


A photograph of a pastor in a light-colored suit speaking to a large, diverse audience in a modern church sanctuary. The pastor is on the right side of the frame, gesturing with his hands while speaking into a microphone. The audience is seated in rows of chairs, filling the foreground and middle ground. The church has a contemporary design with large windows and modern lighting fixtures. The overall atmosphere is one of a significant religious gathering.

Becoming A Pastor of Influence

**A Plan For Pastors To Grow Their
Ministries & Ignite A Movement**

A man with a beard, wearing a brown leather jacket, is speaking into a microphone at a wooden podium. He is smiling and looking upwards. The background is dark with blue stage lighting and a bright light source in the upper left.

**Hi, my
name is
Mike.**

**I am a pastor and
the founder of
[Break200.com](https://www.break200.com)**

A blurred background image showing a group of people in a living room. In the foreground, a person is seen from the back, holding an open book. Other people are standing and sitting around, some looking towards the book. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor setting.

I grew our church from 7 people in a living room, to over 1,000 on a Sunday.

From 7 people to 1,000, I did three things & three things only:

- (1) I preached the most powerful sermons I could week in and week out**
- (2) I personally met with 10 of the most influential people I could find in a 10-mile radius of our church building every week**
- (3) I delegated everything else to volunteers and staff as they began to emerge.**

I am positive that if you took one week to dive deep into each of these categories and put them into practice, you would find an increase in capacity which will in turn lead to an increase in your leadership. When your capacity as a leader grows, your church grows.

I have never met a pastor who changed their thinking and did not change their church. However, I have met pastors who never change their thinking and in turn never change their church.

Let's dive in...

Five Foundational Principles for Becoming A Pastor of Influence



The Principle of Leadership Multiplication

The principle of leadership multiplication is as follows:

Influence non-leaders and you add people to your church.

Influence leaders and you add everyone under their influence to your church.

The first effort is simple addition.
The second is multiplication.

When you add non-leaders, your church grows one person at a time (while simultaneously dealing with a near 20% attrition rate every single year). This explains why most churches never grow. You keep adding people, but at a slower rate than they're leaving.

When you add leaders, your church still grows one at a time, but soon after a leader begins attending they often bring a whole row with them.

The Principle of Selection

To lead a church in growth, a Senior Pastor must spend a disproportionate amount of their time with those with the greatest leadership skills, and delegate the rest to other leaders in the church.

When we look at scripture we see three types of kingdom leaders:

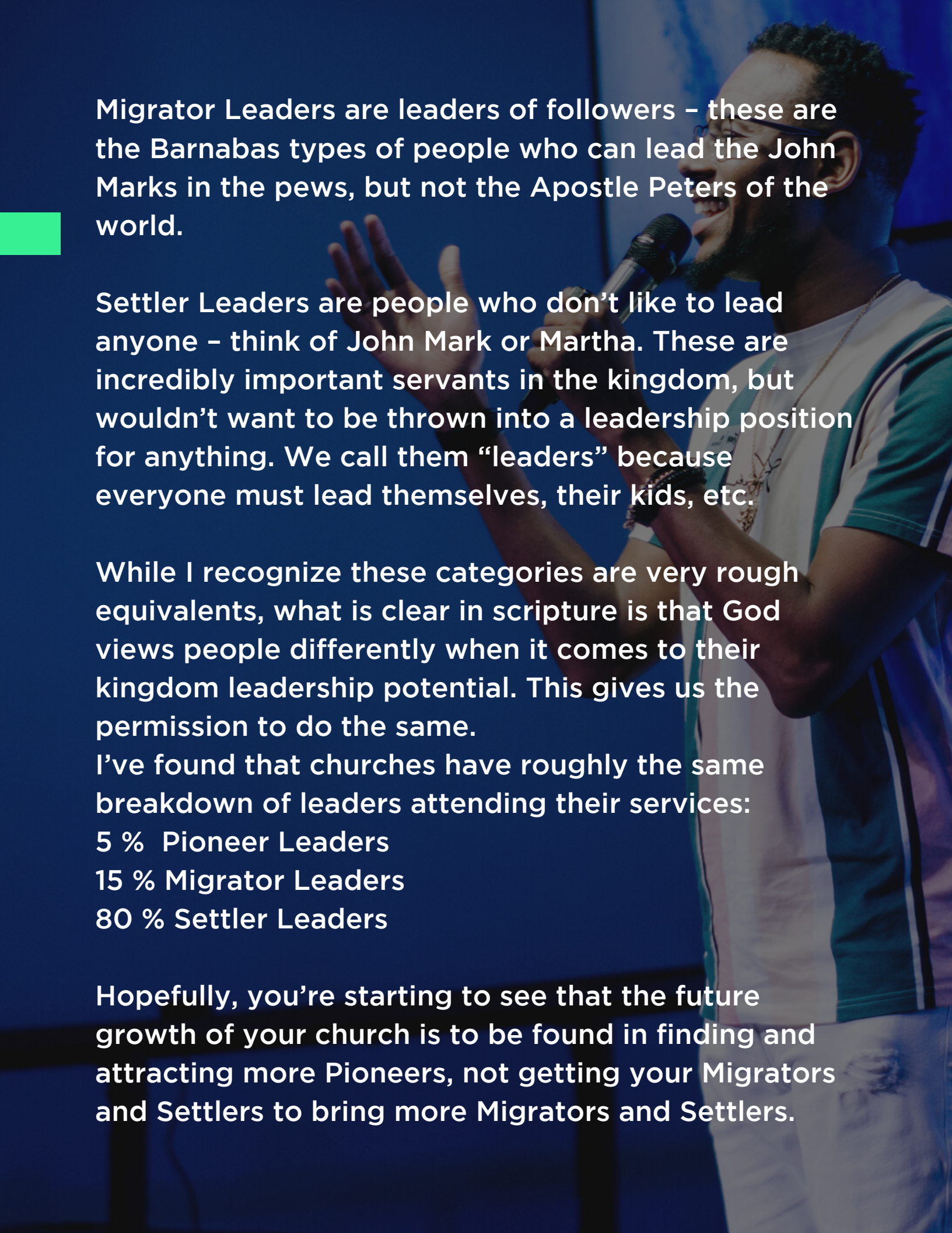
Pioneer Leaders (leaders of leaders)

Migrator Leaders (leaders of followers)

Settler Leaders (followers)

Every Senior Pastor has a limited number of Pioneer Leaders in a 10-mile radius of their church building. Your job is find them, lead them to Christ, and deploy them into leadership in your church community.

Pioneers are are leaders of other leaders. Who are the people most like Paul, Peter, Phoebe, James or John in your area? Where do they work? Live? Play? These are the people you're going after.



Migrator Leaders are leaders of followers – these are the Barnabas types of people who can lead the John Marks in the pews, but not the Apostle Peters of the world.

Settler Leaders are people who don't like to lead anyone – think of John Mark or Martha. These are incredibly important servants in the kingdom, but wouldn't want to be thrown into a leadership position for anything. We call them “leaders” because everyone must lead themselves, their kids, etc.

While I recognize these categories are very rough equivalents, what is clear in scripture is that God views people differently when it comes to their kingdom leadership potential. This gives us the permission to do the same.

I've found that churches have roughly the same breakdown of leaders attending their services:

5 % Pioneer Leaders

15 % Migrator Leaders

80 % Settler Leaders

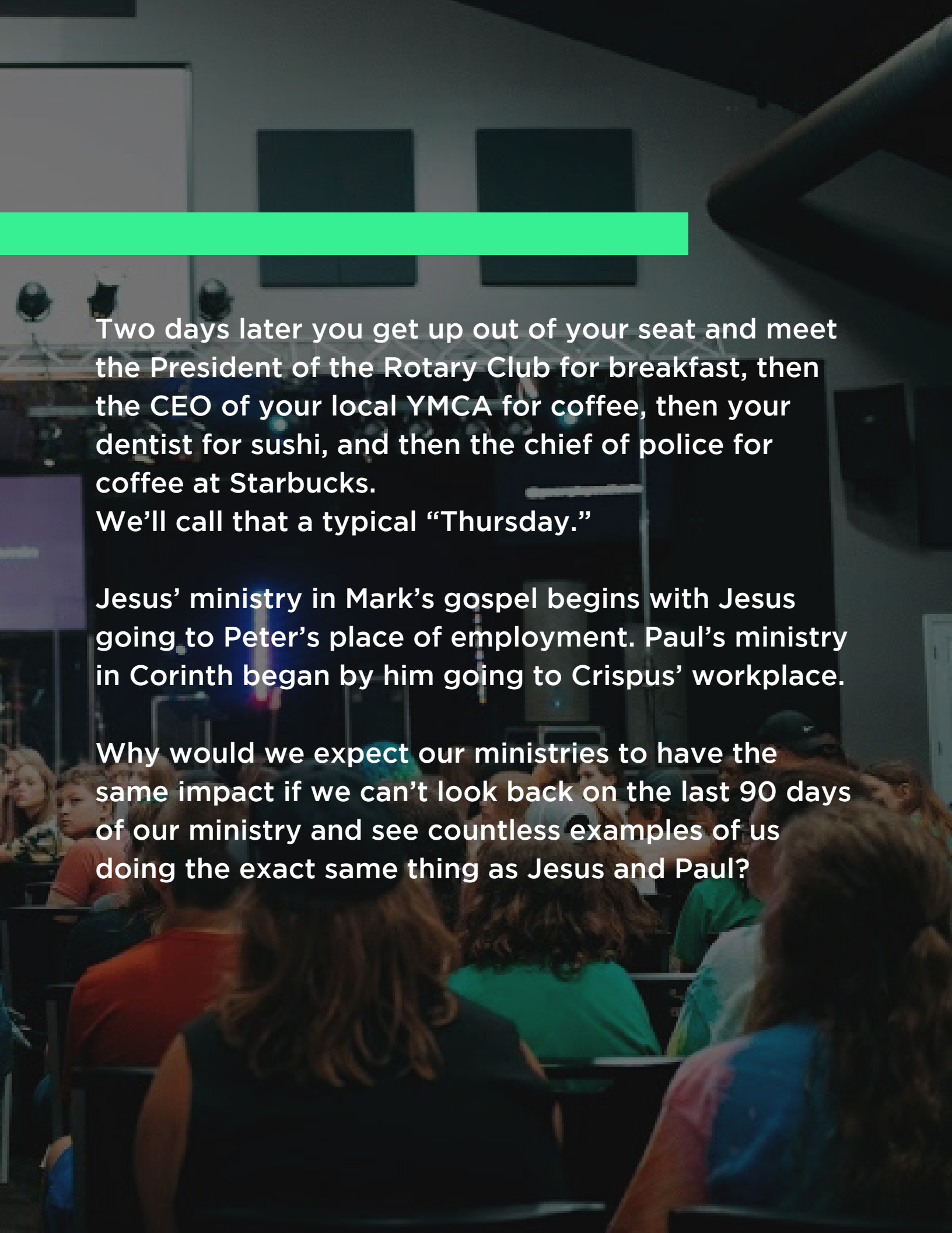
Hopefully, you're starting to see that the future growth of your church is to be found in finding and attracting more Pioneers, not getting your Migrators and Settlers to bring more Migrators and Settlers.

The Principle of Going

If the Great Commission begins with Jesus commanding his followers to go, wouldn't it make sense that the leader of a community of Jesus followers should spend a large chunk of their time "going" in order to help their body reach their full redemptive potential?

The kingdom of God is fueled by movement, so when I find a Senior Pastor frustrated, depressed, and anxious because the church they serve isn't growing, I know for certain it is because their rear has grown calloused instead of their feet.

When I say you have to "go" I literally mean getting up out of your seat, walking to your car, driving across town, walking into an Applebee's, and having a conversation with the Mayor of your city. Then doing the same thing with the Superintendent of your school district, and then with the owner of that amazing pizza shop that everyone in your area loves. Let's call that a typical "Tuesday."

A photograph of a church service. In the foreground, the backs of several people's heads and shoulders are visible as they sit in pews. In the background, a man in a white shirt stands at a podium, speaking into a microphone. The church interior features a white wall with two dark rectangular panels and a large window. A bright green horizontal bar is positioned above the text.

Two days later you get up out of your seat and meet the President of the Rotary Club for breakfast, then the CEO of your local YMCA for coffee, then your dentist for sushi, and then the chief of police for coffee at Starbucks.

We'll call that a typical "Thursday."

Jesus' ministry in Mark's gospel begins with Jesus going to Peter's place of employment. Paul's ministry in Corinth began by him going to Crispus' workplace.

Why would we expect our ministries to have the same impact if we can't look back on the last 90 days of our ministry and see countless examples of us doing the exact same thing as Jesus and Paul?

The Principle of Inverse Priorities

This entire process could be called “Leadership Evangelism” because in a transient society we don’t have time to wait to begin leadership development until after someone becomes a Christian.

We see this principle operating in Jesus’ ministry. When Jesus called his disciples to follow him, he did not demand any “confession” of faith on their part until well later in their time together. Until that confession occurred, he focused on teaching and developing them as leaders.

In Matthew 4:18-19, for instance, Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow him, but it wasn’t until Matthew 16:15 that Jesus finally got around to asking them, “Oh yeah, I’ve meant to ask you. Do you have any idea who I am?”

Connecting with people and getting them to “follow you” is all about converting people to a relationship with you first, then slowly building up enough credibility to begin asking penetrating evangelistic questions.

The Principle of Suffering

The last principle is the most important. Becoming A Pastor of Influence is a ton of work, and it is very difficult. One reason is many Pastors feel uneasy walking up to a lunch meeting with the most powerful and influential people in their region. I get that. I've felt that way before. You'll get over that.

Another is because this is physically and emotionally demanding work, especially for Pastors who are introverts.

You must be organized because, as you'll see in a minute, you are going to have to juggle a ton of names, details, dates, etc.

You must be persistent. You are going to be rejected; soundly sometimes. But keep in mind that many of the same people who reject you at first will become some of your best leaders on down the road.

Finally, expect to be criticized by the Settlers in your church for not paying enough attention to them. The 80% are loud and needy, not because they don't love God, but because they are limited in vision. They are always the last ones to see the benefit of what you are about to do.

A Step By Step Guide To Becoming A Pastor of Influence

STEP ONE

Identify The 100 Most Influential People In A 10 Mile Radius

In his book *The Next Christians*, Gabe Lyons identified seven distinct streams of cultural influence:

- **Business** (e.g., corporations, technology, advertising, commerce)
- **Media** (e.g., publishing, television, Internet)
- **Arts and Entertainment** (e.g., film, music, sports, classical arts)
- **Social Sector** (e.g., nonprofits and civic organizations, foundations)
- **Government** (e.g., judicial, executive, and legislative branches, military)
- **Education** (e.g., schools, sciences, medicine, research)
- **Church** (e.g., churches, para-church and religious organizations)

What I want you to do is gather your staff and key leaders and come up with at least 20 names of people in each of those categories that live or work within a 10-mile radius of your church building (excluding “church” obviously). This will comprise your “Top 100 Community A Leaders” list.

STEP TWO

Identify The 100 Most Influential People In Your Church

For some Senior Pastors, that number will be more than their entire church. I get that.

I'm not just talking about people who are already serving in some capacity. I'm also talking about the "sleepers" who lead in some capacity in the marketplace but aren't actively involved.

STEP THREE

Keep Both Lists Before Your Eyes At All Times

Keep them in front of your face, and get used to the idea that you will be opening those lists, refining them, removing names and adding others, for the next three years.

Preaching killer sermons, leading this effort of Leadership Evangelism, and delegating other responsibilities to staff and volunteers will take up 90% of your time every week.

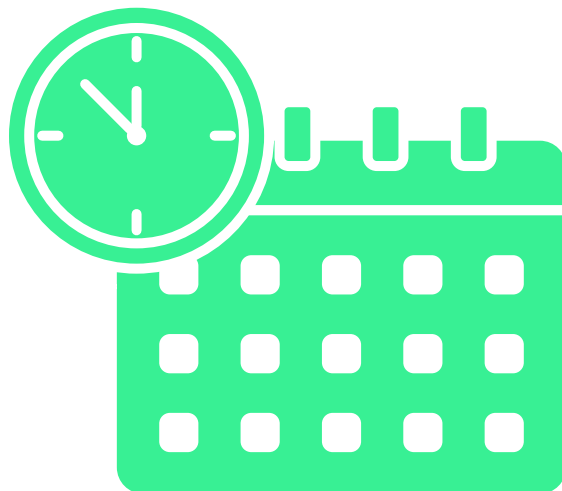
STEP FOUR

Clear Your Schedule For 10 Meetings A Week

That's ten meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Remember, Mondays are blocked off for sermon writing. Fridays and Saturdays are your days off. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays will be blocked off for breakfasts, lunches, meetings at Starbucks, and drop-by appointments (except for your staff meeting and service design). Advanced sermon planning will take place early in the morning on those days.

Remember when I said this would be all you would be doing for three years? I wasn't kidding.



STEP FIVE

Learn How To Become A World-Class Networker

As soon as you're done with this, I want you to buy, read, and then digest the single best book on relational networking in print: Keith Ferranzi's *Never Eat Alone*.

Ferranzi is not a Christian, but he is the only person I've read who understands what it is like for a Senior Pastor of a struggling church in Illinois to feel frustrated and not know how to start connecting with A Leaders in the community.

Trust me. Get the book, then eat the meat, and throw away the bones.

Yes, I know some of your practical ministry professors in seminary would balk at you learning how to "network," but that mindset is why they're still busy teaching emerging Senior Pastors how to lead stagnant churches.

STEP SIX

“Ping” 25 Pioneers From The Community Each Week

Let’s first start out with how to connect with Pioneers who don’t go to your church.

I want you to begin the practice of “pinging” 25 people a week from the “Top 100 Community A Leaders” list you brainstormed with your key leaders. No need to strategize who to contact first. Just start.

Ferranzi calls every attempt to reach out to someone you’re trying to connect with a “ping” - a text, email, or phone call is a “ping.”

You will reach out and “ping” 25 community leaders a week.

Why 25 pings?

It’s the law of large numbers. A certain percentage of people are going to blow you off, at least initially, so to fill up your schedule with ten meetings a week, you’ll need to reach out to a lot of community leaders each week.

How To Contact A Pioneer You Don't Personally Know

Here's what I include in an email to a Pioneer in the community I don't know:

- **First**, I will introduce myself and reference either someone we both know in common or an issue that we both value.
- **Second**, I will ask them to meet for breakfast, lunch, or for coffee. I tell them that as a fellow community leader I want to pick their brain about how we can work together to make our community better (and hopefully help their business or institution in the process).
- **Third**, I will conveniently "hint at" how I could help their business or work effort. People are always tuned into WIIFM - What's In It For Me? So, if that person is a pizza owner, I'll talk about how I eat their pizza and also coach sports teams that could frequent their business. If they are a Principal, I talk about how I know people in their schools and could provide insight that could help them.

I have about a 50% success rate getting people I don't know to agree to breakfast, lunch or coffee.

If they balk at a face to face meeting, I ask if I can stop by. If they balk at a drop-in meeting, I put them on a "contact in three months" list.

If I am turned down outright, right after adding them to a "contact in three months" list I always send them something - a link, an article from the newspaper with a sticky note on it, a book, etc. I want them to know that I was taking them seriously and want to genuinely help them in some way.

STEP SEVEN

“Ping” 25 Pioneers From Your Church Each Week

You will run out of Pioneers in the church well before you run out of ones in the community. The good news is you will work your church and community lists simultaneously.

There are two ways to set up meetings with the Pioneers connected to your church.

Hallway Conversations

When I was your size, I carried a 3 x 5 card that showed my ten open meeting slots available the following week and in between services I approached anyone that looked, walked, or talked like a leader. I found it took three connections with a person in the hallways to get them to say yes.

The first time I met them I'd say, “Hey, I'd love to get together sometime,” but wouldn't try to actually schedule something.

The second time I saw them, I'd say the same thing.

The third time I'd go in for the kill, get a yes, grab their contact information right then and there, and set up the meeting.

“Pinging” Pioneers From Church

The second way to meet with Pioneers from the church is to email them or call. The approach for contacting them is the same as with the community leaders. Most will already feel a natural connection to you and want to meet. The only difference is I ensure people I meet through church that the reason I want to meet with them has nothing to do with money.

STEP EIGHT

Conduct An Initial Meeting

When I walk the anxious path leading from the car to the lobby of Applebee's to meet this person for lunch, I have a pre-determined outline for how I want the conversation to go.

It's called *F-O-R-M*:

F Family - Tell me about your family? How long have you lived here?

O Occupation - Why did you get into what you're doing?

R Religion - What is your spiritual background?

M Mission - Why do you do what you do? What makes you tick?

Whether they are a church-generated lead or someone I contacted out from the community, the first 75% of the conversation is always the same.

The last 25% depends on how I initiated the meeting.

Church-Initiated Meetings

For the last 25% of the meeting with the people I meet through the church, I pull out a pen and draw the bridge. I'll say, "Hey, I don't know if anyone has ever shared this with you, but let me talk for a bit about the big idea of Christianity and ask you where you fit into it."

I grab the person's napkin and draw "You" on the left and "God" on the right (Yes I always have a pen in my pocket). Then I create a barrier between them. I talk about how human sin created that gulf, and because God is holy, our sins must be punished. I draw the word "Hell" on the bottom of the page. Then I talk about since God is also love, he sent his son Jesus to die on the cross to pay the penalty of Hell (as I put a big X over the word "hell") to die on the cross. The cross becomes (I draw the cross between "You" and "God") a bridge over which we can find our way back to God. Then I talk about what it takes to become a Christian, and then hand them the pen and ask them to place an "X" where they are right now - all the way to the left or all the way to the right (on God's side).

**Humorously, most put an "X" in the middle.
I laugh and explain why that's an impossibility.**

Then I ask the single most important question you'll ever ask one of these Pioneers: what is preventing you from getting over to God's side?

Once you get their answer, you're off to the races! The next six months, two years, or maybe even six, will be spent identifying and knocking down one barrier after another until they accept Christ and grow into full devotion as a leader.

Community-Generated Meetings

You obviously aren't going to draw the bridge with someone you just met who is the Superintendent of the School District. At least not at the first lunch.

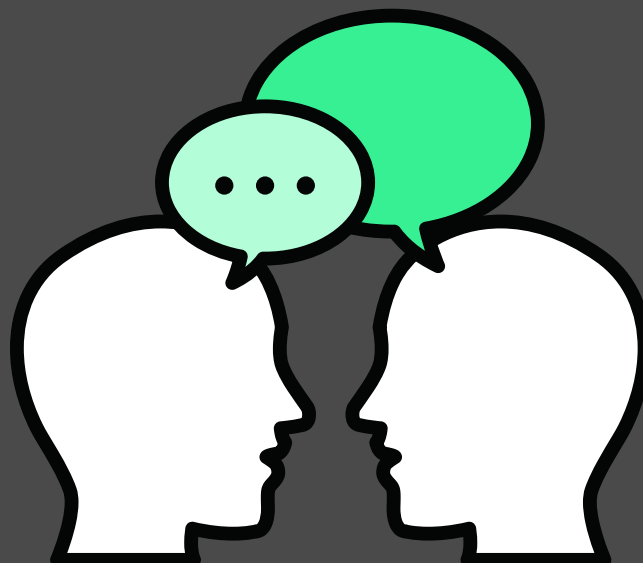
Instead of drawing the bridge, the last 25% of the conversation will be spent asking for their opinion on how you can better serve the community.

Pick their brain.

Ask them hard questions.

Ask them why they don't move away, why they love the area, or what problem points and people to be aware of.

Get the inside scoop from someone who knows the area.



STEP NINE

Give Them Homework

It is at this point that I always give them homework, regardless of whether or not they are a Christian.

What I mean by “homework” is I want to give them something to read which will give me an opportunity to circle back and meet with them again. This is essential. I usually “assign” two types of homework.

Homework Assignment # 1: Myers-Briggs Personality Test

I always send everyone I meet a link to take the Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator.

Then I ask them to send me their four-letter score. I tell them that I have a resource I’d love to send them that will help them understand how they can become a better leader based on an accurate understanding of how they are wired.

In fact, at some point earlier in the conversation I always ask, “Hey, are you an introvert? An extrovert? Are you a thinker or feeler on the Myers-Briggs?”

I pepper the conversation with these kinds of comments for two reasons.

One, it sets the stage for the end of the conversation for when I’ll ask them to take the test. Which means I’ll need their email address. When they email me their score, I direct them to a chapter that outlines their personality type from either *Working Together* by Olaf Isachsen or *Type Talk at Work* by Otto Kroeger.

Two, nothing enables an unchurched man to start looking inward like wanting to know more about how he's wired. This is like pre-pre-pre-evangelism.

I know I've hit the emotional jackpot if I can get the guy to get his wife to take the test. That's because I'll direct them to the book called Just Your Type by Paul Tieger which discusses, in detail, what happens when his type marries her type, and vice versa.

The majority of unchurched A Leader marriages are in pain, so one of my goals is to open up that pain, then push on it with the force of a WWE heavy-weight wrestler.

That pain is what will make them aware of their need for the gospel.

Homework Assignment #2: A Book For Non-Christians

I rarely do this after the first meeting with a community leader, but for the person I met with from a church contact, I tell them I will mail them one of the following three books depending upon which I think would be the best fit (I will mail it directly from Amazon and pay for it out of my business expenses):

A Search For The Spiritual - James Emery White

This has been my go-to book over the years. I used to keep a case in my trunk.

Finding Your Way Back To God - Dave and John Ferguson

This is slowly becoming a favorite too. I just wish it wasn't so long. Men don't like to read.

The Reason For God - Tim Keller

If they have copious intellectual barriers, I always lead with Keller's masterful book.

The overall goal of giving them homework is to (a) give them something that will cause them to think and reflect in my absence and (b) give me a reason to circle back and "ping" them 6-8 weeks later.

STEP TEN

Continue To “Ping” Those You Have Met With Every 6-8 Weeks Until They Are Converted, Disciplined, And Deployed Into Leadership

On average I will attempt to meet with someone every 6-8 weeks for two years or more until either (a) they cut ties or (b) they are fully formed disciples in leadership.

All of my Elders came from these relationships, as did the majority of my staff for the first 8 years of our church. People will ask, “What is your process for developing Elders?” That’s easy: Leadership Evangelism. There is no other process.

I “juggled” roughly 150+ relationships like this for six years. During that time our church grew from 0 to 1,000 in a pretty resistant area.

The goal when Becoming A Pastor of Influence is to see the Pioneers God has placed in your sphere of influence fully-formed in Christ and leading in your church. Until that is accomplished, your work with that person is not “done.”

I believe that if you commit yourself as a Senior Pastor to Becoming A Pastor of Influence as I outlined, your church will double in size in three years or less.

The staff, high capacity donors, Elders, and front-line leaders we need at every level of our churches right now are simply waiting for us to do what Jesus and Paul would do if they were in our shoes.

So let's get out there and find them.