



NEXTGEN RISING

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION
OF GREAT COMMISSION LEADERS

A GLOBAL ADVANCE NEXTGEN RESOURCE

BY

KEITH WEST

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FOREWORD

The paradigm of God is multi-generational. From one generation to the next, we are to participate in the story of His glory. Yet within the Body of Christ, we struggle with this thread of continuity. It seems there is a leadership gap instead of a bridge between generations.

Global Advance has equipped and served great commission leaders around the world. Several years ago, we began surveying our global partners. We asked them to rank the greatest challenges facing them and the Church. Leaders from almost every continent told us that engaging the next generation was one of their most difficult challenges.

This started us on a revelatory journey to more intentionally engage the next generation. We sought to be more intentional about understanding them, inviting their participation and teaching what we're learning to the elders. We all yearn to see God pour out His spirit on both the young and old.

Global Advance believes that God has uniquely fashioned the upcoming generation with gifts, talents and abilities that the world needs. We want to empower the next generation to fulfill the Great Commission, to strengthen the global church, and to penetrate every sphere of culture with the gospel. And we want to do this in a multi-generational way.

I'm so excited about Global Advance's new NextGen Engagement initiative. We are committed to investing in up and coming leaders. We're also committed to helping the already established leaders to better engage the next generation. This is our first Global Advance resource for engaging NextGen leaders. We hope this is a blessing for you.



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Let's partner together so that future generations will know Christ and have an impact on our world!

Gratefully commissioned,

Jonathan Shibley

President, Global Advance

INTRODUCTION

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9, NKJV

Never has the world seemed more in need of hope and truth than it does today. Seldom has a generation been faced with greater spiritual darkness and complexities in society than the generation of young adults who are living in our homes, attending our colleges and universities, entering the marketplace, and worshiping in our churches. The majority have technological and social media resources that enable them to interact with and build relationships in the global community; however, many are lacking an intentional leadership development strategy in their own churches, educational environments, or places of business. They need help to embrace their role as disciple-makers and ambassadors for Christ in their ever-expanding spheres of influence.

Although the task seems daunting, we are promised that the gospel will be preached in the whole world before Christ returns for His church. Multitudes from every nation, language and people group will have an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel before God reaps the final harvest.

God’s redemptive plan is to raise up Great Commission leaders from each generation to continue His mission in the world. Global Advance believes these leaders must be engaged and nurtured by established spiritual leaders and churches in order for them to be adequately prepared to serve in their communities and the nations.

Believing that the next generation of spiritual leaders is God’s chosen instrument to proclaim His praises and share the light of the gospel with a world in spiritual darkness, Global Advance launched a new

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NextGen Engagement Initiative in 2016. Before creating resources or scheduling conferences and training events, Global Advance chose to conduct a Global Needs Assessment targeted at spiritual leaders between the ages of 18 and 35. We translated the assessment into several languages and circulated it throughout our global network over the course of six months. The feedback we received provided valuable information from which we learned how to respond intelligently to their needs.

The questions were created to assess four major themes that we believe impact NextGen leaders. The first theme addressed the spiritual leadership gap in the global church. The second concerned the creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, and level of freedom young people feel in expressing their innovative ideas. The third explored whether or not the church will look significantly different as the next generation begins to assume leadership roles in their congregations and communities. The fourth theme involved their assessment of how clearly churches in their communities are proclaiming the gospel. It also explored their personal assessment of gospel literacy and communication.

In response to what was learned from this assessment, Global Advance commissioned me to create a resource for established leaders in its global network. It is our hope that this leadership development resource will encourage and equip frontline leaders and indigenous churches all over the world to nurture and empower the next generation of spiritual leaders.

King David understood that new spiritual leaders must be raised up in order for God's purposes to be carried out in the future. David pleaded with God not to let him depart from this world until he had faithfully passed on what he had learned and experienced to the next generation. He had a desire to continue to be a good steward of the spiritual leadership entrusted to him. David also longed to see others

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experience what he had personally enjoyed throughout his spiritual journey – a deep, abiding, intimate relationship with God. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come. Psalm 71:18

“...we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.” Psalm 78:4, NIV84

When established leaders read and reflect upon these Scriptures, it is clear that this responsibility did not belong solely to David and his own generation. This is a calling that leaders from all generations share. We are all responsible to invest in the next generation of spiritual leaders. Our task is to ensure that they know the power, mighty acts, and praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, and that they experience an intimate relationship with the One whom David called *“my God.”*

How do churches and spiritual leaders prepare and mobilize the next generation of Great Commission Leaders? How do established ministries, like Global Advance, come alongside frontline leaders to help them be successful in this task? It is our hope that this resource will answer these questions, and that the Holy Spirit will use these leadership development principles to put vision in your hearts and tools in your hands to nurture NextGen leaders.

In our leadership discussions, it was determined that we would not present a model of NextGen leadership development, because models don't always transfer well to every culture and context. Models can become outdated or broken over time. Instead, we decided to offer biblical and practical principles for engaging, nurturing and empowering NextGen leaders, believing that these principles will transcend cultural differences and will find practical application in every context.

Seven principles have been selected for this book. No attempt has



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been made to provide an exhaustive list, but rather to focus on particular principles that we believe will be useful in helping you become more effective mentors to NextGen leaders. Each principle will be introduced by Scripture passages that provide a biblical foundation or illustration for the principle. All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New International Version of the Holy Bible. (Zondervan Publishing House (Grand Rapids Mich.) 2005)

In most cases, we will use the example of Jesus, because He applied each of these principles in the spiritual leadership development of His disciples. To assist with your learning and reflection, I have included side panels for sharing quotes and perspectives of young adults from the nations that participated in our Global Needs Assessment. At the end of each chapter, I have provided questions for personal reflection, a short prayer, and a section for action steps and desired outcomes. Please take advantage of these items as you prepare to launch your own NextGen engagement and mobilization strategy.

Blessings,

Keith R. West, MAGL

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2016 GLOBAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Before we get started with the Seven Principles of NextGen Leadership Development, I want to share some of the highlights of what Global Advance learned from our 2016 NextGen Global Needs Assessment.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

Global Advance translated the online Global Needs Assessment into 9 languages and made it available on our website. During a five-month window, we received 438 responses from 24 countries representing the following geographic regions: North, Central, South America and the Caribbean; Eastern Europe; Western, Southern, Eastern, and Southeastern Asia; Northern, Western, Eastern, and Southern Africa; and Australia.

Additionally, many assessments were conducted live at Global Advance NextGen events in North America, Ecuador, Panama, Chile, South Sudan, Cameroon, Vietnam, China, and Nepal. The largest response from these live events came from Ecuador.

The countries most represented in the Global Needs Assessment were the United States with 91 respondents, Ecuador with 75, South Sudan with 43, and Haiti with 31 respondents. More females took the survey than males by a margin of 6%. Half of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25, and an additional 24% were between 26 and 30 years old.

LEADERSHIP CULTURE

When asked whether or not they believe a generational gap exists in the leadership culture of the global church, 48% either agreed or strongly agreed, as opposed to 19% who disagreed or strongly



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disagreed. The remaining 33% responded as neutral.

When asked to contemplate expanding their leadership, we asked what young adults saw as their greatest challenge. The highest response of 31% was *“knowing enough about myself to figure out where I would make the biggest contribution.”* This selection was highest among Romanian and Chinese participants. The response with the second highest percentage at 28% was *“finding a mentor to guide me.”* This response was highest among North American and Vietnamese participants. We found that 11% selected *“fear of failure”* as their greatest challenge. This selection was highest among North Americans and lowest among Asian and Middle Eastern participants.

We asked what resources would best help NextGen leaders overcome these leadership challenges, and 49% responded *“an advocate to help established leaders better understand and engage my generation.”* The second most popular response was *“self-assessment tools to help me better understand what opportunities best suit me”* which garnered 41% of the participants.

CREATIVITY

When asked whether or not they agreed with the statement, *“I have a great deal of freedom in my current environment to express creative ideas and new ways of doing things,”* 46% either agreed or strongly agreed. The highest percentage of these responses came from English speaking and Romanian participants. The lowest percentage came from Russian participants, of whom 36% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have a great deal of freedom in their current environment. The lowest percentage of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed came from Spanish speaking audiences. We found that 19% of participants took a neutral stance.

We asked, *“Which opportunity is most stimulating to you?”* Responses showed that 36% selected *“creating something new and unique,”* 29%

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preferred to take something that's broken and fix it, 19% preferred taking something that is already working well and making it better and 16% preferred to faithfully manage what is already working well.

Interestingly, when asked what role or relationship with an organization would encourage them to participate, 57% selected *“an organization that desires to partner with me to change or create culture”* and 43% selected *“an organization that has many on-ramps for involvement.”*

FUTURE CHURCH

In response to the statement, *“Church will look different in my generation,”* 61% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. Only 17% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 22% took a neutral stance.

When asked to select which statement best describes how their church or organization is connecting with Millennials, 34% responded that they are putting them in charge of new initiatives and resources to reach their generation, 27% indicated that their churches were having trouble connecting with the next generation and 21% responded that their leaders were listening to Millennials and were trying to figure out ways to engage them.

We asked survey participants to describe the ideal church to engage NextGen audiences. The consensus was that the ideal church would emphasize community and diversity, be more visual and interactive, be more challenging and empowering, and would have more social activism and philanthropy in the community.

THE GOSPEL

We were interested in gospel literacy, so we asked, *“How would you describe your relationship with the gospel?”* We found that 56% indicated that they consider themselves literate in the gospel and



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they can adequately explain it to others, while 39% indicated that they understood the gospel well enough, but they had a hard time explaining it to others.

When asked what advice they would most like to give church leaders in their community regarding the gospel, 40% responded, *“Show us the way! Model a gospel-centered lifestyle in our community,”* 24% responded, *“Open the doors! Give us permission to do whatever it takes to reach people nobody is reaching,”* 19% selected, *“Turn up the heat! Preach and teach the gospel more often”* and the remaining 17% chose *“Give us a voice! Let us communicate the gospel in ways that are more effective in reaching Millennials.”*

When asked to respond to the statement, *“The gospel is often communicated in a clear and compelling way in my church,”* 53% either agreed or strongly agreed, 23% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 25% were neutral in their responses. The highest percentages of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed came from Vietnamese and Arabic speaking respondents from the Middle East and North Africa.

CONCLUSIONS

Here is what Global Advance learned from Millennials in the 2016 NextGen Global Needs Assessment:

- A leadership gap does in fact exist in the leadership culture of the global church.
- Authentic, inclusive, relational, empowering and mentor-based leadership is highly admired by NextGen leaders.
- NextGen leaders do not have enough freedom to express creative ideas and new ways of doing things in their current environments.
- NextGen leaders believe their greatest leadership challenge is knowing enough about themselves to determine where they fit.
- NextGen leaders need advocates to help them be understood, to help them engage in their churches, and to provide access to

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- self-evaluation resources.
- NextGen leaders crave mentoring relationships with seasoned professionals and desire collaboration with peers to feed their creativity.
 - NextGen leaders want their creative voice to be heard and to be put in charge of ministries designed to reach their own generation.
 - NextGen leaders want to partner with organizations to change and create culture, and they want to be mobilized internationally.
 - The church of the future must focus more on diversity and community, be more challenging and empowering, and be more visual and interactive.
 - NextGen leaders are literate in the Gospel and feel comfortable communicating it with others.
 - The Gospel is being preached in a clear and compelling way in the churches of our survey respondents.
 - NextGen leaders are most interested in finding out more about the Esther Initiative and Marketplace Missions of Global Advance.

RESPONSE

The seven chapters that follow are designed to be a timely response to what we learned from young adults in 2016. We directly address some of the primary concerns and needs of NextGen leaders, and we embrace the role of advocate to help established leaders better understand, engage and nurture the next generation of Great Commission leaders. Please prayerfully consider each principle and reflect upon the Scriptures and ideas that are presented, asking the Holy Spirit to teach, convict, motivate and empower you to take up the mantle of an intentional mentor and champion of NextGen spiritual leaders.

Remember that Global Advance is praying for you and for the young men and women that God has entrusted into your care. Now roll up your sleeves and place your hands into the fallow soil of NextGen leadership development. Prepare for a future harvest and trust God for eternal results.

PRINCIPLE 1: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophecy.”
Acts 2:16-18

“He said to them...But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

What Luke described in the book of Acts was the fulfillment of a promise Jesus made to his disciples shortly before His death, and again moments before His ascension into heaven. Jesus promised that He would not leave His disciples as orphans, but that He would send another comforter, the Holy Spirit, as a gift to empower them to be His witnesses in the world.

The disciples, obedient to the command of Jesus, met together often and devoted themselves to prayer while they waited with holy anticipation. Just as He promised, Jesus Christ baptized His followers with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, unleashing divine power and authority into the community of believers who would afterward become known as the Church of Jesus Christ.

It is clear that Jesus intended for the gospel to be taken to the ends of the earth through ambassadors empowered by the Holy Spirit. It was His intent that the gospel be preached, and that churches be established in every nation, city and community. In order for this epic mission to be accomplished, spiritual leaders must be raised up in each community all over the world. Christ did not intend for spiritual leadership to be exclusive or ethnocentric, or He would only have poured out His Spirit on merely a select few. Instead, as the prophet



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Joel first proclaimed and the Apostle Peter later confirmed, Jesus liberally poured out the Holy Spirit on His Church for the blessing and salvation of the nations.

ALL PEOPLE “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.”

On the day of Pentecost, when the whole church was gathered together, the sound of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the room where they were meeting. What seemed to be tongues of fire separated and came to rest on “*each of them*,” baptizing them all with the promised Holy Spirit. Luke recorded that “*all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*” The phrases “each of them” and “all of them” indicate that none of them were left out or denied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When the Apostle Peter quoted the Old Testament prophet Joel in his anointed sermon, he proclaimed that the Holy Spirit would be poured out “*on all people.*”

From Luke’s narrative, we know that there were at least fifteen languages and people groups who heard and saw the evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among believers that day. There were possibly more nationalities and languages represented in the crowd listening to Peter, since people gathered from all over the known world in Jerusalem each year at Pentecost. What a perfect time and place for the church to be born and for God to demonstrate the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit who now indwelt His people.

In many nations, certain people groups are discriminated against and denied access to resources and social privileges. Not so in the Kingdom of God! When writing to the Church in Ephesus, located in Asia Minor, the Apostle Paul assured believers, “*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household*” Ephesians 2:19. To the

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church at Colossae, Paul wrote, *“Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all”* Colossians 3:11.

Does your church discriminate against or look unfavorably upon other people groups? Are there those in your community who are not welcome in your church because of their nationality or tribe? You must ask yourself as a spiritual leader if you are living out the values of the Kingdom of God and reflecting God’s heart for the nations.

God may be challenging you to step out of your comfort zone to begin building relationships with other churches or people groups in your community. God may be convicting you to be more intentional about identifying, engaging and nurturing potential NextGen leaders who are ethnically or culturally different from you and your congregation. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will empower you to be a bridge-builder in your community, bringing together *“all people”* as members of one body in Christ.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS

“In the last days, God says...your sons and daughters will prophesy.”

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, young people were not given a great deal of attention



“My church is a young one, and a creative one. We greatly encourage creativity, but as long as we still engage with the older generation”

(Male, Age 18-25, Romania).



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“I’m very young in my environment. My opinions will surely not interest anyone so I do not share them.”

or status in society. Even the disciples seemed perturbed when people brought their young children to Jesus so He could place His hands on them and pray for them. The disciples even rebuked them and tried to hinder them from approaching Jesus, believing that He had more important matters to which He should attend. Jesus responded, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”* Matthew 19:14. From this exchange, we learn a kingdom value. Those who are often considered least by cultural standards might very well be considered greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Apostle Paul was intentional about cultivating sons in the faith. His greeting to Timothy reflects the quality and nature of their relationship. *“To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord”* 1 Timothy 1:2. Paul felt the same way about Titus, another young leader whom he considered his *“true son in our common faith”* Titus 1:4. In Acts 21, Luke records that Philip the evangelist, one of the seven original deacons chosen in the church at Jerusalem, *“had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.”* God gave them a prophetic ministry in the city of Caesarea and they ministered alongside their father.

How intentional are you in cooperating with the Holy Spirit’s work among the sons and

daughters in your church or in the marketplace? How much value do you place on their leadership potential and kingdom influence? Do their perspectives and ideas matter to you, or are you dismissive of their opinions? What if God is giving them a prophetic voice for their generation? What are you doing to help their voice be heard and expand their influence? Our hope is that God will give you a burden to be spiritual mothers and fathers to potential NextGen leaders.

YOUNG AND OLD

“Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”

Two age groups that are often marginalized in global society are the young and the old. While some societies venerate older generations, many do not. Often as people age they experience a shift in societal influence. Their opinions, life experience and practical wisdom might be sought less and less by those who currently hold positions of influence. They start believing the misconception that they have little to offer anymore and begin to withdraw to the fringes, taking their wisdom and talents with them.

Young people also tend to be marginalized, especially when it comes to leadership opportunities. They often feel that their creativity and innovative ideas are ignored and that no one will take them seriously. They feel looked down upon by older leaders and left out of leadership culture. Timothy, a young pastor, experienced some of the trials of leading a church with mature members who didn't take him seriously. Paul's wise instruction to his son in the faith was, *“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity”* 1 Timothy 4:12.

Our Savior values all generations in the body of Christ. This is why He chose to pour out the Holy Spirit on the young and the old alike. Established spiritual leaders would do well to listen to what God is



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revealing by His Spirit to the young and the old in the body of Christ. God is giving them visions and dreams for His church. Value their perspectives and show them proper respect. Be a good steward of the prophetic truths and insights that God has entrusted to them, knowing that you are accountable to God as a spiritual leader.

MEN AND WOMEN

“Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

When Jesus Christ came, He introduced the values of the Kingdom of God that often stood in stark contrast to existing culture. He declared that He came to break chains and set captives free. This news would have been most welcome and truly liberating to the women who heard Him teach. His grace-filled and respectful interactions with women are well-recorded in Scripture.

According to the Gospel of Luke, as Jesus went about proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, several women joined His ministry team and were able *“to support them out of their own means”* Luke 8:3. These resourceful women were partners in ministry with Jesus. They were greatly responsible for providing the necessary finances for Jesus and the disciples as they went about spreading the good news and healing diseases.

Jesus also commended Mary, the sister of Lazarus, for choosing to sit at His feet to hear His teaching. Mary’s sister Martha would have preferred for her to do the more ‘appropriate’ thing and remain behind the scenes. Jesus praised Mary over Martha even though her actions were counter-cultural. This is just one of many examples of Jesus prioritizing the kingdom value of inclusiveness over the exclusive cultural norms of His day. The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declared, *“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile,*

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slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ” Galatians 3:27-28. In Ephesians, Paul tells the church to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. This teaching would not have been popular or easily implemented due to the culture of their day. Yet Paul wrote under the Spirit’s influence and communicated God’s truth and expectations to His church. They were responsible to hear and obey the Word of God, even if it challenged their personal preferences or the customs of their society.

Paul mentions several women in Scripture as partners in the gospel and courageous believers who contended at his side for the faith. Paul’s dear friend Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, were church planters and spiritual mentors to high capacity leaders like Apollos. Lydia was a highly successful businesswoman in Philippi, an influential city in Asia Minor. Through her thriving business, she was able to influence the lives of others. God used Lydia to help plant a thriving church in Philippi through her leadership, financial resources, and hospitality.

Global Advance serves churches of many denominations across the world. Some churches believe that certain passages in the New Testament prohibit women from teaching, preaching or holding leadership positions in the local church. Others see Paul’s instructions to the Corinthian church as descriptive of the particular churches Paul was guiding at that time, rather than prescriptive for all churches of all times. The latter group encourages women to utilize their teaching and leadership gifts as pastors, church board members, church planters and denominational leaders.

Regardless of your theology of spiritual leadership in your congregation, there is room for women in some leadership capacity, and they need to be encouraged, nurtured and empowered to lead in strategic church ministries and marketplace initiatives. The Holy Spirit has been poured out on them, and it is His choice as to what gifts



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He bestows upon them for the edification of the Church and for the enrichment of society.

Does your church or business reflect kingdom values regarding women in the body of Christ, or do you reflect largely the cultural values of your community? God's intent is that women be equal contributors in the work of the gospel and that they be properly respected and encouraged to use the spiritual gifts and talents God has entrusted to them. Are you an advocate for women in spiritual leadership roles? Do you provide leadership development opportunities for women? What is your greatest fear when it comes to empowering women in your church, business or community? Spiritual leadership is meant to be inclusive. Christ modeled it in His earthly ministry. The Holy Spirit empowers all people in the body of Christ: people from every nation, our sons and daughters, the young and the old, men and women. Our human tendency as leaders is to be exclusive, limiting leadership to a select few. May God grant you the ability to align your leadership with the heart of God, and may you be willing to cast a larger net as you seek to engage potential NextGen leaders in your sphere of influence.

REFLECTION

1. Reflect on the leaders you have developed over the past three years. How diverse is this group? Where is there opportunity to include new leaders?
2. How closely do your cultural values and preferences regarding the value of women as leaders align with the example of Jesus and the teachings of Paul we discussed in this chapter?
3. Who are some young adults in your organization you believe have untapped leadership potential? How might you develop their potential?

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PRAYER

Lord, my heart's desire is to be as inclusive of a leader as your Son was when He walked this earth. In light of Jesus Christ including others in His spiritual journey and showing respect for young and old, men and women, sons and daughters, help me display that same grace and acceptance. Help me to not allow cultural norms and peer pressure to keep me from living out kingdom values regarding the role of women, the elderly, and young adults in spiritual leadership. Give me the grace to include and invest in others who are different from me, knowing that You are pleased when I model my leadership after Yours. I ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, the ultimate leader.

Amen.

ACTION STEPS & TIMELINES

Take a few moments to consider ways in which you might include other potential leaders in your organization. Set some basic timelines to help you move toward greater diversity on your leadership team.

ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE



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PRINCIPLE 2: INTENTIONAL LEADERSHIP

“Jesus said to them, ‘Come with me. I’ll make a new kind of fisherman out of you.’” Matthew 4:19, MSG

“Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.” Mark 3: 13-15

Jesus was an intentional leader. He did everything on purpose. His choice of apprentices was not random or spontaneous. He knew exactly whom He wanted on His team and what needed to be done to help them become world-changing leaders. His strategy was simple and extremely successful.

The desired outcome was stated in His original invitation to follow Him. Come with Me. I’ll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. Only one out of twelve disciples failed to meet this expectation. The rest eventually became the bold, transformational leaders that He prepared them to be, because Jesus was intentional. What were the steps that Jesus took in His leadership development strategy?

SET AN EXAMPLE WORTH FOLLOWING

“He appointed twelve that they might be with Him.”

Jesus desired for His disciples to be up close and personal. He set a perfect example of spiritual leadership and was comfortable living an examined life in close proximity with those He called. They got to see Him nearly every waking hour for three years as He provided the perfect example of spiritual leadership.

Jesus was being intentional when He washed the feet of His disciples shortly before His death. He seized the opportunity to leave an

enduring example of servant leadership. When He had completed this menial task, motivated by a practical need (their feet were dirty and needed washing) and a desire to demonstrate His enduring love for His disciples, He told them that they would be blessed if they followed His example.

Jesus also revealed that He followed His Father's example throughout His earthly ministry. He told them that He did what He saw His Father doing. He enlightened them to the fact that His Father was always working, and that He came to finish His Father's work. Our Heavenly Father was the example that Jesus followed in complete obedience throughout His earthly life, and Jesus became the example for all believers who wish to walk in that same obedience. We are to complete the work that Jesus gave us to do, and we accomplish that by fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and by walking in His footsteps.

"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:1

The Apostle Paul also set an example worth following. In true humility, he was able to exhort the believers in the church of Corinth to follow his example as he followed Christ. Few spiritual leaders would feel qualified to make this statement; however, this is exactly what we should be saying to NextGen leaders. We are all imperfect vessels, jars of clay, but by God's grace and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we can set a proper example of spiritual leadership and true discipleship as we follow the example of Jesus Christ.

NextGen leaders desperately need Christ-like examples. They are not looking for perfection, but they are seeking authentic, humble, Spirit-filled leadership modeled up close and personal.



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STEWARD YOUR AVAILABILITY

When Jesus launched His ministry, He immediately chose twelve men from various backgrounds and vocations to be His disciples. He left behind His career as a carpenter in order to focus full-time on preaching the gospel, healing the sick, casting out demons and developing these men into mature spiritual leaders.

For the next three years, these leaders-in-training lived with Jesus and followed Him wherever He went. It was His intent that they be with Him, have complete access to Him and maintain top priority in His daily schedule. In addition to His other leadership responsibilities, He set aside special time with Peter, James and John.

Jesus often pulled back from incredible ministry opportunities and speaking engagements in order to properly steward His time and availability with the twelve disciples. There was always more that could be done and said among the multitudes. Sometimes there were people who went away without having their spiritual and physical needs met. It wasn't that Jesus was insensitive or selfish, but rather that He was modeling proper balance in ministry and stressing the importance of spiritual and physical replenishment in order for a leader to maintain proper health, spiritual growth, and ministry fruitfulness over the long haul. Jesus set an example for leaders from all generations regarding strategic stewardship of time, energy, relationships and influence. He was able to set healthy boundaries and did not allow people's expectations to set His agenda. NextGen leaders need to have access to your leadership, and that only happens if you properly steward your availability.

EXPAND YOUR INNER CIRCLE

Although Jesus had an innermost circle of three disciples and an intimate circle of twelve, He still made room in His life for a larger circle of followers He trained, sent out and debriefed when they returned

from their ministry service. Depending on which of the Gospels you read, the number of this team was either seventy or seventy-two. Regardless, the principle is the same. Jesus sometimes expanded His inner circle to include and make Himself available to a larger group of devoted followers and potential future leaders.

You probably have a small inner circle of spiritual leaders you are mentoring. You may even have an intimate circle of ten to twelve leaders who have access to your leadership. I want to encourage you to expand your inner circle from time to time to allow some new NextGen leaders to have access to your leadership. Give them strategic opportunities to learn from your leadership and permission to ask questions. Provide meaningful ministry assignments that stretch their faith and creativity. Occasionally, invite one or two of them into leadership staff or elder board meetings to learn how healthy leadership teams function. Spend a few minutes after the meeting to allow them the opportunity to ask questions or share their observations. Take a small group of young leaders to conferences you attend, or take them on a spiritual retreat to model connecting with the Father in deeper ways.

You don't necessarily have to create new time and space in your existing schedule in order to expand your inner circle. Simply think of ways to utilize the meetings and commitments you already have and invite them to tag along. These opportunities will mean a great deal to them, and will help them learn valuable lessons from your leadership. You may find that such moments become the highlight of your week.

Although the majority of your spiritual investment will be in your innermost circle, it is good to follow the example of Jesus by occasionally expanding your circle. The seventy plus disciples that Jesus sent out got to experience amazing ministry, and they saw God work in and through them as they carried out the task that Jesus entrusted to them. His occasional investment in this larger group



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yielded significant kingdom results. You may find that your investment in additional NextGen leaders yields similar results.

Even now, God may be convicting you to enlarge your inner circle. He may be giving you an idea or two on how to engage NextGen leaders in occasional leadership development opportunities. Pray for guidance, plan well and follow through. It will be worth the relational investment and spiritual deposits you make in new leaders.

GATHER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

A necessary part of spiritual leadership development is gathering financial resources. Though seldom discussed, Jesus had a team of financial supporters who traveled with Him and ministered to His needs, as well as the needs of His disciples (Luke 8:1-3). The purpose of these financial resources was to allow Jesus and the twelve emerging leaders to devote their full capacity and energy to ministry and leadership development. This was their way of contributing to the work of the Kingdom of God. It is not clear whether Jesus asked these financial partners to serve in this way, or if they were led by the Holy Spirit to perform this important task of financial support. It is clear, however, that resources were in place that allowed Jesus to focus on leadership development.

It is true that many leaders live in communities where financial resources are quite limited; however, we all have the ability to plan ahead, communicate vision clearly, ask God's people to make financial commitments, trust God for ample provision, and prioritize ministry finances to create resources for spiritual leadership development. The need for spiritual leadership development may encourage some churches in your community to pool their kingdom resources so that they can accomplish together what they could not do separately. This kind of cooperative effort both encourages the body of Christ and helps accomplish this God-given task.

MODEL GREAT LEADERSHIP

Jesus modeled great leadership. This was indeed the point of allowing the disciples to be with Him and follow Him for three years. He wanted His leadership to significantly influence and inform theirs. The disciples had many opportunities to see Jesus model what He was teaching. They saw how He treated people, what He prioritized, how He gave thanks for meals, when He chose to pull back from a busy ministry schedule and spend time with His Father, and how He demonstrated His love to people with whom no one else wanted to associate. Jesus modeled greatness through meekness, love through service, patience through suffering and persecution, and forgiveness and grace.

NextGen leaders in your church or business need great leaders to follow. They need you to model excellent leadership and to help them nurture their own leadership. Again, greatness does not mean perfection, but rather Christlikeness and excellence. Are you modeling great leadership for potential NextGen leaders?

NURTURE A HEALTHY LEADERSHIP CULTURE

Jesus chose men from different socio-economic backgrounds, religious beliefs, and vocations. He allowed them to be themselves, with all their imperfections, prejudices, and doubts. They had freedom to be sinners that were loved unconditionally even as they argued amongst themselves, tattled on each other and tried to be first in line and most important. Although Jesus was transforming them into adventurers who would boldly take the Good News to the ends of the earth, He understood that spiritual formation is a process of learning and maturing that can at times be messy and slow. He saw the diamonds inside the rough exteriors and the great leadership potential hidden behind spiritual immaturity.

What were some of the elements of the leadership culture that Jesus established? First, each of these leaders knew that he was chosen.



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Jesus purposely sought out each individual and personally invited him to be on His team. They knew they belonged. Second, Jesus always spoke the truth in love. Peter and the other disciples knew this element of Jesus' leadership quite well. Third, Jesus created a culture of servant leadership marked by personal humility and willingness to take the lesser place. Fourth, Jesus created a missional leadership culture, ministering to the sick and the poor, spending time with tax collectors and prostitutes, and modeling generosity and compassion toward those who were in need. Jesus created a leadership culture that was marked by grace and forgiveness.

CREATE MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND PRACTICE

Jesus gave His disciples many opportunities to practice what they had been taught through observation and authoritative teaching. Two well-known examples are when He sent the twelve disciples on a mission to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons. He commissioned an even larger group of disciples to go and do likewise. Jesus expected a great deal from His followers. He sent them on a mission trip without a suitcase, no trip cash, and no hotel reservations. They basically went out armed with a message and the clothes on their backs. Yet they came back home rejoicing from both assignments, excited that God had used them mightily and that they had been entrusted to perform an important task without Jesus showing up to take over the ministry. He trusted them to figure out a place to stay, to find places to preach and teach, and to have the boldness and creativity to engage people in need of hope. Jesus could have gone along as a silent observer, but He wanted them to learn to apply what they had learned in ways that increased their confidence and made an eternal difference in people's lives. When they came back home and reported to Jesus what God had accomplished through them, Jesus didn't sit them down and immediately tell them how they could have done it better. He rejoiced and celebrated with them. He was happy

for their successes. In fact, He depended on these intentional training exercises to prepare them in advance for a future global mission.

You, too, have the ability to create meaningful opportunities for NextGen leaders in your church or organization to practice and reinforce what they are learning from your leadership. However, for this to be a reality, some leaders reading this book will need to make some important adjustments. First, you must learn to trust your NextGen leaders. Trust that they have been listening to you and observing your leadership more than they appear to be. Trust that when given an opportunity to step up their leadership, they will rise to the occasion.

Second, you must show that you believe in their potential to do amazing things. What do your words and body language communicate when you interact with them? Third, you need to stretch their faith and encourage their imagination. Give them important problems to address. Allow them the latitude to figure out solutions and attempt initiatives without micro-management or unnecessary interference from you. Trust in the Holy Spirit's activity and direction in their lives and trust them. They need to learn and practice in a grace-filled leadership culture. You have no idea what NextGen leaders are capable of until you give them opportunities to engage and apply their influence in important ministry or business projects.

REFLECTION

1. How would the leadership culture of your church or business be described by those who are in it? Would they describe it as a grace-filled, forgiving, authentic culture, or would some describe it as a culture of performance, fear, or control?
2. What potential leadership development resources are already in your hand? What other ministries or businesses might you approach to partner with you in gathering NextGen leadership development resources? How might you lead your church or



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business to develop a long-term strategy and financial investment in a NextGen leadership development initiative?

3. What are three potential opportunities that you can create to expand your inner circle to include NextGen leaders? Use the Action Steps & Timelines section to record your thoughts and get started.

PRAYER

Jesus, Lord and Master, thank you for being an intentional leader. You were purposeful in who you selected to join Your innermost circle. Yet You had time to occasionally expand that circle in order to develop other spiritual leaders and accomplish important tasks. Help me to follow Your example of intentional leadership. Help my life to set a godly example of excellent spiritual leadership in my home, community, and workplace. Give me wisdom to submit to the Holy Spirit's leadership as together we create a leadership culture in my church or business that is healthy, full of grace and forgiveness, and focused on developing NextGen leaders. Help me be a better steward of my time and leadership in order to leverage them for Your eternal purposes. I pray this in Your Name, Lord Jesus.

Amen.

ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE

PRINCIPLE 3: RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP

“He appointed twelve that they might be with him...” Mark 3:14

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead I have called you friends...” John 15:15 NIV.

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” John 13:1

PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

Jesus told one would-be follower, *“Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head”* Matthew 8:20. It seems difficult to practice hospitality if you don’t have a domicile. However, we must see hospitality in a broader sense than entertaining guests in your home. Henri Nouwen described hospitality as *“primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines”* (Nouwen 1986).

When Jesus entertained Nicodemus, who fearfully sought Him out under the cover of darkness, He created sacred space for the



We asked participants to choose two characteristics they admire most in a spiritual leader. We discovered that 61% selected “is authentic,” 57% selected “builds relationships with all kinds of people,” and 56% chose “mentors new leaders.”



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gospel. When Jesus took His disciples away for a spiritual retreat, He was practicing hospitality, orchestrating a time and space for His disciples to sharpen their leadership skills and increase their learning.

We, too, must see hospitality as a key ingredient for building deeper relationships with others. For many spiritual leaders, practicing hospitality is as natural as breathing because it has deep roots in their culture. For others, practicing hospitality seems unnatural and can be quite intimidating. It might be helpful to view hospitality in a broader sense that includes opening your home, your life, your schedule and your heart as sacred space for others to see and hear the gospel.

ESTABLISH AUTHENTIC MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Think back on your early years of spiritual leadership. Who were the people who most influenced you during those formative years? You may readily name one or two who made significant spiritual deposits in your life. Upon deeper reflection, you might even name four or five people who helped shape you into the leader you are today.

In the 1990s, Paul Stanley and Robert J. Clinton conducted a study of spiritual leaders who finished well. After surveying over one thousand spiritual leaders, they were able to identify five particular characteristics that they all shared. One commonality was that they each had a network of meaningful relationships and several important mentors during their lifetime (Stanley and Clinton 1992). Stanley and Clinton define mentoring as *“a relational experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources”* (Stanley and Clinton 1992).

Establishing authentic mentoring relationships should happen on two levels. First, you should have mentors in your own life in order to finish well and set an example to others. You need peer mentors who are beside you in your spiritual journey, and you need at least one mentor who is further along in the journey than you are. Once these

relationships are in place, you will be properly fortified and equipped to mentor others more effectively. Second, you should develop authentic mentoring relationships through which you may empower NextGen leaders by sharing your God-given resources with them.

A word of exhortation is in order. Don't take a passive stance in developing mentoring relationships, waiting for NextGen leaders to have the courage to approach you. Be proactive. Approach young people in whom you see potential for spiritual leadership. There are many examples in Scripture of great spiritual leaders who deliberately and strategically selected those they desired to mentor. Elijah chose Elisha. Jesus singled out twelve future apostles. Barnabas went in search of Paul. Paul selected Timothy, Titus and other young leaders from Asia Minor. Priscilla and Aquila sought out Apollos and *"invited him into their home to explain the way of God more adequately"* Acts 18:26, NIV84.

ENCOURAGE CONSTELLATIONS OF MENTORS

According to Dr. Robert Clinton, retired professor from Fuller Theological Seminary, *"A growing leader needs a relational network that embraces mentors, peers, and emerging leaders in order to ensure development and a healthy perspective on his or her life and ministry"* (Stanley and Clinton 1992). Stanley and Clinton were among the first to use the term *"constellation of mentors"* for the group of mentors that a person gathers around their life. No single mentor can meet all the mentoring needs of a growing spiritual leader. Not every mentoring relationship is meant to be long-term. Sometimes God calls people alongside us for a particular phase of our spiritual development, and then calls others to take their place or join them in mentoring us. Leaders should not take this mentoring dynamic personally, but should understand that the Holy Spirit uses a constellation of mentors to develop spiritual leaders.



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There are several reasons for having a group of mentors around us. First, our mentoring needs change at different stages of our spiritual journey. For example, if God is calling a young leader to plant a new church, he or she would be wise to seek out a new mentor that has experience in planting and growing a healthy church. A seasoned church planter will undoubtedly have more insightful advice and perspectives regarding birthing a church than other mentors might possess.

It is not disloyal for a young leader to change mentors or add new mentors to their mentoring relationships. In fact, a discerning mentor should anticipate that changes are needed and should assist the young leader in the process of approaching an additional mentor. It is wise to discuss this possibility when you first establish your mentoring relationships with NextGen leaders. Give them permission in advance to adjust their mentoring constellation as necessary, and offer to assist them with re-assessing their mentoring needs. Affirm them for taking ownership of their mentoring relationships. This should relieve any unnecessary anxiety and false guilt on their part if adjustments are needed.

A second reason to encourage a constellation of mentors is that no one mentor possesses all the wisdom, experience and perspectives that are needed for younger leaders to develop in their journey. We all have certain spiritual gifts, practical skills and life experiences to offer, yet we don't have them all. We must think of ourselves soberly and with Christ-like humility, and realize that those we seek to mentor often need a different or additional mentor in order to reach their God-given potential. Remember that our task as mentors is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's agenda rather than our own.

Allow me to use a personal example. I am currently mentoring a young man who recently revealed that he senses God is leading him into a new business venture. He has a certain degree of practical

experience, but has never started this type of business. I prayerfully suggested that he seek out a Christian business professional who has successfully started and grown a healthy business of this nature. I made a recommendation of a potential mentor and introduced them via email. They have recently reached out to one another and plan to meet soon to discuss the possibility of entering into a mentoring relationship. Rather than feeling uncomfortable about this, I am pleased that I am helping this young man along in his spiritual journey. I still provide spiritual mentoring, but he requires an additional mentoring relationship in order to best prepare him to move in the direction he believes God is leading.

A third reason for having a constellation of mentors is to gain consensus when we are having a difficult time discerning God's guidance. A wise person seeks council from trusted sources. Often God will speak to our hearts through a consensus of other believers who know and care about us. This type of council affirms that our anticipated course of action is wise and in line with God's activity in our lives. If only one mentor or peer mentor agrees with us, and two or three others have serious concerns, this should be reason for us to pause and address their misgivings before moving forward.

A fourth reason for a constellation of mentors is that we see it modeled in Scripture. Paul instructed Timothy to mentor others while Paul was still mentoring him. Those people Timothy mentored were to be actively mentoring others at the same time they were being mentored by Timothy.

I want to suggest a simple starting point to build a healthy mentoring model in your own life. Let me use an example from everyday life. When a new house is built in our community, often a tree is planted in the front yard. Because mature trees are often too expensive to transplant, most homeowners will purchase a young tree, not much more than a sapling. Immature trees need structural support while



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they are growing and putting down roots. Often a stabilization method is used to ensure that the plant will stay upright and straight during seasons of rain and high winds. The planter will drive stakes in the ground at equal distances a few feet from the tree, and will tie strands of wire or tubing to the stake and the tree for the necessary support.

Visualize your own life as a young tree in need of strong and reliable support in order to be firmly rooted and continue growing straight and tall. Think of the support stakes as mentors in your life: a Barnabas to encourage you; a Paul to challenge you; and a Timothy to keep you sharp in your leadership development. The wires represent accountable and authentic relationships binding you to these mentors. If the wires become broken or relaxed, the stakes are ineffective. If the wires are too tight, the tree will not retain the flexibility to grow strong and ability to withstand storms. There must be strong and secure mentoring relationships, bound together and held in place by the Holy Spirit, for NextGen leaders to develop properly.

Unlike a young tree that eventually has no need for external support, you and I will always need mentoring relationships to keep us strong and growing in the right direction. The moment we think that we no longer need others speaking into our lives and journeying with us is the moment that pride and self-sufficiency begin to creep into our hearts, causing us to be vulnerable to our own fleshly natures, sinful influences in the world and the spiritual attacks of the evil one.

BUILD COMMUNITY

I love how the Gospel of Mark describes the relationship that Jesus built with His twelve disciples. He intentionally sought them out *“that they might be with Him.”* He decided that they should become friends as well as followers. For three years, He invested not only in quality time with His disciples, but quantity time as well.

Jesus decided that His leadership development methods would

include participating in life with His disciples, letting them see Him throughout the day in the moments when the crowds weren't watching. They saw Him when He was tired, hungry, in need of silence and craving solitude. They saw Him express emotions of frustration with their lack of faith, and watched His anger flare at the hypocrisy and spiritual blindness of the Pharisees. They watched Him grieve and weep at the loss of a close friend. He modeled authentic leadership and invited the twelve into deeper spiritual companionship. He made room at the fire for small talk, friendly banter and deep spiritual conversations. He built a faith community that was a model for all of us to emulate. Jesus invested in honest relationships with emerging spiritual leaders, fashioning them into an authentic community around the central belief that He was their Lord and Christ, and they were His friends. And so should we.

I encourage you not to follow the example of spiritual leaders who feel they should remain aloof and distant from others within their congregations or businesses. Regardless of their reasons, we do not see this leadership model encouraged in Scripture. Instead we see spiritual leaders like Jesus, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila and Titus opening their lives to other believers and making themselves available as companions on the shared spiritual journey. God also knows our human limitations, so it is wise to select a handful of relationships like Jesus did.

Perhaps the biggest reason some spiritual leaders insist on remaining distant is that they are afraid – fearful of being vulnerable, unwilling for others to see who they really are and how they really act behind the scenes. They are terrified of being seen as human and sinful, which is what all of us truly are. God never expects perfection. He knows how we are formed, that we are dust. But He does expect truth and authenticity from spiritual leaders. May God relieve us of the burden of living for the approval and accolades of others. May He free us to be



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real with those we lead, living authentic, imperfect and forgiven lives, depending on the goodness and mercy of God rather than on a false persona of spiritual leadership.

REFLECTION

1. Take a moment to reflect upon the spiritual mentors and peer-mentors that the Holy Spirit sovereignly placed in your life when you were a young leader. Take a moment to thank your Heavenly Father for bringing them into your life. Consider contacting them if possible to express your gratitude for their spiritual investment and support.
2. Draw a chart of your current constellation of mentors with you in the middle. Who is ahead of you in the journey? Who is beside you as a peer mentor? Who is behind you in the journey that sees you as their spiritual mentor? Who is missing from this constellation? Is there room to add a NextGen leader to your constellation?
3. How are you doing at practicing the spiritual discipline of hospitality? Is there sacred space in your life for new authentic relationships with NextGen leaders? What actions might you take to open your heart, calendar, home or mentoring constellation to offer hospitality to young leaders?

PRAYER

Father, thank you for the spiritual mentors You have strategically placed in my life throughout my spiritual journey. They have made an eternal difference and I am grateful to them and to You for their influence. Lord, help me create sacred space in my life for new mentoring relationships. Help me to be humble enough to see where my mentoring constellation is not strong enough. Give me courage to reach out to other leaders to make sure that I have the spiritual support in place to finish well as a leader. Father, I want to run the race well and

finish strong, bringing other spiritual leaders with me in the journey. May we all hear “*Well done*” from Your lips at the end of our shared spiritual journey.

Amen.

ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE



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PRINCIPLE 4: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.” John 17:17

“They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’” Luke 24:32

FACILITATE TRANSFORMATION WITHIN (THE HEART)

Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus spent significant time in prayer for His twelve disciples and for all future disciples who would soon follow in their steps. He prayed that His Father would sanctify those entrusted to Him before they were sent out on their global mission.

Jesus knew that *“being”* preceded *“doing.”* He wanted His disciples to be spiritually transformed and set apart by the Father through the Word of truth before they launched their Great Commission ministry. When God’s Word penetrates the heart, it burns like a fire. It refines the character, purifies the thought life, and renews the mind. It penetrates deeply into the soul and spirit of believers. That’s why the disciples who met the resurrected Christ on the road to Emmaus described the encounter as one that made their hearts burn within them. God’s Word, communicated in the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of Jesus, transforms the hearts of spiritual leaders.

Many leadership development ministries, seminaries and Bible colleges focus on the head and hands of leadership, meaning the knowledge and skills necessary to become a better spiritual leader. This emphasis is important and helpful to the body of Christ. What sometimes gets less attention, however, is a significant emphasis on the spiritual formation of the heart that is required for spiritual leaders

to be transformed on the inside. A leader with immense knowledge and an impressive skill set may go far in business or ministry, but what causes the hearts of others to burn within them when they are around a spiritual leader is the inner transformation that is taking place in the leader's heart. Few things make the gospel more attractive than a truly transformed life.

Saul of Tarsus had immense theological training and possessed the leadership skill set necessary to gain him a position of significant influence in Jewish society. Yet it was not until his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus that he experienced a transformation of the heart. What a transformation it proved to be! It was after this complete metamorphosis that Jesus changed Saul's name and gave him a new calling in life. He was then able to use his knowledge, skills and renewed heart in concert to become one of the greatest spiritual leaders the world has ever known.

What about your heart? Does it burn within you when you read and meditate on the Word of God, and when you sit under the empowered teaching of others? Is your mind being renewed and your life being transformed by the Spirit of God, or are you allowing the world to shape you into its mold? Are you relying mostly upon your knowledge and skills to propel your ministry forward, or are you prioritizing an intimate relationship with Christ that transforms your heart?

Being proceeds out of doing! God looks at the hearts of men and women and determines what He wants to accomplish through them. Gerald Hartis once said, "*Ministry is what we leave in our wake as we follow Jesus*" (Ford 1991). Is that statement true of you? Is following Jesus your highest priority? His invitation still holds true, "*Come, follow me, and I will make a new kind of fisherman out of you.*" Are you ready for that kind of transformation to take place in your heart? What's holding you back?



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FACILITATE TRANSFORMATION WITHOUT (CULTURE)

When Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God had come to earth, He began to preach good news and teach principles of the Kingdom. It was clear to those who listened that His message was often counter-cultural and controversial. Although the transformation started in the hearts of all who heard and responded by faith, it wasn't confined there. The transformation Jesus brought about was meant to flow out of redeemed hearts like streams of living water gushing forth from a limitless source. These refreshing streams are designed to bring about spiritual and cultural transformation as believers share and demonstrate the Good News that has been entrusted to them.

Although Jesus meant for His Church to be a life-giving community and a preserving presence in culture, often the Church finds itself retreating from culture and insulating itself from a world that desperately needs its influence. Andy Crouch, in his book *Culture Making: Recovering our Creative Calling*, explains that there are five common ways the global church relates to culture. It may condemn, critique, copy, consume, or create culture (Crouch 2008). Although each of these responses are necessary from time to time as a gesture to society, none of the first four responses brings about lasting cultural transformation. The only gesture capable of bringing about lasting change is the fifth response of creating culture.

Andy Crouch believes that often the church of Jesus Christ moves from making a gesture of condemning or critiquing society to assuming a permanent posture of condemnation. This causes the church to isolate itself from culture and remove any potential for being the salt and light it was meant to be. On the other hand, sometimes churches copy or consume culture so readily that there is no real difference between the community of faith and the surrounding culture; therefore, they minimize the transformational impact of the Kingdom of God upon society by being so much like it. As Crouch affirms, if churches all over

the world decided to create new culture as Jesus did, then we would begin to see significant and lasting community transformation take place.

NextGen leaders desperately desire to be creators of new culture. They want to be stakeholders in new initiatives that take on some of the greatest challenges facing the global community. They believe that the church of Jesus Christ has the ability to address some of the greatest injustices and unacceptable conditions facing the nations, and that believers have a responsibility to lead the way through the love of Jesus Christ and the power of the Gospel.

Global Advance believes that the Holy Spirit has released a pioneering gift and entrepreneurial grace upon Millennials for the purpose of advancing the gospel and bringing about spiritual and cultural transformation. We want to help churches and organizations like yours prepare and mobilize NextGen leaders to be ambassadors of Christ and creators of culture. Will you join us in this NextGen initiative to prepare the next generation of Great Commission leaders?

BE TRANSFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Although God uses established spiritual leaders like you to facilitate spiritual transformation in NextGen leaders, the true source of lasting transformation is the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. As the Holy Spirit was poured out by Jesus on the Day of Pentecost, He immediately empowered believers in three specific areas to bring about inner and outer transformation:

Believers Were Empowered to See God's Plan (Vision)

Vision is about what we see through the eyes of faith. The prophet Joel prophesied about a time in the future when old and young alike would simultaneously be empowered by the Holy Spirit to see things they had never seen before, things the prophets of old longed to look



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into but could only anticipate through faith and hope. The Apostle Peter, under that same divine influence, proclaimed that what the people saw on the day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel's ancient prophecy. With the gift of the Spirit, Christ empowered His followers to catch His vision for the kingdom of God in the world. This vision was magnificent and all-encompassing in its scope. This gospel of the kingdom would eventually be preached in the whole world and would result in people from every country, region, language, city and tribe having an opportunity to put their faith in Jesus Christ and be adopted into God's family.

Believers Were Empowered to Communicate God's Truth (Message)

In addition to giving new vision to the church through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ made sure that believers had a message to share with the world. The gospel message was unleashed to the nations on the day of Pentecost.

"Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken." Acts 2:5-6

What were they hearing? Luke quoted them directly in Acts 2:11: "... we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" When Peter stood up and boldly proclaimed the Good News of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, thousands of people responded to his invitation to repent and receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They, too, were empowered to communicate God's truth in their own spheres of influence.

Believers Were Empowered to Transform God's World (Mission)

Jesus assured His disciples, *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in*

all Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The message that representatives from the nations heard on the day of Pentecost, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is the same transformational message that is to be taken to the ends of the earth under the unction of the Holy Spirit. Each believer from every generation is commissioned and granted divine authority by Jesus Christ Himself to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things He commanded us. He promised that He would be with us always in the person and activity of the Holy Spirit whom He poured out freely and abundantly on His church. He promised that our lives and message would have the power to transform lives, homes, communities and nations for His glory.

REFLECTION

1. Would you describe your own spiritual leadership as being transformational? In what ways is your inner transformation bringing about outer transformation in your community?
2. How is your church or business currently relating to the surrounding culture? Have you insulated yourself, taking on the posture of a critic or a condemner of culture, or are you engaging in ways that allow you to be salt and light in your community and nation?
3. What local community transformation initiatives might create opportunities for NextGen leaders in your church or business to engage and create culture for the sake of the Gospel? Take a moment to write them down in the Action Steps and Timeline section.



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PRAYER

Father in Heaven, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to usher in the Kingdom of God among us. Thank you that Your eternal Kingdom is both now and not yet. We see a foretaste of Your Kingdom now, but will one day see it come in all its fullness. May Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Father, transform our hearts by the Gospel and Your eternal Word. May the streams of living water that the Holy Spirit birthed within us burst forth from our hearts and touch the lives of our families, communities and nations. May we be ambassadors of Christ and creators of culture as you continue to transform us into the image of Your Son.

Amen.

ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE

PRINCIPLE 5: SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil... Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.” Luke 4:1, 14

Spiritual leadership was personified by Jesus Christ. These verses in the Gospel of Luke clearly and succinctly reveal the essence of Christ’s leadership. They are meant to be the touchstone for all who would bear His name and take up the mantle of spiritual leadership.

In 2014, I wrote the following blog entitled *“Spirit-filled Savior”* based on this passage:

Scripture records that our Savior embarked upon his earthly ministry full and sent, empowered and anointed by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1-19). This intimate relationship fueled His ministry of preaching the Good News of the Kingdom and demonstrating the Father’s love for the world. It was *“through the eternal Spirit”* that Jesus *“offered himself unblemished to God”* for our salvation (Hebrews 9:14, NIV). The Apostle Paul declared, *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form”* (Colossians 2:9 NIV). This relationship of fullness sustained Jesus during His temptation and triumph in the wilderness, His passion in the garden, His agony on the cross and His victory in the resurrection. In many ways, the life of Jesus was higher than, yet in other ways it was meant to be imitated. He commanded us to love, serve and go as He did. He invited us to lose our lives in His greater life, to take up our crosses and follow Him and to do even greater things than we saw Him doing. However, He instructed His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait



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for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit who would clothe believers with power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8). What He expects His church to accomplish and who He expects His church to be is utterly impossible without the indwelling and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. Why would the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, exhort believers to be filled with the Spirit and walk by the Spirit? Because that's what Jesus did. We are compelled to fix our gaze upon our Savior and imitate His Spirit-filled, Spirit-led life as we obey His commands to be His witnesses, to be His compassionate hands and feet in the world and to be His church on display – loving, serving, forgiving and uplifting one another. How is this accomplished? By allowing ourselves to be controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God as we prayerfully surrender our wills and offer our lives to the Spirit's divine leadership. If we submit to the Holy Spirit's influence as Jesus did, we too will experience fullness as we walk in the very footsteps of our Spirit-filled Savior. (West, 2014).

Most spiritual leaders would agree that we don't always feel spiritual. In fact, sometimes we feel anything but spiritual because we know all too well our own thoughts and motives, weaknesses and sinful habits. We occasionally feel like imposters when people commend us for our spiritual leadership, and now and then we find ourselves operating under our own control rather than the unction of the Holy Spirit.

Even our role model, Paul, shared in Romans 7:24 that he was a wretched man who needed deliverance from this body of death. We are all in the same condition; however, praise be to God who has delivered us from condemnation by the law of the Spirit. Therefore, we can lead God's people with humility, authenticity, confidence and

joy, knowing that the Holy Spirit is leading, filling, empowering and anointing our leadership, making it truly spiritual.

Our generation is here to advance the gospel and provide spiritual leadership to the global church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are also tasked with raising up the next generation of spiritual leaders, teaching them to walk by faith and by the Spirit of God.

How do we accomplish this important task? I have five suggested activities that will help you begin to see some progress in engaging and nurturing the next generation of Great Commission leaders.

PARTNER WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE NEXTGEN LEADER

“In the church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers...while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” Acts 13:1-3

The elders in the church in Antioch understood that spiritual leadership involves partnering with the Holy Spirit in the work of the ministry. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate leader of the Church and provides direction and power to fulfill His redemptive purposes throughout the earth. Spiritual leaders in the global church are called to respond in faith and obedience to the Holy Spirit’s direction.

This passage of Scripture indicates that the elders postured themselves in worship, prayer and fasting in order to receive instructions about future ministry from the Holy Spirit. This stance of humility and utter dependence upon God among leaders of a successful church ministry is instructive to all of us. How often do you and the leaders of your church or business gather together in a posture of worship and submission, waiting upon the Holy Spirit to reveal His instructions? How often, on the other hand, do you forge



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ahead with your own ideas and plans, and then ask the Holy Spirit to bless your intentions?

Barnabas and Saul were two of the elders who participated in these activities. It was during their extended time of worship and prayer that the Holy Spirit revealed His plans and callings for their lives and for the church to which they belonged. The Church of Jesus Christ is forever indebted to the Antioch elders who were patient and humble enough to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance, and then partner with Him in sending out two of the greatest missionaries in church history.

What if God intends such plans for young NextGen leaders in your congregation or business? Could there be a Barnabas or Saul in your midst who is being called by the Holy Spirit into a new work? How will you know unless you lead your team in spiritual activities that allow the Holy Spirit to make His intentions clear?

You may have many plans and intentions for NextGen leaders, and you may be asking the Holy Spirit to bless those plans. Why not submit your plans and ideas to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in prayer, worship and fasting? If you wait upon the Lord, He will make his intentions clear and will identify future leaders, and you will know what you must do to cooperate with His plans and purposes.

LEAD FROM A SPIRITUAL POWER BASE

"The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet before the Lord. The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word." 1 Samuel 3:19-21

From childhood, Samuel was set apart by the Lord to be a spiritual leader to the nation of Israel. The source of his power to lead and communicate effectively was the presence and voice of the Lord

in his life. The Lord was with Samuel throughout his childhood and adolescence, sovereignly laying a foundation for spiritual leadership. The Lord did not allow a single word that Samuel spoke to be wasted or ineffective, even in his adolescence. The Lord appeared and revealed Himself to Samuel through His word in a time when the word of the Lord was rare in the nation of Israel (1 Samuel 3:1). God lovingly and intentionally nurtured a NextGen leader into the role of national spiritual leadership. Eventually, Samuel became the prominent leader of a nation. The source of Samuel's spiritual power as a mature leader was not based on his position, education, or pedigree; rather, it emanated from a lifetime of personal encounters with the God of Israel, starting with his first response to the voice of God, *"Speak, for your servant is listening"* 1 Samuel 3:10. No doubt this was a statement he repeated many times throughout his spiritual journey. Samuel led from a spiritual power base.

The term *"power base"* is one I first heard from J. Robert Clinton's Leadership Emergence Theory which proposes that spiritual leaders are not born leaders, but rather their leadership emerges over a lifetime under the sovereign power and activity of the Holy Spirit. Clinton defines power base as *"the source of credibility, power differential, or resources that enables a leader to have authority for influencing followers"* (Clinton, 1988). He describes two types of power bases in spiritual leadership.

The first type is a positional power base. The source of this leader's power, influence, or credibility is derived from their position in an organization. King Saul in the Old Testament is an example of someone who led solely from a positional power base. Eventually, his leadership was characterized by jealousy, fear, intimidation, insecurity and control. King Saul created an unhealthy and paranoid leadership culture that drove away talented leaders and created fearful and insecure followers. Saul had trust issues, and often accused loyal followers



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of being disloyal merely because they disagreed with his actions or perspectives. He even accused his own son Jonathan of disloyalty because of his friendship with David. Saul's use of a positional power base contributed greatly to his failure as a leader.

The second is a spiritual power base, where a person's authority and influence are not derived from their position in an organization, but rather by a spiritual power that is evident in their lives. David, a shepherd boy who later became King of Israel, led from a spiritual power base. This is demonstrated early in his life when, as a youth, he confronted and defeated the giant Goliath who defied the God of Israel. As he courageously engaged a seasoned warrior who was immensely taller and stronger than any of the Israelites, he declared, *"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied"* 1 Samuel 17:45.

God would eventually give David a powerful position as King of Israel, but he still led from a spiritual power base throughout his lifetime, with one exception. When David failed to go to war with the army of Israel, the ensuing season of unfaithfulness surrounding his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and the accompanying murder of her husband Uriah, revealed that he was currently leading from a positional power base. The Holy Spirit's power was no longer the base of his leadership. He used his position as King of Israel to summon Bathsheba to his palace for an adulterous affair and to orchestrate the conspiracy to have Uriah killed. Although David later received God's forgiveness and spiritual restoration, this disastrous decision was not only an abuse of the leadership that God had entrusted to him, it also proved to be quite costly. The resulting consequences were painful, and this event signaled a plateau and gradual decline in his leadership influence. Throughout King David's life, his greatest influence, credibility and power differential came from an intimate relationship

with God by His Spirit.

God may have granted you a position of power, influence, and credibility within your organization and community. It would be easy to rely heavily on your position to influence others and get things done. Let me encourage you to lead from a spiritual power base regardless of your position. Model this type of spiritual leadership for NextGen leaders. Explain to them the difference in these two power bases and be willing to share lessons you learned from seasons in your life when you may have led or were tempted to lead from the wrong power base. Speak the truth in love when you see talented young leaders vying for positions of power and influence. Humbly challenge their motives and remind them of where their true power is found. God gave Zechariah a message for a NextGen leader named Zerubbabel that all leaders need to remember. “ *‘...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty*” Zechariah 4:6.

MODEL A POWERFUL PRAYER LIFE

“Then Moses said to him, ‘If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and your people unless you go with us?’” Exodus 33:15-16

Moses was a leader who modeled a powerful prayer life, especially in front of his young aide, Joshua. Joshua observed first-hand the intimacy that Moses shared with God. When Moses spent forty days up on Mt. Sinai speaking with the Lord, Joshua was on the mountain with him (Exodus 24:13-18; 32:15-19). When Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the Lord in response to the rebellion and disbelief of the nation of Israel after the spies gave their reports of the Promised land, Joshua observed Moses humbling himself before God and interceding for the people (Numbers 14:5-6).

Undoubtedly, Moses’ intimate relationship and conversations with the God of Israel made a profound impact on Joshua. The book of Exodus



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records, *“The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent”* Exodus 33:11. What reason might Joshua have to stay at the tent of meeting after Moses left? Some might say that he was staying to guard the tent. This is highly unlikely for some obvious reasons. First, the tent of meeting was not a dedicated sanctuary. Exodus 33:7 says, *“Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the tent of meeting.”* Apparently Moses took whatever tent was currently available and designated it as a private place where he and the Lord could meet face to face. The tent was simply a vessel, an instrument of hospitality and therefore had no intrinsic value when not in use. Second, God’s presence does not need protecting or guarding. He is fully capable of protecting his own glory and does not need a mortal to protect him.

Perhaps the most plausible reason for Joshua to stay at the tent of meeting was that he knew it was where God met with Moses face to face. Maybe Joshua hoped that God would one day invite him in to the tent of meeting for an intimate encounter, and he wanted to remain in close proximity to the presence of God. As the heir-apparent of Moses, Joshua understood that Moses relied upon prayer and guidance from God to lead his people, and he wanted to emulate the example of his mentor.

Moses’ physical countenance was radiant after he spent time with God. God listened to Moses and honored his requests because of the depth of intimacy they enjoyed. How about you, dear leader? Are you different in your spiritual countenance after spending intimate time with your Father in Heaven? Are your prayers being answered and are you being changed as a result of your prayer life? Do NextGen leaders know how to pray more powerfully and effectively because you and I have modeled it consistently for them? Do young leaders

long to experience intimacy with Christ because of what they see in our relationship with him?

Let's commit together to erect a new *"tent of meeting,"* a prayer closet, a sacred space, where we enter to meet with God daily in deeper and more intimate ways. Let us model a consistent, powerful, and transformative prayer life that NextGen leaders would want to emulate.

PRACTICE AND ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Mark 1:35

"After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." Matthew 4:2

Jesus practiced spiritual disciplines throughout His earthly ministry. Some of the more obvious activities included solitude, prayer and fasting. Jesus practiced spiritual disciplines for various reasons. First, He craved intimate time alone with His Heavenly Father. Second, He used these activities to prepare Him for the rigors of ministry, opposition from religious leaders and intense spiritual warfare. Third, He used spiritual disciplines to help Him recharge and replenish His strength after seasons of intense ministry or opposition.

Jesus taught His disciples that spiritual preparation is needed in order to be successful in certain confrontations with the evil one. When His disciples were unable to cast out a demon on one occasion, causing Jesus to step in to complete the task, they asked Him privately why they had been unsuccessful. *"He replied, 'this kind can come out only by prayer and fasting'"* Mark 9:29. From this response, it is clear that there are certain deep-seated and entrenched spiritual strongholds that require the application of spiritual disciplines in order to be demolished. Jesus' answer implied that these disciplines were what allowed Him to be in a constant state of readiness to confront spiritual opposition.



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Many established spiritual leaders need to be encouraged to practice the spiritual discipline of rest. Often we push ourselves to do more than we should in a given week, and if we are honest with ourselves, our motivation is sometimes misguided - fear of disappointing others if we don't show up for church functions or events, fear of what others think about our dedication to our organization, a desire to prove that we are working harder than anyone else to set an example, fear that important ministry or business won't get done if we take a day off - these are just some of the motivations for spiritual leaders not practicing the discipline of rest. What emotions may lie at the heart of these excuses? Could it be pride? Or false guilt? Or addiction to work? Could it be a lack of faith in God or others? These questions are worth pondering if you find yourself unable to take a regular Sabbath rest to disengage and recharge your physical, emotional and spiritual batteries.

In his book *"The Rest of God,"* Mark Buchanan states, *"Sabbath was made for man. It was something God prepared long ago, inscribed into the very order of creation: a day when all other days loosed their grip. They were forced to. It's a day that God intended to fuss over us, not we over it. It was designed to protect us, pay tribute to us, coddle us, in all our created frailty and God-imprinted beauty and hard-won liberty, in our status as men and women whom God made in his own image and freed by his own hand and own blood."* (Buchanan 2006)

What kind of example are established leaders setting for NextGen leaders in regard to spiritual disciplines? Are we helping them better understand the benefits and blessings of a healthy balance and rhythm in our lives? Are we teaching them how to flourish in life and ministry through the application of spiritual disciplines? Are we equipping them with the tools necessary for spiritual warfare? Spiritual disciplines are better *"caught than taught."* NextGen leaders need to see a positive example set by those who would seek to nurture them into mature spiritual leaders.

IMPART SPIRITUAL BLESSING

The first Fatherly blessing is recorded in Genesis 1 after God created man and woman. He blessed them and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:28). Later, after the great flood had destroyed the face of the earth, God blessed Noah and his sons and gave them the same command as their forefather, Adam. Perhaps the most famous blessing is that of Abraham in Genesis 12 where God promised to bless his descendants with an eternal blessing. The practice of imparting a blessing resurfaces again and again throughout the Old Testament in the lives of patriarchs, prophets, priests and kings. When instructing Aaron and his sons in the duties of the priesthood, the Lord told Moses to have them pronounce the following blessing on the Israelites. *“The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you; The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace”* Numbers 6:24-26. Thousands of years later, this same blessing is pronounced regularly in church services all over the world and is imparted and received with sincerity and gratefulness.

The blessing was seen as a prophetic and powerful act by a member of one generation toward the next, or by a loving God to a chosen servant. It was taken seriously by giver and recipient alike. The blessing was meant to impart favor from the giver, to provide direction regarding the future trajectory of the recipient’s life, to instill confidence in the goodness and favor of the Lord, and to indicate the passing of the baton of leadership from one generation to the next.

The practice continued in the narrative of the New Testament. Jesus blessed His followers during the Sermon on the Mount. He blessed the little children who came to Him, and He was blessed by His Heavenly Father at both His baptism and transfiguration. The Apostle Paul blessed his sons in the ministry, and blessed the elders whom he appointed in every town before moving on to plant more churches.



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There is no doubt that the blessing was, and still remains, an important aspect of leadership and family life.

Some of the established leaders reading this book have never experienced a blessing from their fathers or mothers. Others have never experienced a blessing from a spiritual father or mother. This reality often brings with it a sense of pain and unfulfilled longing. The withholding of a blessing can feel as painful as a curse. It is difficult to understand why a blessing would be withheld from us. Yet in ministry and business, NextGen leaders sometimes feel that the blessing is being withheld from them. They long for established leaders to speak prophetic and powerful words over their lives. They ache for established leaders to believe in them and to trust that they will take up the mantle of leadership when their time comes and will wear it well.

Most of the reasons for withholding a blessing from the next generation are not legitimate. At their root, we will often find that the underlying motives are more selfish than we care to admit. Established leaders may be prideful, insecure, fearful, controlling or skeptical as to whether or not NextGen leaders have what it takes to take up the mantle of leadership.

What about you, fellow leader? Is there a NextGen leader in your sphere of influence who desperately needs to receive a spiritual blessing from you? What is holding you back from imparting a spiritual blessing? What might God be prompting you to do or say to be His mouthpiece and hand of blessing to the next generation of Great Commission leaders?

REFLECTION

1. Read Luke 4:1, 14 again. Ask yourself whether or not your current relationship with the Holy Spirit reflects that of Jesus Christ who was full of the Spirit, led by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit.

2. Reflect upon the definition of a power base and the two types of leadership power bases we discussed. Are you currently operating more from a positional power base or from a spiritual power base?
3. How are you currently practicing spiritual disciplines like solitude, prayer, fasting, and rest? What actions are needed to help you create margins in your schedule to make time for practicing and modeling these spiritual disciplines? What actions are needed to help you grow in this area? Record them in the section below.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, your Son Jesus Christ set the perfect example of spiritual leadership. May I emulate His leadership. Thank you for His influence in my life and family. Thank you for both the positive and negative examples of spiritual leadership recorded in Scripture. Help them to inform my own leadership practices. Help me to lead from a spiritual power base instead of a positional power base. Give me an increased desire to practice spiritual disciplines in order to be the best leader I can be for your Kingdom. Father, grant me the unselfishness and confidence to impart spiritual blessing on NextGen leaders, and help me to prepare them admirably for the mantle of leadership that they will one day wear. Help my prayer life to be powerful and effective, and help me to model a commitment to prayer for the NextGen leaders you have entrusted to my care.

Amen.



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ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE

PRINCIPLE 6: GRACE-FILLED LEADERSHIP

“We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

CREATE “ENVIRONMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS OF GRACE”

I first heard the term “*environments and relationships of grace*” from a book by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and Ken McElrath called *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence*. I highly recommend this book to established leaders and NextGen leaders alike.

According to the authors, “*Most people know an environment of grace when they see it. They simply point to the results: people feel safe, they grow up, they trust each other, they live authentically, they celebrate each other, they laugh a lot, they produce better...people feel empowered...they discern a positive spirit that acts as a catalyst in their soul, giving them a sense of hope that ‘this is a place where I belong.’*” (Thrall, McNicol et al. 1999).

The authors further explain that environments of grace “*work hand in hand with relationships of grace to create cultures in which trust, creativity, hope, and other positive outcomes emerge.*” On the other hand, “*In an atmosphere of ungrace, all*



***“I am truly blessed to work in a safe environment with other believers.”
(Female, Age 31-35, USA).***



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favor and love must be earned. When humans, who all fall short, feel they cannot earn favor or love without meeting a too-high standard, they lose hope” (Thrall, McNicol et al. 1999).

These environments and relationships of grace sound quite familiar when we look at the culture that Jesus created for His disciples in their three years of life and ministry together. We see these grace-filled environments and relationships lived out in the pages of the New Testament in the home of Lazarus in Bethany, in the temple courts and village synagogues, and by the charcoal fire or in the upper room. Jesus created environments and relationships of grace that became a model for community life and work culture in the body of Christ. The disciples knew they were valued, loved, believed in and celebrated for who they were. They were free to be themselves around Jesus because of authentic relationships and a grace-filled environment.

The early church in Jerusalem is a wonderful example of a healthy church culture. Although imperfect, this church modeled a culture of grace, authenticity, trust, creativity, generosity, freedom, hope and love. The apostolic leaders shaped a church culture based upon the relationships and environments of grace they personally enjoyed with Jesus Christ.

What about your current culture? How would NextGen leaders in your organization describe the environment? Would they characterize it as a culture of fear, control or favoritism? Or would they affirm that it is a grace-filled leadership culture? I encourage you to have some fruitful discussions with NextGen leaders regarding your organizational culture. Invite them to be candid in their assessment. If no one offers an opinion or everyone seems fearful to say anything that might be construed as negative or disloyal, then you probably have an “*ungrace environment.*” Even healthy organizational environments have opportunity to improve, and I encourage you to invite NextGen leaders to be significantly involved in helping to create environments and

relationships of grace in your organization.

Jesus was full of grace and truth. He left an example that leaders should follow. If leaders are full of grace and truth, then they will be instrumental, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, in creating environments and relationships of grace in their organizations. God's work in all domains of society – the marketplace, education, religion, the arts, science and technology, family, or government – deserves no less than to be characterized as full of grace and truth.

OFFER SECOND CHANCES

Some of my favorite stories in Scripture involve second chances. Who doesn't love the story of the prodigal son whose father gave him a second chance? We all love to hear of John Mark's second chance to be a spiritual leader, thanks to his cousin Barnabas who refused to give up on him. The woman caught in adultery received a second chance from Jesus. Zacchaeus definitely received a do-over, and Jonah may have received the biggest second-chance of all, although he failed to appreciate it as much as we would like.

Perhaps the most touching second chance in Scripture is the story of Jesus reinstating Peter on the shores of Galilee. As serious as Peter's denial was, especially in light of his prideful statement of fidelity made just hours before the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, we see a perfect example of a spiritual leader lovingly confronting failure and helping a young leader regain his sense of calling and purpose. *"Simon, son of John, do you love me?... Feed my lambs... Take care of my sheep... Feed my sheep"* John 21:15-17. Jesus built a fire, fed His disciples, fellowshiped with them in an environment and relationship of grace, then went about the important leadership task of getting a good leader back on his feet. As painful as it must have been for Peter, it was just what he needed, scarce hoped for, and desperately longed for – a second chance! We are all grateful for Peter's reinstatement as a



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spiritual leader. Imagine how different our church history and Scriptures would be if spiritual leaders were not given second chances.

The Apostle Paul, as respected of a leader as you will find in Scripture, had his own failings as a leader. One such failing was his inability to give a NextGen leader, named John Mark, a second chance. Paul's lack of forgiveness and flexibility caused him to fracture a relationship that the Holy Spirit had forged. *"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."* If the Apostle Paul had listened to Barnabas and given John Mark an honest second chance, he would have preserved one of the best missionary teams that the world has ever known, and would have been pleasantly surprised in the spiritual growth of John Mark. Graciously, God gave the Apostle Paul second chances also.

How about you, dear leader? Like Paul, are you hesitant to offer second chances when NextGen leaders falter? Are you inflexible and unforgiving when leaders lose their way? Let me encourage you to follow the example of Barnabas. See the untapped potential in leaders who are struggling with failure, lack of confidence, weakness and fear. Remember how many second chances you have been given in your leadership journey. Take your cue from Jesus and be willing to lovingly confront, affirm and restore leaders who have lost their way.

It must be said here that certain behaviors have consequences that might prevent a spiritual leader from assuming the same role in an organization that they previously held. In fact, it may not be possible for them to stay within the organization because of environmental circumstances or existing culture. This should be the exception rather than the rule in grace-filled cultures. Grace, discernment and wise counsel are necessary in difficult situations that will undoubtedly come up. Part of your leadership role may be to help a NextGen leader find a new place of service in an environment where he or she can receive a fresh start. For those who enjoy sports analogies, a leader who has

failed may have received a “*yellow card*,” but the Lord hands out very few “*red cards*.” Taking appropriate time for reflection, confession, restoration, counseling and mentoring is always recommended before putting a NextGen leader back in the game. Your mature influence will help them to eventually re-engage and will give them every opportunity to be successful as a leader.

BE PATIENT WITH IMMATURITY

When the disciples argued amongst themselves about who was the greatest, they were demonstrating their spiritual immaturity. Instead of reprimanding them for arguing and wanting to be greater than their fellow disciples, Jesus redirected their conversation by teaching them how they could be truly great. He took a little child in His arms and began to teach them His idea of greatness. According to Jesus, the path to greatness in God’s economy is a sincere desire to be the least. The fastest way to the front of the spiritual leadership line in the Kingdom of God is to put everyone else in front of you. These were truths that Jesus would rather they meditate upon. It wasn’t wrong for the disciples to want to be great. They simply had the wrong idea of greatness. Thanks to the patient instruction of Jesus, they learned important lessons in spiritual leadership.

When Jesus told His disciples, in John 14, that He was going to prepare a place for them and that He would one day come again to take them to their new home, Philip responded, “*Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.*” Jesus answered, “*Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?*” John 14:9 The nature of Jesus’ response to Philip’s statement indicates that Philip did not have a mature perspective.

Sometimes, when nurturing NextGen leaders, you will assume that your wisdom and insight are sticking, and that they are really catching on to what you are teaching and modeling for them. Then in a moment,



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their immaturity may surface, and you may be thinking, *“You’ve got to be kidding me! We’ve gone over this a thousand times! I thought you had mastered this and were moving on! Are you listening to a word I say? Get me a new mentee, someone who will actually get it!”*

Mentoring emerging NextGen leaders can try your patience.

Remember, as Paul told young pastor Timothy, to keep your head in all situations. They have so much talent and potential waiting to be drawn out, but sometimes dealing with their immaturity can cause us to lose sight of the gradual progress they are making. *“Correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction”* 2 Timothy 4:9.

The occasional frustrations in dealing with immaturity are worth the eternal results, so be encouraged and be patient. Remember that NextGen leaders also have to exercise patience when relating to established leaders who at times can be inflexible and slow to take action. It is a shared journey of patience and collaboration.

BE TIMELY AND ENCOURAGING IN YOUR FEEDBACK

“When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida...” Luke 9:10

Jesus had just sent His twelve disciples out on a mission with His power and authority to preach the kingdom of God, heal the sick and cast out demons. Upon their return, He wasted no time in receiving a detailed report of their experience. He immediately took them aside for a spiritual retreat in Bethsaida. Although the crowds soon found them and brought their planned retreat to an early conclusion, this is still indicative of a spiritual leader who sought to be encouraging and timely in His feedback. His assignment was a test of their collaborative leadership, faith and courage. It was important to debrief what they had learned by doing. Good teachers and mentors take advantage of teachable moments, not only to celebrate, but to reinforce learning.

As an established leader who seeks to nurture the next generation of Great Commission leaders, it is your privilege and responsibility to create learning tasks that test the leadership, faith and courage of your NextGen leaders. They need to be stretched, and they need to apply their learning in real time settings that reinforce what you have taught them. There is a certain degree of intentionality that must be applied to leadership development, and you must learn to follow up quickly while the experience is still fresh in their minds and hearts.

Encourage NextGen leaders to keep a journal of each ministry task you have given them so they can give an accurate report of their daily experiences and reflections. Be sure to celebrate successes and new learning. Re-direct when necessary, but guard against being overly critical. Remember that all leaders have to learn by doing, and sometimes mistakes are made and opportunities missed because of lack of experience. In most cases no permanent harm is done. It's important to remember that learning, doing, reflecting and adjusting are part of the adult learning process. I encourage you to think about your current leadership style. When you assign a task to a NextGen leader, how strategic and intentional are you about leveraging the opportunity to provide helpful advice, encouragement and appropriate feedback? You won't be sorry that you followed up quickly.

REFLECTION

1. How would you describe the staff culture in your current environment? Would you characterize it as "*environments and relationships of grace*" or would it best be described as a culture of control, fear, intimidation or isolation? Would your staff describe the current environment as healthy or dysfunctional? Would they be fearful to answer such a question in your presence? Are you afraid of their response?
2. Who is a NextGen leader in your sphere of influence that may



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need a second chance or a spiritual blessing from you? What is holding you back from responding to their need?

3. How might you be more intentional in providing learning tasks and timely feedback for NextGen leaders? Take a few moments to plan a ministry event that will stretch their leadership, faith and courage. Plan a follow-up meeting or retreat to provide timely and encouraging feedback. Record the details in the Action Steps and Timelines section below.

PRAYER

Father, my heart's desire is for your Holy Spirit to create a leadership culture in my organization that would be characterized as *"environments and relationships of grace."* Lord, only You can transform hearts, but use me to lead our people into grace-filled authentic relationships with each other. Drive out any fear or intimidation, cast out any desire to control and help us establish a healthier culture than we have ever experienced. Father, give me the grace to offer second chances and to be patient with immaturity, just as your Son Jesus did with the leaders You entrusted to Him. I want our culture to reflect the values of Your eternal Kingdom, rather than the pattern of the world. I pray these things in the name of Your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE



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***“I have an awesome pastor who makes it a priority to help empower the vision God has given me.”
(Female, age 26-30, USA)***

PRINCIPLE 7: EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” John 14:12

Jesus empowered His twelve disciples. After three years of intense preparation, He envisioned a day when they would do even greater things than they saw Him doing. Of course, the source of these “*greater things*” would be the authority of Jesus and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Jesus always intended to leave the task of the Great Commission and the birth and growth of His Church to the apostles and to all the disciples who would follow in their footsteps. Gospel ministry and spiritual leadership development are about empowerment. The ultimate goal of leadership preparation is to release them when they are ready to lead with our blessing and unwavering support. It is astonishing that some established leaders see NextGen leadership development from a negative perspective, thinking of it more as a chore of ministry than as a privilege. Hopefully this resource is challenging that type of mindset.

In Matthew’s Gospel, we find a story of empowerment of leaders. Matthew 14:15-

16 states, *“As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.’ Jesus replied, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’”*

What if Jesus had agreed to the disciples’ suggestion to send the crowds away? The problem would have solved itself somehow. Thousands of people would have been sent away with their stomachs empty, and probably too few markets or homes would have been available to adequately provide for their physical needs. They may have gone hungry for a few days, then eventually returned to their towns and villages. What if, on the other hand, Jesus supernaturally took away the physical hunger of the multitudes and sent them home for the evening? Everyone would have gone away satisfied, and the disciples would have been pleased with themselves that they were the ones who reminded Jesus of the people’s needs. Yet they would have missed the opportunity to participate in a miracle of God’s abundant provision that still inspires believers today.

Instead, Jesus gave His disciples a meaningful opportunity to learn and experience a profound lesson of faith in God’s abundant provision.



***“Here in Cameroon, most people do not easily accept ‘change’ They prefer to stick to their old methods of doing things and this really makes the growth of innovation very slow and difficult.”
(Male, Age 18-25, Cameroon)***



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The disciples knew that, humanly speaking, they had no chance of providing food for more than a few dozen people. Yet Jesus commanded them to feed the people with meager resources that they scrounged together. Think how silly they must have felt bringing Jesus such a small resource when thousands of hungry people milled about nearby. Conversely, think how joyful they must have felt when Jesus took their offering and miraculously turned it into exceedingly more than enough food to fill every empty stomach.

As the disciples clutched their baskets brimming with leftover bread and broiled fish, we can only imagine how their faith swelled and their knowledge of God deepened as the sun began to set on a day like no other. They became possibility thinkers that day. If Jesus could take five loaves of bread and a few small fish and feed a hungry multitude, what could He do with the offering of a surrendered life and a simple act of faith?

God wants to use you to stretch the faith and challenge the assumptions of NextGen leaders. They need to be given intimidating problems to solve, not just to watch you solve problems for them. They need to learn to look for resources that God has already provided, even if they seem insignificant at the time. They desire to be participants in miracles of God's provision and blessing. Are you giving them an opportunity to do something epic for the kingdom of God? Are you encouraging them to take risks and trust God? God wants to raise up a generation of leaders who are possibility thinkers, and it is our task to help them get there.

BE AN ADVOCATE FOR NEXTGEN LEADERS

Where do established leaders start when it comes to empowering the next generation of Great Commission leaders? The young adults we surveyed indicated that one of their greatest needs in addressing the leadership gap in the global church was having an advocate to help

established leaders better understand and engage my generation.

Let's be completely honest. Each of us has likely heard or participated in conversations where the current generation speaks negatively of the new generation of young adults between the ages of 18 and 35. In North American contexts, it is often said that Millennials don't have a strong work ethic, that they have difficulty consistently showing up to work on time, and that they are not dependable in positions that require a great deal of responsibility or perseverance. The word "*entitled*" often comes up when referring to Millennials. They are sometimes stereotyped as restless, selfish, coddled or lazy. Although there are undoubtedly adults that fit these descriptions, they are certainly not confined to one particular age group. To be honest, this is simply not a fair assessment of a whole generation, and frankly it does them a disservice.

Young adults often have a different world view, different priorities, values and beliefs from the previous generation. This could be said of countless generations of young adults throughout history. We must be careful not to think that our generation is superior. We have plenty of problems of our own like materialism, consumerism and individualism, not to mention a tendency to be workaholics in North American contexts.

Rather than write off a generation because they view and respond to the world differently, established leaders need to adopt an open learning posture toward the next generation. Here are a few ideas to help you engage NextGen leaders. Have authentic conversations with them. Get to know what they believe and value. Be open to different ideas and interpretations of culture, politics and religion. Be willing to listen to their beliefs and opinions even if you don't understand or agree with them. Invite them over for a meal in your home. Find out what you have in common. Share your story and your life with them. Treat them as adults and equals. In a word, offer your respect.



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*“My generation is full of new ideas, the desire to serve God, and the desire to help with all our strength in the development of God’s house.”
(Female, Age 18-25, Russia)*

If God has entrusted NextGen leaders with the Great Commission and has empowered them with His Holy Spirit, then we must follow His lead and do our best to prepare and encourage them to grow into the men and women that God desires them to be. They need leaders on their side who will act as sponsors, coaches and champions for their generation. I believe that our generation will be held accountable for how we engage, defend, prepare and empower the next generation that God has commissioned.

ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Building authentic relationships with NextGen leaders is invigorating and enjoyable. For over 25 years, I have intentionally entered into mentoring relationships with young adult leaders, and I believe it has been one of the highlights of my ministry. There is so much energy, creativity and innovation that flows from young leaders who are not afraid to dream big and take risks for God. What they lack in wisdom and maturity, they make up for in passion and action. Both generations working together blends these respective strengths into an effective leadership team.

Let’s face it. Established leaders need young leaders as much as young leaders need us. We tend to think more in terms of safety,

predictability, comfort and status quo the older we get. We often fear failure more than we fear being irrelevant in our methodologies. The next generation challenges our static tendencies and comfort zones and encourages us to move forward with innovation and fresh creativity for the sake of the Kingdom.

A term we all need to make a regular part of our leadership vocabulary is ideation. The dictionary defines ideation as *“the capacity for or the act of forming or entertaining ideas”* (Merriam-Webster Inc. 2016). Synonyms for ideation are imaginativeness, inventiveness and originality. NextGen leaders are full of imagination, creativity and original ideas. How are you doing at capturing these resources for the sake of the Kingdom?

How might it enhance your ministry if you were to create an ideation room in your church or organization to encourage fresh ideas and collaboration? It would need to be an environment with few rules and no lid on creativity. What if you were to invite NextGen leaders to attend an ideation retreat with some of the established leaders in your organization where the two generations could enjoy getting to know each other better and thinking outside the box for a day or two? What new projects might you involve NextGen leaders in shaping with their own imagination and passion? You might be surprised how ingenious, transformative and successful their ideas prove to be.

CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF FAITH AND FREEDOM

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10

“So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free.” John 8:36

The fullness of life and freedom that Jesus promised to those who come to Him does not only apply to the act of conversion. It is a promise for the entire spiritual journey. Our Savior wants His people of all generations to embrace the freedom and fullness that He



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purchased for us with His precious blood. It does Him a disservice when believers create cultures in Christian organizations that are more about control and conformity than about freedom, faith and fullness. When NextGen leaders feel a lack of freedom in regard to their spiritual gifts, passions, creativity and natural abilities, something is wrong in the organization. When they experience a tight lid on their leadership, a disregard for their ideas or an adversarial relationship with established leaders, this is indicative of an unhealthy leadership culture.

Established leaders have a God-given responsibility to encourage the next generation to be men and women of faith and freedom. I often tell young adult leaders that God has given them *“the freedom to dream and the courage to explore.”* God desires that His leaders be strong and courageous, and that they experience the freedom to dream and take risks for the sake of the Gospel.

Are you an encourager and a fellow-risk taker for the Kingdom of God? Is your faith meter on full or is it nearing empty at this stage of your spiritual journey? Would you characterize your own leadership as courageous? There is a generation rising who needs to be encouraged to be a people of faith and freedom. Your task is to nurture this attitude among the next generation and to model faith, courage, willingness to take risks for God and the freedom to pursue the God-given desires of your heart.

DELEGATE STRATEGIC TASKS

As stated in the Global Needs Assessment section, Global Advance asked NextGen leaders, *“Which opportunity is most stimulating to you?”* We found that 36% selected *“creating something new and unique,”* 29% preferred taking something that’s broken and fixing it, 19% preferred taking something that is already working well and making it better and 16% preferred to faithfully manage what is already

working well.

We also asked, “*What role or relationship with an organization would encourage you to participate?*” We discovered that 57% selected “*an organization that desires to partner with me to change or create culture*” and 43% selected “*an organization that has many on-ramps for involvement.*”

NextGen leaders want to be a part of collaborative teams that make a transformational impact on culture. They want to be stakeholders and partners with established leaders and organizations. Many of them like to start new initiatives or take new initiatives to a whole new level. Sometimes the greatest barriers to their leadership and creativity are not their own limitations, but rather those that are placed upon them when they are not given strategic opportunities to participate and lead in organizations.

Part of empowering NextGen leaders involves demonstrating trust in their judgment and leadership ability. It is important that they possess the humility to perform some of the less glamorous tasks of leadership when called upon, but it is equally important to give them opportunities to lead in tasks where the stakes are higher and more is expected of them. They need to be given God-sized problems and assignments from time to time.



“The world changes every second, and the new generation knows how to adapt to it.” (Male, Age 18-25, Vietnam)



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Years ago when I was a firefighter recruit, I spent weeks in the classroom learning about how to fight structure fires. I appreciated the education and felt that my knowledge was sufficient to keep me safe and to help me be successful in extinguishing fires. However, all the theory in the world would not adequately prepare me for the real-life challenges I would soon face. Watching my instructors extinguish large fires would be an opportunity to learn, but it would not give me the necessary training I required to do my job. If the only firefighting activity I was allowed to practice was putting out small fires with a fire extinguisher, I would have been ill-prepared to enter a building that was fully-involved with flames and smoke. Our class of recruits was given numerous opportunities to extinguish structure fires and oil spill fires in a controlled environment while we were still in the instructional phase. This preparation gave us the confidence and hands-on experience to be released to our respective fire stations, knowing that we were adequately trained. It also gave the seasoned veteran firefighters confidence that they could depend on us in important situations. Our abilities had been thoroughly tested and our learning demonstrated.

In the same way, if established leaders only teach and model leadership, they are not adequately preparing NextGen leaders for future real-life situations. They must present opportunities for young adults to lead in strategic initiatives while still in their training phase. This preparation will give NextGen leaders greater confidence in their leadership abilities and will assure others that they are adequately prepared for future ministry challenges.

COMMISSION AND RELEASE

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have

commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” Acts 13:2-3

“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.” Acts 14:23

All leaders must eventually be commissioned and released in order for them to realize the destiny that God has planned for them. It is a natural part of spiritual leadership development, and it is meant to be an important rite of passage in their spiritual journey. Often, NextGen leaders are ready to be released before established leaders are ready to let them go. Sometimes established leaders know that the NextGen leaders are ready before they know it themselves. Some young leaders need to be prompted to be patient and wait for God’s timing, while others have to be lovingly shoved from the nest and encouraged to embrace new responsibility before they think they are ready.

In some of the churches that Paul and Barnabas planted, they did not have the luxury of staying for an extended period of time to develop pastoral leaders. At other times, they were able to invest a good deal of time and effort into leadership development. There were some cases where they only had a few weeks to plant a church before persecution or the prompting of the Holy Spirit caused them to move on. As difficult as it may have been at times to commission and release new leaders to take on the responsibilities of church leadership, Paul and Barnabas had no choice but to officially appoint them, pray and fast for their divine empowerment and success, and commit them to the Lord.



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Trust in the Lord is really at the heart of commissioning and releasing NextGen leaders. Paul and Barnabas *“committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.”* Fear is often the chief motivator for holding on too long to NextGen leaders, sometimes to the detriment of the proclamation of the Gospel and the growth of the global church.

There was a great deal more that the apostles needed to learn when Jesus ascended into heaven. He left some of the necessary leadership development to the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, *“I have much more to teach you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth”* John 10:13. This is instructive for established leaders. There will always be more learning that needs to occur in the lives of NextGen leaders. You must rely upon the Holy Spirit to continue to develop their leadership and teach them what they must learn. You have to let them go with your blessing to fulfill the God-given desires of their hearts. Make their release an enjoyable and memorable experience for them. Encourage your church or business to affirm and bless them. Don't let them leave your organization with a sense of guilt or isolation simply because you are not ready to release them, or you fear that they are not ready. The Holy Spirit is the One who decides when the time is right, and we all must submit to His leadership and celebrate their release to fulfill their God-given destinies.

Commissioning and releasing NextGen leaders does not imply that we cease to be involved in their leadership, but rather that the nature of our relationship changes, much like the relationship with our natural children changes when they are launched into adulthood. We still love them and desire to be involved in their lives, but the role and responsibilities are different.

Upon the commissioning and release of NextGen leaders, your new role may be that of a counselor, mentor, spiritual companion or peer. It is advisable to give them space and allow them the initiative to define

the future nature of your relationship and the frequency of interaction. Assure them of your ongoing support and availability, and encourage them to reach out to you whenever they desire. This will mean a great deal to them as they move forward.

Once commissioning and release has taken place, it is time for you to engage a new group of NextGen leaders. Continue to build on your own learning experiences as you become more proficient at nurturing young adults. Remember that the process of NextGen leadership development we see clearly outlined in 2 Timothy 2:2 involves continuing to entrust what you have learned to others, while those you have nurtured begin to do the same. Leadership development eventually becomes exponential as you and those you have invested in continue to invest in others, just as the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to do. What could be more exciting to a spiritual leader than to see a NextGen leader begin to mentor other NextGen leaders? This is the culmination of commissioning and releasing. What a privilege to be involved in such a transformative process. Let us thank the Lord together for the blessed privilege of raising up NextGen leaders.

REFLECTION

1. Who was the leader who most empowered you when you first began showing a capacity to lead? What were their most effective strategies for helping you gain confidence as a leader? Take a moment to reflect on the impact this leader made on your life, and think about the exponential results of their original investment in you. Thank the Father for placing an established leader in your life.
2. When you hear terms like *“stakeholders, collaborators, and partners,”* with regard to NextGen leaders and their desire to be engaged in leadership opportunities, what ministries or initiatives come to mind in your organization that would be a good place to start including them in strategic tasks?



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- 3. When young leaders leave your organization, is it because you are launching them and celebrating their new opportunities, or is it because they are frustrated and feel that they must leave in order to pursue what God has placed on their hearts? Is there a young leader who left due to being under-utilized or frustrated with a closed leadership culture? How might you follow up and affirm them? Are you willing to take some constructive feedback from them in order to learn and change?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that you were, and still are, an empowering leader. Thank you that, although there was so much more You could have taught the original disciples, You entrusted what remained to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and you commissioned and released them for a strategic task. Jesus, thank you for coming and dying so that we all could experience freedom and fullness in you. Thank you that you instill faith, divine authority and Holy Spirit power in each of us to help us fulfill our destinies as Great Commission leaders. We are grateful for the opportunity to be commissioned and released for the sake of the Gospel. Continue to empower us so we can empower other leaders to follow in your steps.

Amen.

ACTION NEEDED	TIMELINE

CONCLUSION

What if the next generation is being greatly underestimated and underutilized by our generation? Might it be that they have the potential to be the greatest generation the world has yet to see? Why make a bold statement like this? Because they have within their grasp the global connectivity and technology, the creativity and passion, the divine authority and empowerment to complete the Great Commission in their lifetimes. Their generation could actually have the distinction of ushering in the Kingdom of God in all its fullness once the gospel is clearly shared in all the unreached people groups remaining in the world. This is an epic yet attainable task.

As promising as this vision sounds, they need the help of established leaders if this dream is to become a reality. Global Advance has chosen to be an advocate for the next generation of Great Commission leaders. We have joyfully embraced the responsibility of assessing their needs and providing you with a practical resource to help you be successful as a developer of NextGen leaders. These seven principles were utilized by Jesus in His leadership development ministry, and we are confident that they will work for you also.

You have heard the perspectives of young adults from the global community who have expressed a desire to be mentored and engaged by churches and organizations as stakeholders and partners in transforming the world with the love of Jesus Christ. They long to have their voices heard and to be included as collaborators and creators of culture. They want to help shape the church of the future with the creativity and passion that the Holy Spirit has entrusted to them. They desire to clearly and effectively proclaim the gospel in all domains of society and in every unreached people group.

Fellow leaders, we must engage, prepare, and empower NextGen



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leaders to fulfill this great task that has been entrusted to them. Collectively, we can be a “*Barnabas*” to the next generation. Let us join other established spiritual leaders in organizations and churches all over the world in the high privilege of nurturing NextGen leaders. Together we will help them rise up and take their place in the *Missio Dei*.

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