

# SMALL CHURCH, **BIG VISION**

A PURPOSE DRIVEN SERIES

**HANDBOOK**





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# SESSIONS

## SESSION 1

### DON'T MISS THE MARK FROM THE START— FUNDAMENTALS FOR HEALTH

*with Dale Sellers*

Often we look past the two most important questions we need to ask ourselves in ministry, “why does the church exist?” and “what part does my church play”? In our efforts to know the how to’s, we neglect the why. As we search for the practical, we run past the foundational. Without clarity around mission, we can fall into doing the same thing year after year with no greater impact and ultimately succumbing to defeat. Join Dale Sellers as he helps us better define and gain clarity of mission so we don’t miss the mark!

## SESSION 2

### STOP THINKING LIKE A BIG CHURCH—EMBRACING THE STRENGTHS OF SMALL CHURCH

*with Karl Vaters*

Without question, big churches and small churches are different. Certainly not in mission, but in how they operate and are led. Differences in staffing, finances, resources, you name it. Stop trying to mirror the efforts of others and start embracing God’s specific plan and purpose for your sized church! Understand that ALL churches can make a significant impact no matter what the size. Join us for this session as Karl explains the differences between leading big and smaller sized churches. Same goal, different game plan!

## SESSION 3

### 3 WAYS YOUR CHURCH CAN BE MOST EFFECTIVE AT ITS CURRENT SIZE

*with Karl Vaters*

Roughly 95% of churches are small to mid-sized. God created all kinds and sizes of churches for all different kinds of people. Each church with a special and unique fingerprint. Identifying and understanding your church’s make up will maximize your ministry’s effectiveness. Journey with Karl as he walks us through the principles of identifying and utilizing your church’s DNA to be used for the Glory of God!

## SESSION 4

### PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE— LEADING YOUR CHURCH FORWARD FROM A PROACTIVE POSITION

*with Dale Sellers*

During the pandemic, our leadership style became highly reactive, as we found ourselves operating in survival mode. But since then, has leading in crisis mode become your norm? Do you feel like you’re constantly trying to keep the plates spinning so that none land on the floor and shatter? Maybe you can’t work ON ministry because you’re so busy working IN the ministry—reacting to every detail and need. Imagine leading from a proactive instead of reactive position. A place where strategies, systems, and structures exist. Join Dale as he shares the priorities of leaders in proactive leadership.

# DON'T MISS THE MARK FROM THE START

## —FUNDAMENTALS FOR HEALTH

### ASSESSMENT

Healthy churches take an annual inventory to evaluate their impact and effectiveness. An effective assessment asks the following:

1. Do we understand God's \_\_\_\_\_ for His Church?

The Great Commission tells us to go into all the \_\_\_\_\_.

The Great Commandment teaches our \_\_\_\_\_ is to love God and love others.

2. Are we clear on the mission and vision as the church leader?

Mission defines \_\_\_\_\_ we exist.

Vision determines \_\_\_\_\_ we are going and \_\_\_\_\_ we are going to get there.

### PRACTICAL STEPS TO DEVELOPING YOUR MISSION

To gain clarity when defining your church's mission:

1. Define the ministry \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus has placed within you.
2. Do an \_\_\_\_\_ of the leadership gifts of those you lead.
3. Determine the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the community around you.
4. Develop a \_\_\_\_\_ BEFORE you engage in a \_\_\_\_\_.

### STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY COME BEFORE SERVICE

One of the biggest misunderstandings that can drive leaders is the thought that I'm being effective as long as I'm busy.

***“Activity does not always equal accomplishment!”***

God tells Ezekiel to speak to the structure \_\_\_\_\_ speaking to the breath.

The oil flowed as long as the widow brought a \_\_\_\_\_ to hold it.

Your mission and vision are the structure and containers \_\_\_\_\_ create to accomplish the purpose of your ministry, in the location you are currently serving, at this particular time in history.

### NOTES

# DON'T MISS THE MARK FROM THE START

—FUNDAMENTALS FOR HEALTH *(continued)*

## WHAT STOPS PASTORS FROM UNDERSTANDING THEIR MISSION AND CASTING THEIR VISION?

Three common reasons pastors fail to cast vision effectively, and how to overcome them:

**1.** Getting stuck on past leadership \_\_\_\_\_.

Personal failure has a greater impact on spiritual leaders than on most people, due to the pressure and expectation to never miss the mark. We often forget that the majority of leaders in the Bible had some type of failure.

Embracing failure is often the first step to removing the blinders that keep us from clarity of vision.

God used Elijah in unbelievable ways to demonstrate His power and plan (**1 Kings 17–19**). However, Elijah came to a point of suicide because he was exhausted from doing ministry. Twice God asks Elijah this question,

***“What are you doing here, Elijah?” —1 KINGS 19: 9, 13***

Return to a path of renewed vision and healthy leadership by asking the same question of yourself when facing failure:

How did I get to where I am today?

- \_\_\_\_\_ events led to my failure?
- \_\_\_\_\_ influenced or intimidated my life in a negative way?
- \_\_\_\_\_ did I begin to sense that I was heading down the wrong path?

**2.** Leading from \_\_\_\_\_.

“Insecurity may be the most detrimental attribute a leader has to overcome. The insecure leader may attempt to be intimidating and aggressive, or may be indecisive and passive. No matter how they react, the focus of the insecure leader’s vision is more upon trying to hide their insecurity from those around them instead of where they want to lead the ministry.”

**3.** Leading without sufficient \_\_\_\_\_.

The vast majority of pastoral training focuses on biblical understanding and communication. The reality is most leaders have never been trained now to actually lead! Take heart, there are unlimited resources available today to help us learn how to be more effective leaders.

## NOTES

# DON'T MISS THE MARK FROM THE START

—FUNDAMENTALS FOR HEALTH *(continued)*

**OBSERVATION:** *I've observed throughout my ministry that many churches don't like to develop a strategy. For some, the word strategy seems unspiritual. If this is you, then let's change the word strategy to plan. Planning is not unspiritual. Yet so many churches refuse to develop a plan.*

## NOTES

## TWO MISCONCEPTIONS AND THREE REASONS CHURCHES AVOID A STRATEGY/PLAN

Many spiritual leaders believe that it is somehow compromising to use solid business principles in the strategic development of the church.

Believe strategy quenches the Holy Spirit's \_\_\_\_\_.

Believe developing a strategy is using \_\_\_\_\_.

It requires \_\_\_\_\_ in evaluating current conditions and effectiveness.

It can "rock the boat" of our current \_\_\_\_\_.

It forces \_\_\_\_\_.

"Writing down the strategy does not necessarily mean I've figured out everything, but it does put a methodical process in place that moves me closer to accomplishment."

## REFLECTION

1. Where do you struggle most in understanding your mission and vision?
2. What is the process you use to communicate and/or cast vision to your staff and congregation?
3. Do those closest to you understand why your ministry exists?
4. What measures do you have in place to measure your mission/vision progress?

# STOP THINKING LIKE A BIG CHURCH: —EMBRACING THE STRENGTHS OF SMALL CHURCH

## THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF SMALL CHURCHES

The church of \_\_\_\_\_, give or take 50, and the church of \_\_\_\_\_, give or take 50.

The church of \_\_\_\_\_ is far more common than the church of \_\_\_\_\_ or 2,000.

## WHAT IS THE GRASSHOPPER MYTH?

The false impression that our small church ministry is less than what God says it is because we \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves with others.

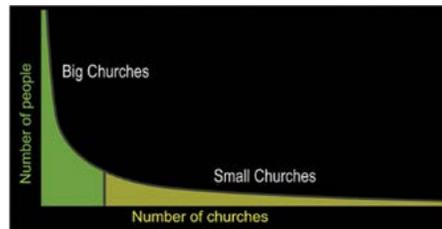
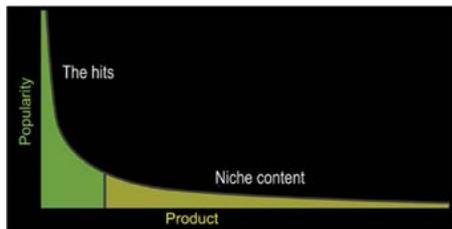
*“All the people we saw there are of great size...We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” —NUMBERS 13:32-33*

## THREE UNDENIABLE REALITIES OF CHURCH MINISTRY

1. 80–90% of churches will never be larger than \_\_\_\_\_ people.
2. Virtually all pastors *will* pastor a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ for at least some time in our ministry.
3. You can lead a small church \_\_\_\_\_ without settling for \_\_\_\_\_.

The church needs to embrace its “\_\_\_\_\_”

## NOTES



# STOP THINKING LIKE A BIG CHURCH

—EMBRACING THE STRENGTHS OF SMALL CHURCH *(continued)*

## PRINCIPLES

Small is not a \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_, or an \_\_\_\_\_.

Bigger fixes \_\_\_\_\_.

Pastoring a small church is not a \_\_\_\_\_ for doing something \_\_\_\_\_.

It's a \_\_\_\_\_, and it's worth doing \_\_\_\_\_.

## REFLECTION

1. As a small church pastor, how do you define success in ministry? As you think about your answer, be mindful of not falling into the trap of comparison.
2. In what ways could your church redefine quality in ministry? How would this look different than what quality looks like in a big church?
3. Have you ever thought of your church's small size as a problem? A virtue? Or an excuse? If so, what would it take to change that attitude?
4. Leading a small church isn't for everyone, just as leading a large church isn't. Each is unique to lead and requires a specific gift set. Not based on your current circumstances, which do you believe you're called to lead?

## NOTES

# 3 WAYS YOUR CHURCH CAN BE MOST EFFECTIVE AT ITS CURRENT SIZE

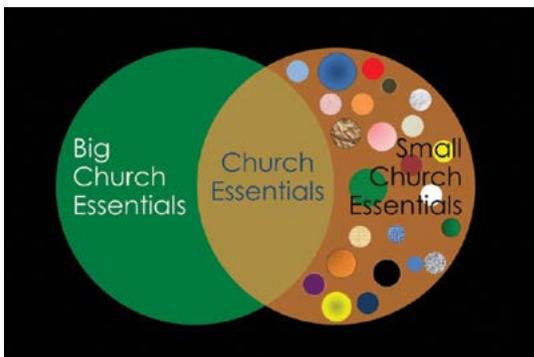
## 3 MAIN THINGS WE NEED FOR CHURCH EFFECTIVENESS

1. Realize your \_\_\_\_\_ church can be an \_\_\_\_\_ church.  
Over \_\_\_\_\_ of our churches are under 200, over \_\_\_\_\_ are under 100.  
My first reaction: \_\_\_\_\_!  
My second reaction: \_\_\_\_\_?  
My third reaction: \_\_\_\_\_?  
People will come to small churches, but they won't give up \_\_\_\_\_ to do so.  
\_\_\_\_\_ looks different in a small church than a big church.
2. Discover how \_\_\_\_\_ churches function differently from \_\_\_\_\_ churches.

NOTES



Many big church \_\_\_\_\_ don't translate well to a small church \_\_\_\_\_.



## 3 WAYS YOUR CHURCH CAN BE MOST EFFECTIVE AT ITS CURRENT SIZE *(continued)*

### THE LAW OF LARGE NUMBERS

The \_\_\_\_\_ the crowd, the more \_\_\_\_\_ they behave.

3. Understand and use the \_\_\_\_\_ DNA of your small church for God's \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE FLIP SIDE OF THE LAW OF LARGE NUMBERS

The \_\_\_\_\_ the crowd, the more \_\_\_\_\_ each person has—for good and bad.

Big church leaders prioritize \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Small church leaders prioritize \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

### THREE STEPS TO CHANGING SMALL CHURCH CULTURE

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the culture.
2. Show them what you \_\_\_\_\_ about the culture.
3. They will give you \_\_\_\_\_ permission to \_\_\_\_\_ with them in moving the culture forward.

Don't \_\_\_\_\_ what your founders \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ like your founders \_\_\_\_\_.

### REFLECTION

1. What would it look like if you started thinking like a healthy small church instead of obsessing over becoming a big church?
2. Have your church's resources ever felt like the table of random materials in Apollo 13? How can you work with what you have and who you have more effectively to honor God and serve people?
3. How might the Law of Large Numbers change the way you think about church leadership?
4. What would it look like if your church was more intentional about prioritizing relationships, culture and history?

### NOTES

# PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE—LEADING YOUR CHURCH FORWARD FROM A PROACTIVE POSITION

## JESUS TEMPLATE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND OUR CALLING

The apostle Paul gives us the intended structure for how Jesus wanted his church to be formatted. The promised results of following his instructions are:

An atmosphere of ongoing \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ both deep and wide.

The intent of how healthy churches are led and function has never been about the pastor and/or staff doing the work of the ministry. Churches that are actually healthy are defined by their ability to \_\_\_\_\_ their members for success for their ministry.

**Proactive leaders are \_\_\_\_\_.**

They understand:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ clarity of direction.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ those they lead to recognize their individual gifts.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ up leaders to hand the ministry off to in the future.

**Reactive leaders are \_\_\_\_\_.**

They prioritize:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ everything themselves in order to fill an inner need.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ people out of a desire for security.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the status quo due to fear of change.

### Results of Proactive Leadership

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 13)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 14)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 15)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 16)

### Results of Reactive Leadership

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTES

## PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE—LEADING YOUR CHURCH FORWARD FROM A PROACTIVE POSITION *(continued)*

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM GIDEON'S STORY THAT MAY RELATE TO OUR LEADERSHIP STYLE (JUDGES 6:11–15)

1. The nation was \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ by a massive enemy invasion.
2. God sent a messenger with a word to tell them that \_\_\_\_\_ was coming soon through Gideon's leadership.
3. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon while he was threshing wheat in a wine-press. His response was \_\_\_\_\_ instead of \_\_\_\_\_.  
God speaks to the \_\_\_\_\_ that is inside his life.  
Gideon cuts down the idols and repairs the altar to the Lord.
4. The people actually got \_\_\_\_\_ at him and wanted to kill him.  
If you take a leap of faith then you'll experience the crash of reality.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the call was right on time.

God told him his army was too big (32,000), so he cut it down. God said a big army would take credit for themselves of what God was about to do. Gideon cuts it down from 32,000 to 10,000 to 300.

***“God said to Gideon, ‘you have too large an army with you. I can’t turn Midian over to them like this, they’ll take all the credit saying, ‘I did it all myself,’ and forget about me.’ ” —JUDGES 7:2***

6. Gideon's army routed their enemy because they \_\_\_\_\_ God's instruction.
7. The nation was at \_\_\_\_\_ under Gideon's leadership.
8. However, as soon as he died, the people went \_\_\_\_\_ into the same old things.
9. Even though Gideon's generation \_\_\_\_\_ a miracle, they failed to pass onto the next generation how to \_\_\_\_\_ the miracle.

\*Gideon slipped back into a reactive leadership style once everything calmed down. He failed to adopt the proactive posture needed to continue with visionary, intentional leadership once entering into a season of peace.

### NOTES

## PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE—LEADING YOUR CHURCH FORWARD FROM A PROACTIVE POSITION *(continued)*

### THE REALITIES OF REACTIVE LEADERSHIP

#### Common traits of a reactive leader:

1. The reactive leader tends to lead from a place of \_\_\_\_\_ instead of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The reactive leader usually leads their organization to become \_\_\_\_\_.
3. It takes \_\_\_\_\_ situations for the reactive leader to step up.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ momentum consistently appears as the reactive leader focuses on past hurts.

### 3 THINGS THAT PARALYZE THE REACTIVE LEADER

1. The fear of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Holding onto past \_\_\_\_\_.

### PROACTIVE LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

#### The realities of proactive leaders:

1. The proactive leader defines the \_\_\_\_\_ behind activities. Ask why about everything you do as often as you can.
2. The proactive leader draws strength from God's \_\_\_\_\_. Faith comes by hearing God's Word.
3. The proactive leader recognizes that sometimes it takes \_\_\_\_\_ to move us along. We can see many times in history that God allowed the pressure to build to get His people to do what He had told them to do.
4. The proactive leader stops \_\_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_\_ to work a miracle on their behalf.
5. The proactive leader tends to \_\_\_\_\_ themselves for success.

### NOTES

## **PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE**—LEADING YOUR CHURCH FORWARD FROM A PROACTIVE POSITION *(continued)*

### **REFLECTION**

1. Have you ever led in a direction that you weren't 100% certain or comfortable with? What motivated you to do that?
2. Do you default to activity or busyness due to a lack of mission clarity because you feel an underlying pressure to perform? If so, what is the source of this pressure?
3. Is your leadership style more reactive or proactive? What has led to you lead from this position?
4. Does the thought of passing on a healthy ministry to the next generation affect how you lead? What are some practical ways you can be more effective at handing off a healthy ministry to the next generation?

### **NOTES**

# ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



## DALE SELLERS

Dale launched Dale Sellers Leadership, Inc. in March 2014 to assist organizations in the areas of leadership, encouragement and

evangelism. Dale became a ministry consultant for The Unstuck Group in April 2017 with a focus on helping the small church. In July 2018, he accepted the position as Executive Director of 95Network, a non-profit ministry designed to help small to medium sized churches through Content, Connections, Consulting, Coaching, and Conferences.

Dale recently signed with David C Cook Publishing and released his first book entitled "STALLED: Hope & Help For Pastors Who Thought They'd Be There By Now" in September of 2020.

Dale Sellers has been in ministry for almost 40 years. He and his wife Gina have been married for 39 years and have three daughters, two sons in law, and two amazing grandchildren!



## KARL VATERS

Karl has served at Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in Fountain Valley, CA for 29 years, the first 25 as lead pastor, and

currently as teaching pastor.

He wrote and self-published his first book, *The Grasshopper Myth*, after struggling for years with feelings of failure after trying to help his congregation grow past certain numerical "barriers". That book describes how he almost flamed out trying to chase numerical increase, then how he eventually came to understand the value of small congregations in God's strategic plan of salvation.

Since then, Karl has written three books for Moody Press:

- Small Church Essentials
- 100 Days to a Healthier Church
- The Church Recovery Guide

In addition to his pastoral ministry, Karl produces resources for *Helping Small Churches Thrive* at [KarlVaters.com](http://KarlVaters.com) (formerly [NewSmallChurch.com](http://NewSmallChurch.com)). He also speaks at over 30 conferences per year about church leadership issues from a small church perspective.

Karl Vaters has been in pastoral ministry for over 40 years. He and his wife Shelley have been married for 38 years. They have a daughter, two sons, a son-in-law and two beautiful grandchildren.

# RESOURCES



## ABOUT PURPOSE DRIVEN

The Purpose Driven Church model was born when Rick Warren began reaching out to local pastors with the vision of supporting each other to grow healthy churches based on timeless biblical principles. The model is grounded on the 5 purposes found in the Great Commandment and Great Commission: Being part of God's family (Fellowship), helping members become more like Jesus (Discipleship), loving Jesus with our whole lives (Worship), serving the church (Ministry) and sharing God's love (Evangelism). What pastors have discovered across cultures, church contexts, and continents, is that when we center the church around the purposes God has commanded of his church—as opposed to personalities, programs, or personal preferences—members and the church as a whole begin to grow and thrive. For more information regarding Purpose Driven, go to [PD.church](http://PD.church).



## ABOUT 95NETWORK

Across all churches within the United States, 95% have less than 500 people attending. In fact, 90% of all U.S. churches have less than 200 people attending—and 95% have less than 100. " These statistics prove that small and mid-size churches are the backbone and majority of churches in the US.

Though seemingly well equipped, oftentimes small church pastors and their leadership teams are at a loss when it comes to church growth, balance and overall church health. Many pastors feel trained for biblical teaching, but few feel prepared for the challenges and logistics of daily ministry. 95Network helps churches employ practical solutions to some of those everyday challenges through the 5 "C"s—Community, Content, Conferences, Consulting and Coaching.

Learn more about the mission and vision of 95Network by visiting [95Network.org](http://95Network.org) or email Dale Sellers at [dale@95network.org](mailto:dale@95network.org)



## ABOUT PASTORS.COM

In partnership with Purpose Driven, Pastors.com exists to provide church leaders with resources and opportunities to nourish and enrich their lives and leadership. Go to [Pastors.com](http://Pastors.com) and get access to sermons, small group materials, and articles all for church leaders.



## ABOUT KARLVATERS.COM

Karl's heart is to help pastors of small churches (up to 90 percent of us) find the resources to lead well, and to capitalize on the unique advantages that come with pastoring a small church—something virtually every pastor will spend at least some of their ministry years doing. He also believes that big and small churches can and should work together more often—to the benefit and blessing of everyone.

Karl hosts the podcast, "Can This Work In a Small Church?" Through guest interviews and solo episodes, he talks about universal church leadership issues, then digs deeper into how those issues look different when we approach them from a small church context.

Karl writes for many publications, including ChristianityToday.com, Outreach magazine, Church Law & Tax, and more. He also serves as the Small/Mid-Size Church Ambassador for Compassion International.

You can contact Karl at [Karl@KarlVaters.com](mailto:Karl@KarlVaters.com)



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