



Do you know the ABC's of Christianity? Do you know what they are? Some people use the ABC acronym for sharing the gospel-Admit-Believe-Commit. Admit that you are a sinner in need of salvation. Believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is your only hope. Commit your life to him, trust Christ alone for your salvation. That's not a bad summary of the good news, is it?

Those are the ABC's of the Christian faith but they are not the ABC's that I have in mind. Nor am I thinking of these ABC's-Attendance, Buildings and Cash. Or some call them the 3 B's-Bodies, Buildings and Bucks. None of these are goals or ends in themselves, but a church must take them into consideration. You never run a church just to increase attendance, to build more buildings and to increase cashflow, but you would be foolish to ignore these ABC's. In fact, this is precisely what I have talked about the last two weeks, isn't it? We have looked in depth at our attendance, how to best fit into our current building (because we don't have a spare half a million dollars lying around) and how to afford all of it. These ABC's are not the foundation of a church but they are integral to it.

The ABC's that I have in mind are the ones that define the role of a pastor. If you were with us last week, I showed you from the ministry of Paul and Barnabus and from our current situation, that hiring a second pastor makes a lot of sense. I also told you that this Sunday I would describe the ideal role of this second pastor. Here is a summary of his role as ABC's.

**Attain to the unity in the faith**  
**Build up the body of Christ**  
**Clothe yourself with Christ**

These ABC's are taken from Ephesians 4, so let's read a portion together.

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,*

The PURPOSE of hiring a pastor is found in the ABC's.  
The PROCESS of reaching these goals is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.  
The PERSON is the shepherd/teacher.

Let me work backwards and talk about the person first. You'll notice that I have pulled pastor and teacher out of the longer list. First, these were offices in the early church. All church leaders in the first century would have one of these offices or the roles. Apostles were limited to the first century so there are no more apostles. You may hear some churches still using this designation and in my opinion, either they give a new definition to the term or else they are just plain wrong.

I don't believe that the office of a prophet still exists even though the gift of prophecy does. You could certainly say that there are still evangelists and perhaps still the office of an evangelist. But I am going to focus on the office and role of a pastor-because it is by far the most common role and because it is most relevant to us. Most scholars state that pastors and teachers and essentially the same thing. All pastors are teachers but not all teachers are pastors so most commonly the phrase pastor-teacher is used.

What is a pastor? We all know that he's the guy who works one day a week but gets paid for five, right? During last Sunday's membership class I asked how many times the word Trinity is used in the Bible. you probably know that the answer is zero. The concept of the Trinity is taught all over the Bible but the word Trinity is not a term directly lifted from Scripture.

The word pastor is similar for it does not appear a single time in the Bible. The majority of you will have the word pastor in verse eleven so you must think I am joking or lying to you. The ESV is about the only version that has the word shepherd instead of pastor. And do you know why it has the word shepherd? Because it is the word shepherd. Early English translations used the word pastor because the Latin word *pastorum* means shepherd. But since we don't speak Latin--unless your name is Rod Lysne--we should be using the word shepherd. To me, the word shepherd is much more functional. Pastor feels like a title, which is why I prefer you call me Rich. But shepherd is something that you do. And that's what we talking about, isn't it? What does a shepherd do? And specifically, what will a second pastor at Grace be doing?

So working backwards, we understand that the person is a shepherd. If we move forward, we will bringing a second full time shepherd on board. His responsibility will be to shepherd the people in the congregation. But that's also my role, isn't it? So as we will also need to distinguish my role from his role.

So the person is a shepherd and the process is to equip. This one little word is absolutely huge. A shepherd does the act of shepherding mainly by equipping the people in the congregation to shepherd one another. The traditional understanding of a pastor is one who marries and buries you and visits you in the hospital in between marrying and burying you. The pastor is one who cares deeply and walks beside you in life, through the good and the bad. But in the vast majority of cases, this kind of a pastor is an employee. The church hires the pastor to perform specific roles. And these roles are things that the congregation can't do or doesn't want to do. The average person doesn't want to perform wedding and funerals. You don't want to preach sermons and constantly visit sick people in the hospital so you hire someone who will do all of those things.

That's a pastor. These are all necessary tasks and are certainly part of the role of shepherding. But fundamentally, a pastor is not to be doing the task of shepherding but training and equipping people to do the shepherding with him. That's what verse 12 means- *to equip the saints for the work of ministry*. Who is supposed to be doing the ministry in a local church? The saints. And who is that? That's you! you are a saint. Does that sound funny to you, to refer to yourself as a saint? Do you know what the word saint means in the Greek? It means "holy one." This is the exact same word for the name of the third person in the Trinity-the Holy Spirit. To be holy is to be set apart. You are set apart in more ways than one. you are set apart by the blood of Christ, made holy, credited with the righteousness of Christ. That makes you holy. But you are also set apart for ministry.

You do ministry and I am to equip you to do that ministry. This is the clear Biblical model. But there are two great forces working against this Biblical model. The first comes from the pastor himself. He wants to do all or most of the ministry because he falsely believes that is his job. He is not willing to turn the ministry over to the saints. The one who is to be equipping the saints is, in a sense, hoarding the ministry for himself and denying his Biblical responsibility.

The second barrier comes from the saints. They don't want to be equipped. They don't to be engaged in vital ministry. Maybe they'll serve in some small way occasionally, but that's about all.

So, if much of our church is not actively and progressively engaged in vital ministry, who is to blame? Why do we not have a lot more people active in ministry. Now we do have lots of people engaged in service. a few months ago I told you how I discovered that 75% of our youth who are 13 years old and up and regularly serving in our church in some capacity. That's very encouraging and we have a lot to be encouraged about. But we also have a high percentage of folks who are not engaged at all. I'd like to place the blame on you. That would make me feel a lot better. But I confess that I must share that blame. After all, whose job is it to equip the saints for the work of the ministry? Who is the one person in this room who gets paid to raise up men and women for ministry?

There's a leadership book called *From Good to Great* that has a great illustration. When an organization is not going the way you want it to, the leader has two options--the mirror or the window. You can look out the window at the masses of people in your organization and ask, "What's wrong with those people? Why can't they pull their own weight?" The other choice is that the leader can look in the mirror and ask himself, "What's wrong with me? Why have I not led these people into greater service?"

I think we have a window problem *and* a mirror problem. It is my job to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and it is your job to want to be engaged in the work of the ministry. Some of you are hurt and broken and just need to sit in a church and heal from past hurts. I have always said that that is a good reason not to be actively serving. We want Grace to be a place of healing for you. If you need a spiritual ICU, then we would like to be that for you.

Some of you don't serve because you are lazy and spiritually immature. You don't serve because you don't *want* to serve. And I am not casting judgment on anyone in particular. I don't know why you are not serving. It could be any one of these reasons or other reasons. And serving itself does not mean you are mature and doesn't automatically make you spiritually mature. But, as we will see later, you cannot mature if you are not serving. It's like reading your Bible. merely reading it does not make you grow spiritually but you cannot grow unless you read it.

Still others don't serve because you don't know how. You can't blame a three year old for not knowing how to do calculus, can you? If we have not equipped you for ministry and provided ministry opportunities in order to sufficiently equip you, then the blame falls on us. I am willing to shoulder that blame.

One of my favorite parts of ministry the past three years has been the LEAD program. We are taking men and doing our best to equip them the 3 C's of leadership: Character, Competency and Calling. It has been a great joy to me to walk alongside these men and we have learned and grown together. I am going to offer three month LEAD for youth from March through May. It's not a perfect process and we are continually trying to make it better, but it's good. It is equipping the men for the work of the ministry. So it has been a joy to me but it is my embarrassment that we had not done this for the prior ten years. I had tried some similar things in the past that did not pan out. So as a church, we have failed to adequately equip the saints for the work of the ministry. We have a window problem and a mirror problem.

And this is the reason I think we need a second pastor. As we see it, the main role of this pastor would be Ephesians 4:12- *to equip the saints for the work of ministry*. Now that is the role of every pastor, right, so why do we need to hire another pastor to do this work? Why not just equip our own people instead of paying someone to do it? I remember someone asking this question at least two years ago. If you carried this logic all the way through then you would never have hired me. You should have trained people to share the preaching and everything else that I do. There are churches that work this way but I would guess that most of you don't think that's the best model. So if you believe that hiring one pastor is a good idea then it follows that hiring a second pastor is a good idea. And this is especially true as we have been growing. The more we grow the greater the need for more saints to be equipped.

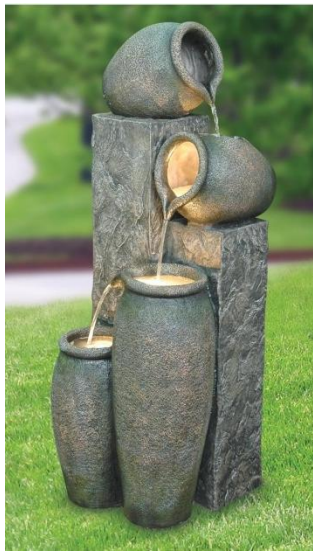
Now one thing I don't want you to think is that the goal is ministry in and of itself. We don't want to create some ministry machine that sucks people in and chews them up. If you have never seen the 1973 movie *Soylent Green*, get ready for a major spoiler alert. ([Soylent green](#) clip.)

This movie is about a world food shortage and Charlton Heston makes the grim discovery that their food source, called *Soylent Green*, is actually made from people. This is a good picture of what some ministries are like. Churches take fresh bodies and push them through the ministry machine like a wood chipper. "We'd love to have you be part of our ministry. Would you consider joining us? Just follow me." Then one by one we feed these unsuspecting souls through the ministry grinder. In many cases, the ministries run the church instead of the church running the ministries. In some ways, we may have erred too far on the other extreme. We have never wanted to start a new ministry unless it was well staffed from the very beginning and as long as it matches our overall ministry vision.

Make no mistake-ministry is people, but not like Soylent Green is people. Ministry is people in multiple ways. Ministry is people because it is done by people and for people. As soon as ministry becomes a task related to some personal agenda, then it ceases to be ministry. As people minister to other people, who gets the greater benefit--the ones ministering or the ones being ministered to? It should be both. However, often if you are the one doing the ministering, it feels like you are doing all of the giving and none of the receiving. And in one sense, you are but it does not have to be like emptying one bottle into another. If I take a full gallon jug and pour water into an empty gallon, what's going to happen? The first gallon will begin to empty and if I keep pouring, the formerly full gallon will eventually pour all of its contents into the formerly empty container. Far too often that's what ministry feels like. But the secret is to be plugged into the source of living water, the fire hose of ministry power called the Holy Spirit.

This is not to say that you can always be in high ministry gear with no rests. Some people say that they would rather burn out in the Christian life than rust out. I get what they mean but I'm not sure it's the best way to put it. You do need to rest and recharge. As I said last week, I have as much as I love my job, I have no desire for it to put me in the grave early. But there is a way to be actively engaged in ministry and not get burned out.

What's the magical elixir that will keep you from getting ministry burnout? The secret is Jim Boisen. Huh-what do I mean? The Bosien family cleaned the church yesterday. That was very nice of them, but cleaning the church is hardly a superpower, is it? Here's what Jim said to me yesterday. He said, "I actually like to clean the church." What I should have said was, "Well, you could do it every week then!" But that would have been selfish. But do you see where I am going with this? The point is that Jim enjoyed serving in this particular way. He may not want to do it every week and he certainly has far more spiritual gifts than the gift of church cleaning, but the point is that ministry is to be enjoyed.



But the truth here goes deeper still. It's not just enjoyment from ministry but personal spiritual growth from ministry. Ministry done with the right heart attitude is not like pouring one container of water into another. It's more like this fountain. water is poured from one container into another into another and into yet another. Obviously a fountain like this has a pump that pumps the water back to the top but it's a good picture of ministry. As you pour into others you are being filled back up again.

It's like the little pot of oil in the story of Elisha and the widow. The widow's sons were about to be sold into slavery to pay their debt. Elisha instructed to her gather as many pots and jars from her neighbors as she could. She started with just a little pot of oil. The widow naturally assumed that the finite amount of oil would run out very soon. But God miraculously allowed that little pot to keep pouring and pouring until they ran out of jars. In God's economy, there was not a finite amount of oil. An infinite God cannot be bound by finite containers.

But with ministry, the jars to be filled don't come to an end. You never get to the point where you say, "OK, the jars are full. Everyone I know has been ministered to all that they can handle." Ministry does not end, which may be a reason that some of you are not eager to serve. You see ministry as a draining experience or at best as a zero sum game. What you put out never comes back to you.

There are a multitude of benefits of serving but the one that most relates to this passage is equipping. As you serve, you and are being further equipped and you are growing in spiritual maturity. Why are Chloe and Kellyn working so hard to spend seven weeks in the Congo this summer? The obvious answer is that they both love children and they want to help the ministry of Global Fingerprints. They want to serve "the least of these." Honestly, I don't know how I would do for seven weeks in the Congo and I am guessing this is not at the top of your bucket list either. The girls will be pouring themselves into the lives of others in a location that is hard to live and has no small danger. But they also know that as they pour themselves out, the Lord will be pouring into them. Their bodies will get tired but their little pots of oil will not run out.

They also know that this is the way to super size their own spiritual growth. Going to the Congo for seven weeks is a way to throw themselves on God's strength alone. Through ministering to others God will minister to them. Through helping others to grow God will grow them. You see, it's not just that their pots of oil won't run out. Ministry is so much more than that. It's putting yourself in a place where God can change you. You certainly don't have to travel half way around the world for that to happen but you do have to step out in faith and serve others.

There is a paradox to ministry. On the one hand you need to be equipped before you can serve. But on the other hand, service is a form of equipping. You will never be equipped unless you are also serving. So ideally these two things will happen simultaneously. This is what LEAD is meant to do-to sharpen our character and our competency as we are called to serve.

I think our church has helped to equip them for his ministry adventure. But I'd like to do more. I want a church that equips, not just youth and men, but men, women and children of all ages. We don't want a ministry machine that requires a never ending supply of people to feed into it. Rather, we want a ministry environment where we provide the opportunities to be equipped where our people are stepping out in faith to serve. I am convinced we are ready for a second pastor/shepherd that would spend most of his time equipping the saints for ministry. We don't yet know what title will be assigned to this person but his primary job description will be equipping.

Next week I will show you how this person can use the process of equipping for the purpose of:  
Attain to the unity in the faith  
Build up the body of Christ  
Clothe yourself with Christ

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