

THE MINISTRY MBA

**10 PRACTICAL COURSES TO
LEAD A THRIVING CHURCH**

**SAMPLE CHAPTER:
LEADERSHIP 601 &
COMPANION WORKBOOK PAGES**

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LEADERSHIP 601

“Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them.”

– JOHN C. MAXWELL

Course Syllabus – Leadership 601

Course Goal: To help church leaders understand leadership principles tailored to church settings.

Learning Objectives:

1. Exposure to fundamental leadership theories and models.
2. Apply critical leadership principles in a ministry context.
3. Develop a plan to grow as a church leader.

Suggested Reading:

- *Spiritual Leadership*, by J. Oswald Sanders
- *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, by John C. Maxwell

COURSE: Leadership 601

Every course in this book has its place in ministry, but some topics carry more weight. We’re starting with leadership for a reason. In my opinion, the lack of solid leadership is the most significant gap in the local church. Great leaders inspire and equip people, products, and organizations forward. I cannot think of a single church problem a great church leader couldn’t solve. If that statement feels a bit bombastic, hang with me until the end of our chapter.

Let's Talk Leadership

This course is first as it's foundational to every other course. Leadership is like the foundation of a house upon which you'll place the structure. Like a house, if the foundation is poor, the structure cannot stand. This is why most business programs require a leadership course as a core requirement.

A leadership course attempts to provide a comprehensive, albeit theoretical, examination of the principles, theories, and practices that define effective leadership. These courses equip students with the knowledge necessary to lead organizations effectively in various contexts.

You and I both know that book knowledge is only helpful to a point. Leadership information without application isn't leadership. Great leaders grow through study and practice. In our leadership course, we'll define and understand leadership while considering how it applies to your ministry context. Books, blogs, and courses cannot make you a great leader, but they can provide new leadership concepts and challenge your current skills.

Let's discuss what a student would learn in a leadership course, and then we'll turn our attention to ministry and pastoral leadership.

What is leadership?

I realize this is a loaded question. Ask 100 people, and you'll get as many answers.

Leadership has been called influence and linked to charismatic visionaries or organizational roles. However, true leadership goes beyond these definitions, touching every aspect of mission, vision, and culture.

Similarly, many people define leadership through management terms. Although leadership and management are often used interchangeably, they function uniquely within an organization. Managers orchestrate what exists. Leaders innovate, create, cast vision, and build the culture.

NOTE: We'll discuss management in detail in our third course.

Leaders do more than four things, but these four are core to leading well:

1. **Defining the Mission, Creating Vision, and Setting Direction:** Leaders define the organization's direction. They paint a compelling picture of the future, inspiring and motivating people to work towards it. This also means adjusting the vision and direction as necessary.
2. **Inspiring and Motivating:** Effective leaders inspire their followers, creating a sense of purpose and enthusiasm. They appeal to higher ideals and values, encouraging people to give their best.
3. **Fostering Innovation:** Leadership encourages creativity and new ideas. Leaders are willing to take risks and explore new possibilities to advance the organization's mission.
4. **Building Culture:** Leaders invest in connecting values to beliefs and behaviors.

Reducing a leader's job to four things feels a bit simplistic. If you're a leader, you know how challenging the position can be. Leadership success often feels like a moving target that requires adaptability and vulnerability.

Leadership is about guiding people toward a shared goal, creating a sense of purpose, and driving innovation and change.

But these four elements form the core of what all great leaders do well. Setting the organization's direction through the mission, vision, and strategy defines the organization. Inspiring and motivating people requires knowing people, loving people, and supporting people. Fostering innovation demands pushing back against the organization and "the way we do it around here." And defining, refining, and maintaining a healthy team culture dictates leaders pay constant attention to the values and behaviors of the team.

A leadership student learns the tools and techniques to lead themselves, teams, departments and divisions, and entire organizations. In ministry, we lead staff, elders or boards, volunteers, members, attendees, believers and nonbelievers, and, at times, the community. Organizational leadership is challenging. Ministry leadership can feel impossible. The weight is heavier, and the expectations are often greater.

*Ministry leadership isn't easy.
If it were, everyone would do it.*

Bottom line: Ministry leadership isn't easy. If it were, everyone would do it.

I believe you can do it, and do it well.

Let's move the discussion to your context—church leadership.

Leadership in a Ministry Context

You may be asking yourself: Does the church need leadership?

It's God's church. Jesus is the head. And we, as pastors, are called to "shepherd the flock," right? Not lead, but serve as shepherds.

Yet every church revitalization expert points to the necessity of leadership to repair and rebuild. Experts also often suggest a lack of leadership is why churches die or need revitalization. My doctoral focus was "Church Revitalization." As we discussed in the introduction, the statistics around church health are staggering. After reading countless books on the topic and completing my dissertation, I believe the experts are correct: Lacking leadership is a problem across the church. I would argue it is the problem.

Yes, pastors are called to "shepherd." However, it's possible we may misunderstand the role of a shepherd.

Shepherding Your Church

Jesus and other biblical authors use shepherds to describe the role of leading and caring for congregations. Two thousand years ago, everyone understood the role of a shepherd. Not so much today, though. We don't have many shepherds roaming beside the interstate or outlet mall.

It's easy to think of a shepherd as a man passively watching over their sheep. Not necessarily leading them but caring for them. Sitting with them. Visiting them in the hospital. Performing a sheep wedding or two.

Shepherds not only care for their sheep but lead them with direct engagement, creating routines and protecting them. The metaphor extends to pastors, who must lead their churches with intentionality and care.

I'm sure shepherds do more than this, but from what I can tell, shepherds:

1. **Direct Their Flocks:** Shepherds often use specific calls, whistles, or verbal commands that the sheep recognize and respond to.
2. **Engage Directly:** Shepherds often lead their sheep by walking in front of them, showing them the path to follow. They also use a staff or crook to gently guide and steer individual sheep.
3. **Provide:** Providing food or calling the sheep to water encourages them to follow.
4. **Create Routines:** Sheep often follow familiar routes, so shepherds establish regular pathways for moving the flock.
5. **Meet Their Sheep Where They Are:** A calm, patient demeanor from the shepherd helps keep the flock relaxed and more manageable.
6. **Protect:** By leading the sheep to safe areas and protecting them from predators, the shepherd earns the trust of the flock, making them more willing to follow.

Leading sheep requires a combination of knowledge, skill, and patience. If you're ever tempted to believe shepherding your church is a passive, non-leadership role, please reconsider. Your church belongs to God, Jesus is the head, and you are placed in your position as the local leader.

Pastors and church leaders are leaders. Peter was a leader. Paul was a leader. It seems God called Paul because the original Disciples weren't leading beyond the neighborhood. God needed a stronger leader.

You, my friend, are called to the same. To LEAD.

Questions for Reflection

- In what ways are you leading your church like a shepherd? Are you balancing care and leadership well, or do you tend to focus on one more than the other?
- How can you improve your leadership by adopting more shepherding behaviors like engaging directly with your team or creating calm, predictable environments?

Ministry Leadership

Following my MBA, I spent nearly a decade in the business world. I worked as a consultant for Accenture, an IT firm, and then helped run a small marketing agency. During this time, I enjoyed working for several leaders and leading several teams and projects. When I left the marketplace for full-time ministry, I assumed my business skills would help. Yet ministry leadership, as I soon learned, requires more and weighs more than other leadership roles.

After three years as a family ministry pastor (Leading the birth-high school ministries and staff at Southside Church in Peachtree City, Georgia), I became the lead pastor of a struggling church in Woodstock, Georgia. Chris, the pastor who gave me my first ministry job at Southside, counseled me through the interview process. When I accepted the job, he said, “This job will be much more challenging than what you’ve been doing. The weight of leading the entire church is unique. The lead pastor’s job is challenging. The enemy cares a lot more about pastors than marketplace leaders.”

I smiled and thanked Chris for the advice but didn’t take him seriously. I’d watched him lead the entire church for three years. I was on our leadership team and felt I understood it all. And I had an MBA, too. Pride told me I was more prepared than the average pastor.

It took only two days to call Chris with my first question. For the first two months, I probably called him twice a week.

Chris was right. Church leadership is unique, challenging, carries more weight, and brings more expectations.

Church leadership is not just about achieving organizational goals but also about fostering spiritual growth and community. Church leaders are called to shepherd their congregation, provide spiritual guidance, create an environment where members can grow in their faith, and ensure nonbelievers can engage their curiosity. This requires a unique blend of pastoral care and

organizational leadership.

Church leadership is the most challenging leadership role I've ever experienced.

All leadership is challenging. Inspiring and equipping people to accomplish a mission is never easy.

Personally, church leadership is the most challenging leadership role I've ever experienced. I also believe church leadership is the most important organizational leadership role in the world. Why? Because the church's mission is the most important mission in the world. We defined four core elements of leadership. Setting the mission, vision, and direction, building teams, fostering culture, and innovating new programs and initiatives define the work of leadership. Again, leadership is more than the core four, but these four elements are crucial to any leader, including church leadership.

Let's consider each of these leadership spaces within a ministry context.

Defining the Mission, Creating Vision, and Setting Direction

Leaders define the organization. They determine why the organization exists, paint a compelling picture of the future that inspires and motivates people to work towards it, and set the direction of the work.

Mission, vision, and strategy are related but unique. Leaders must understand the differences to lead each effectively.

Let's Begin with Your Mission

The mission is the church's core purpose—why it exists. It must be clear and concise, ensuring everyone understands the church's objectives. Your mission should be concise and straightforward, ideally less than eight words, to provide a clear and focused direction (I offer a few examples later in this chapter).

The mission sets the benchmark for success. When in doubt, the mission is the target for

everything done in and by the church. For church leadership, the mission should focus on the church's core spiritual and community objectives, ensuring that the actions and strategies align with these primary goals.

Luckily, and unlike the marketplace, Jesus and other New Testament authors defined the church's mission. Matthew 28:19-20.

“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.”

The Great Commission highlights several key aspects of the church's mission:

1. **Evangelism:** The call to “make disciples of all nations” emphasizes spreading the gospel to people everywhere.
2. **Baptism:** Baptizing new believers signifies their entry into the Christian faith and community. Baptism is part of a discipleship pathway, making discipleship a core element of a church mission.
3. **Teaching:** Instructing believers to follow Christ's teachings is crucial for spiritual growth and obedience to God's commands.

Another foundational scripture comes from the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 1:8:

“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 to the ends of the earth.”

This verse underscores the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers to witness and spread the gospel locally and globally.

Ephesians 4:11-13 also outlines the church's mission in terms of building up the body of Christ:

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

This indicates the roles within the church that aim to equip believers for service, foster unity, and mature faith.

I recently heard a pastor define the mission as such:

1. Lost people saved.
2. Saved people pastored.
3. Pastored people disciplined.
4. Disciplined people mobilized.

When I worked for North Point Ministries as the lead pastor of Woodstock City Church, our mission was “to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.”

This was our target or success benchmark. We existed as a church to “lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus.”

Our verbiage echoed what Jesus, Luke, and Paul said through Scripture.

Your church mission statement should restate God's mission for the local church. Make it short and memorable. Most importantly, set it as your success target.

Questions for Reflection

- Does your church’s mission statement clearly define why your church exists and who it serves? If not, could you simplify or refine it?
- In what ways does your mission guide decision-making in your church? Can you think of any recent decisions that didn’t align with your mission?

What is a Vision?

An organization’s vision is a future-oriented declaration of its desired future state and goals. It involves people in the vision. Leaders must communicate a clear and compelling vision to their team and congregation. Every insider (staff, key volunteer, etc.) should see and understand the vision.

At Woodstock City Church, our vision was “to create a church unchurched people loved.”

We knew the natural tendency of the church is to drift inward. This makes perfect sense, as the insiders fund and serve. Without them, there isn’t a church to lead. Yet we also knew that if we began focusing on insiders, we’d lose a significant portion of God’s mission for his church. Our vision statement helped keep what could be most easily lost from being forgotten.

While a mission statement is more definitive and practical, a vision statement inspires and motivates members of the organization by presenting a compelling picture of the future. Vision is aspirational.

People often confuse mission and vision statements. Perhaps these examples will help:

TED

Mission: Spread ideas

Vision: We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and, ultimately, the world.

Google

Mission: To organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.

Vision: To provide access to the world's information in one click.

Tesla

Mission: To accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy.

Vision: To create the most compelling car company of the 21st century by driving the world's transition to electric vehicles.

Woodstock City Church

Mission: To lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus.

Vision: To create a church unchurched people love.

Questions for Reflection

- Is your church's vision statement inspiring enough to motivate your team and congregation? What future impact does it paint, and how compelling is it?
- How often do you communicate your vision to your team and congregation? What could you do to ensure your vision is consistently shared and understood?

And Then We Have Strategy (or Ministry Model)

An organization's strategy is a comprehensive plan to achieve its mission and vision. It includes specific goals, actions, and resource allocations necessary to achieve the desired outcomes.

We'll cover strategy in detail in our next course, but to differentiate mission and vision from strategy, think of it this way:

Time Orientation

Mission: Present-focused; what the church does now.

Vision: Future-focused; what the church aspires to become.

Strategy: Bridges the present and future; outlines the plan to achieve the vision.

Purpose and Scope

Mission: Defines the church's core purpose and fundamental activities.

Vision: Describes the future impact and direction of the church.

Strategy: Provides a detailed plan and steps to achieve the mission and vision.

Nature and Function

Mission: Broad and enduring; foundational purpose.

Vision: Inspirational and specific; motivational future goal.

Strategy: Detailed and dynamic; actionable plan.

As a pastor or ministry leader, it is your job to define and overcommunicate your church's mission, vision, and strategy (MVS). When you feel you've said it more than is necessary, you're just getting started. You must keep repeating it over and over again. Like a bucket of water with holes in the bottom, mission, vision, and strategy leak. As the leader, you're the MVS standard bearer.

Inspiring and Motivating

Influential leaders inspire their followers toward the mission and vision, creating a sense of purpose and enthusiasm. They appeal to higher ideals and values, encouraging people to give their best.

The most effective way to inspire and motivate is not with compelling words but with influence and missional success. Let's examine both.

Authority or Influence

Most people connect leadership positions to power—and rightfully so. Leadership comes

with some authority. Because of this connection, people tend to see leadership through positions, titles, and power. Call it “positional authority.”

Positional Authority

Positional authority is derived from the title or position one holds within an organization. It is the formal power given to leaders, managers, or supervisors based on their role. This type of authority allows leaders to make decisions, give orders, and enforce rules. Critical aspects of positional authority include:

1. **Formal Power:** The legitimate power that comes from holding a particular position.
2. **Decision-Making:** The ability to make decisions that impact the organization.
3. **Control:** The authority to control resources and direct the activities of others.
4. **Accountability:** The responsibility that comes with the position to achieve specific results and uphold standards.

However, positional authority alone is often insufficient to inspire and motivate people over time. People may obey someone with positional authority out of obligation or fear, but this does not necessarily translate into genuine commitment or enthusiasm. Just because people do what they are told doesn't mean they are following. They may just be obeying.

Relational Influence

Relational influence, on the other hand, is earned through personal interactions and relational care. It is the ability to inspire, motivate, and guide others based on trust, respect, and personal connection. Critical aspects of relational influence include:

- Trust and Respect: Building trust and earning respect through consistent and ethical behavior.
- Empathy and Understanding: Demonstrating empathy and understanding toward team members.

- Communication: Effective and open communication that fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- Support and Development: Investing in the personal and professional development of others.

Relational influence trumps positional authority every day in every way.

Relational influence is powerful because it creates a sense of loyalty and commitment among team members. People are more likely to go above and beyond when they feel genuinely valued and supported by their leader.

Relational influence trumps positional authority every day in every way. This is especially true for inspiration and motivation in a church setting.

As a church leader, focus on gaining influence.

Questions for Reflection

- Do you rely more on positional authority (your title or role) or relational influence (trust and connection) to lead? How can you grow your relational influence with your team?
- Think of a recent situation where you exercised leadership through influence rather than authority. What made it successful, and how can you build on this?

Success in Story

Have you ever heard, “People give/serve/engage to vision”? This is what other leaders told me when I became a lead pastor. The point was that people would engage if I cast a compelling vision.

This is true, but only to a point.

Vision can inspire movement—at least once. But as the saying goes, “Fool me once; shame on you. Fool me twice; shame on me.” If we cast a compelling vision but don’t follow through, people will not be fooled. This is why an *executed* vision is necessary for engagement.

Whenever we share a story of life change, we demonstrate that our mission and vision are more than words. Stories show the mission and vision in action.

At Woodstock City Church, I could have said every Sunday that we wanted “to create a church unchurched people will love,” but without any stories to prove the mission and vision were happening, all I’d have were words. Some people would feel initially inspired. Few people would continue to trust me without any evidence of success.

Remember, words backed up by stories inspire and motivate.

As a church leader, work hard to grow your relational influence and share stories of life change every chance you get. A great question to begin every meeting and personal interaction is, “What have you seen recently that makes you feel we’re accomplishing our mission?” This is a story solicitation question that sets the tone for everything you do.

Questions for Reflection

- How often do you share stories of success and life change within your church? How can you make storytelling a more consistent part of your leadership to motivate others?
- What is one recent example of life change in your church that exemplifies your mission? How can you share this story to inspire your congregation?

Fostering Innovation

Leadership encourages creativity and new ideas. Leaders are willing to take risks and explore new possibilities to advance the organization’s mission.

Easier written than done.

Every organization struggles to innovate, but the church may be the worst innovator of all. Strategies and models are defined and cemented as churches mature into the organizational fabric. If you’ve ever heard or used the phrase, “That’s how we do it around here,” you have a cemented model in place. Over time, every church I’ve seen begins to serve their preferred methods, not their mission.

Serving the model is a problem, and here’s why: Models are built for moments. Strategies are created for current realities. When anything changes (culture, community demographics,

etc.), the moment and reality change. But our model doesn't automatically adjust. We show up Sunday after Sunday to execute our current ministry model. Many churches today execute a ministry model, strategy, and approach created decades ago – many before the Internet.

Think about that! No wonder so many churches are struggling. No wonder we need more leadership in the church!

Remember, our strategy is our plan to achieve the mission and vision (we'll cover strategy in detail in our next course). If our mission or vision falters, we have a strategic leadership problem. A lack of effective evangelism is a strategic leadership issue, as are people needing to experience effective discipleship and spiritual growth. If you're

If our mission or vision falters, we have a strategic leadership problem

What worked last year may not work as well this year. What worked in your "heyday" may not accomplish as much today. What worked in 2019 will definitely not work the same today. This is a huge leadership challenge in the local church, making innovation a critical leadership skill.

Again, we'll tackle strategy in the following course and innovation in our last course. For now, know that church leaders must innovate to remain effective.

Questions for Reflection

- Does your current church model or strategy serve the mission, or are there areas where it feels outdated? How could you begin to innovate in those spaces?
- What risks have you been hesitant to take as a leader? What would it look like to embrace that risk to better serve your church's mission?
- Is there an area in your church where the phrase "we've always done it this way" hinders growth? How can you lead your team to explore new approaches?

Building Culture

Peter Drucker famously said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

He couldn't have been more right.

It does not matter how well you articulate your mission and vision and plan your strategy; the entire organization suffers if your culture is toxic.

The power of culture within an organization is immense. It shapes the behavior, attitudes, and effectiveness of its members. A strong culture creates a sense of identity and belonging, guiding how individuals interact, make decisions, and achieve goals. It sets the unwritten rules influencing daily behavior and long-term strategies, contributing significantly to organizational success.

Culture is rooted in the values that an organization upholds. These values act as a compass, directing behavior. However, values alone are not enough; they must be explicitly tied to behaviors to be effective.

To tie values to behaviors, organizations must first define their core values clearly and ensure they are understood. This involves listing values and explaining what they look like in practice. For instance, if a core value is “integrity,” behaviors might include being honest in communications, owning up to mistakes, and ensuring process transparency.

In most organizations, what's “written on the wall doesn't happen down the hall.” Values that aren't connected to beliefs and behaviors are only aspirational. In most organizations, including churches, unintentional behaviors subtly become integrated into the DNA, reversing the flow. These unintentional behaviors form beliefs that establish values. We say that we value “integrity,” but if the value isn't directly connected to behaviors, the value becomes aspirational.

Have you heard of Enron? Enron used complex financial structures and off-the-books partnerships to hide its debt and inflate profits, misleading investors and stakeholders about its true financial health. When these deceptive practices were exposed, it led to a loss of investor confidence, plummeting stock prices, and ultimately, the company's bankruptcy in December 2001.

Any guess as to Enron's values? They have four. Respect, Communication, and Excellence are three. The other? Integrity. Enron stated that it was “committed to maintaining honesty and transparency in all its business dealings.”

You cannot just state values. Leaders must connect values to behaviors and celebrate these

behaviors when seen or heard. Do this through:

- **Telling Stories:** One effective way to tie values to behaviors is through storytelling. Sharing stories of how values have been exemplified in specific situations helps to bring them to life. These stories provide concrete examples of values in action, making it easier for others to emulate those behaviors.
- **Leadership Modeling:** Another crucial aspect is leadership modeling. Leaders must consistently demonstrate organizational values through their actions. When leaders walk the talk, they reinforce the importance of these values and encourage others to follow suit. Leadership actions are powerful symbols that set the tone for the entire organization.
- **Connect to Performance:** Additionally, integrating values into performance evaluations and reward systems can reinforce desired behaviors. Recognizing and rewarding staff or volunteers who exemplify organizational values encourages others to do the same. This alignment ensures that values are not just aspirational statements but integral parts of the organizational fabric.

Church leaders are culture builders. After all, the culture will dictate the church's success more than any mission, vision, or strategy ever can. Focus on "how" you do what you do, then spread the how across the entire church.

Church leaders are culture builders.

Questions for Reflection

- What values are currently shaping your church's culture? Are these values consistently reflected in the behaviors of your staff and volunteers?
- How can you better tie your church's core values to everyday behaviors within your team? What small changes would you make to strengthen alignment?
- How do you model the values you want to see in your church's culture? In what areas might you need to improve to better lead by example?

Case Study: Andy Stanley's Leadership at North Point Community Church

When I think about church leadership expertise, many names come to mind, but as a mentee of and staff member under Andy Stanley, his example is the perfect punctuation to this chapter.

Andy Stanley of North Point Community Church in Georgia is renowned for his strategic and innovative approach to church, church leadership, and organizational structure. His methodologies have shaped North Point and provided a global model for a seeker-comprehensive approach.

Defining the Mission, Creating Vision, and Setting Direction

Andy Stanley has mastered defining clear missions and painting com-pelling visions. At North Point Community Church, the mission is to “Inspire people to follow Jesus by engaging them in the life and mission of North Point Community Church.” This mission is straightforward yet clear and actionable, providing a clear direction for all church activities. Stanley’s vision of “creating a church unchurched people love” paints an aspirational picture of the future, inspiring both staff and congregation to keep those far from God in mind. This vision highlights the church’s outreach focus, aiming to attract and nurture individuals who might not typically attend church. Stanley consistently communicates this vision, ensuring every member understands and works towards this goal.

Inspiring and Motivating

Stanley inspires and motivates his followers by appealing to higher ideals and values. Primarily through his masterful communication, he motivates the staff, volunteers, and church to grow in their faith and to serve their community. He shares stories of transformation and success to illustrate the impact of the church’s mission, thereby reinforcing the purpose and encouraging continued commitment. His approach goes beyond quality communication. Stanley demonstrates genuine care and concern for individual growth.

Fostering Innovation

Innovation is a hallmark of Stanley’s leadership. He encourages creativity and innovation to

advance the church's mission. North Point was formed out of a desire for a new and innovative church model. Under his leadership, North Point has pioneered several innovative strategies and models, such as multi-campus expansion and leveraging technology for virtual church services. Stanley's willingness to explore new ideas and his ability to adapt to changing circumstances have kept the church relevant and effective in its mission. He fosters an environment where team members feel safe proposing and experimenting with new ideas, knowing innovation is valued and supported.

A prime example is North Point's approach to the outsider. Rather than "seeker-sensitive," North Point originated the seeker-comprehensive church. Rather than watering down the message or avoiding complex topics as is required to be "sensitive," North Point strives to be comprehensible, meaning they desire believers and non-believers to understand sermons and the Gospel. Stanley likes to call his preaching approach "double-barrel." When developing a sermon, he works to ensure people, regardless of their biblical background or knowledge, can comprehend, remember, and apply the message.

Building Culture

Stanley understands the critical role of culture in achieving the church's mission. He invests significantly in building a culture that aligns values with beliefs and behaviors. At North Point, the culture comprises collaboration, continuous improvement, and personal growth and involvement. Stanley models the church's core values through his actions and interactions, setting a standard for others to follow. By celebrating successes and recognizing contributions, Stanley has cultivated a strong and vibrant church culture that supports the overall mission.

Stanley's leadership approach demonstrates how a leader can guide an organization toward a shared goal, create a sense of purpose, and drive innovation effectively. His approach to leadership offers valuable insights for any church leader aiming to grow their congregation and fulfill their mission.

In Summary...

As John C. Maxwell says, *“Everything rises and falls on leadership.”* This is true in every organization, including your church.

Leadership in the church is multifaceted, requiring a balance of visionary direction, practical management, and spiritual guidance. By understanding, applying, and practicing, church leaders can better navigate the complexities of their role and effectively guide their congregation toward fulfilling the church’s mission.

Before we conclude, let me reiterate: There is no leadership challenge like church leadership. The expectations and spiritual weight can overwhelm even the strongest of us. I’ve been there. Pray for wisdom in your church leadership. Invite God to help you illuminate the Gospel and grow as a leader in your church.

Course Assignment

1. **Case study analysis of a successful church leader:** Pick a few pastors you see as successful leaders and study their skills. Perhaps you can read a biography or find interviews with them. What makes them a great church leader? What skills do they possess? How have they learned and progressed in their leadership abilities?
2. **Grade yourself:** Consider the four core elements of leadership. How are you leading each element? How would your team or volunteers grade your leadership in these spaces? Which one should be your focus for growth?
3. **Personal leadership development plan:** How are you planning to develop your leadership? Nothing great happens accidentally. You need a plan.

LEADERSHIP 601 WORKBOOK

"The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."

— RALPH NADER

Welcome to the Leadership 601 Workbook, designed to help you apply the leadership principles discussed in the chapter to your church context. Leadership is foundational to every aspect of ministry, from defining the mission and vision to inspiring and motivating your team, fostering innovation, and building a healthy culture. This workbook provides practical tools, reflection questions, and action steps to guide you in becoming a more effective leader and driving your church toward more significant impact and growth.

Key Concepts Overview

Summary of the Chapter's Main Points:

- Leadership is the foundational element in church success. Effective leaders define the mission, create a compelling vision, foster innovation, and build a strong culture. Church leadership is not just about managing tasks but inspiring and guiding people in their spiritual journeys and church growth.
- **Why It Matters:** Strong leadership in a church setting is crucial for spiritual and organizational growth. Without clear leadership, churches struggle with mission drift, lack of motivation, and an inability to innovate. This chapter emphasizes the key roles leaders play in directing and developing a thriving church.

Reflection Questions

1. Defining Mission and Vision:

- *Does your church have a clearly defined mission and vision? How well do you think they resonate with your congregation?*

- *In what ways are you personally connected to the mission of your church? What would need to change for you to feel more aligned with the mission?*

2. Inspiration and Influence:

- *How do you currently inspire your staff and congregation? Are you using more positional authority or relational influence to lead?*

- *What's one example of a recent leadership decision that inspired others? How could you improve in this area?*

3. Fostering Innovation:

- *What systems or models in your church are outdated and need innovation? What's holding you back from introducing new strategies?*

- *What area of ministry could benefit the most from innovation right now?*

4. Building Culture:

- *Describe your church's current culture. Are there any behaviors or attitudes that don't align with your stated values?*

- *What intentional steps could you take to shape a healthier, more aligned church culture?*

Practical Exercises and Action Steps

1. **Self-Assessment:**

- **Leadership Strengths and Weaknesses:** On a scale of 1-10, rate how well you're leading in the four core areas:

	EXCELLENT					POOR				
Mission and Vision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inspiration and Motivation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fostering Innovation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Building Culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Based on your scores, where do you see the greatest need for improvement?

2. **Practical Application – 90-Day Leadership Development Plan:**

- **Step 1:** Define your church's mission statement in one sentence (if it's not already clear). Ensure it's concise and memorable. I suggest eight words or less.
- **Step 2:** Write a vision statement describing your church's future state (Review the mission and vision statement examples on page 29 of *The Ministry MBA*).
- **Step 3:** Create 3 specific goals you will achieve over the next 90 days to foster innovation, improve culture, or grow relational influence in your leadership.

1. Goal 1: _____
2. Goal 2: _____
3. Goal 3: _____

Example:

- Goal 1: Host a vision-casting meeting with key leaders and volunteers.
- Goal 2: Implement one new strategy in our community outreach efforts.
- Goal 3: Schedule one-on-one meetings with staff to understand their challenges better and inspire them forward.

Use the following template to define and track progress toward the goal.

GOAL: Vision Casting and Strategic Planning Tracker

- **Purpose:** Helps church leaders track vision casting and strategic planning progress over time.
- **Tracker Sections:**
- **Vision Casting Event/Initiative:** Name the vision casting event (e.g., “Vision Sunday 2024”).
- **Key Vision Message:** What is the core message being cast to the congregation and staff? (e.g., “Focus on community outreach”).
- **Strategic Goals:**
 - Goal 1: _____ (e.g., “Launch a new community service initiative by July”).
 - Goal 2: _____ (e.g., “Increase small group involvement by 15%”).
- **Team Assignments:**
 - Who is responsible for each goal? (e.g., “Jane to lead small group training”).
- **Key Milestones:** List significant dates or events (e.g., “March: Launch training for group leaders”).
- **Progress Updates:**
 - Update #1: _____
 - Update #2: _____
- **Next Review Date:** Schedule the next progress check-in (e.g., “Leadership meeting in April”).

3. **Action Plan:**

- Write down the top three changes you plan to implement over the next 12 months. Include specific deadlines for when these will happen and a method of accountability (i.e., a leadership team, board, or mentor to review your progress).

1. Change 1: _____

2. Change 2: _____

3. Change 3: _____

Use this template to create your Accountability/Action Plan:

Action Plan Template

- **Action Purpose:** Describe the change you will make (e.g., “Reach our community to grow our influence”).
- **Action Plan:** Describe the action item (e.g., “Increase community outreach by 10% by June”).
- **Accountability Partner:** Who will help hold you accountable for this goal? (e.g., “Lead pastor”).
- **Progress Milestones:**
 - Milestone 1: _____ (e.g., “Meet with community leaders in February”).
 - Milestone 2: _____ (e.g., “Launch outreach program by May”).
- **Final Check-In:** Date to review results (e.g., “Review results in June staff meeting”).

Application to Ministry

Discussion Prompts (For Group Use):

1. How can we, as a church leadership team, improve our systems for staff development and accountability?
2. What outdated practices do we need to address as a team?
3. What areas of our church culture require immediate attention to align with our stated values?
4. How can we better communicate and reinforce our mission and vision to the congregation?

Personal Reflection and Growth

Personal Leadership Development:

Take 10 minutes to reflect on the following:

1. What are your top three leadership strengths?
2. How are you currently leveraging them in your role?
3. What one habit or behavior do you need to change to become a more effective leader?
4. What steps can you take this week to build deeper relational influence within your church?

Use the space below to jot down your thoughts and create a personal growth plan for the next 90 days.

End-of-Chapter Review and Progress Check

1. **Cumulative Action Plan:**

- At the end of each section, summarize the action steps you've committed to and track your progress.
- Example: *"Goal: Create a clearer mission statement by [date]. Progress: Drafted mission statement, reviewing with team next week."*

2. **Success Metrics:**

- Set measurable goals for your leadership growth.
- Example: *"I will improve our church's volunteer engagement by 20% within six months by restructuring our recruitment and training processes."*

3. **Encouragement to Revisit:**

- Revisit this workbook every three months to track your growth and re-evaluate your leadership development goals. Leadership is a journey, and continuous reflection and adjustment are key.