Natural Church Development Resources

Empowering Leadership

Church of the Resurrection Leadership Development Set, Carol Cartmill and Yvonne Gentile (Abingdon Press, 2006)
Experience the three-stage leadership development program from The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection. These resources guide participants through discovering their spiritual gifts, talents, and passion and on to developing their skills as Christian servant leaders. Leadership Essentials, a desk reference and guide, provides practical help for everyday team issues.

Resources include:
- Serving from the Heart Leader Kit (Leader guide with CD-ROM with video clips for teachers, printable posters, and PowerPoint slide show)
- Leadership from the Heart Leader Kit (Leader guide plus DVD with downloadable handouts and 10 video segments)
- Leadership Essentials: Practical Tools for Leaders in the Church

Direct Hit, Paul Borden (Abingdon Press, 2006)
Many congregations are declining due to an inward focus, and see their pastor as someone who should minister only to their needs. Direct Hit offers hope to leaders of congregations that have lost their outward focus. By preparing for and leading systemic change, pastors can bring new life into the culture of a congregation, guiding it to answer God’s call to reach people with the good news.

Growing Spiritual Redwoods, William Easum and Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press, 1997)
Growing Spiritual Redwoods is an effort to help church leaders answer the kinds of questions that confront congregations and Christians in this era of rapid and uncertain change in the church. Rooted in the beliefs of deep spiritual vitality and an openness to change, “spiritual redwoods” emerge as pillars of witness and mission in church leadership.

Selling Swimsuits in the Arctic Kit, Adam Hamilton (Abingdon Press, 2006)
Through seven simple keys to growing churches, pastors and ministry leaders will use this program with key leadership in the congregation to create the kind of motivation and excitement that can lead to measurable and sustained growth in ministry.

The kit contains:
- DVD of video segments for use in each of the four study sessions
- CD-ROM with recorded content from the 2005 Church of the Resurrection Leadership Institute and handouts for use in the study sessions
- Hardcover copy of the original text plus a new leader’s guide to Selling Swimsuits in the Arctic.
  The current paperback version of the book will serve as the participants’ book.

Selling Swimsuits in the Arctic Korean, Adam Hamilton (Abingdon Press, 2006)
A Korean-language translation of the best-selling release Selling Swimsuits in the Arctic. The pastor of one of today’s most dynamic churches illumines the basic principles of attracting the unchurched to the Christian message.
**Kicking Habits**, Thomas G. Bandy (Abingdon Press, 2001)
This ground-breaking book shows congregations how to overcome the destructive attitudes and systems that prevent them from focusing on their true mission: making disciples of Jesus Christ. Drawing on the stories of exciting new congregations that have arisen within the last few years, this updated edition sharpens the portrayal of the thriving church system, demonstrating its essential concern for savvy awareness of the larger culture and fidelity to the core of the gospel.

**Ultimately Responsible**, Sue Nilson Kibbey (Abingdon Press, 2006)
This book and accompanying DVD reviews the practical, moment-to-moment choices servant leaders make that God uses for spiritual growth and ministry deployment. Great leaders are willing to sacrifice ego, self-significance, and self-imagined importance in order to live downward into increasing effectiveness, no matter what it takes. It is the passionate, relentless commitment to learning this art that God uses to transform ordinary people into intentional leaders.

**Waking to God’s Dream**, Richard Wills (Abingdon Press, 1999)
*Waking to God’s Dream* shares the spiritual disciplines and insights needed for the transformation of the congregation of a large church in decline to one that is growing and reaching out to its community in a variety of creative ministries. Detailing the steps and initiatives that lead to this turnaround, the author’s personal experiences demonstrate how personal commitment on the part of the congregation’s leaders and ministers has been the key to the work they have accomplished.

**Momentum for Life**, Michael Slaughter (Abingdon Press, 2005)
This guide outlines five life practices for balance and self-leadership through lifestyle elements in the acronym D-R-I-V-E: Devotion to God, Readiness for lifelong learning, Investing in key relationships, Visioning for the future, and Eating and Exercise for life. Taken together, they shape life as an upward momentum. They remind you that leadership is not about entitlement, but about example.

**Gift-oriented Ministry**

**Equipped for Every Good Work**, Barbara Miller and Dan R. Dick (Discipleship Resources, 2001)
*Equipped for Every Good Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church*, offers a four-tool process for the discovery and development of spiritual gifts, spirituality types, interaction styles, and working preferences. This resource helps individuals better understand their gifts and graces for Christian service in the world and also strengthens faith communities by giving them methods and tools for understanding the gifts and graces of the people of God who comprise each local congregation.

**Serving from the Heart**, Carol Cartmill and Yvonne Gentile (Abingdon Press, 2002)
This 4- to 8-week study leads adults through assessing their spiritual gifts, talents and abilities, resources, individual style, dreams, and experiences, all adding up to an enhanced capacity to serve God and neighbor. The leader kit includes a book with easy-to-follow lesson plans for eight 45-minute sessions or four 2-hour sessions.

*Spirit Gifts* is a dynamic group experience that builds community as participants share together in study, reflective exercises, discussion, worship, prayer, music, and group activities. The Leader’s Resource includes: program helps, session guides, teaching/presentation pages, charts, spiritual gifts survey answer sheet, definitions of spiritual gifts, prayers, promotional materials, and more. Leaders choose the 4-12 week approach or weekend option.

Passionate Spirituality

**A Place to Pray**, Roberta Bondi (Abingdon Press, 1998)

In many ways the Lord’s Prayer is the most fundamental of all Christian prayers. It was given by Jesus in response to his disciples’ explicit request that he teach them to pray, and throughout the period of the early church (along with the Apostles’ Creed), it was regarded as a basic catechistic text. *A Place to Pray: Reflections on the Lord's Prayer* is not an exegetical book; rather the reflections in it, which draw from the author’s own experiences, teaching, and study of the early church, are presented in a series of letters to a fictional friend.

Beginnings: The Spiritual Life, Andy Langford (Abingdon Press, 2006)

This 10-week, video-based study of Christian spirituality introduces participants to spiritual “habits of the heart” and is for those who want to explore the habits. This study can be used after *Beginnings: An Introduction to Christian Faith* or as a stand-alone program. This series invites seekers, new believers, and even longtime church members to take a fresh look at the Christian faith in a warm, relaxed setting.

Companions in Christ (Upper Room, 2006)

The sensational small group series *Companions in Christ* is now being offered in a new 5-piece participant book set as well as the traditional 1-piece participant book set. With the same great daily devotional material and group conversation, the two different participant book styles allow each group to create a study that best fits their members. The new 5-piece participant book set will allow groups to take initial breaks between modules. Topics include:

- Embracing the Journey
- Feeding on the Word
- Deepening Our Prayer
- Responding to Our Call
- And many others!

Saint Benedict on the Freeway, Corinne Ware (Abingdon Press, 2001)

As a guide to life in the twenty-first century, this book translates formative practices worked out in the past, creatively adapting those disciplines to contemporary daily life. The author targets what she terms "something more"-people: those who want to grow spiritually but do not know how to do so. *St. Benedict on the Freeway* responds to this yearning as both a book for personal reading and a resource for small groups in the church.
Simple Truths, Stephen Bauman (Abingdon Press, 2006)
Adapted from popular radio commentary, Simple Truths offers a daily dose of graceful reflection for twenty-four-hour rush-hour readers. This brief observation on simple truths—easily neglected but deeply significant—concentrates on life, meaning, values, and our common good.

Vessel of Peace, Ellen Stephen and Doug Shade (Abingdon Press, 2007)
In a world filled with stress, Vessel of Peace offers an ancient but seldom-followed path toward a peaceful life of deep meaning in the spirit. In this guide, we discover how to empty ourselves of cultural myths that cause us anxiety and how to fill ourselves with spiritual truths that enable us to live an authentic and fulfilling life.

Writing Tides, Kent Ira Groff (Abingdon Press, 2007)
Exquisitely written, Writing Tides enables anyone to discover contemplative insights through personal reflections, practical notes, or work-related writing. Drawing upon the author’s experience leading courses in writing, spiritual formation, and vocation, readers discover writing practices that aid meditation, prayer, and spiritual growth.

Functional Structures

Web-Empower Your Church, Mark M. Stephenson (Abingdon Press, 2006)
A great church website is more about ministry than technology. Web-Empower Your Church offers step-by-step guidance to web implementers and other church leaders who are on the exciting journey to building an effective web ministry. The accompanying CD-ROM contains documentation, training, and a demonstration version of website-building software.

From Cooperation to Competition, Lyle E. Schaller (Abingdon Press, 2006)
Congregational life has changed in so many ways in recent years, not least among them the transition from cooperation to competition as the central model of how churches relate to one another. Simply put, congregations that don’t learn to compete in this new “economy” will have few chances to thrive.

A Mainline Turnaround, Lyle E. Schaller (Abingdon Press, 2005)
This book studies ways congregations and their denominations can reinvent themselves in order to reach the generations born after 1960. Many established churches are designed to meet the needs of previous generations; they were destined to fail when the needs of current generations diverged radically from those of their predecessors—as indeed they have.

The Myth of the 200 Barrier, Kevin E. Martin (Abingdon Press, 2005)
The common experience of large congregations getting larger and small congregations getting smaller has given rise to the belief that growing congregations tend to hit a barrier at the 150-200 attendance mark. The dividing line in American Church attendance is 150 people on an average Sunday. Churches below this seem to have a harder time growing. Above this, churches seem to have an easier time growing. Trying to grow a smaller church can feel like trying to break through what the author calls the “200 barrier.”
You Only Have to Die, James A. Harnish (Abingdon Press, 2004)

This book describes how God calls each congregation to a specific mission, how God grants discernment to understand what that mission is, and how God enables the congregation to die to its entrenched attitudes and behaviors in order to be resurrected to a new life of ministry and witness.

Inspiring Worship Service

Art in Service of the Sacred, Catherine Kapikian (Abingdon Press, 2006)

Art in Service of the Sacred encourages congregations to take seriously the role of visual art in worship and in the broader life of the church. This rich resource explores the dynamics among art, artist, and the church. It proclaims the power of art when used as art, reclaims the presence of religious symbols in worship, asserts the importance of the aesthetic dimensions of ecclesial space, and recovers the role of visual art to engage our senses and imaginations as we seek to encounter God in our lives.

Awesome Altars, Mary Dark (Abingdon Press, 2005)

Awesome Altars is an illustrated tool kit—a book and "how-to" DVD—that explains new ways to use altar design to help people more fully worship God. This inspirational package, which includes recipes for many altars, describes how imaginative and creative ideas can come together to prepare and attract the people of God. By using true and often funny stories, plus specific hands-on examples, this book and disk will help you organize an altar team, work with the pastor and music staff, cultivate fresh ideas, and deliver inspiring worship space, week after week.

Dare to Dive In!, Heather Kirk-Davidoff and Nancy Wood-Lyczak (Abingdon Press, 2006)

This guide provides skits, monologues, liturgies, and other worship resources to help small to mid-sized congregations make worship more engaging, interesting, and inviting. Mainline churches cannot continue with "business as usual" and expect that they will be able to revitalize. Nowhere is this truer, the authors say, than in worship, where too many churches communicate their depression about the fate of their congregation more clearly than they communicate the joy and hope of the Gospel.


The Igniting Worship Series consists of resources designed to assist pastors and worship leaders in building effective worship experiences. Series volumes include:

- 40 Days with Jesus
- Communion
- The Seven Deadly Sins
- Helping and Serving
- Advent and Christmas

Powerful Persuasion, Tex Sample (Abingdon Press, 2005)

The book explains how the electronic generations receive and process the information communicated by new media. Readers learn how to communicate to the generations formed by electronic culture, instructing churches to engage in a new evangelism, one that makes use of new technologies and cultural expressions.
Slice of Life Worship Dramas, Vols. 1 & 2, Shelly Barsuhn (Abingdon Press, 2007)
Slice of life dramas are a tool to capture the imagination of viewers and communicate
good news by telling stories that mirror real life. Slice of Life Worship Dramas also
contains helpful hints to assist in launching a drama ministry, working with church
leaders, building a team, choosing scripts, and running effective rehearsals. Themes in
volume 1 include second chances, courage, doing good, forgiveness, love, spiritual
growth, anxiety, kindness, and God’s provision and truth. Themes in volume 2 include
God’s power, sin, transformation, temptation, integrity, outreach, patience, missions,
trust, and grief.

The Worship Workshop, Marcia McFee (Abingdon Press, 2002)
Rather than providing simply another manual for doing worship, The Worship Workshop
offers an interactive workshop that helps worship teams develop more meaningful and
memorable worship for the congregation. By combining liturgical history and the creative
process, The Worship Workshop encourages worship teams and staff to break out of the
traditional worship box in order to create diverse ways to present the Good News in
worship.

Holistic Small Groups

Go BIG with Small Groups, Bill Easum and John Atkinson (Abingdon Press, 2007)
Most churches that begin small groups find that within a couple of years two things
happen—the number of small groups has dwindled in size and few if any of them have
birthed other small groups. The main way most churches keep small groups going is by
reinventing them over and over, usually with the same people. This book examines the
pitfalls that endanger all attempts to center a congregation’s life around small groups and
how to make small groups growing, self-reproducing centers of Christian discipleship.

The Church in Many Houses, Rev. Dr. Steve Cordle and Thomas G. Bandy (Abingdon
Press, 2005)
Although the largest churches in the world are cell based, many have questioned
whether the model will work in North America. The Church in Many Houses: Reaching
Your Community Through Cell-Based Ministry makes the case that the cell model will
work—if key assumptions about spiritual growth and the nature of the church are
reexamined and renewed. By drawing on scripture, research, and insights gained
through personal experience as the pastor of a growing cell church, this book identifies
the four pivotal philosophical shifts necessary for the cell approach to work.

Cultivating Christian Community, Thomas R. Hawkins (Discipleship Resources, 2001)
This book discusses the qualities of the Christian community, including practicing
hospitality; creating a safe space where different people feel welcomed, affirmed, made
visible, and valuable; centering on Christ; practicing the means of grace; occurring when
we find healing and wholeness; inviting us to discover our unique gifts for ministry; and
equipping us to live out our baptismal covenant, sharing in God's work of heal and
restoring all creation.

Starting Small Groups, Jeffrey Arnold (Abingdon Press, 1997)
Adapted from a workbook format that allows each congregation to identify its own
particular needs and character, this resource includes ways to plan, envision, and
strategize for the formation of small groups. The author looks at significant issues related
to designing or revamping a small-group ministry, including group types; group structure;
leadership training and support; marketing; recruiting people into groups; answering the
why, when, how, and what of groups; and evaluating so that positive changes can be
continually made.
How to Start and Sustain a Faith-Based Women's Spirituality Group, Patricia D. Brown (Abingdon Press, 2003)
This book is a resource for those who are interested in starting and sustaining a faith-based small group for women. It includes tools for organizing, creating, and sustaining the group, which the author calls a circle. The book invites women to develop their spiritual side and to model their relationship with God as they envision ever-new ways to inspire, encourage, and affirm one another.

Need-oriented Evangelism

The Race to Reach Out, Douglas T. Anderson and Michael J. Coyner (Abingdon Press, 2004)
Offering a friendly greeting to church visitors is important, but it is only the first of many steps that congregations must take in order to turn visitors into members and new members into committed disciples. This book demonstrates how to identify and respond to visitors in a nonthreatening, yet interested, way; how to share information about them with the leaders of those ministries and programs in which they would be most interested; how best to help them in their decision to become church members; and how to help them understand and fulfill their own call to ministry in the congregation. Churches should be motivated, not by a desire for institutional survival or advancement, but by a passion for people and their place in the kingdom of God.

Accompanying the many definitions of the term "evangelism" is a fundamental inability to locate the practice of evangelism within one's overall theological convictions. This book proposes to ground the practice of evangelism in an understanding of God's love for the world, specifically as seen in the incarnation of God in Christ. In Jesus, God took on all of what it means to be human. Because of this, evangelism must be a ministry to the whole person.

Needs-Based Evangelism, Robert Pierson (Abingdon Press, 2006)
This book shows how churches can better organize ministry in order to be effective witnesses. By meeting felt needs of people through intentional ministries, the church will grow to be sure; but more importantly, it will fulfill its biblical mandate to care for those who are hurting and suffering. Being a Good Samaritan church begins with the leadership. It requires an absolute commitment to address the needs of people in order to invite them to become disciples of Jesus Christ. But in order to compete with and appeal to unchurched people in today's secular and consumer-driven society, the church needs to be entrepreneurial in its method of evangelist outreach.

Leading Beyond the Walls, Adam Hamilton (Abingdon Press, 2002)
Bringing a depth of analytical skills often lacking in visionary leaders, this book goes beyond simply telling the story of Church of the Resurrection. Questions are shared about the largely unchurched population to which Church of the Resurrection has reached out. Further, it is demonstrated what is learned by listening to the answers to these questions and how doing so strengthens strategically crucial decisions the church makes.
Loving Relationships

**DISCIPLE: BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH BIBLE STUDY** (Abingdon Press, 2003)

DISCIPLE is a program of disciplined Bible study aimed at developing strong Christian leaders. The study gives the Old and New Testament equal time, emphasizing the wholeness of the Bible as a revelation of God. DISCIPLE draws upon the work of scholars, the personal Bible reading and study of the participant, and dynamic group discussion to aid understanding of the Bible. The first study in the program is **DISCIPLE: BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH BIBLE STUDY**, a thirty-four-week overview of the entire Bible.

**Living the Good Life Together** (Abingdon Press, 2006)

In this series of 12-week video studies, group members explore key features of Christian character and then apply what they've learned to daily life. Each study is based on two of Jesus' teachings: COME and SEE (first 6 weeks) includes scripture, the study and reflection guide, and the DVD AND helps the group discuss and meditate on a key feature of Christian character. GO and DO (second 6 weeks) gives suggestions in the leaders guide to help the group plan, practice, and live out the key feature.


Small-group members will explore the topics of love, marriage, and sex in order to gain biblical perspectives; reflect upon God's purposes for these intimate and important parts of their lives; discover new insights regarding concepts of commitment, discipleship, and call in relation to these topics; and be encouraged to take steps to improve their marriages and intimate relationships. This Planning Kit contains 1 each of VHS - DVD - Leader's Guide - Participant's Workbook - Pastor's Guide.

**How to Act Like a Christian**, Leith Anderson and Dan Collison (Abingdon Press, 2006)

*How to Act Like a Christian* offers encouraging words and practical help to anyone seeking to live fully and effectively in God's world. This addresses the questions and needs that Christians bring to the faith and offers helpful and encouraging answers about: Love, Forgiveness, Care, Money, Sex, Decision making, Criticism, Illness, Grief, Purpose, Prayer, Hope, and Faith.