in terms of numbers as well as spiritual vitality.*

*The authors guide the reader by firstly recognizing a need to change our current mode of doing church. This recognition comes about beginning with God, granting us holy zeal, a deep sense of urgency, a clear vision and continuing prayer. Without these it is not even possible to talk about any U-turns. In other words, before we can even make a U-turn, we need to know WHERE to U-turn from.*

*The second part of the book deals with the details of what a U-turn looks like. Churches need to U-turn by:*

- Moving from 'Personal Preferences' to 'Biblical preferences'
- Recognizing at least 6 kinds of roadblocks impeding the unleashing of leaders in the Church
- raising our expectations from low to high, in terms of seeking and doing God's will
- developing a 'tough skin' against well-intentioned dragons, and retaining 'soft hearts' toward people, especially those who attack us, rightfully or wrongfully.
- Adopting 6 holy risks (p136-141) and 8 principles (141-146)
- outreach and evangelism

*The third part of the book contains reminders that U-turns are to be constantly ongoing. This section is important, so that whatever good that has been done in the beginning and the middle will not be easily unraveled.*

## **March**

***Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups*** by Ruth Haley Barton Kindle \$9.99 and Print \$16.98 Part One—Introduction through Chapter Six (pp. 9-129)

**Subject:** Spiritual Discernment...spiritual development and decision making at the board and/or ministry team level. I was made aware of this book when Pastor Sid Johnson of Spokane Valley BC mentioned he was taking his board through it. This book offers individual and corporate direction for developing the skill of spiritual discernment. All too often churches make decisions based more on rational pros and cons rather than making space for the Holy Spirit's guidance. This book provides much practical and spiritual advice for helping boards practice spiritual leadership and decision making.

*An Amazon Review: Most Christian leaders have a vague sense that our approach to decision making should be different from secular models, but we are not quite sure what that difference is, according to Ruth Haley Barton in this book. Spiritual discernment requires us to move beyond reliance on human thinking and strategizing to a place of deep listening and response to the Spirit of God within and among us.*

*A problem with spiritual discernment is that it seems subjective and mystical, whereas typical leaders are more drawn to objective and pragmatic decision-making techniques. Many poor church decisions have been made by leaders who thought God was telling them to move in one direction when the objective evidence indicated that the wise course of action was in a different direction. So how does the author recommend proceeding?*

*Before even starting on discernment, the author recommends that each member of the leadership team go through a spiritual transformation process involving adopting a number of spiritual practices, and that the team as a whole agree on values that will undergird their community. The recommended discernment process itself involves the following steps:*

*\* Preparation: clarify the question, gather the community for discernment, affirm guiding values and principles*

*\* Seeking leading: pray for indifference (i.e. absence of any personal bias), test for indifference, pray for wisdom, prayer of quiet trust*

*\* Discerning God's will: listen to the question, listen to each other, listen to pertinent information, listen to inner dynamics, create silent space for God, reconvene and listen again, select and weigh the options, agree together, seek inner confirmation*

*\* Act: communication with those who need to know, make plans to do God's will as you have come to understand it*

*The last chapter is entitled "But Does It Work?", and while some readers will enthusiastically embrace the author's advice, others may be left wondering. The recommendations concerning the use of liturgical prayers and other practices based on monastic and Quaker traditions may not appeal to everyone. Nevertheless, anyone who is tired of church leadership meetings which seem to ignore God's leading will find some useful ideas to consider inside this book.*

## **April**

***Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups*** by Ruth Haley Barton  
Part Two—Chapter Seven through Appendix 3 (pp. 130-248)

## **May**

***The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*** by Peter Scazzero Kindle \$9.99 and Print \$15.89

Subject: Pastor's emotional and spiritual health. An honest reflection on the necessity for church leaders, especially pastors, to lead out of emotional and spiritual health.

An Amazon Review: *Great for anyone wanting to have a transformed inner life that translates to an effective leadership/servant style. Although specifically targeted towards the church, the principles may be applied to all areas: home, career, community, etc. The author makes this important point: Let the Holy Spirit work in and through you before you lead.*

*The book is around 380 pages and covers such topics as:*

- 1. Who we are is more important than what we do.*
- 2. Don't view yourself in either of two extremes: either all good, or all bad.*
- 3. Be honest about your shortcomings (the author defines as your "shadow") that can trip you up if not handled properly.*
- 4. Benefits of dealing with your shadow and suggestions for how to deal with your shadow.*
- 5. Dangers of trying to do ministry activities apart from Christ.*
- 6. Definition of a loving union with Jesus Christ.*
- 7. Suggestions for slowing down so you can enjoy and experience union with Jesus Christ.*
- 8. Characteristics of unhealthy and healthy decision making and planning.*
- 9. Suggestions for the wise use of power and establishing proper boundaries in your relationships with other people.*

## **September**

***Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*** by Tim Keller Kindle \$9.99 and Print \$12.60  
Part One—Chapters 1 through 4 (pp. 1-120)

Subject: Preaching... Nothing is more foundational for a strong, growing ministry than engaging, culturally informed, Biblical preaching. Every pastor would be wise to learn from one of the masters of the craft.

An Amazon Review: *Readers will be drawn to a few important items that stand out in this work:*

*The Centrality of the Gospel*

*First, Keller is relentless about the necessity of gospel preaching. He stands with C.H. Spurgeon who famously admonished preachers to "preach a text and make a beeline to the cross of Christ." Keller repeatedly challenges preachers to preach "Christ crucified," to "preach Christ through every theme of the Bible." Wherever the preacher finds himself in the biblical text, he must alert the listener to the person of Christ and the completed work of Christ. It is this feature that makes Keller's work unique and should propel his work to the required reading list of every Bible College and Seminary course that pertains to preaching.*

## *The Importance of the Heart*

*Second, Keller focuses on the heart in biblical preaching:*

*Preaching cannot simply be accurate and sound. It must capture the listeners' interest and imagination; it must be compelling and penetrate to their hearts. It is possible to merely assert and confront and feel we have been very 'valiant for truth,' but if you are dry or tedious, people will not repent and believe the right doctrine you present. We must preach so that, as in the first sermon on Pentecost, hearers are 'cut to the heart.'*

*Dr. Keller walks readers through a critical discussion of the heart which is "the seat of the mind, will, and emotions, all together." Critical to this discussion is the idea that expository preaching must move the heart to action. Keller notes, "It is all-important, then, that preaching move the heart to stop trusting and loving other things more than God ... So the goal of the sermon cannot be merely to make the truth clear and understandable to the mind, but must also be to make it gripping and real to the heart." Thus, Keller highlights the primacy of both the heart and the mind. To exclude the mind in the preaching endeavor will lead to contentless preaching. But to exclude the heart will necessarily lead to preaching which is void of application.*

*The standout feature of this section is Keller's treatment of Jonathan Edwards and his approach to the heart in preaching. Edwards refuses to pit the heart against the mind and argues for a view of preaching that integrates both. Keller does a terrific job of expounding Edwards's work, *Religious Affections* and the impact such of view has on preaching.*

*There is much to commend in Keller's work on preaching. Readers are encouraged to dive in and benefit from this godly man who has mastered the preaching task.*

## **October**

***What Does the Bible Teach About Homosexuality?*** By Kevin DeYoung Kindle \$7.01 and Print \$7.38 [Optional Book: *Is God Anti-Gay?* by Sam Allberry]

**Subject:** Homosexuality and the Bible... It goes without saying that the subject of homosexuality has become a challenging ethical issue for the church. ABC Northwest has taken a clear, biblical stand on the issue after the region's split in 2002. The Region has not focused on this issue during the ensuing years. None-the-less it is important that we teach the biblical view of human sexuality and respond to those who wrestle with the issue. There are numerous good books on the subject. This is a book that is accessible to the average lay-person, and for that reason it is selected as a resource suitable for introduction in the local church.

The Region's statement on human sexuality appears at the end of this document to reference during the discussion.

*Amazon Review: The book seeks to answer the following question: "Is homosexual activity a sin that must be repented of, forsaken, and forgiven, or, given the right context and commitment, can we consider same-sex intimacy a blessing worth celebrating and solemnizing" (p. 15)?*

*In response the book breaks down into two parts, the first dealing with the five most debated and relevant biblical texts related to homosexuality (p. 19). These are Genesis 1-2, God's design for marriage; Genesis 13, Sodom and Gomorrah; Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, concerning the Old Testament's condemnation of homosexual practices; Romans 1:18-32, the New Testament's prohibition of homosexual behavior; and specific meaning of Greek words used for homosexuality in the Bible.*

*Part two addresses seven of the most common objections to the traditional view of sexual morality such as:*

- *the Bible seldom speaks of homosexuality*
- *when it does it is not dealing with it in its modern forms*
- *other sins, such as gluttony and divorce, are worse*
- *the church should welcome homosexuals*
- *social values have changed*
- *it is not fair to single out homosexual behavior as sinful because the homosexual person cannot help being what he is*
- *God is love, therefore we should tolerate those who are homosexual.*

*The book concludes with appendices on same-sex marriage, same sex attraction and ten commitments for how churches should interact with homosexuals and the homosexual agenda.*

## **November**

***Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*** by Tim Keller Part Two— Chapters five through seven, plus Appendix (pp. 121-240)

## **December**

***God's Promise of Happiness*** by Randy Alcorn Kindle \$2.51 and Print \$2.99 only 90 pages.

**Subject:** Theology ... This book was selected to give everyone a break from heavy reading during Advent. Consider the goodness of God, that in Him is true happiness. What if the church was the "happiest place on earth" in a real sense because of the vibrant life among its people, empowered and made happy in their life together in the Spirit?

*Amazon Review: This booklet is adapted from the author's acclaimed (but 496 page) book Happiness, which is already showing up on many 2015 "Best" lists. Perhaps this short version was released because of the hesitancy of some (including myself) to tackle a book of such length. It can also serve as an enticement to read the full-length book.*

*Alcorn writes that Christians throughout church history have understood that happiness, gladness, feasting, and partying are God's gifts, yet many Christians today live as if faith drains happiness. But he writes that Christians have the benefit of walking the hard roads hand in hand with a Savior and King whose love for us is immeasurable. Because of this, who has more reason to be happy than Christians? Amen!*

*The book is organized well. Each short section begins with a question, such as “Do We Have a Choice Whether or not to Desire Happiness?”, or “Is it Okay for Christians to be Happy?” There is then a short response to the question followed by one or more Scripture verses. As such, it could be read devotionally, with one or more of the short readings tackled each day.*

*Alcorn writes that he includes a lot of promises in this helpful booklet—most of them are God’s, not his. All of God’s promises are fully trustworthy because they are blood-bought, paid for by an all-powerful Lord who loves you radically.*

*I recommend this booklet. You will enjoy it, and it may encourage you to read the full-length book.*

## **ABC of the Northwest Resolution on Human Sexuality**

(Adopted by 80% of delegates at the 2002 Tacoma Biennial; made ABC-NW Region Board policy in 11-2003)

Because we are all wounded and broken people in need of the healing power of God’s grace in Christ Jesus, and being aware of the confusion of voices pertaining to human sexuality, the following statement defines our common understanding for sexual behavior.

Because we affirm the Bible as our rule for faith and practice and embrace its ethic of compassion, love and ministry to all persons and the availability of God’s grace through repentance (Luke 5:30-32; John 8: 1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:11);

We affirm that God’s gracious creation intent for human sexual conduct as defined in scripture is faithful, lifelong heterosexual union for married persons and committed celibate behavior for unmarried persons. All other sexual practices are clearly identified as sinful and destructive of individuals, of community and of the fellowship of believers, and like all sin, call for repentance, openness to the transforming power of God, and restoration to the community of faith. (Genesis 1:27, 2:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We affirm the existing Region policy “against violence of all kinds, including against persons of all sexual orientations.” (Policy adopted by the Regional Board, American Baptist Churches/NW, October 30, 1998)

Therefore, we resolve that this Region will encourage grace-motivated ministries which respond to human need and offer God’s transforming love to all wounded and broken people, including heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and transgendered persons.

Acknowledging the high calling of church and Region leadership, we resolve that this Region will not recognize for ordination or recognize the preexisting license or ordination of any person practicing, affirming, endorsing and/or celebrating adultery, fornication, gay/lesbian/bisexual behavior, or any other practices that are contrary to God’s creation intent as defined above.

And finally, because of our commitment to do mission together, we resolve that any church within this Region that endorses, celebrates, or affirms adultery, fornication, gay/lesbian/bisexual behavior, is choosing not to cooperate in the work and mission of the

ABCNW. That church will be indicating their choice to sever their relationship with the ABC of the Northwest (Article 3, Section 3, 3.2 (a)).

## 2015 LLC Monthly Reading Assignments

MONTH	BOOKS and/or ARTICLES	NOTES
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>FACTS on Growth 10</i></li> <li>▪ <i>EQUIP Practical Ways to Train Missional Leaders</i> by Various Authors</li> <li>▪ <i>Evangelism and Discipleship</i> by Bill Hull and Bobby Harrington</li> <li>▪ <i>Becoming a Faith Soaring Church</i> by George Bullard</li> <li>▪ Revisit essential chapters in <i>Church Unique</i> by Will Mancini</li> </ul>	
February	<i>Flesh</i> by Hugh Halter	This book is pretty radical. Some will appreciate it. Others may hate it. Chosen to challenge readers to think about how they are incarnating the Gospel.
March	<i>The Leadership Triangle</i> by Kevin & Ken Ford	Excellent business book written by two Christians.
April	<i>What Every Pastor Should Know</i> by Gary McIntosh & Charles Arn	Part One-Choose five chapters.
May	<i>Ordinary</i> by Michael Horton	
September	<i>Autopsy of a Deceased Church</i> by Thom Rainer	
October	<i>What Every Pastor Should Know</i> by Gary McIntosh & Charles Arn	Part Two-Choose an additional 5 chapters.
November	<i>Re-Vision</i> by Aubrey Malphurs	Part One-pages 1-128
December	<i>Re-Vision</i> by Aubrey Malphurs	Part Two-pages 129-226

## 2014 Reading List for ABC of the Northwest LLCs

**January**     *Recovering Hope for Your Church: Volume 1--Finding Hope for Your Church* (TCP Leadership Series) by Eddie Hammett Kindle Book \$2.99

January comes quickly on the heels of a busy Advent season for most pastors. With an approximate total of only 70 pages this extended essay can be easily read in one hour. This particular volume clarifies the issues a church will need to face if it intends to have a faithful and fruitful future. Hammett sheds light on the various lies that keep churches stuck in the past. He advocates for a coach approach in embracing change that will help move a church along a continuum from traditional to missional to incarnational. It would be best to read this in the context of an LLC where the majority of the churches are stuck in their transformational journey.

If your LLC has made significant progress in transformation the group may want to read one of these alternative ebooks from George Bullard. Bullard and Hammett are colleagues working together through the Columbia Partnership. These ebooks are \$2.99 each in Kindle format. Sometimes they are offered free. Software Kindle readers are available without cost for desktop, laptops and any tablet.

*How to Never Experience Unhealthy Conflict in Your Congregation Again, Part One & Two* (Conflict Ministry Playbook Resources) by George Bullard

*Writing the Future Story of Your Congregation* (SSJ Playbook Resources) by George Bullard

*Living Into the Potential of Your Congregation* (SSJ Playbook Resources) by George Bullard

*Radical Congregational Transformation* (SSJ Playbook Resources) by George Bullard

*Harold's Breakthrough Discovery* (SSJ Playbook Resources) by George Bullard

**February**     *8 to 15, The World Is Smaller Than You Think* by Tom Mercer

One of the best approaches to making relational evangelism front and center in the local congregation and individual's walk with Christ. Here's the description from an online blurb: "On the average, each of us has 8 to 15 people, whom God has supernaturally and strategically placed in our relational world so that He might use us to show them His love. The Greeks used one word to describe this personal world: OIKOS. This book is not about programs or events, but a new way to view the world around us. The oikos principle is one that Jesus designed, modeled and taught, for one purpose, to change the world-a world that might just be smaller than you think!"

Tom Mercer is the highly effective lead pastor at High Desert Church in Victorville, CA. Tom has lead this congregation from a standard ABC church of 125 in worship to a multi-site, mega-church of 12,000. Tom will conduct a Pre-Conference training event on May 29, 2014 at the All Region Conference in Missoula, MT. The title, "Developing an Oikocentric Church." He will also provide a two-part workshop explaining the Oikos emphasis in detail on May 30, 2014.

**March**        *Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* by Andy Stanley Part One (Chapters One through Eight)

This is an extensive book in which Andy Stanley takes us inside his life and ministry. The book "provides church leaders with an in-depth look into North Point Community Church and its strategy for creating churches for unchurched people. Andy writes, 'Our goal is to create weekend experiences so compelling and helpful that even the most skeptical individuals in our community would walk away with every intention of returning the following week...with a friend! Stanley explains his strategy for preaching and programming to 'dual audiences': mature believers and cynical unbelievers. He argues that preaching to dual audiences doesn't require communicators to 'dumb down' the content. In the book he explains North Point's spiritual formation model: *The Five Faith Catalysts*. He also explains the three essential ingredients for creating irresistible environments.

**April**        *Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* by Andy Stanley Part Two (Chapters Nine through Fourteen)

**May**         *The Circle Maker: Praying Circles Around Your Biggest Dreams and Greatest Fears* by Mark Batterson (This book is a bargain in its Kindle version at \$2.99)

This book was selected to increase the value and practice of prayer. One reviewer writes, "Mark calls upon believers to pray big prayers and draw circles in holy desperation for more of God in our lives: for ourselves, our children and our communities. Those prayers, when mixed with faith, are seeds which bear fruit, even in the generations to come. He exhorts the believer to pray prayers which honor God's greatness, His Goodness, His omnipotence, His desire to answer as a loving Father. Draw circles around God's promises. They are for us. Pray them through and wait expectantly."

**\*September** *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High* by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler Part One (Chapters One through Six)

This is an essential book providing a practical and effective approach for engaging in dialogue when the stakes are high. Any pastor who is leading change would be wise to learn the techniques explained in this book. If the members of your group struggle with how to engage conflict in a constructive way then you should go with this book. If your LLC seems to have high emotional intelligence with mature conflict resolution skills then you may want to focus on the Malphurs book option. Here is a helpful introduction from Amazon:

“We all face situations in life where things are tense and saying the right things is crucial. This is what the authors call a ‘crucial conversation.’ As opposed to a casual discussion, crucial conversations happen between two or more people when opinions vary, stakes are high, and emotions run strong. Whether you are approaching a boss who is breaking his or her own policies, critiquing a colleague's work, or talking to a team member who isn't keeping commitments, keeping the conversation productive can be very difficult.

The main technique the authors teach is the talent of dialogue. This is the free flow of meaning between two or more people. People who use this technique are able to find a way to get all relevant information from themselves and others out in the open and make it safe for everyone to add their meaning to the shared pool. These people try hard to ensure that all ideas find their way into the forum; and as this "pool of shared meaning" grows, it helps people by exposing them to more accurate and relevant information so they can make better decisions.”

**\*October** *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High* by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler Part Two (Chapters Seven through Twelve)

**+November** *Effective Staffing for Vital Churches: The Essential Guide to Finding and Keeping the Right People* by Bill Easum and Bill Tenny-Britain Part One (Chapters One through Nine)

When the authors refer to "staff" they are talking about paid and nonpaid ministers. We are ALL ministers. So this book can be applied to ALL sizes of church.

- (1) From professional paid staff overseeing volunteers who lead programs to paid servants who equip and coach unpaid servants to oversee most pastoral ministry;
- (2) From a reliance on all paid staff to a combination of paid and unpaid servants;
- (3) From focusing on the needs of the congregation to an outward community oriented focus; and
- (4) From a clear division between clergy and laity to an "it doesn't matter if you're ordained or not" approach (p. 22-23).

**+December** *Effective Staffing for Vital Churches: The Essential Guide to Finding and Keeping the Right People* by Bill Easum and Bill Tenny-Britain Part Two (Chapters Ten through Seventeen)

**\*NOTE:** Although “Crucial Conversations” offers excellent guidance for engaging in “hard conversations” your group may need to concentrate on Strategic Planning. If so, consider Aubrey Malphurs book as an alternative choice for September and October.

*Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* by Aubrey Malphurs

**+NOTE:** If you discern that your LLC may not give their full attention to the “Effective Staffing” book you might want to consider one of these as an option. Having scanned “Effective Staffing” in some depth I believe the book applies to any size church, and especially for churches that do have some active staff, whether paid or unpaid, part time or full time.

*Pursuing the Full Kingdom Potential of Your Congregation* by George Bullard

*Unfreezing Moves: Following Jesus into the Mission Field* by Bill Easum

## **2013 Leadership Learning Community Book List**

**January** *Word and Deed* by Duane Litfin

Why this book: As a Region we’ve been encouraging pastors and churches to shift to an outward focus, to become more missional in orientation and practice of ministry. To this end the LLCs have read *The Externally Focused Church* and *The Externally Focused Quest* by Rick Rusaw, along with *Breaking the Missional Code* by David Putman and Ed Stetzer. In a technical sense “outreach” is distinct from “evangelism” in that it focuses on service that demonstrates the God’s love as commanded by Jesus for us to do (Matthew 10:40-45). However, outreach is insufficient without verbal communication of the Gospel. This book underscores the importance of proclaiming the Gospel and guarding against outreach taking the place of this fundamental undertaking that Jesus has given the church.

**February** *Spirited Leadership* by Tom Bandy

Why this book: This book is about shifting the way the church organizes and conducts ministry. It delves into details about how churches may be better prepared to enter the mission field by adopting an policy governance organizational structure coupled with ministry teams. This is more than a book about structure, it is about the church being deeply committed to its God-given vision, mission, values and beliefs (DNA). It demonstrates how to embed the DNA into every level of the church starting with the leadership team. This will be a challenging read because transitioning boards from a management focus to a spiritual leadership focus is tough, tough work, but so necessary for transforming churches.

**March** *Easter Options*

March is “Easter Month”, and therefore full of time restraints. For this month each LLC will study one of the following. Consult your local LLC Mentor Pastor for details.

- 1) Review the second half of *Spirited Leadership*.

-- OR --

2) Study and discuss three to six videos from The Nines Conference. There are 99+ to choose from. Each Mentor Pastor will pre-select the videos for their LLC.

**April** *A Failure of Nerve* by Edwin Friedman

Why this book: The last book to be written by Friedman (completed posthumously by his wife and colleagues), but his most important work. Asserts that every effective leader should expect to be sabotaged. Furthermore, the differentiated leader will be misunderstood by others as overly-assertive, even coercive. In his own words Friedman said about true leadership, *I mean someone who has clarity about his or her life goals, and, therefore, someone who is less likely to become lost in the anxious emotional processes swirling about. I mean someone who can be separate while still remaining connected, and therefore can maintain a modifying, non-anxious, and sometimes challenging presence. I mean someone who can manage his or her own reactivity to the automatic reactivity of others, and therefore be able to take stands at the risk of displeasing.* This book will help leaders understand that they are called to first follow Christ as they serve as leaders in His church.

**May** *On the Verge* by Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson

Why this book: Hirsch and Ferguson are leaders in the new wave of missional movements among churches that are increasingly apostolic in their DNA and approach to reaching the world with the Gospel. This book combines their theological reflection with new approaches to being and doing church. This selection was chosen to stretch our imagination to grasp what God wants to do and can do in the church today, even old established churches.

**September** *Love Works: Seven Timeless Principles for Effective Leaders* by Joel Manby

Why this book: From the business world the biblical principle of loving others, and putting people first is demonstrated to be a winning approach. And, why not? As one Amazon reviewer said: *Joel Manby's thesis--backed up by decades of successful leadership--is different. A business run on timeless principles of love, like patience and kindness and truthfulness, can improve its bottom line and its relationships at the same time. Simply put, love actually works.* And, it works in churches, too...especially churches!

**October** *One of two choices (see the LLC Mentor Pastor for details):*

*Sifted* by Cordeiro, Chan & Osborne

Why this book: A sobering and uplifting look at the place of suffering and trials in the life of a church leader. Helps leaders understand they are not alone in such trials as they

endeavor to lead a congregation. Written from an honest perspective encouraging pastors through practical wisdom in regard to family, self-care, and facing desperate times.

-- OR --

*Humilitas* by John Dickson

Why this book: An excellent spiritual treatise on the importance of biblical humility for anyone endeavoring to exercise leadership in Kingdom enterprises. Humility, rightly understood, is a must ingredient in effective leadership. Shades of *Good to Great's* Level 5 leader come to mind. The book also makes the case that convincing character coupled with sold out belief in Christ's mission, not pride of accomplishment, will in the end persuade people to follow. Excellent, brief read.

**November** *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (Part One) by Lencioni

Why this book: Pulling together insights from his many previous books Lencioni covers four steps to health: build a cohesive leadership team, create clarity, overcommunicate clarity, and reinforce clarity. Outstanding reviews abound regarding this book.

**December** *The Advantage* (Part Two) by Lencioni

## 2012 LLC Reading List

**NOTE:** This is a new list with changes that make it somewhat different than the list you saw at our Mentor Pastor meeting in September. The Rusaw book is still on the list, but I pushed it to the end of the year. So, if you bought it, don't despair. It's a great follow-up to *The Externally Focused Church* and I hope your LLC will take it seriously. I've inserted a new book for February, authored by our keynote speaker, Lee Spitzer, at the upcoming Biennial Celebration in Chehalis in May 2012. I've also included two books that focus on Emotional Intelligence and Relational Intelligence. I think this is an area in which all of us can improve, and these two books will give pastors tools for developing further competence with EQ. Transformational leaders always exhibit a high level of EQ.

Please note that we continue to have funds to reimburse ministers who don't have expense accounts for purchasing books. However, we encourage buying at the lowest rate possible so that the funds may be stretched out. With some books the best deal is to buy "used" through an Amazon link. The shipping will cost some, but many books can be purchased at a very low cost. **To encourage these practices reimbursement for books will be restricted to the lower rates available online.** I've included pricing information so you don't have to look it up.

**January** *Maestro* by Roger Nierenberg. (Amazon price \$17.98, Kindle \$16.98, Amazon Hardcover Bargain Price \$7.98. It's overpriced for its size. There are multiple copies via the "new" and "used" links on Amazon with a starting price of \$.01 plus shipping.)

A deceptively insightful book because it is cast in a brief, story form. I chose it in part because it's a short, easy read after the busy Advent season. But, more importantly I chose it because it contains important wisdom for any team leader or organizational head. The story demonstrates a way of leading so as to avoid the trap of being "the boss" who tells people what to do. "Bossing" people, or "directing them" can create distance between the leader and followers with low performance results. It's better to work in a collaborative way, as much as possible, to avoid the "us" versus "him/her" feeling that bossing causes. Leadership insights emerge as an orchestra conductor embeds the main character, a business leader, in different spots within his orchestra. The conductor explains how he pulls together the whole group into a cohesive whole without force or by demand. Insights emerge in the discussions between the conductor and business leader that help the leader be more effective in his leadership style. A good read for improving one's skills as a visionary leader and a team builder.

**February** *Making Friends, Making Disciples* by Lee Spitzer (Amazon \$12.00, Kindle \$9.99 and bulk rate through ABCNJ. We will be investigating ordering in bulk quantities and will let you know what we decide.)

Dr. Lee Spitzer is the executive minister of ABC-New Jersey and a personal friend. He's an excellent thinker, writer, leader and speaker. And, a committed evangelical. The Region Board was so impressed with Lee when he came out to encourage our board back in May that they asked him to be the keynote speaker for our Biennial Celebration in May 2012. It's a good book for pastors, a good book for churches. As a church training tool it can help people think about their friendship circles in terms of the importance of friends as fellow travelers in discipleship. Also, helpful for coaching people to identify non-Christian friends within their friendship circles and how they may be reached for Christ.

**March** *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves. (Amazon \$11.97 Kindle \$8.87)

Delivers a step-by-step program for increasing EQ via four, core EQ skills that enable learners to achieve their fullest potential:

1) Self-Awareness 2) Self-Management 3) Social Awareness 4) Relationship Management

The book includes a code at the back for accessing an online test measuring one's EQ. As you plan to study this book with your LLC, pastors should complete the test in advance and be prepared to reflect on their findings. You will need to give them a heads up.

**April** *Relational Intelligence* by Steve Saccone (Amazon price: \$16.13; Kindle \$14.52)

This book will reinforce some of the content of Emotional Intelligence 2.0. However, it places more emphasis on the relational, mission and passion of the leader due to the fact that it is written from the perspective of someone in ministry. Steve Saccone is a member of

Irwin McManus's staff (Mosaic in L.A.). Not only does he give good advice for improving our relational skills, there's much practical input for strengthening our influence among congregational members and attenders.

**May** *The Apostolic Congregation: Church Growth Reconceived for a New Generation* by George Hunter III (Amazon \$10.38 Kindle \$9.36)

Over the last decade or so church growth has become a bad word for some. Much of this decline in reputation stems from lack of understanding of church growth research and application, not to mention the rare example of a dominant CEO type pastor pushing growth for growth's sake and thereby models the worst in church growth. (Honestly, I've encountered very few examples of this stereotype.) This book recovers church growth principles for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church and adds additional insights. Consider Nelson Searcy's glowing recommendation for the book: *All the pastors on our staff (The Journey Church in New York City) are reading this book right now. It's the best summary of classic church growth thinking that I've seen in at least a decade. And Professor Hunter is just the guy to do it. He cuts through a lot of what people 'think' about church growth to give us the straight forward truth (including the most current research to date). Odd as it is to say, his footnotes are worth the price of the book. Buy the footnotes and you get a no-fluff, all meat church growth handbook thrown in for free. My pen literally ran out of ink as I marked up this book. Every pastor who is serious about church growth and evangelism should read (and mark up) this book.*

-- Nelson Searcy, Founding Pastor The Journey Church (New York City)

**September 15** *Characteristics of Effective Pastors* by Kevin Mannoia & Larry Walkemeyer, Part One pp. 1-117 (Amazon \$8.00 Kindle \$9.99)

This is a well-balanced book with important insight for strengthening the overall spiritual vitality and leadership depth of the pastor. It is based on input from a panel of top clergy coaches. (Including H.B. London, Gordon MacDonald and Jack Hayford.) The book asked the panel to choose the top fifteen qualities that make for an effective pastor. Characteristics include personal integrity, model of holiness, Holy Spirit empowerment, inspired preaching, visionary leadership, and more. I think this will give you much grist for the mill for building character in the pastors over the busy two-month period as the fall gears up without overloading the pastors.

**October 15** *Characteristics of Effective Pastors* by Kevin Mannoia & Larry Walkemeyer, Part Two, pp. 118-238

**November** *The Externally Focused Quest: Becoming the Best Church FOR the Community*, by Eric Swanson & Rick Rusaw – Part One, Chapters 1 through 5 (Amazon \$16.30 Kindle \$14.67)

As you may recall *The Externally Focused Church* was the first book chosen for the LLCs when we launched them back in 2005. Has it really been over six years? Wow. Anyway, this is new material presented with continuing zeal for the church to be out in the world as salt

and light. I believe it will help reinforce the importance of churches serving their communities in order to build bridges for the Good News to reach people far from God.

Here's an intro from Amazon: *In The Externally Focused Quest, Eric Swanson and Rick Rusaw show church leaders how to transform their churches from being internally focused to being more oriented to the community around them. They use nine big missional concepts that need to be addressed in the quest to become the best church for the community: focus, purpose, scope, missions, partnering, evangelism, systems, creativity, and outcomes. Understanding and applying the truths of each concept will provide many of the tools leaders need to take their churches on the externally focused quest. Written by the cofounders of the Externally Focused Network, this book presents a highly practical approach that gives step-by-step guidance for churches to become truly externally focused without giving up the programs that serve their members.*

**December** *The Externally Focused Quest: Becoming the Best Church FOR the Community*, by Eric Swanson & Rick Rusaw – Part Two, Chapters 6 through 10