

many gifts

CALLING AND GROWING
CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

Many Gifts offers us a very helpful guide for developing leaders. It points to good resources, saves us the work of creating something entirely new, and affirms our interest in working with the good resources that already exist. This tool can take us into our mandate of developing the Culture of Call in our congregations as it affirms the church community's role in calling out and affirming leaders at all stages of life. I believe it should be in the hands of every pastor, cell group leader and nominating committee.

—Garry Janzen, Executive Minister, Mennonite Church British Columbia

I like *Many Gifts* a lot. I like the scope of the various sections – the biblical stories, the breadth of age groups that are included, and the wide variety of ways for working at calling and growing leaders that it includes. For such a short book, you have included a lot of valuable and interesting material, made it very accessible to most readers, and made helpful references to other resources for people who want to dig deeper.

—Muriel Bechtel, Area Church Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

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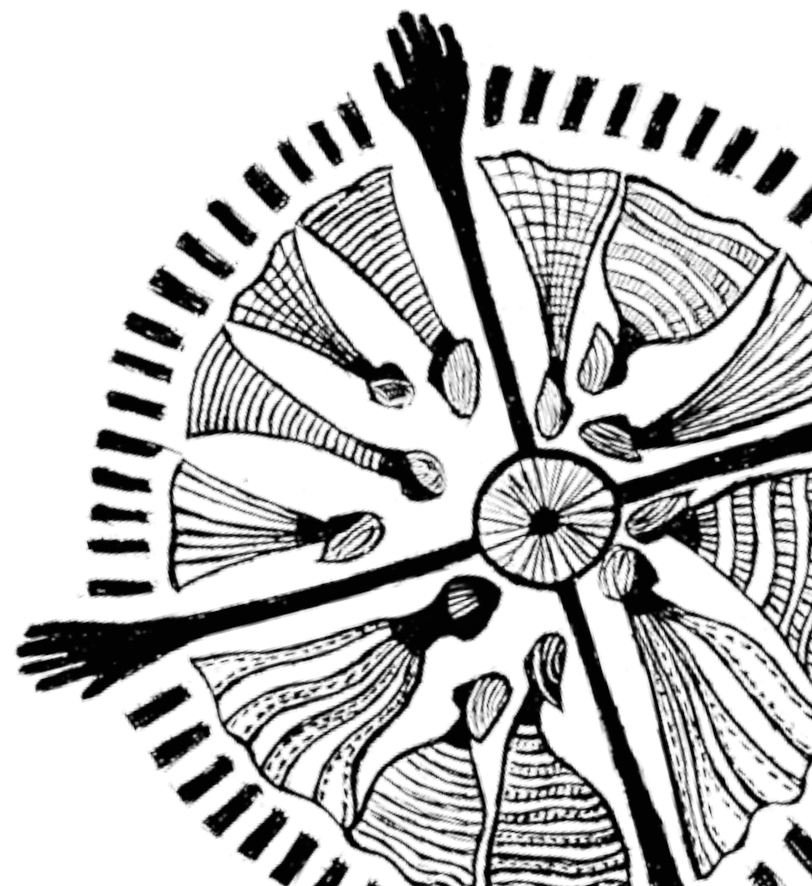
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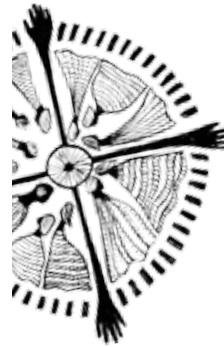
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To the local church with its wide spectrum of congregational leaders and pastors; to anyone who equips leaders.

Table of Contents:

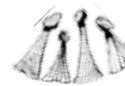
Introduction.....5



1. The Heart of Leadership:
Biblical reflections and stories for a church formed by Scripture.....7



2. Leadership Gifts and Personality Styles:
Identifying gifts for the common good.....11



3. Hear and Respond:
Recognizing God's call in all life stages.....17



4. Leadership Development Strategies:
Mentoring, spiritual friendship and apprenticeship.....25



5. Releasing the Gifts:
Blessing, affirmation and encouragement.....31

***Vision of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA:
Healing and Hope***

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

Purpose Statement: This booklet is to be a practical resource to pastors and other church leaders in calling out and nurturing the gifts of children, youth and adults, to deepen our commitment to forming a people of God, becoming a global church and growing leaders. These are essential for the church if it is to engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ. When people discover their authentic selves and are affirmed for those gifts, they are freed to joyfully serve the church's mission with their varied God given gifts. We want to be a vibrant church that provides the leadership we need to carry out Jesus' *commission to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19).

This is not a book of instructions. It is a guide with some helpful suggestions and resource lists to help our congregations think about developing leaders and a *Culture of Call*¹ at all stages of life and for all forms of ministry. It is our prayer that this booklet will begin that discovery process for many so that the church can bless the world through its growing body of leaders.

*–Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Nurture, Mennonite Church Canada,
and Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister and Director of
Leadership Development, Mennonite Church Canada*

¹ "Culture of a Call" is a term N.A. Mennonites have been using to describe the nurturing of pastoral leadership.

Foreword: Growing Leaders

*Marlene Kropf, Denominational Minister of Worship,
Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership*



Where do leaders come from? And more particularly, where do church leaders come from?

Such questions gain special urgency when the Mennonite Church in both Canada and the United States is facing a generational transfer of leadership. With many pastors and congregational leaders expected to reach retirement age during the next decade, congregations wonder who will lead in the future. At the same time, many young adults are eager to offer their gifts and insights to the church. How will the church meet this challenge?

Finding and calling leaders is one of the church's most important day-to-day tasks. It was one of the first things Jesus did in his public ministry. The early church quickly discovered that it was necessary to call forth leaders for the emerging movement to remain healthy. Throughout Christian history leaders have been called to serve the church and guide its growth and witness in the world.

Somewhere along the way, the church lost sight of its original vision of the Spirit's gifts being given to all members of the body of Christ. Leadership became concentrated in the hands of a few, usually men. As a result, the ministry of ordinary Christians received little attention and the spiritual vitality of the church suffered enormously.

During the early days of the Anabaptist movement in Switzerland and Holland, one fresh moving of God's Spirit renewed the call to ministry for all believers. Out of their engagement with Scripture and their life together, ordinary Christians boldly proclaimed their faith. Many became martyrs as a result of their vigorous witness and faithful commitment to Christ.

In more recent times, the role of leadership in Mennonite congregations has again received special attention. Although we've given creative and sustained energy to strengthening the role of pastoral leadership in the past two decades, we've given far less attention to the call and equipping of congregational leaders. Both congregations and pastors recognize that pastors alone cannot provide adequate leadership for congregations. Nor can congregations remain healthy when the gifts of many members of the body of Christ remain dormant or under-used.

What may have been missing most is the practice of spiritual discernment. A church is not an organization with slots to fill. Rather, it is an organism given life through God's Spirit in which each member is entrusted with gifts for building up the body and for carrying out God's mission in the world (Ephesians 4:7-13). In other words, rather than gearing up to accomplish a new to-do list, we need to discover how to cooperate more fully with the Spirit who is already at work in the church.

Like other Christian practices, the practice of spiritual discernment can be learned. It includes prayer, listening to each other's stories, waiting for the Spirit's guidance, testing with the community, and risking steps of obedience. But when we've discerned the Spirit's call, we're not finished yet. Then comes the creative and life-giving work of equipping new leaders, mentoring them, evaluating their efforts, setting them free to lead, and supporting them with ongoing encouragement and counsel.

We often sing the refrain, "None can stop the Spirit" (from the song, "How can we be silent," #61, *Sing the Journey*). But we can. If the church doesn't do the rigorous, yet life-giving work of discerning gifts and calling forth new leaders, we will surely impede the Spirit's work among us and in the world.

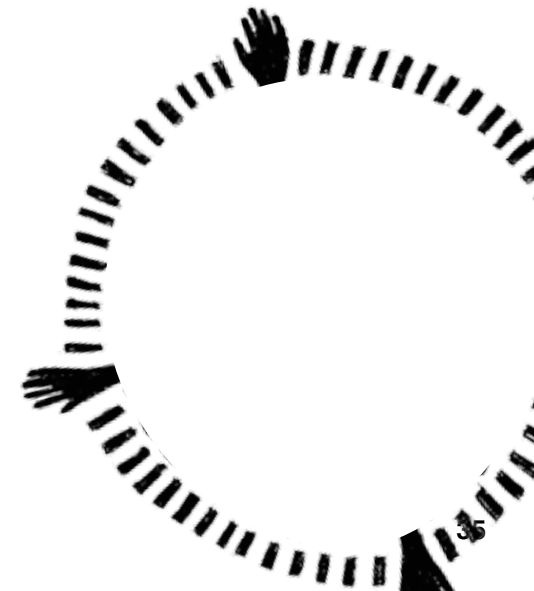
This practical guide encourages us to keep alert, paying close attention to the Spirit's work in the church. It includes helpful resources for pastors, gift discernment committees, and all who engage in mentoring new leaders. May the church be blessed by these efforts and discover fresh new ways to call forth leaders for the mission of the church in the world.

—Marlene Kropf, *Denominational Minister of Worship,*
Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, March 2009

We wish you much joy as you call and equip your people with the "colourful robes" of ministry for the common good of all!

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 4: 20, 21



Releasing of Gifts

As you consider how you will become more intentional about identifying, nurturing and releasing the gifts of individuals within your congregation consider the following leadership attitudes and practical behaviours:

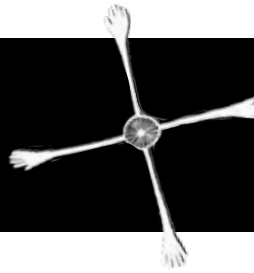
- Leaders will shift their energy and time from taking care of a specific ministry to primarily becoming an equipper for ministry and mission:
 - ~ this includes seeing potential gifts in others and naming these gifts
 - ~ inviting the individual to explore and practice the skill/gift that has been named
 - ~ provide training, practice and ministry opportunity for the development of skills and knowledge
 - ~ Ensure that there is financial support for training and practice
 - ~ Be, or find, a mentor, who walks along side and gives support
- Leadership and the congregation will cultivate a “permission giving mindset” that is open to exploring gifts and testing/experimenting with using those gifts in ministry. In practical terms this means living with some imperfection and mistakes; viewing them as opportunities for growth rather than an indication of failure. This also involves a willingness to imagine, encourage, explore and support new initiatives or ways of engaging in ministry and to appreciatively evaluate what works well and what doesn't.
- Leaders will engage in follow-up reflection with individuals as they explore their gifts and nurture a way of life that invites growing and maturing as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Discussion starters following an opportunity where an individual has engaged in testing his/her gifts:

- ~ What did I/we learn from the experience?
 - ~ How were my gifts used?
 - ~ How did the experience strengthen or challenge my sense of call?
 - ~ How did it deepen my relationship with God?
 - ~ How did it strengthen our sense of community?
 - ~ How will I apply that learning to do even better in another situation?
 - ~ How am I/are we continuing to be called to God's mission in the world?
- Leaders will be open to transformation in the process of calling and mentoring others. Gifts that are activated may call the church into new ministries.

1. The Heart of Leadership: Biblical reflections and stories for a church formed by Scripture

—Karen Martens Zimmerly



A Church formed by Scripture

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone... All who believed were together and had all things in common and day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Imagine every church yielded to the Holy Spirit! Imagine every church giving generously! Imagine every church meeting needs and bearing fruit! Imagine every church boldly proclaiming grace!

The early church presents a compelling image of spiritual vitality lived out (in the work, worship, and the rest of life) not only on Sunday but on Monday as well. They are a healthy body, where the spiritual and physical needs of everyone are taken care of and this is attractive to others. But this was no human initiated activity. The believers responded with openness to receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit and it is this gift of God's presence filling them that enabled them to be the church in their world.

That is our calling. That is our challenge. But how does this happen?

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are a people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9, 10)

While in the Old Testament only some were appointed to be priests in this new order, known as the church, we are a collective priesthood. Earlier in the passage Peter speaks of being a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices. Peter's use of “priesthood” in this passage is to denote a function, a ministry, a service. As understood in the New Testament, the spiritual sacrifices include both the function of worship and prayer, as well as the function of ministry and service (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15-16).

The whole of the Christian community is to be involved in this all of these “priestly” functions. While the functions may differ there is one common purpose and that is to proclaim in word and life what God has so generously done. There is good news to share so grab your robe and put it on!

But what do these robes look like?

Now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are a variety of services but the same Lord, and there are a variety of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

The Scripture is clear that there are a variety of gifts, a variety of services and a variety of activities that produce a multicoloured array of robes. A careful reading of the New Testament texts that list spiritual gifts (Romans 12: 4-8, 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10, Ephesians 4:11-13 and 1 Peter 4:8-11) reveal that while there is some overlap in the gifts that are mentioned, the lists are not identical. This suggests that these are only a sample of the gifts that are needed in order to equip the church for God's mission.

What this rich diversity of gifts has in common is that each gift is a revelation of God's Spirit. These gifts come from God and are activated by God. God is the initiator and God bestows gifts for the blessing of all.

Responding:

Group Response: Consider using the biblical stories in this section for a quarterly Sunday School class or small group Bible Study. The following set of questions could be used to frame each session:

- What kind of leadership gift(s) does the biblical character have?
- How are these gifts identified and affirmed?
- How does the individual grow and mature in the use of his/her gifts?
- How is the activity of God recognized in the story?

Individual Response: Consider some of the following biblical characters who were called to join God in ministry for the welfare of God's people and the world around them. How can their stories guide and shape us?

- Choose a character and Bible passage(s). Read the passage slowly and meditatively several times. Each time take note of the words, phrases, actions that stand out for you, where your imagination was caught.
- Close your meditation time with reading the passage again and with prayer.
- Bring the character and passage to mind during the course of your day as you interact with others and make decisions. How might _____ respond in your situation?

Sample Blessing

Leader: (name of individual), we have watched you grow and see within you a love for Jesus, a desire to serve God, and potential for leadership.

People: We, your church, join with God in calling you to serve (name specific focus) in God's kingdom. We support your decision to dedicate time and conversation to deepening your relationship with Jesus. We bless you to ask questions and discover what it means to be a leader. We encourage you to see your mistakes as learning opportunities. May you find joy and guidance as you listen to the voice of God in your life.

Leader: (*Mentor's name*), we are grateful for your willingness to enter into a mentoring relationship with (name), studying Scripture together, opening yourselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and being accountable to one another.

People: (*Mentor's name*), we offer you our blessing and prayers in your role as mentor.

Individual and Mentor: We gladly enter this new relationship, walking together in friendship and learning. We look forward to hearing new aspects of God's call.

ALL: We covenant together, God helping us,
To love the Lord with all our hearts,
To love each other as ourselves,
And to listen together to God's call on our lives.
We commit ourselves to each other,
Opening ourselves to God's transforming power
In and through us as we represent God to the world.
May our joining together
Mutually bless and strengthen us
As we follow Christ together.

Adapted from a Litany of Celebration from Ministry Quest, a program of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Canada.

Additional prayers of blessing that you may want to use are found in *Sing the Story*, 193 and 194, and in *Sing the Journey*, 160 and 167 or *Words for Worship 2*. For more extensive litanies of dedication, you may wish to download and adapt some of the resources at this Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre link: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/940.

Ministry of Blessing

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3:1).

The blessing of God is rich, extravagant and generous. We experience this blessing most fully through Jesus Christ. Through this blessing God can “*accomplish far more than all we can ask or imagine...*” (Ephesians 3:20). God blesses us in order that God’s blessing is shared and experienced by others in ways that we can hardly imagine!

Parents in the Old Testament had a ritual for bestowing blessings on their children. In Genesis 48:8-16 Jacob lays his hands on Joseph and Joseph’s children and pronounces a blessing. Jacob’s blessing is rooted in the God who faithfully walked with him and his ancestors and who will now carry these two generations into a world beyond the one that Jacob knows. A blessing pronounces hope for the future and invites both the giver of the blessing and the receiver to trust that God is faithful and will provide.

The Mennonite Church *Minister’s Manual* states “Conveying God’s blessing is a rich practice that is deeply embedded in the Bible and Christian custom. Out of the abundance of God’s goodness, we seek God’s blessing and invoke the lavish provision and well-being of God on persons, ventures, events and activities.”¹

Leaders will want to consider a ministry of blessing in the calling and equipping of laity for mission. Blessings are commonly given in settings such as worship but can also be given in other gatherings, such as: a sending at the end of a planning meeting or a Sunday School class; a blessing before beginning a service project or when meeting with an individual; as part of a small group or Bible study, a training event for worship leaders or musicians. Each of these settings and many others are rich opportunities for blessing the gifts that have been identified and the participants who are offering their gifts for God’s mission.

- Live with your Bible character for several months.
- Reflect: How has God been shaping me for ministry through this time of “Dwelling in the Word”? Where do I sense that God may be inviting me to use the gifts I have been given?

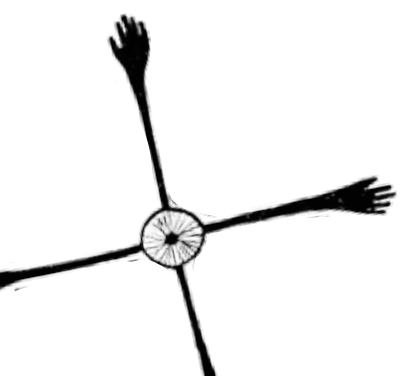
Biblical Leadership Development Stories

1. Exodus 3 and 4: Moses experiences a dramatic call and even then does not feel he has the needed gifts. Yet God calls him to lead the Hebrew people out of a very oppressive situation and provides him with a partner in Aaron, whose gifts complemented Moses’. How would using our gifts take us out of our comfort zone and cause us to rely on and trust God?
2. Exodus 35: 30-35: Bezalel is recognized by Moses as being filled with the spirit of God with skill, intelligence and knowledge in every kind of craft. What unique gifts do people in your congregation bring?
3. Deuteronomy 31, 34; Joshua 1: Joshua, who has been Moses’ assistant, is commissioned to continue what Moses began and leads the Israelite people into the Promised Land. What different kinds of leaders are needed to carry out a vision in your congregation?
4. Luke 6: 7: Jesus called twelve disciples who followed Jesus and were taught by him. He also sent them out two by two. How can we incorporate mentoring? Pairs for learning and ministering?
5. Ruth 1-4: Through marriage and death of her husband, Ruth connects with a foreign people through commitment to her mother-in-law. She develops resourcefulness, courage, and abilities that otherwise she may never have developed. Can we hear God’s call when our human plans fall apart?
6. Luke 10: 38-41: Mary and Martha exemplify gifts of being and doing. How does Jesus’ encounter with these two sisters challenge us to honour both, i.e. not to neglect “being with” Jesus at the expense of all our “doing for”?
7. 1 Samuel 3: Samuel is dedicated to the Lord’s service by his mother, Hannah, when he is still a child. But, even though he is immersed in life within the temple, he needs the guidance of the priest, Eli, to recognize that God is calling him. How are we guiding those whom God has entrusted into our care?
8. Acts 6: 1-7: Sometimes a complaint becomes an opportunity for new ways of doing ministry. The early church grew rapidly and soon realized that even 12 leaders could not do all the work of giving spiritual leadership and taking care of the practical needs of people.

¹ John Rempel, *Minister’s Manual*, Newton, KS, Faith & Life Press, and Herald Press, Scottsdale PA, Waterloo, ON, 1998, 103 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/939.

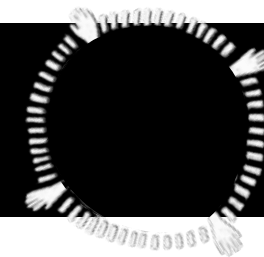
A process of discernment took place to appoint 7 individuals who would ensure that all the widows were fed. Can you discern the opportunity in a complaint that is expressed?

9. Esther 4: Esther finds herself in a life and death, yet opportune situation where she has a choice – to protect her own position or to risk her life in order to save her people. Her Uncle Mordecai has equipped her with the knowledge she needs and challenged her to act for the welfare of her people. Mordecai, in return, willingly carries out the orders that she gives him. Are we willing to be accountable to one another and be directed by other individuals for the welfare of God’s people?
10. 2 Kings 5 and John 6: 1-14: A servant girl in the home of Naaman, the commander of King Aram’s army and the boy with 5 loaves and 2 fishes play important roles in helping others recognize the presence of God. Are we open to receiving the gifts that our children and youth have to offer?
11. Acts 9:36: Tabitha, devoted to good works and acts of charity was greatly grieved when she died because the clothing she had sewn had been a help and encouragement for the widows of the church. How can we support and name the encouragers among us? What might her role in the church have been after God used Peter’s prayer to raise her back to life? Who might be in need of our prayers (like Peter’s) that God would raise them back to a life of meaningful ministry?
12. 1. Timothy 4: 6-16: Timothy’s Christian mother and grandmother, “fanned into flame the gifts God had given him” and Paul was a mentor to him. He grew up in the church and was called to leadership by his community of faith. He is encouraged to remember his call and blessing for ministry and to convince older leaders of his qualifications for ministry by the record of his actions. Whose gifts need fanning into flame and mentoring in our community of faith? Who are the young leaders in our midst that we need to listen to?



5. Releasing the Gifts: Blessing, encouragement and affirmation

–Karen Martens Zimmerly



Ministry of Encouragement and Affirmation

The Apostle Paul didn’t have email as a way of connecting with congregations, so he wrote letters that were hand-delivered and might take months to arrive at their destination. Yet in most of his letters to the various New Testament churches, he begins with a word of encouragement: *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world (Romans 1:8)*. He names their gift and how it serves the larger body and the world. Pastors and congregational leaders play a critical role in giving encouragement that names the gift or working gift and then identifies how this gift contributes to God’s mission. Encouragement is affirming for the individual and when this encouragement is given in a group setting it can model for others how we are all invited to participate in God’s larger story. When recognizing the gifts of others, these gifts grow. Consider a ministry of encouragement as a daily spiritual discipline.

Recommended Resources:

Item	Purpose
A Generous Presence: Spiritual Leadership and the Art of Coaching by Rochelle Melander (Alban, Herndon, VA, 2006) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/937 .	Melander describes how her pastor intentionally points out how individuals in their congregation are like yeast, silently working to change the world. Those whom the pastor recognizes as hospitable seem to open their arms even wider, embracing the ones others might ignore. The ones she names as helpful seek those in need of assistance; and the ones she points to as loving seem to grow even bigger hearts of caring.
Memories, Hopes and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change , by Mark Lau Branson (Alban Institute, 2004) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/938 .	Forster a culture of blessing and releasing by using this book, which applies the Appreciative Inquiry approach to whole congregations and helps them to think in terms of when individuals or the whole congregation are at their best.

Recommended Resources:

Item	Purpose
<p>Children in the Sanctuary: Involving Children Fully in the Worship Life of a Congregation, (Presbyterian and Reformed Educational Partnership, Louisville, KY, 2002) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/915.</p>	<p>The study guide and workbook from the Reformed Church, provides excellent guidelines and examples for involving children as apprentices in worship planning and leadership in the worship service.</p>
<p>Teaming Up: Shared Leadership in Youth Ministry, by Ginny Ward Holderness; Robert S. Hay, (Westminster, Louisville, KY, 1997) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/935.</p>	<p>A comprehensive guide and workbook that involves youth in their own ministry and encourages them to become tomorrow's church leaders. Holderness refocuses the attention on leadership in the youth ministry to young people themselves, thereby providing a helpful apprenticeship model and outline in chapter ten for use in other areas of ministry and leadership development as well.</p>
<p>Leadership Education: Preparing for Congregational Service: Studies in Congregational Caregiving, and Leadership Education: Preparing for Congregational Service: Studies in Preaching and Worship, ed: E. Anne Stuckey, (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart IN, 1996) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/936.</p>	<p>These eight session study guides provide a useful resource for group discussion with persons who provide care or lead worship in the congregation, and help them learn both the "what" and the "how" of caregiving and worship leading. The written assignment possibilities could be used to help persons think more concretely about their work, or to guide an oral follow up evaluation with their ministry supervisor.</p>



2. Leadership gifts and personality styles: Identifying gifts for the common good

–Elsie Rempel



All of us are created in the image of God, but God clothes that image with a multi-coloured array of robes by gifting us with unique personalities and aptitudes. When we join together as the church, the colorful spectrum of these personalities and aptitudes reflects this image of God more fully than any of us can on our own. This is good news! Jesus provides our most complete image of God and the fullest example of what it means for human gifts to be set free in service and to the glory of God. However, as his body on earth, the gifts of Christians working and worshipping together as the church can also be set free for God and the world. When these God given gifts God are set free to be a blessing, we will discover that each congregation has enough, is enough, to be the body of Christ, for the common good, in that context.

For gifts to be set free, they need to be identified and affirmed. **When people discover their authentic selves and are affirmed for those gifts, they often serve with great joy.** And, while only certain gifts fall under the category of leadership gifts, all are important for the health of the body of Christ. Discerning our God given gifts together, as a whole congregation, will bless the church in many ways. The focus of this booklet, however, is the blessing that will be released for the many ministries of the church as leaders emerge out of good gift discernment processes. Such processes will identify and release those leadership gifts for the mission of the church, which is to grow as a community of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world, using all of the gifts of all God's people.

Personal Reflection on the Call to Leadership

Questions, such as the following, can help begin the personal reflection process in which calls to leadership can emerge.¹

1. What are scriptures that significant people have given you?

¹ This set of questions has been taken from the resource, "Shaping your call story" – www.mbsseminary.edu/files/download/Shaping_your_call_story?file_id=12991576. It is one of many valuable leadership development tools that have recently been developed by the Mennonite Brethren Churches in North America. A recommended resource, especially for discerning the call into pastoral ministry, is *Finding Leaders for Tomorrow's Churches: Discernment Resources for Churches* (Canadian Conference of MB Churches, Winnipeg, MB and Kindred Productions, Hillsboro, KS, 2007) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/906.

2. What scriptures do you keep rehearsing and reflecting on?
3. Which biblical call stories echo in your soul?
4. What are gifts and aptitudes that God has equipped you with?
5. Who has been an encourager or opened doors of opportunity for you?
6. Identify one event or incident which you believe God has used to change your direction, focus, or purpose.
7. What do you want others to understand about who you are, who you are becoming, and how they can participate in your growth?

Models of leadership

Even while there are gifts other than leadership gifts, leadership comes in a great variety of forms that emerge from childhood on. Some leaders have gifts for wonderful worship leading. Other gifts are more pastoral and shine as people listen and engage in friendship and encouragement ministries. Some leaders are inquisitive and gifted interpreters of the Word, while others lead by teaching that which has been interpreted by others. Some lead through their actions, organizing and activating others like good coaches, or by offering gracious hospitality, while other leaders provide a poetic or musical voice for God's people. All of these leadership styles can be used by God and the church, when it gathers and when it scatters, for forming a people of God that engages the world with good news.

Natural and Spiritual/Working and Waiting Gifts

Gift discernment material tends to focus either on natural qualities (those with which we were born and have been encouraged to develop) or on spiritual gifts (those gifts with which the Holy Spirit equips us to be in Christ). The Holy Spirit frequently works with our natural qualities, but can also equip a person with new strengths and abilities when that is needed to accomplish God's purposes.

Natural gifts can be discovered through a person's basic interests and by reflecting on what enhances or depletes a person's energy, or what helps a person grow in their awareness of God. Spiritual gifts may build on natural gifts, or may be received in response to a specific need, where God equips and works through us in surprising ways.

ing as a leadership training tool from his culture.¹ Backward teaching is used on Cree trap lines. Instead of teaching the apprentice trapper all the steps in sequence before they begin, the experienced trapper invites the apprentice along to watch and see how it is done. When the trap is skilfully laid and one last thing is needed—for snow to be brushed over it—the apprentice is invited to do that final step. On the next hunting trip, the apprentice is allowed to do the final step plus the step just before it. This continues until the apprentice is able to do the whole procedure. The goal of setting the trap so that it will catch an animal has been clear all along. The apprentice experiences success from the beginning, even while he is equipped to work incrementally toward the goal of setting a good trap on his own.

His mentor has seen to it that the more difficult tasks have been done with the needed skill, while the skills of the apprentice grow gradually. The traps have been well set, and have not hindered the hunters in bringing back skins and meat to the community.

What would backward teaching look like when training leaders for the church? While each ministry of the church would apply this strategy differently, to suit its specific needs and goals, apprentices could be taken along in many ministry areas, to observe, learn and participate as they are able. Perhaps an emerging leader could be invited along on a pastoral visit and given a closing prayer to offer at the end of the visit. Music leading might begin by having the apprentice turn pages while the trainer plays. In service and outreach ministries similar support roles could help the apprentice gain confidence and skill as they provide incremental support. Worship leading could be done in a similar way by a younger and more experienced leader. Pastors could meet with a group of youth to discuss the scripture for next Sunday's sermon and provide enough background and context so that their reflections can shape the direction of the sermon.² Worship committee chairpersons could meet with a group of upper elementary children and provide them with the building blocks of the worship service, gather their suggestions on the flexible pieces, assign and help them prepare for readings or certain prayers.

¹ CD of Native Ministries Partnership Circle meetings, Mennonite Church Canada, Winnipeg, March 2007 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/934.

² Doug Klassen, Pastor of the Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, AB, has been doing this for years, and finds it to be a very positive experience for himself and for the youth class.

Recommended Resources:

Item	Purpose
Soul Tending: Life Forming Practices for Older Youth and Young Adults , (Abingdon, Nashville, TN, 2002) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/930 .	This book was developed as a resource for youth and young adults, but is becoming a valued resource for other adults as well. For questions and guidelines to help you start a spiritual friendship, see Youngman's book, 182.
Finding a Spiritual Friend: How Friends and Mentors can Make your Faith Grow , by Timothy Jones, (Upper Books, Nashville, TN, 1998) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/931 .	Good for Adult Bible study, fellowship or service groups could encourage the formation of spiritual friendships.
Closer Than a Brother: Building Deeper Friendships , by Sven Eriksson, (Faith and Life Resources, Newton, Scottdale, and Waterloo, 2004) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/932 .	Men's Groups who engage in this study would find a good guide for the journey of developing spiritual friendships.

c. Apprenticeship

Joyce Ann Mercer writes about developing language and habits of faith, two essential areas of leadership development, in the church's children, as an apprenticeship. Such an apprenticeship emphasizes both faith talk, which she calls "insider speech" with faith walk, which she calls "core practices" in a way that is reminiscent of the Early Church's approach.

She writes: For children to become genuine apprentices of Christian faith and life, they must have opportunities to participate with others in the "core practices" (singing, mission activities, sacraments, ways of interpreting scripture and patterns of prayer) that define faith and life, or that are formative and constitutive of an alternative identity in the world.¹

Sarah Covin Juengst provides a helpful breakdown of apprenticeship into four stages: observation (learning by seeing), assisting (assuming minor and then more difficult responsibilities tasks), teaching (or doing some other leadership task) under supervision (with friendly evaluative debriefing), and then teaching (leading) alone, without a mentor present.²

The apprenticeship approach receives an interesting, and wholesome twist, in the following illustration from Cree hunting practices. Ray Aldred, a Christian Theologian who is part of the Cree Nation (part of the larger Algonquian Nation of North America), recommends backward teach-

¹ Joyce Ann Mercer, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood*, Chalice Press, St Louis, MI, 2005, 204 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/945.

² Sarah Covin Juengst, *Equipping the Saints: Teacher Training in the Church*, Westminster, Louisville, KY, 1998, 112 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/933.

Gifts that come naturally, that we are already using or have strong potential for using, are easiest to identify. "They are commonly referred to as your *working gifts*...By comparison, a *waiting gift* is a gift that you may have the potential for developing... It is waiting to be identified and developed. Waiting gifts can often be identified by looking into your interests, inclinations, sensitivities and concerns."¹ **Digging Deeper**

The process of discovering and affirming gifts can be supported by a variety of personality and learning style tools, such as the Enneagram, Myers Briggs Temperament inventory, Multiple Intelligence inventories, or Personal Profile Systems such as DiSC.

The Enneagram

Item	Purpose
The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective by Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert . trans.: Peter Heinegg . (Cross Road Publishing, New York, 2004) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/908 .	Provides insight into the enneagram from a Christian worldview, with sections on its origin, what it is, the nine enneagram personality types, and how Christians can benefit from the enneagram. Rohr views the nine types from a Christian perspective, identifies the root sin of each type, and how God can redeem that sin into a beautiful gift. He also talks about what gifts the types naturally have, and how we can grow in those.
Personality Types: Using the Enneagram for Self-Discovery by Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson. (Houghton Mifflin, NY, 1996).	A substantial book, but very user friendly. Recommended by Mennonite pastors to use with identified leaders who are willing to work intensively at self discovery for the purpose of better collaboration and service with their gifts.

¹ Alvin J. Vander Griend, *Discover Your Gifts: and Learn How to Use Them*, third edition, student book, Faith Alive, Grand Rapids, MI, 2008, 43 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/907.

Myers Briggs Temperament Inventory and applications to spirituality

Item	Purpose
Personality test based on Jung-Myers-Briggs typology – http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp .	This free, online, test can be completed in about five minutes. As such it is not as accurate as more extensive assessments, but it provides a helpful starting point.
Discover your Spiritual Type: a Guide to Individual and Congregational Growth , by Corinne Ware, Alban Institute, 1996 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/909 .	Ware provides a framework for people to name and understand their spiritual experience – in much the same way Myers-Briggs typology provides a framework for understanding personality type. Readers explore four spiritual types: head, heart, mystic, and Kingdom with exercises that allow individuals and groups to assess their type.
Soul Types: Matching Your Personality and Spiritual Path , by Sandra Krebs Hirsh and Jane A.G. Kise, Augsburg Fortress, 2006 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/910 .	By experts in the field of psychological type who explain how the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator theory can help people discover their most natural approach to 'soul work' and the paths that add fullness to life, while recognizing the limitations of doing only 'what comes naturally'.

Multiple Intelligences

Item	Purpose
Gather'Round Handbook , Mennonite Publishing Network, (Scottsdale, Newton and Waterloo, 2006) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/338 .	This handbook of the Mennonite and Brethren Sunday School Curriculum, <i>Gather 'Round: Hearing & Sharing God's Good News</i> has helpful, concise descriptions of the multiple intelligences for identifying our natural gifts on pp. 58-59.
Praying All Ways: A Multiple Intelligences Approach to Prayer , by Carol-jean Willie, (Harcourt, Orlando, FL, 2005) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/911 .	Provides a fresh perspective, and multiplicity of instructions for new ways of praying and worshiping after providing an excellent introduction to Multiple Intelligence theory and an inventory (pp. i-x) to help people determine their dominant ways of learning, praying and worshiping.
Prayer & Multiple Intelligences: Who I Am Is How I Pray , by Bernadette T. Stankard, (Paperback – Aug 2005) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/956 .	Similar to "Praying All Ways," but less of a practitioner's manual, and more easily accessed in Canada, Stankard's chapters on prayers that appeal to our different intelligences will help users identify their gifts while opening up new and fresh avenues in which their prayer lives are likely to thrive. Great for small group use.

b. Spiritual Friendships

This spiritual practice has much to offer the whole church as we engage in the process of finding and growing leaders. It has the potential to bless and encourage everyone, not just the leaders among us. Spiritual friendship has a long tradition in the Christian church, though Mennonites have only recently engaged in intentional spiritual friendships. It has some similarities to formal spiritual direction, but it is reciprocal and informal.

Jesus modeled spiritual friendship for us when he said, "I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends..." (John 15:15) Jennifer Youngman describes spiritual friendship as follows:

In any close friendship, two people will share what is most important in their lives: hopes, dreams, fears, and concerns about relationships, as well as details of their everyday lives. In a spiritual friendship two people may also share such things, but in addition there will be a stated focus on each person's relationship with God.

John Wesley used to ask, "How is it with your soul?" That is a good starting point for a spiritual friendship. In a spiritual friendship people agree to share about their spiritual lives in a way that encourages each one's growth in God. They might set aside a regular time to talk about what is happening in their prayer lives, how the words of a sermon struck them, or an image that came during a period of silence.

Spiritual friends trust each other and pledge to keep conversations confidential. They practice holy listening and simple joys together. Your goal will be to each know God better and grow on your individual spiritual journeys.¹

What would it look like to incorporate spiritual friendships into our congregational life so that leaders and others would be nurtured and their gifts would be more easily identified? In ministries with primary and middle school children, opportunities to sign up as *faith buddies* could be integrated into events with children. They could be supplied with a booklet that describes a *faith buddy system*, a pledge of confidentiality, and has age appropriate conversation prompts. Occasional check-ins with an adult spiritual guide could support and nurture this process. With junior and senior youth, a *spirit peer pairing* could be offered in addition, or as an alternative, to the mentoring/adult friendship program offered by many congregations. Young, and other, adults would benefit from guidance offered in the following books.

¹ Jennifer A. Youngman, *Soul Tending: Life Forming Practices for Older Youth and Young Adults*, Abingdon, Nashville, TN, 2002, 182 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/930.

As our church becomes more intentional about growing leaders we will do well to be more intentional about pairing up emerging leaders with suitable mentors, and equipping their relationship with supportive resources and events. This pairing can happen with all ages, and with various levels of formality and informality. Young children who are especially energetic often get invited to serve as ‘teacher’s helper.’ If this is seen as mentoring, rather than just a class management strategy, gifts can be named and claimed for the common good. During adolescence, mentors often provide a safe adult with whom the adolescent can associate as they individuate from parents, and with whom they can test emerging values and interests that will shape their adult lives. As youth mature and develop their vocational interests and training, mentoring can focus on helping them develop and test those skills, providing coaching and contacts into the social and ecclesial networks where they can blossom as young and maturing leaders. Whenever adults make major shifts in their lives, church members who are more experienced in that area can serve as occasional or longer term mentors. Seeking out and nurturing such relationships in our increasingly urban and socially disconnected congregations could do much to restore health to, and leaders for, all aspects of our congregational lives.

Recommended Resources:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Mentoring: A Guide for Ministry , by Cheryl Lawrie, (Discipleship Resources , Nashville, TN, 2005) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/928 .	In this ecumenical and practical guide for clergy, congregational leaders, and youth/young adult workers, Lawrie describes the purpose of mentoring and the larger context of vocation/life purpose by weaving practical considerations and basics for mentoring into the material.
Making Disciples in the Congregation: A guide to Christian Formation through the process of mentoring and the experience of congregational worship: Occasional Papers #17, by Paul Verluuis III, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary , Elkhart, IN, 1995 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/929 .	This book on mentoring adults, a case study of how the Christian initiation process was carried out in one Mennonite congregation, is a helpful resource for preparing adults without a church background for meaningful membership in the congregation.
Mentoring Matters – a guide for building mentoring relationships , MB Biblical Seminary, Fresno, CA, 2008. (MinistryQuest.com) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/941 .	This booklet is written as a guide for mentors and mentees who desire to have a strong and fruitful relationship. Includes encouragement and inspiration, instructions, tools and a strong reason to say yes to a mentoring relationship.

Spiritual Gifts Resources

<i>Item</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Discover Your Gifts: and learn how to use them, (third edition,) by Alvin J. Vander Griend, (Faith Alive, Grand Rapids, MI, 2008) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/907 .	This is a five-session adult curriculum that approaches gift discovery around the gifts that are named in Scripture in a manner that will be comfortable for many Mennonites.
Talent Show: Your Faith in Full Colour , by Dave Lichti, (MMA, Goshen, IN, 2005) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/912 .	A small-group Bible study on the stewardship of talent that works with a Spiritual gift inventory, and applies the use of these gifts to church and everyday life.
Lifekeys , by Jane Kise, David Stark, Sandra Hirsh, (Bethany House, Grand Rapids, MI, 2005) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/943 .	An eight-session textbook and workbook built around the metaphor of an orchestra, in which we learn that God has an important part for each of us to play and that fulfillment is making music where God wants us to play.
Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts , by Charles V. Bryant, (Upper Room Books, Nashville, TN, 1991) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/913 .	A practical look at how the gifts of the Holy Spirit can renew the lives of individuals and revitalize the church’s ministry. Includes an in-depth description and solid biblical foundation for 32 spiritual gifts.

DiSC

<i>Item</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
DiSC Classic Profile , also called DiSC Test, Personal Profile System, DiSC Profile 2800 (A Biblically oriented version), and DiSC Personality Profile, by John Geier, available through www.DiSCProfile .	A group of psychological inventories based on the 1928 work of psychologist William Moulton Marston , for examining the behaviour of individuals in their environment or within a specific situation. DiSC looks at behavioural styles and preferences and is an acronym for: Dominance – relating to control, power and assertiveness, Influence – relating to social situations and communication, Steadiness (submission in Marston’s time) – relating to patience, persistence, and thoughtfulness, and Conscientiousness (or caution, compliance in Marston’s time) – relating to structure and organization. Recommended by two of Mennonite Church Canada’s five area church ministers.

4. Leadership Development Strategies: Mentoring, spiritual friendship and apprenticeship.

–Elsie Rempel



Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA are making it a priority to grow leaders for the church, partly in response to a critical, continuing need for pastors and other leaders for the many ministries of our gathered and scattered church. However, growing leaders is always an integral part of being a healthy, thriving church. God never runs out of opportunities for those who are willing to use and develop their gifts as they participate in the incoming reign of God on Earth. One of the reasons Mennonites have a long history of founding and supporting church schools is because we see these as integral for growing Christian leaders. However, there are also many informal ways of helping people of all ages grow and lead others to grow in faith and service. This chapter explores a few of these informal ways.

a. Mentoring

One method for growing leaders for the church, that has been effective since the church's beginnings, is that of mentoring. Both Jesus' ministry and the way the apostles followed his example in training the leaders of the early church, model mentoring strategies for today's church.¹

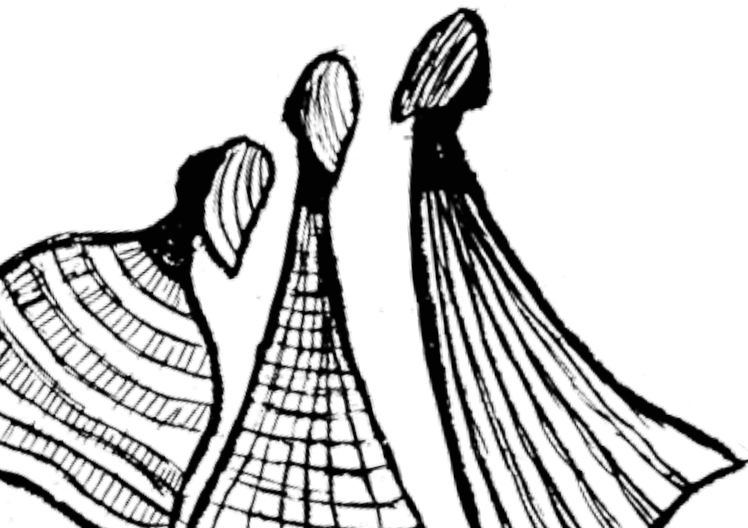
By definition a mentor has knowledge, skills, experiences, and spiritual qualities to which an apprentice/new leader might well aspire. The mentor serves as listener, advocate, and resourcing friend for the growth of the apprentice being mentored. Giving oneself to a relationship of trust, truth, respect, and prayer can be rewarding to the mentor and bring the satisfaction and joy of entrusting to others what has been learned through years of serving God in a leadership role.²

Walter Wright states that mentoring is "an intentional, exclusive, intensive, voluntary relationship between the leader and the follower... in which one person empowers the other by sharing himself or herself and his or her resources."³ All who are engaged in church leadership have benefited from relationships with people who accompanied, encouraged, and believed in us as we grew in confidence and leadership skills.

¹ See different aspects of mentoring in Mark 3:14, Luke 6:40, 2 Timothy 2:1-2 and 3:10, 1 Peter 5:3, Acts 18:24-26, Romans 7:21-25, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Ephesians 4:11-12, Matthew 10-11:1, Philippians 2:5-7.

² Adapted from the Mennonite Church Credentialing packet for beginning pastors – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/927.

³ Walter Wright, *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service*, Great Britain, Paternoster, 2000, 44 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/926.

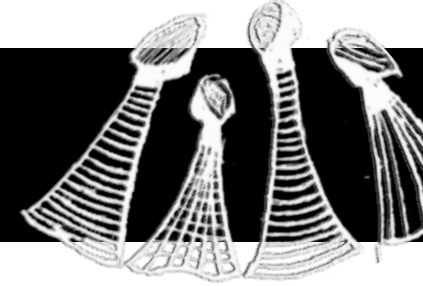


Recommended resources:

Item	Purpose
Aging, Spirituality, and Religion: A Handbook, Vol. 2 , by Melvin A. Kimble (Author), Susan H. McFadden (Editor). (Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN, 2003) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/955 .	The essays in this book offer wisdom to readers of all ages going through any life-transition. In addition to substantive theoretical essays, this book offers many examples of how religion and spirituality are encountered in the growth experiences and life crises of older adults and their families, includes suggestions of service opportunities for older adults.
Called for Life: Finding Meaning in retirement , by Paul C. Clayton. (Alban Institute, Hendon, VA, 2008) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/922 .	The eight chapters and related study questions of this book respond to the insecurities, transitions, and opportunities that face people as they retire.
A Journey Called Aging: Challenges and Opportunities in Older Adulthood , by James C. Fisher and Henry C. Simmons. (New York, Haworth Press, 2007) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/923 .	Examines the significant changes and major landmarks between 60 and 90 and presents an insightful exploration of the years between entry into older adulthood and death. A blend of research based findings and anecdotes present a new way of looking at these life stages.
Growing Old in Christ , Editors: Hauerwas, Stoneking, Meador, Cloutier; (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/924 .	Substantive theological treatment of issues regarding aging and faithfulness in all of life's seasons.
The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully , Joan Chittister. (New York: Blue-Bridge, 2008) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/925 .	This inspirational and illuminating work looks at the many facets of the aging process, including its purposes, challenges, and surprises. Aging is presented as a natural, active, productive, and deeply rewarding part of life. Issues such as the temptation towards isolation, the need to stay involved, the importance of health and well-being, the ending of old relationships, the fear of tomorrow, and the mystery of forever, are addressed.

3. Hear and Respond: Recognizing God's call in all life stages

–Karen Martens Zimmerly and Elsie Rempel



“Here I am and I’m listening for God’s call.”

When Bryan Moyer Suderman sings *In the Highways*,¹ by Maybelle Carter, he adapts the refrain from, “I’ll be somewhere working for my Lord” to “I’ll be somewhere listening for my name.” When his CD, *God’s Love is for Everybody*, was introduced to the children’s club in one Mennonite congregation, children were encouraged to scatter and hide in the darkened sanctuary. When the children had all disappeared from view, the leader called out children’s names, simulating the way God calls us by name. When a name was called, the child popped up from his hiding place and said “I’m Ben, and I’m listening for my name,” then popped down to hide somewhere else. The children were excited and engaged. When Kate’s name was called, she answered, “Here I am, and I’m listening for God’s call.” Yes, indeed! After a momentary silence, the game continued, but in that moment everyone was reminded that God is at work in our midst, calling leaders, and that Kate, like Samuel of old, is attuned to that call.

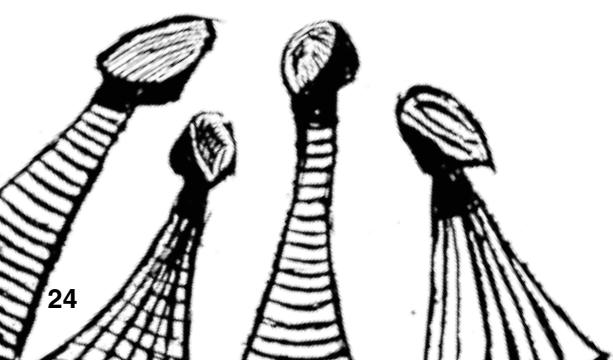
Leaders come in all ages

The biblical record includes stories of individuals being called into God’s mission at all ages of life; children like Samuel, teenagers like Mary, young adults like David and Daniel, adults like the disciples and Paul, seniors like Abraham and Sarah, or Simeon and Anna. While each calling is unique, such a diversity of people suggests that age is not a defining factor. God desires and invites people of all ages to join in God’s mission in the world.

Hearing the Call

Young Samuel hears an unknown voice calling in the darkness of the night, but only after three trips to Eli’s room does Eli finally recognize it is God who is calling Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-9). God then delivers bad news. Samuel is not sure that he wants to share it, yet with coaching from a wise but fallible Eli, Samuel speaks the message God has given him. Samuel continues to mature in leadership so that “none of his words fall to the ground” (3:19). His leadership is shaped by continued encounters with God and recognition by the people of Israel that he is trustworthy.

¹ Bryan Moyer Suderman, CD, *God’s Love is for Everybody*, track 12, (Waterloo, ON, Scottsdale, PA, Newton, KS, Faith & Life Resources and Mennonite Church Canada, Winnipeg, Man., 2002) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/284.



Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA leaders continue to hear that local churches are finding it increasingly challenging to find individuals who will serve in their various ministries. Clearly there is a need for people with a wide variety of gifts. How will the children, youth and adults of our congregations hear the voice of God calling them?

Across this land, whether in rural or urban contexts, there are so many voices calling for our attention that the call of God can be muffled. Thankfully, like Samuel, we are not left alone in the discerning process! The biblical story suggests that the call to leaders begins with God who invites our partnership as individuals and communities of faith.

As we consider the immediate and future need for leaders in our church, both pastoral and lay, we need to be intentional about becoming “learning partners” in ministry for the new time in which we live. Old practices no longer seem to work. We may not be able to find the individual to fill a role in the current structure such as a deacon or Sunday School teacher or board member but there may be those who are open to other forms of ministry with a different focus. Consider the role you have within your local congregation or area church. Whom could you invite as a learning partner to explore and participate in one specific aspect of the work to which you have been called?

It took Samuel and Eli more than one encounter to recognize the call of God. Being intentional about becoming learning partners in ministry is more than a one time task to check off on a “to do” list. It invites ongoing conversation between the partners to reflect and ponder: How might God be calling you/me in this ministry situation? What is God saying? How will we respond?

In the process of working and learning together we may be surprised how God becomes present in our midst and transforms our ministry to face our current reality and provide the leadership we need.

Preparing for New Leaders: Questions for Leaders to Ponder

As you consider your area of ministry and those with whom you work:

1. How are you nurturing spiritual vitality (individually and corporately) that focuses on recognizing the presence of God and God’s ability to transform?
2. How are you intentionally cultivating a sense of call to serve in mission and ministry in the church and the world, rather than calling people to fill a position?
3. Considering all ages, who in your congregation seems to have qualities or gifts for the kind of ministry you are involved in?

older adults face transitions such as early retirement or the early death of a spouse, grief work and other transition processes often release gifts and energy for pursuing interests and careers in new areas. For instance, it was only after losing a spouse that C.S. Lewis, began writing fiction, at the age of 59. Similarly the shocking bombing of the World Trade Fair towers in New York on September 11, 2001, and the sudden death of her spouse while out jogging, triggered a transformation in Rachel Nafziger Hartzler to stop nursing, enroll in a Master of Divinity program at AMBS, publish a book on Grief and Sexuality¹, and become a pastor.

Extended Middle Age describes a relatively new phenomenon in western society. Many people now retire while they are still healthy and energetic, so they replace their former work with another set of activities. This cohort includes many of the baby boomers who are now entering retirement. Helping this segment of our congregations discern and offer their ministry gifts and passions will help equip the church for God’s mission in the world.

Elderly Adults describes those adults whose energy and health no longer allow them to be physically active. These adults, whether their years are advanced or not, are challenged to shift from doing to being, from independence to dependence on others. Some of these adults are graced with the ability to claim the value of being, and become models of grace-filled living and intimacy with God. This is also a significant leadership gift, a gift that can help those who are still too active, slow down, and take time to be, and prepare for the spiritual intimacy that this final stage of life can offer. When elderly adults are given permission and space to ask their significant faith questions, they may offer significant leadership in the area of making transitions and living within new parameters.

¹ Rachel Nafziger Hartzler, *Grief and Sexuality: Life after Losing a Spouse*, Herald Press, 2006 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/921.

d. Adults

The need for encouragement and affirmation continues as young adults move into adulthood. Frequently it happens through spiritual friendships and less formal forms of encouragement such as fellowship or ministry groups where gifts continue to emerge as adults rise to the varied challenges of work, family and church life. Faith continues to develop as adults keep exploring what it means to find and claim vocation: a purpose for one's life that is aligned with the purposes of God. Such transitions carry great potential for developing additional leadership gifts for, as they manage these transitions, many will become increasingly responsible, mature, ministering people of faith in our congregations.

Vocation needs to be reclaimed as part of responsible, mature, Christian selfhood. The notion of vocation needs to inform and transform the lives of and ministries with the adults in our congregations.

Recommended resource:

Item	Purpose
Becoming Adult Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith , by James W. Fowler, (Jossey-Bass, 2000) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/920 .	In this updated reissue of his 1984 classic on faith development theory, Fowler shows how communities of faith can support and nurture individuals as they shape themselves, and are shaped, in spirit and in faith. He connects his previous work to the contemporary conversation about identity and selfhood in postmodernity and invites readers to explore what it means to find and claim a Christian vocation.

e. Older Adults¹

Middle Age begins somewhere before we reach the retirement age of 65, but its beginning is hard to define. Awareness of being “middle age” often begins with familial life transitions such as the death of one's parents or the birth of grandchildren. “Adult life appears to be made up of stable periods and of transitions. The stable periods often stretch out over a number of years unless interrupted by some cataclysmic event; the transitions are short in duration and intense in character.”² When healthy

¹ Older adulthood consists of many stages. Some experts on aging say there are more life stages after retirement than before. However, current resource books tend to span these stages within single volumes. Therefore, the recommended resources for all stages of older adulthood have been combined.

² Daniel Levinson (1978) quoted from “A framework for ministry for the last third of life,” Melvin A. Kimble (Author), Susan H. McFadden (Editor). *Aging Spirituality and Religion*, vol. 2, (Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN, 2003), p.82.

4. How will you invite them to use their gifts? How will you equip them? How will you engage them in reflection on their ministry? How will you support them as they change and grow through the ministry? How will the ministry change and grow because of them?
5. Are you as a leader open to change? Are you open to new ways of engaging in mission that will be brought by those whom you have called and mentored?

Identifying Emerging Leaders

a. Children

Leadership gifts begin emerging very early in life. Observing children at play will reveal those who are initiators, creative, compassionate, articulate, organizers, etc.

Even young children experience a deep satisfaction when activities that give them joy are appreciated and imitated by others. When we welcome and support children as apprentices in the varied ministries of the church, their areas of giftedness and leadership potential become evident and develop.

Recommended Resources:

Item	Purpose
Pathways to Leadership: Training for Young Leaders ages 9-12; A Manual for Church Planners and Mentors , by June Holohan, (Presbyterian Church in Canada, Toronto, 2004) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/914 .	Working through the leadership training sessions helps identify and form young leaders in the areas of worship planning and leading.
Children in the Sanctuary: Involving Children Fully in the Worship Life of a Congregation , (Presbyterian and Reformed Educational Partnership , Louisville, KY, 2002) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/915 .	This study guide and the accompanying DVD include six distinct segments addressing the following topics: What is Worship?; Promises Made at Baptism; Opportunities and Challenges When Children Participate in Corporate Worship; Children Participating in Worship; Children Leading in Worship; and Children Planning Worship.
Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood , Joyce Ann Mercer, (Chalice Press, St. Louis, MI, 2005) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/915 .	This book on Christian education and children presents a compelling invitation to practice full inclusion of children in all aspects of church ministry and outreach.

b. Youth

Youth are often eager to reflect critically on social issues and seek friendships in which they can test the values, faith and beliefs that have formed them. It is in these friendships that their leadership skills can be identified and encouraged. If churches have a mentoring program, the observations of the youth's mentor can help the church identify these emerging leaders. If they share similar gifts, encouraging them to engage in ministry together as a junior/senior pair will deepen the mentoring relationship as well as provide valuable training for the young leader.

Mentors and youth leaders can identify and encourage youth to serve the congregation from their unique areas of giftedness. Such involvement will help the youth find greater meaning in congregational life. Their skills and gifts are often reaching levels where they serve effectively and further develop their gifts as they lead worship, preach mini-sermons, organize outreach and service activities, or serve at church camps. Church settings that are characterized by encouragement and freedom to experiment, along with a willingness to guide, will identify and develop many congregational leaders in this age group.

Recommended Resources:

Item	Purpose
<i>Beyond Me: Grounding Youth Ministry in God's Story</i> , by Wendell J. Loewen, (Faith and Life Resources, 2008) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/916 .	Reading through this book as a group of youth sponsors would provide a solid Anabaptist theological foundation for working with youth and helping them grow in Christian ministry.
<i>Building Assets Together: 101 Group Activities for Helping Youth Succeed</i> , Jolene L. Roehlkepartain Search Institute, (Minneapolis, MN, 1995) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/959 .	Bring your classroom youth group to life with these interactive experiential activities about some of the most important things in life for youth. This book gives creative, easy-to-use activities to introduce developmental assets – the building blocks of healthy development to young people. (Curriculum: 30 sessions)
<i>Lives to Offer: Accompanying youth on their vocational quests</i> , Dori Grinenko Baker & Joyce Ann Mercer, (The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, OH, 2007) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/958 .	Youth leaders, parents, teachers and pastors are invited to companion youth toward callings that matter. Voices of power, control, dominance and consumption are challenged and church based voices and models of grace are offered.

c. Young Adults

Whether we speak of young adults or emerging adults, it is important to recognize that, in North American society, this cohort now extends to at least age thirty, in contrast to earlier understandings of this life stage. Today's young adults often remain critical and sensitive to authenticity, or the lack thereof in the church, but they also tend to "have big dreams for what the church *could* be if it were to "fulfill its purpose," "be relevant," or "truly follow Christ." This is in itself a great gift to the church, if older adults can accept these dreams without feeling defensive or discredited.¹ Young adults' leadership gifts are frequently being honed in the workplace as well as in many facets of congregational life. Older leaders who are eager to hear and encourage the young adult's dreams "of what the church could be," and who are not overly threatened by young adult's frequently critical analysis of what they perceive the church to be, are important conversation and prayer partners for young adult leaders. Affirmation and guidance from such adults can do much to enhance and claim the leadership gifts of young adults for the church and its mission.

Recommended resources:

Item	Purpose
<i>BikeMovement: A Mennonite Young Adult Perspective on Church</i> . Ed. James R. Krabill ; Alicia Horst ; Tim Showalter , Mennonite Mission Network , (Elkhart, IN, 2007) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/450 .	Church leaders reading this book together, or viewing the DVD by the same name, would be given a good window into the worldview and ways some Mennonite young adults frame and engage issues of being the church.
<i>Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith</i> , by Sharon Daloz Parks , Jossey-Bass , (San Francisco, CA, 2000) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/917 .	This book anchors mentoring in the rich dynamic of developmental theory, while challenging the reader to heightened levels of accountability. The examples Parks offers inspire the reader to create stimulating mentoring environments that foster growth and development.
<i>Thank you for Asking: Conversations with Young Adults about the Future Church</i> , by Sara Wenger Shenk , (Herald Press, PA, 2005) – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/919 .	This is a book of stories – the stories of young adults as told to other young adults who are working hard with imagination, longing, and love to weave a coherent faith and way of life. They show the way to a church that will be authentic, down-to-earth and life giving for their generation.
http://young.anabaptistradicals.org/	This website and blog allow you to read (or participate in) conversations with young Anabaptists about what it means politically, socially, and theologically to live faithfully, rooted in the spirit of early Anabaptism.

¹ Tim Showalter, Preface, *Missio Dei: exploring God's work in the world: Bike Movement: A Mennonite young adult perspective on the church*, ed. by Alicia Horst and Tim Showalter, Mennonite Mission Network, Elkhart, IN, 2007, 2 – www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/918.