

LPD Conference, March 7, 8, 2014
“Living the Story”

Ministerial – session #1

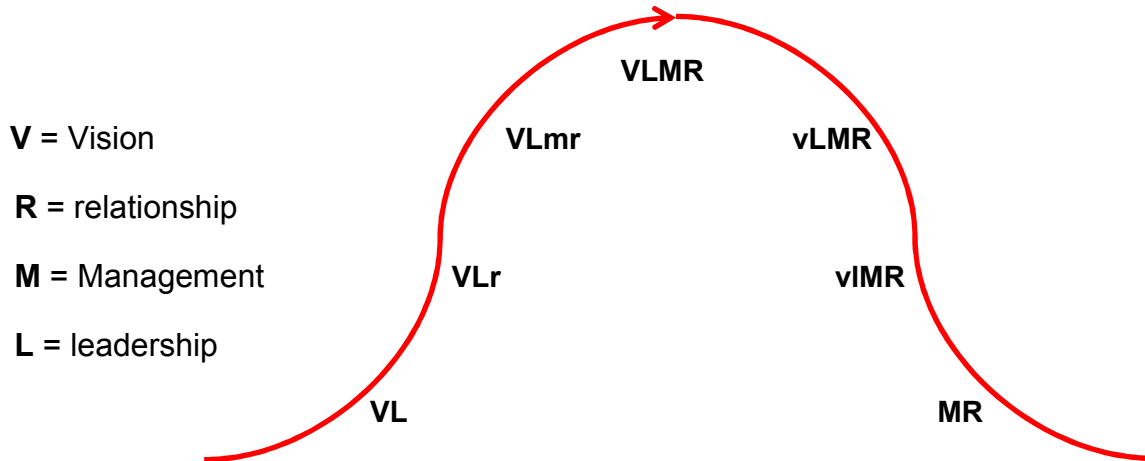
“How am I Doing at Living the Story?” - living the gospel as servant –leaders

Rob Stewart:

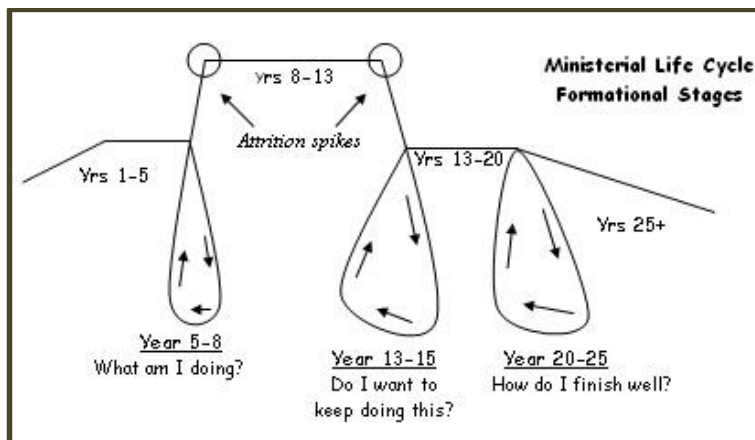
For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” (Romans 1:16,17)

Lifecycles – of organizations, of churches and of pastors

Observed (and somewhat predictable) Lifecycle of a Pastor within a Church (Stewart’s version)



• **Pastoral Lifecycles - Daniel Pietrzyk**



Formational Stages of ministry:

1. Years 1-5 - Starting out.

2. Years 5-8 – “what am I doing?” – Key word “connection.”

Pre-professional ministry training – usually focuses on knowing the right content and on developing skills to accomplish ministry tasks. As important as these are, they are usually not the reasons that people leave ministry. Rather, ministry-killing issues are matters of life skills, behaviour patterns and character.

3. Years 10-13 – “do I want to keep doing this? Can I keep doing this?” – Key word “sacrifice.”

Where can I go? And whom can I tell that I fear I can't go anywhere? And why do I feel ashamed that I even worry about these things? Would my heroes, then and now, worry about walls? What's wrong with me?
(Gordon MacDonald: Building Below the Waterline)

3 choices:

- I. Try going back to your point of origin, “youthfulness,” where the dream of no limits still exists;
- II. Try driving in circles, cursing the wall and moaning that it is impossible to go back, or (and this is the important possibility)
- III. Try going up to the wall and find the passes or tunnels that lead to a healthy, spiritually vigorous, and personally effective last forty years of life.

4. Years 20-25 – “How do I finish well?” – Key word – “legacy.”

5 Themes of Resilient Pastoral Ministry:

Resilience: focuses on who the pastor is and how that influences what a pastor does.

1. Spiritual Formation

“Before you were called to be a shepherd, you were called to be a lamb.” (*Diane Langberg*)

Pastors can be so caught up in doing church work that they fail to do the work of the church – which begins by abiding in Christ (John 15:4) (cf. 1 Tim 4:7,16).

“Pastors often slip into the trap of building their identities around their roles and performance rather than being beloved children of God and coheirs with Christ. Pastors need to pursue growth in their understanding of and feelings concerning God's acceptance. They also need to focus on their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The sad fact is that, for most of us in ministry, our work for Christ comes before our relationship with Christ. We know in our minds that healthy ministry is an overflow of abiding in Christ. We know that godly leadership is an extension of one's relationship with God. But when push comes to shove, we usually put mission in front of relationship.”

2. Self-Care

Why don't people in ministry seem to value self-care?

1. Pastoral role itself places expectations on clergy that can become unrealistic.
2. Pastors may not view it as an ethical imperative.

3. Pastors might “spiritualize away” their need for it. (c.f. Evans)
 “I would rather burn out than rust out in the service of the Lord” *Christmas Evans (1766-1838)*

I admire the bravado. It sounds dedicated, bold and stirring. However, when I view the burn-outs and almost burn-outs who lie by the ecclesiastical road, the glory fails to reach me. Is there not a third alternative? In Acts 20:24, Paul stated, “I consider my life to be worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given to me.” Herein lies the model I choose to follow. I want to neither burn out nor rust out. I want to finish the race.”

James Berkley – *Leadership Journal, Winter 1983*

The crucial point for the clergyperson to consider is this: “Do I have a personal life and a unique relationship to God? Or, am I totally defined by the ministry that I carry out to others?”

Hands and Fehr, “Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy”

Three ways to differentiate between our role and identity:

1. Maintain our spiritual disciplines apart from our ministry responsibilities.
2. Develop friendships outside of one’s ministry context.
3. Pursue hobbies and interests outside of ministry responsibilities.

*** Joining peer/affinity groups = important.**

3. Emotional and Cultural Intelligence

The ability to be balanced, fair, collaborative and to respect the input of others.

“When I was in seminary, I was taught how to preach and how to exegete the Scriptures... I wasn’t taught how to exegete people... I didn’t know that pastoring is dealing with people and their messiness.”

Emotional Intelligence: the ability to manage one’s own emotions proactively and to respond appropriately to the emotions of others.

Cultural Intelligence: awareness of regional, ethnic and generational differences and the implications of these differences personally and interpersonally.

- “Reflection-in-action”
- “Reflection-on-action”

4. Marriage and Family

- Maintaining spiritual and relational health with one’s spouse and children.
- Honouring marriage covenant
- Healthy balance of family and ministry.

5. Leadership and Management

Both are necessary responsibilities of one’s calling in pastoral ministry.

- Beware of trying to become the hero leader
1. Leadership is the *poetry* of gathering others together to seek adaptive and constructive change.
 2. Management is the *plumbing* that provides order and consistency to organizations.

Questions for discussion at tables:

1. At what formational stage are you on the pastoral lifecycle? (cf. Pietrzyk)

- Do you identify with the suggested formational stages and related questions?
- Have you considered leaving ministry? What has kept you going?
- How can Pietrzyk's model assist in mentoring others in their ministry journeys?

2. While all five themes of resilient pastoral ministry are both essential and “connected,” is there one that presents a particular challenge to you at this time? If so, which one?

- i. Spiritual Formation
- ii. Self-Care
- iii. Emotional and Cultural Intelligence
- iv. Marriage and Family
- v. Leadership and Management

3. What is the relationship between “resilient pastoral ministry” and living/preaching the gospel?

4. How can we assist one another to better live out our callings and to live out the gospel in the days ahead?

I consider my life to be worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given to me.” (Acts 20:24)