

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES AND RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

Most churches easily fall victim to the charge of being personality-driven. Some might even say that growth in the American church is dependent upon “cults of personality”. Many churches try and fight back, claiming that rather than being personality-driven they are purpose-, vision-, or mission-driven. However, it seems inevitable that most American churches become personality-driven. Proof of this could come from a simple survey asking people how they chose the church they are attending. After sifting through the cliché “Sunday school” answers such as, “God is present there” or “The bible is preached there”, one would find that a main reason people choose a church is because of the personality they see on the stage every week. It is not often that people would say that they are attending a church despite the Senior Pastor’s lack of personality. It is also rare to find a personality-driven church whose leadership has been able to decentralize its power and authority.

The role of Senior Pastor is very unique and not unlike a CEO of a company. Both are hired based on previous successes and lead entire organizations. However, while a CEO is empowered after proving his worth through work and experience, a Senior Pastor can be empowered by church based on his personality. A CEO is held accountable by objective standards such as profit margins and market caps, while a Senior Pastor is held accountable by subjective standards such as likability and

pathos. Many times this likability can lead to an extreme amount of power and authority over the church.

A wise Senior Pastor understands that his strength of personality can also be his biggest weakness, and makes provisions so that his power and authority are decentralized in an effective management system. For decentralization to be possible it is imperative that the Senior Pastor be a secure individual and that he put in place a system of management where power and authority can be decentralized. Further study could be done on how a senior leader's inability to decentralize his power impacts an organization. Although that is not the purpose for this project, it seems intuitive to imagine that churches that find ways to decentralize grow numerically at a much more efficient rate than those that do not. If decentralization does provide promise for the church, it is fruitful to investigate strategies for implementation.

How does decentralization work? How can decentralization and evaluation coexist? Does decentralization mean there is no longer a place for team? What management system will allow for decentralization and evaluation and teamwork? These are all great questions that are at the heart of this research.

The issue of this research is to examine core strategies in selected case studies of how large churches use a vision and values management system to empower their associates, evaluate their progress and enhance their effectiveness. It seems appropriate, and wise, to take some time to learn from one church's experience in their quest to answer this same question.

The History of EvFree Fullerton

Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, CA (from now on to be referred to as EvFree Fullerton) is a church with a distinguished history. EvFree Fullerton's history can be separated into three descriptive periods: prestigious church, feast and famine

church, and turnaround church. All three of these periods have taken place between 1980 and 2013. While EvFree Fullerton is an established church with a unique history, it continues to strive forward; endeavoring to defy the statistics that say it should be at the end of its lifecycle. To understand its current situation we must first take a look at its past.

Prestigious Church: A National Voice Recognized

EvFree Fullerton was a church in need of a pastor in 1980. With no thoughts of becoming a nationally recognized church, it took a chance on a new senior pastor who would later state that he failed his first pastorate before EvFree Fullerton came around. This person was Chuck Swindoll, who is now known for his several accomplishments: author of 70 books, preaching voice of the “Insight for Living” radio broadcast heard all over the world in various different languages and over 2000 stations, former president of Dallas Theological Seminary and now Senior Pastor of Stonebriar Community Church.

It was at EvFree Fullerton that Chuck Swindoll became a nationally recognized speaker and author. This is where his radio ministry took off, and where his books became best sellers. EvFree Fullerton came to be known as a staple mega church, with several thousand people in attendance under his leadership. One couldn’t even imagine how a church could transition from such an individual’s ministry accomplishments in one setting. However, in 1993 EvFree Fullerton would find itself in the midst of a transition when Chuck Swindoll accepted to the call back to his Alma Mater, and became President of Dallas Theological Seminary. The church known as EvFree Fullerton, would take on the seemingly impossible task of trying to replace a nationally recognized preacher.

Summary

EvFree Fullerton became a nationally recognized church after taking a chance on a, self-proclaimed, failure of a pastor, and as Chuck Swindoll grew in notoriety, so did EvFree Fullerton. He launched a radio broadcast named, “Insight for Living”. This was the gateway to a national audience who would buy his books after listening to him on the radio. After 13 years of ministry in the city of Fullerton, Chuck Swindoll accepted the call to become the President of Dallas Theological Seminary and EvFree Fullerton would begin the monumental task of attempting to replace him.

Feast and Famine Church: A Prophecy Realized

After allowing a couple years for a transition period, the church settled on hiring Dale Burke as their new Senior Pastor in 1995. His leadership at EvFree Fullerton can be illustrated by the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine prophecy in the book of Daniel. As such, his leadership at EvFree Fullerton was characterized by seven years of fruitfulness followed by seven years of barrenness. First let us start with the seven years of plenty.

Seven Years of Plenty

As one could imagine it was hard filling the shoes of a living legend at EvFree Fullerton. And while this proved difficult for the congregation, lamenting losing such a tremendous preacher and grieving his departure, eventually, they got to know and love Dale. He wasn't nearly the preacher, writer or radio personality that his predecessor was, but he loved the church. During this period some speculated that while Chuck Swindoll had an extensive radio listening audience, Dale Burke was able to grow the local work at EvFree Fullerton past where Chuck had been able to bring it. There was a period there where Dale Burke had significant impact, and the favor of the people. He was responsible for doing many good things on the campus of the church at Fullerton, many buildings

were retrofitted and modernized. He was even responsible for some new buildings. And this is something that can be appreciated today when walking around the campus of EvFree Fullerton and taking in “the commons” or “the well”. A new modern look, accompanied by a coffee shop and library in these buildings screams “quality above expense!”.

Unfortunately, Dale Burke’s time at EvFree Fullerton would not only be characterized by plenty, but famine as well.

Seven Years of Famine

After seven years of a difficult but stable transition, love was lost for the Senior leader at EvFree Fullerton. While there are probably many details that are hidden in this matter one thing is certain, Dale Burke was no longer loved as he once was, and a church that enjoyed such prominent influence in the Evangelical world was now shrinking and getting older. At the end of this seven year period, the old guard was left to reminisce about how things were, and how far they had fallen away from what used to be EvFree Fullerton’s reputation. Finally, amidst much disappointment and unmet expectations, Dale Burke stepped down from his position as Senior Pastor in 2010. What was approximately a fourteen year stint, characterized by good and bad, was now over.

Summary

EvFree Fullerton wisely spent a two year period to transition a great preacher in Chuck Swindoll. They finally landed on hiring Dale Burke as their new Senior Pastor in 1995. Dale’s tenure there would be characterized by seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. In his seven years of plenty one would find great favor, accomplishments and growth. In his seven years of famine one would find great discord, unmet expectations and frustration. Finally, in 2010 after approximately 14 years of

service, Dale Burke would step down as the Senior Pastor at EvFree Fullerton, and the church would again begin the process of transitioning a long tenured Senior Pastor.

Turnaround Church- A Promising Leader Galvanized

The Elder's at EvFree Fullerton would again decide to take a two year period to transition the vacancy left by Dale Burke. After much thought and prayerful deliberation they would make a risky choice that may remind some, ironically, of a risk they took earlier in their history which paid off when they hired Chuck Swindoll. This time they would hire Mike Erre. He was a young man at 42 but had seen the unparalleled favor of God in his greenhorn ministries. Mike Erre saw great amounts of growth as the College Pastor at Mariners Church in Irvine, CA (**one of the largest churches** on the west coast of the United States). He then went on to become the Teaching Pastor at **Rock Harbor** in Costa Mesa, CA which ironically was a plant of Mariners, and had grown to mega-church status itself. He would end up going back to Mariners as the campus pastor for one of their satellite venues. Mike Erre saw great amounts of favor and growth in all of these opportunities. Hundreds and thousands would flock to his ministry in all of these contexts. And he would see similar fanfare as the new **Lead** Pastor at EvFree Fullerton!

Numerical growth came almost instantaneously, when EvFree Fullerton announced Mike Erre as the new Lead Pastor at EvFree Fullerton. Within nine months of being installed as the new Lead Pastor, Evfree Fullerton had grown by 1,500 people. What could previously be described as an elderly church that had dwindled down to 2,500 people, had become a church of 5,300 with an influx of thousands of young adults.¹ The God-given ability to reach the young would be the same strength he would call upon

¹ "Vision Night," *Ev Free Fullerton*, n.d., <http://www.evfreefullerton.com/blog/2013/09/vision-night/> (accessed October 5, 2013).

to win over the elderly, namely: his preaching gift. It seemed as though he would be the perfect fit for a traditional church with a healthy appetite for bible-based preaching; they needed someone who would fulfill their need of being scripturally focused and yet relevant to the culture and the younger generation. Mike Erre fit the bill. And with this new growth and influence, came new vision for the church.

The Promise of New Vision

In an effort to align the church and its leadership toward a specific direction, Pastor Erre took the elders on a retreat to discover the vision, or initiatives, that would guide the church. This new vision would come out of the theology of the Missio Dei, namely that, “God is a missionary God and we are to be a missionary people”.² From this retreat, the leadership prayerfully agreed up three main initiatives that would represent the vision of EvFree Fullerton moving forward: “Increase missional urgency, foster intergenerational investment and give ministry away”.³ Quite simply, the vision was not only to grow the ministry within the walls of the church but to grow the ministry outside the walls of the church, locally. While they would continue to support missions in other countries, as many churches do, a special emphasis would be placed on the mission locally, as it had been identified as a weakness of their church.⁴ In Pastor Erre’s words, “The Father sends the Son, the Father and the Son send the Spirit and then the Trinitarian God sends the church. We are first and foremost, a sent people”.⁵

² “Vision Night,” *Ev Free Fullerton*, n.d., <http://www.evfreefullerton.com/blog/2013/09/vision-night/> (accessed October 5, 2013).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Along with missional urgency, was the desire to see intergenerational investment in their church. As with any turnaround church with an aging congregation, there was an obstacle to getting the generations to intermix. Pastor Mike Erre capitalized on an idea that was there prior to his coming to EvFree, one where the people would commit to being part of a “Six Pack”; 6 men, representing 6 generations, meeting together for 6 months.⁶ This would foster the intergeneration investment they were hoping for, while seeing discipleship through mentorship, and finally, giving ministry away.

In Mike Erre’s words they wanted to, “De-professionalize ministry”. Rather than seeing the pastor as the only one doing ministry, everyone needs to view themselves as doing ministry. The leadership of the church is there to foster new leaders, empowering them, not doing the work all by themselves. Pastor Erre would challenge his congregation, not only to serve at the church facility, but outside of it as well, complimenting their desire for missional urgency successfully.

Change without Compromise

Since God is a missionary God, EvFree Fullerton would have to learn how to become a missionary church once again. One of the challenges to this was a nice, but outdated, facility. Secondly, it was a church that was rich in space, but poor in relevance. Pastor Mike would begin to challenge the older generation that they needed to allow for change without compromise.⁷ How could the church become relevant and yet not compromise the essentials? The answer seemed to be in changing style but not substance.

⁶ “Vision Night,” *Ev Free Fullerton*, n.d., <http://www.evfreefullerton.com/blog/2013/09/vision-night/> (accessed October 5, 2013).

⁷ Ibid.

The leadership would begin to make big changes so as to become relevant to the present culture. Pastor Mike would acknowledge the difficulty for some. He would also remind them that they only did it because they found it essential to become relevant again to their culture.⁸ Many more embraced the needed changes, even if it was not their preference, because of his great preaching and the effects the changes were making, as evidenced by thousands of new, young adults in attendance. Quickly, 1.5 million dollars was raised, and the auditorium was revamped; covering the pipe organ with a scrim and updating the stage area with all the latest technological gadgets. With a new ambiance and strategy, EvFree Fullerton has equipped itself to be able utilize all that technology can offer in order to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Summary

EvFree was a prominent church with prominent leadership that had fallen from the ranks of successful churches. Although still a mega church, it was receding weekly. The best days of the church were in the past, along with the memories of when Chuck Swindoll was the Senior Pastor. And while Pastor Dale Burke would give a good effort, after seven years of his leadership the church began its downfall. After a transition period of a couple of years, the church would hire Mike Erre as the new Lead Pastor. Just as a seed needs to die in order for it to give birth to a new tree, so the resurrection principle was at work at EvFree Fullerton when Mike Erre was hired. After being hired, Pastor Erre took his elder board on a retreat and dreamed up the new vision for the church. It was the aligning factor in all that they would do in the future. The three initiatives were as follows: Increase Missional Urgency, Foster Intergenerational

⁸ Ibid.

Investment, and Give Ministry Away. These would become the bedrock of the church's direction, and, govern future decision making.

The Hypothesis Revisited

It seems important, at this point, to revisit the purpose of this case study: The issue of this research is to examine core strategies in selected case studies of how large churches use a vision and values management system to empower their associates, evaluate their progress and enhance their effectiveness.

The above hypothesis causes us to examine three fundamental methods that will enhance ownership, performance and accountability of a church's pastoral team.

1. Empowerment- How does a vision and values management system *empower* the associate?
2. Evaluation- How does an organization *evaluate* success in a vision and values management system?
3. Effectiveness- How can a vision and values management system be used to make associates more *effective*?

One Community Church's transformation can be understood after examining these three areas.

Hypothesis1: The decentralization of authority provided by a vision and values management system is a core strategy that empowers the associate.

Decentralization is possible when vision and values are so thoroughly communicated that they become the managing entity of the organization. For the purpose of this paper, vision will be discussed in the empowerment section, and values will be focused on in the evaluation section. For vision to become the managing entity of the organization it must be embraced, mastered and memorized.

As demonstrated in the earlier description of the history of EvFree, one of the first things Pastor Mike did was to take elders on retreat to determine what the vision of the church would be moving forward.

So, in terms of vision that Mike has brought in, this is a big way of getting at 3 main objectives that he and the board, before I came, agreed upon. Number 1 is this church needs a sense of missional urgency. Not just missions way out there in India. Great. But also mission right here... The second thing that ties into the staffing issue is we want to give ministry away... And the third area is intergenerational.⁹

However, a cleverly stated vision does not have its intended effect unless many buy in. Therefore, it is not surprising that the pastor of college students would also have a good working knowledge of this vision plan, even though he is concentrated on a particular life stage,

This last January, Mike went away with the elders to an elder retreat where he prayed and he came up with 3 different mission objectives, 3 different things that he would like to see. One of them is he wants to see an increasing missional urgency. In other words, not just a global missionary initiative, but rather seeing our back yard and across the street as the mission field. You know, all of us kind of being on mission. The second one was fostering intergenerational cross pollination... The third one was giving ministry away. We are big believers that we shouldn't be the professionals here. We want to engage people and we want to recruit them into a lifestyle.¹⁰

One of the ways that this new vision is promoted is to constantly champion provocative phrases that highlight the necessity for the distinctive. One such example is,

⁹ David Fletcher, "Interview with the Author," (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 2.

¹⁰ Michael Callahan, "Interview with the Author," (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 18-19.

“God is a missionary God and we are a missionary people.”¹¹ Another is “intergenerational cross pollination.”¹² And finally the established culture was one where pastors were not to be considered as professionals.¹³ These three examples represented the “talking points” for the new vision and would be the way to keep it before the people in slogan format. The strategy was to be very intentional in their casting of vision and it was very necessary, as this new vision was a departure from where the church had traditionally been. Scott Belon remarks when the topic of vision came up,

And so Mike is creating new ones and they have been communicated to us as an upper leadership staff as far as the idea of you know being kingdom people with kingdom communities and the whole goal of reaching our local area with more of an intentional purpose and being missionally focused. But we just didn’t have that before. That was never a part of our DNA. We were very global and very discipleship focused, but not very locally outreached...¹⁴

Freedom

The benefit of establishing a clear and concise vision is that it allows for staff to be completely empowered, and free from micromanagement. Here is the Executive Pastor speaking about their desire to allow for freedom as long as their employees are functioning within the vision and values of the church, “We give a lot of freedom for that. We have a very broad sense of direction for where we want to go with our 3 main

¹¹ Jay Williams, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 11.

¹² Michael Callahan, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 18.

¹³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴ Scott Belon, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 25.

objectives and it is my role to work with them to hone their ministries so that they are in alignment with our own church vision.”¹⁵

And this is something that the staff backed up, “I have had a lot of freedom to do what I wanted to do.”¹⁶ Jay would go on to say that he enjoyed how upper leadership was “hands off”¹⁷ as it relates to the freedom he experienced. From his experience the freedom came as a byproduct of him understanding the direction and culture of the church.¹⁸ Another associate agrees, “But Mike is really good at not being down into the details. And same with Dave Fletcher. They allow us to fly free.”¹⁹ Empowerment is something that is very intentional at EvFree, “Mike’s style is we hire _____ to do a job. Go do the job. Now tell me how it goes, tell me how I can help. I am not going to micromanage you.”²⁰

Another way empowerment is promoted at EvFree Fullerton is to challenge their staff to take risks.

Risk Taking

Risk taking is a value that is preached from the top down.

So Mike’s idea and I am right there with him... is get out there with the bait out and see if it works and tweak the bait. Because if you spend all your time

¹⁵ David Fletcher, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 5.

¹⁶ Jay Williams, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁸ Ibid., 12.

¹⁹ Michael Callahan, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 18.

²⁰ David Fletcher, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 3.

developing a finished product, you might deliver a product that nobody wants or you might deliver a product too late. Or it might just be a dud of a product. So what we are trying to instill in folks is look, you have 5 ideas. Try all 5 of them. 4 of them fail, but we are learning and one is a home run, go for the home run. Who is going to criticize you that you grounded out, you hit the ball and you were out, but then you hit the grand slam that won the game. Go for it.²¹

This idea is easily understood by the staff at Evfree, “I think Mike said over and over again, he said he wants people to take risks, and failure is OK, as long as we learn from it.”²² And Scott seems to drive the nail in about the empowerment culture at EvFree, “Under our current leadership, I feel very empowered, very encouraged to lead, to take risks, to take chances and not be afraid to fail, you know, take opportunities and run with them. I love that. I love it.”²³

Summary

The decentralization of authority provided by a vision and values management system is a core strategy that empowers the associate. By allowing the vision to set the direction of the organization each associate becomes free to navigate within that sandbox; thereby allowing the organization to benefit from the high morale and creativity that comes when a person is empowered. Another cultural element that adds to freedom and empowerment is the emphasis on not being afraid to take risks.

²¹ Ibid., 3-4.

²²Jay Williams, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 14.

²³ Scott Belon, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 24.

But how can empowerment and evaluation coexist? It seems appropriate at this point to ask the question, how does an organization that promotes freedom, also, evaluate progress? By what means should a church measure progress?

Hypothesis 2: The establishment of clear measurements within a vision and values management system is a core strategy that evaluates progress.

Freedom can sometimes get a bad name because many times it is thought of as not being measurable. How can you measure individuals that have been given freedom to do what they see fit to do? At EvFree Fullerton it all starts with job descriptions. Pastor David Fletcher is gifted at managing large staff teams and uses job descriptions as the means to make sure that measurements are clear. He believes it is the vehicle that allows him to celebrate victories, and help in times of weakness.

I love to be aware of emerging problems. I love to be aware of success stories. I love regular dialog with people I work with and we are right in the middle of doing everybody's job description... And so the first thing I did was show them my job description. Three main things with percentages of time for each because that is how I do ministry is percentages of time. And then I show them Mike's job description. This is what we are asking Mike to do. And then I put up a blank slate and I just say tell me about your world. And then we just design it right there. And then, they would see what I was typing right on the big screen and then I would send them a draft, and say, "look, this is just a draft, we are going to come back and confirm later."²⁴

A great amount of strategy is represented through this process. First, expectations are established together, rather than being handed down. By doing this David has allowed for his associates to maintain the feeling of ownership in a process that ultimately establishes expectations. This solves the paradoxical problem of trying to empower while establishing expectations. In his words, he is achieving a, "slow and

²⁴ David Fletcher, "Interview with the Author," (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 4.

gentle alignment of all the staff and the honing of their gifts and abilities focused in the right direction.”²⁵ And his staff appreciates the process seeing it as receiving insight not micromanagement.²⁶

Yeah, so my next meeting with Fletcher will be significant. Because at that point I think we will probably agree on what is my job description. And he is really putting an allocation of time. What are your tasks and what is the percent of time. He is putting that kind of stuff to that, so that will be very helpful.²⁷

Pastor Michael enjoyed this process so much that he would go on to say that Pastor Fletcher was a “genius” and is looking forward to the follow up meeting where things would be finalized.²⁸ Pastor Scott Belon remarks that he is also looking forward to the interaction and finds it to be something that is especially needed as the church has never functioned in a context of accountability. “We are kind of telling him what we do, but it helps us to refocus where we spend our time so there can be accountability. Otherwise, no one knows what you are doing, you are just doing.”²⁹

Summary

The establishment of clear measurements within a vision and values management system is a core strategy that enhances progress and is the foundation for collaborative communication which enhances effectiveness. While EvFree Fullerton has

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Scott Belon, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 27.

²⁷ Jay Williams, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 12.

²⁸ Michael Callahan, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 20.

²⁹ Scott Belon, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 26-27.

made great strides moving forward with a new vision of the church, values are yet to come.³⁰ In the meantime, the executive pastor has focused on making sure expectations are clear between the senior leadership of the church and their associates. He does this by going through a process of rewriting job descriptions. This is not intended to be a micromanaging activity but a conversational one,

...my style and Mike's style is we hire _____ to do a job. Go do the job. Now tell me how it goes, tell me how I can help. I am not going to micromanage you. I want to be involved in it. And I don't have enough data points right now. I think it will go really well, but I don't have enough experiential points to celebrate it.³¹

Pastor Fletcher values and encourages staff input into this process.³² And his ultimate goal is to be able to get to a place where faithfulness and alignment can be measured, “We need to measure faithfulness, we need to measure how hard you are working, we need to measure is it in alignment with what we are doing.”³³ While he is not afraid of numbers as a barometer of success ratios³⁴, he is also more interested in measuring successful behaviors.

Ultimately, he is striving to set expectations together so that both sides can be passionate about the measurements and celebrate them together.³⁵ And it is the heart of

³⁰ David Fletcher, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 5.

³¹ Ibid., 3.

³² Ibid., 6.

³³ Ibid., 6.

³⁴ David Fletcher, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 6.

³⁵ Ibid., 6.

helping and aiding that will prove beneficial when striving to foster an environment that promotes teamwork.

Hypothesis 3: The development of a collaborative work environment within a vision and values management system is a core strategy that enhances effectiveness.

There is no doubt that when you allow for an idea to filter through a brainstorming and debating process that the end product will be more thought through, even more effective. However, the process to get there is delicate, as feelings could get hurt and the temptation to micromanage must be continually fought off. How does an organization adopt a collaborative communication strategy without hitting any of these pitfalls?

EvFree Fullerton is built around teams, “Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, so it is not kind of ‘co-’. And then, under the executive, and really under the Senior Pastor, are 4 associates. And those 4 associates are over different teams, and we all kind of fall in these teams. For a while, it was interesting... I was on 3.”³⁶ It seems that teams start at the top and then trickle down to the bottom,

You know, it is over here. What I mean is Scott is the associate, and he is over team 4... it is student ministries team. So basically, he is responsible for children to college. Recently, young adults has come under that umbrella of responsibility, so I am also helping out with young adults, which means Scott is directly over that as well. But Scott prays with us every Tuesday morning at 9AM. He has taken us on retreats. Every summer, there is a student ministries retreat where he says thank you, you know, 50 times, and it is a beautiful thing. It is not repetitive... He really genuinely means it. So he fosters this team building aspect over here. Because we are all this tightly knit North Campus area we are able to

³⁶ Michael Callahan, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 20.

stay together and hang out a lot more than these guys who are a little bit more reserved.³⁷

One Pastor felt more comfortable talking in terms of teams when asked about who was his direct report.³⁸ And one event that brought all the various teams together into one greater team was an endeavor to minister to the city of Fullerton.

The city of Fullerton had experienced some rough publicity when a homeless man was roughed up by some police officers. In the midst of all the bad publicity, the Senior Pastor decided that it was time to minister to the city of Fullerton,

And so Mike saw this vision of coming together and saying, “hey, let’s minister to the city of Fullerton.” So we put on a luncheon so that all, what we would call, either senior staff or ministry team, they were all servers. And other folks were too. The rest of middle management kind of area, they were actually helping with the food. We had set up crews, tear down crews. It was a whole church effort and it was a really beautiful thing. So we had an all staff, which is everyone meeting, the next Wednesday and everyone came together and agreed that that was one of the best things we had ever done.³⁹

We did it twice in the last 9 months, bringing them onto our campus, welcome them in. We feed them. Our whole crew here at The Well takes care of all the food and all that. Our staff individually serves each table. Other support staff comes in and serves... And I think start to finish those have been some of the coolest things that have really spoke “team” to us in the fact that we have not only had a chance to be together doing those things and it has all been for the same purpose, but I think the reward of seeing some of the fruit afterwards and knowing it is making an impact in our community is pretty cool.⁴⁰

³⁷ Michael Callahan, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 21.

³⁸ Jay Williams, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 12.

³⁹ Michael Callahan, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 22.

⁴⁰ Scott Belon, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 28.

And one descriptive item, that many associates pointed out, which helped build the team atmosphere at EvFree Fullerton was the value of honesty.

Honesty

Honesty is a mainstay at EvFree Fullerton especially when it comes to team, it is something the Senior Pastor has done a good job of introducing, “So I think what has come now is Mike has brought a lot of honest conversation. He has brought openness, a lot of energy and passion. And I think the chance to talk about a lot of stuff.”⁴¹

Pastor Mike has gone so far as to invite pushback, “Yeah, I think the invitation is there. I mean I think Mike has created a climate to really be honest, to pushback, to disagree.”⁴² And this was shocking to Pastor Michael who had come from an environment where differing ideas were not vocalized,

Well, I’m actually shocked because I came from an environment where that was not welcome. And Mike not only welcomes it, but encourages it. He is a big believer in thinking out of the box and so he loves pushback. I remember one time I asked him if I could offer some pushback. He said, ‘I always want you to offer that.’ He likes that. There is a guy in our meetings that he has in there for the sole purpose of being the devil’s advocate. So I feel very free actually.

But it is one thing to allow people to speak up, and a completely different thing to listen to those voices,

I think I appreciate Mike in the way that he shows that the team is important. There have been multiple things that he has done what he has initiated and planned and tried, but we will come back to the team and say how is this working? And if the team is against it and not fighting for it he puts the brakes on.

⁴¹ Jay Williams, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 9.

⁴² Ibid., 14.

Like he listens to that, he is aware of that. He is not like, “hey, I think it should be this way, so screw you guys.” I really sense this idea that the team’s opinion is that when he makes a mistake and he jumps over it and it doesn’t work right, he owns up to it and if it works right he takes credit for it, you know.⁴³

He has even created a ministry team where this type of honest talk can flourish, “Ministry team. All the time. It is a pretty fluid place. And people are very free in sharing their thoughts in a healthy way. So that is a very positive thing too.”⁴⁴

And this is another area where the executive and senior leader are on the same page. Pastor Fletcher finds it significantly important that his staff feel free to speak up when they see something directionally off and this desire has even affected the way he set up his office,

It is hugely important to me and so that is why I have relational office. No desk. Chairs. No paper. The exercise equipment in the corner is just fun for Steve and I, but it also lowers the tension level, because you are well-educated... You are in a power role. All of those things conspire against you for people to tell you the truth. I am new. That is another thing. They don’t know me for so long. And so I try and make it as easy as possible for people to speak up and do blue sky time as much as possible.⁴⁵

He went on to talk about how he strategizes activities outside of the office in order to accomplish the same idea,

Now something Beth and I haven’t been able to do yet is have, and it is our goal beginning in about a month, is to have every ministry team member over to our home for dinner. Just one couple, two couples at a time. Just let them see our

⁴³ Michael Callahan, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 28.

⁴⁴ David Fletcher, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7.

house. Just let them see us off the clock. Just having a good time. And just being with them. That will help too.⁴⁶

Summary

The development of a collaborative communication environment within a vision and values management system is a core strategy that enhances effectiveness. EvFree Fullerton has made a great point of establishing a culture where open conversation can flourish. This has been established in large part because of the secure leadership of their Senior Pastor Mike Erre, who only stops shy of begging people for honest feedback. It is reinforced by his new Executive Pastor who sets up his office in such a way to promote conversation not intimidation. With a culture of honesty and senior leadership that listens, EvFree is on its way to having an environment where ideas, programs and ministry can be enhanced.

Summary and Conclusion

EvFree Fullerton has seen the heights of success while Chuck Swindoll was the Senior Pastor and the spiral of disappointment as a new low was established of a dying and aging congregation during the feast and famine time of Dale Burke. Pastor Mike Erre was called upon to turnaround the church, and he is well on his way to doing it! As it is with anything, they must continue their success while avoiding certain pitfalls.

The difficulty with a team strategy is that if the culture is not carefully regulated it can begin to feel like everyone is managing everyone. Associates can begin to wonder who is in charge, or feel that they have multiple overseers. To curve this potentially disastrous culture, EvFree Fullerton will need to make sure roles and

⁴⁶ David Fletcher, “Interview with the Author,” (Fullerton, CA: Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, June 18, 2013), appendix pg. 8.

processes are well defined within their team environments. This way, suggestions are understood as suggestions, and decision making is efficient and does not impede upon empowerment. They also need to resist the temptation to use team as an excuse to micromanage associates; something that they do not seem to struggle with.

The vision is very clear at EvFree Fullerton, however, the values are not. This may be because they are at the beginning of their transformation, but it needs to be a priority for the future. Values help to align the staff and give further clarification of how the vision will be established. Values should also provide the means for evaluation. All goals and expectations should correspond to the values of the church.

Finally, careful attention should be given to how the suddenness of change can affect the staff's ability to be honest. Much progress has been established in the area of honesty, however, the staff is also in shellshock over the recent turnover of so many on staff. The question should be asked if the staff has become gun-shy and are now holding back because of the recent context. The obvious concern would be that they turn into "yes men" out of fear.

Overall, EvFree Fullerton has demonstrated how large churches can use a vision and values management system to empower their associates, evaluate their progress and enhance their effectiveness. Empowerment and enhancement through collaboration have come in large part because the Senior Pastor's secure personality to empower individuals and ask for their constructive feedback. Evaluation has been initiated with the hiring of their Executive Pastor, who has begun clarifying expectations through a job description auditing process.

DAVID FLETCHER INTERVIEW:

DAVE: OK. This is Dr. David Fletcher at EV Free Fullerton. I usually ask how long have you been at your church and...

FLETCHER: 75 days. I am an expert.

DAVE: And any additional ministry experience, how long have you been executive pastor.

FLETCHER: I have been in pastoral ministry for 30 years and I have been an XP for 14.

DAVE: Educational background?

FLETCHER: Too much. BA, Th M., D. Min. Executive education at Kellogg School of Management, Harvard Business School. Other than that, none.

DAVE: And, man, can you give the 30 second version of how you ended up at the church? That is the third question.

FLETCHER: We were going to move from Akron to Austin and I was going to run XP pastor full time. I had a donor in Dallas who was giving us a quarter million dollars to expand our work from India to Sri Lanka and Myanmar. We got radically redirected to Fullerton, CA. Other than that, it is just an everyday story. We had an apartment rented. We had the mailbox rented. We had moved the the mail. We were driving down to Austin. And God just redirected.

DAVE: I applied at a church called Hill Country Bible Church in Austin.

FLETCHER: Yeah. Hill Country is a good church.

DAVE: I have a friend who goes there.

FLETCHER: It can be kind of slow in the hiring process.

DAVE: OK. So we will go to the questions here. What is your understanding of the vision and the values of your church and how do you keep everybody online to this?

FLETCHER: So for 14 years after Chuck Swindoll, Dale Burke was the senior pastor. Chuck was here for 20 some odd years. Chuck left to become the president of Dallas Seminary. Dale came in and Dale had a good run, but toward the end it was kind of challenging, kind of bumpy. And then Dale left and there were 2 pretty hard years for the church. Attendance had dipped to about 2500 people. And then they hired this guy named Mike Eric. I have a paper you need to read. You can quote from it but you can't publish it yet, because I am going to publish it in February of '14. Mike Heary is my name for him. He is lightening in a bottle. Within 6 months of Mike coming, attendance had grown by 1900 people. He is an absolutely amazing communicator. When he had

been a lead pastor, lead teacher down at Rock Harbor and then at Mariner's. He had taken the Mariner's South Campus in the extreme southern part of the county. It had been in this movie theater. They had like 300 people. 18 months later they had 3200. He is dynamic. He connects. You should see the racial diversity on these campuses. The only people we don't have represented here well are African Americans. You look and you see a lot of whites, OK. I'm used to that. Then you see a lot of Asians. OK. That is reflective of the community. And then just last Sunday I am looking around, and it is like where are all these 35 year old latinos coming from? And people of all different dresses. Very few people wear ties here, but you know you can just tell people with a lot of different socio-economic layers are coming. That is his appeal. Mike has enormous vision. So what he did was he infused a fresh sense of vision. This church needed some huge turnarounds. The governance style was set back from like 1952. It was burdensome for the last 20 years. So that needed changing. The structure of the staff were terrific folks, but they were hands on shepherds. That's what they were hired to do. And that was culture. And as you know post recession, the American church can't afford that. And if you think about hiring shepherds for a congregation of 4500 people, and if you think well, we are just going to have 1 shepherd for every 100 people, I would need to hire 45 pastors just for that and directors and all that. So, the American church can't afford that. We need to go back to a biblical model of Ephesians 4 which I have been passionate about for 30 years and that is equipping people to do the work of ministry. So just last month at the elder meeting, we commissioned 3 guys to do weddings. And this is the first of many kinds of commissions we want to do. So these are going to be community ministers specifically to do weddings. We want other people to do specifically funerals. Now there can be overlap. You can be cross-commissioned. But we don't want to water down one type of commission. We want to commission men and women to be soul care agents and, you know, ministers in their community. So, in terms of vision that Mike has brought in, this is a big way of getting at 3 main objectives that he and the board before I came agreed upon. Number 1 is this church needs a sense of missional urgency. Not just missions way out there in India. Great. But also mission right here. Loving the city of Fullerton. So we held our second appreciation luncheon for the city workers because Fullerton had a huge crisis 2 years ago. A guy was beaten by 3 or 6 policemen. It was a terrible story. The city went into the doldrums. Many city workers for their 15 or 20 years have never had an appreciation. And the church saw that and they said, "hey, we want to be a church in this community and loving our community." So they said, "hey, can we just host a lunch." Some people didn't like it and boycotted it. Most of the city workers came. Because they said, "what is your agenda?" We don't have an agenda. We just want to love you and say thank you. So missional urgency. The second thing that ties into the staffing issue is we want to give ministry away. And that has been kind of true here except at the staff level. And I know you have seen it. When you hire a staff person what happens to the volunteers in the ministry. They become his or her volunteers. That just can't be. The staff member needs to facilitate the ministry of the other people instead of saying, "hey, this is now my area." And it is about job protection. And the third area is intergenerational. We really want to celebrate more and more bringing people together of different generations. So they started this thing called 6 packs. 6 guys, 6 months, 6 generations essentially. And they just get together and they just hang out. You can call it a mentoring kind of deal and it

is. But it is really just a time to learn from one another. And it is forcing people to say, "you know, I have never had a grandfather in my life." And I get some wisdom now from this guy who I would otherwise never talk to. So those are the 3 main vision initiatives and most of the people who have been at this church for 10 or 20 years realize major changes going on. For some people, it is too much, too fast. But when we had the kind of attendance loss that this church had and then you have this fresh sense of vision, it is what the church had to have.

DAVE: What is the church's management style? What is their approach? Has there been any shift in that approach in recent years?

FLETCHER: For many years, the church has had a very strong senior pastor, executive pastor relationship and they are accustomed to that. So we had Chuck and Paul Sailhammer. You had Dale Burke and Mel Howell. Now they have Mike Eary and me. That coupled with a very strong elder board. For a couple of years in this very hard transition time for 2 years, the elder board went from 35,000 feet down to like 1,000 feet and they knew it. And they got way deeply involved in affairs that elders should never get involved in. I am not fussing at that because it is what had to happen in a really hard, challenging time. So now, the board is saying, "hey, we need to fly back to 35,000 feet. We need to carry the spiritual weight of this congregation, not the ongoing operations of this congregation." So we are right-sizing it. And they are all in favor of it. Last year in March 13, they voted out a thing called the general board. An old thing from the 50's. And they still have layers of government structure and we have a 3 person governance team that is going to make recommendations to the board on what we need to do for further governance changes.

DAVE: And how does the staff management promote freedom within subordinates or associates?

FLETCHER: Well, I can't speak well to the past of that because I just don't have enough history. And I don't know that the staff right now, it would be fascinating to learn what you are learning. Some people are going to love it and some are going to be challenged by it because my style and Mike's style is we hire David Hurtado to do a job. Go do the job. Now tell me how it goes, tell me how I can help. I am not going to micromanage you. I want to be involved in it. And I don't have enough data points right now. I think it will go really well, but I don't have enough experiential points to celebrate it.

DAVE: Can you give me an idea, you said you want to be involved in it. What kind of decisions is it safe for them to make. What kinds of decisions are they not free to make in your ideal?

FLETCHER: Well, a big surprise for folks here is for many staff changes are very slow. So an example: Mike added an evening service with about 3 weeks notice. In the old days, it would take them 6 to 9 months to make that decision. So Mike's idea and I am right there with him and you can see this in all the endeavors I do, his thought is get out there with the bait out and see if it works and tweak the bait. Because if you spend all

you time developing a finished product, you might deliver a product that nobody wants or you might deliver a product too late. Or it might just be a dud of a product. So what we are trying to instill in folks is look, you have 5 ideas. Try all 5 of them. 4 of them fail, but we are learning and one is a home run, go for the home run. Who is going to criticize you that you grounded out, you hit the ball and you were out, but then you hit the grand slam that won the game. Go for it. So I'll give you an example of that. I went to our connections lunch which was a newcomers lunch. It took a horrendous amount of time for staff, just incredible amounts of time. And they were emailing people and they were getting these reservations and it was good, but it was incredible the amount of work. And the style was dated, just the presentation style. It was Sunday lunch and the Senior Pastor couldn't come to it. And then you had people sharing the gospel at it. Well, Mike is superlative in sharing the gospel almost every Sunday, Not in the traditional way but he's always leaving Jesus and do whatever he's talking about. The solution to the problem was not more stuff, It is more of Jesus. Why do we want to do more this traditional 4 spiritual laws sharing the gospel at some lunch that no one is really listening to. So we canceled that and instead we went with a the whole new style on about 3 or 4 weeks notice and it was kind of hard for some staff because they were like, "well, is my job on the line if this thing doesn't go well." We are all in it together. Put my name down as the one responsible for it. And that is a new culture here is one of experimentation. Like a Google, not like an Apple. So Apple only releases finished products. Of course, they have \$50 billion in the bank. Google is doing betas all the time. And even jettisoning good projects. Like Google Checkout is going to leave, do you know that? I assume you have heard of Google Checkout? They are killing Google Checkout on Nov 20 and it kills me 'cause I do a lot of business with them. Yeah, it is only going to be for software, no things of substance or even training materials like what I do. They just didn't want to be in that business anymore. I think they are nuts. But OK.

DAVE: They are honing in on their hedgehog. Are you hands on, hand off or flying in and out of both?

FLETCHER: I don't think I go quite with a question like that. I love to be aware of emerging problems. I love to be aware of success stories. I love regular dialog with people I work with and we are right in the middle of doing everybody's job description. In that sense, I am very hand's on on key things. Most of the ministry team which are pastors and directors did not have accurate job descriptions when I came. That is an understatement. Nobody did. I had one person come up to me as we were doing it and they pulled out a piece of paper and said, "oh man, this is 10 years old. I haven't looked at it in 10 years either." I said, "put it away. I don't want to see it." And there was a little bit of reticence in coming to my office to talk about job descriptions. What is going to happen? So giving you a brief aside to tell you how I did it. You saw the big TV monitor in my office. So on my Apple, I have Apple TV for the TV and then I can hook in wirelessly to that. And so the first thing I did was show them my job description. Three main things with percentages of time for each because that is how I do ministry is percentages of time. And then I show them Mike's job description. This is what we are asking Mike to do. Also with hours expected because we had a lot of folks working 60 hours a week. I don't believe in working 60 hours a week. I want 45-55 hard hours a week and then go home, just be done. And then I put up a blank slate and I just say tell me about your world. And then we just design it right there. And then, they would see what I was typing right on the big screen and then I would

send them a draft, and say, "look, this is just a draft. We are going to come back and ____." That all gets your question of hands on. That is really tightly hands on and walking them through the process. Talking about hiring process until I train people in the way that I want to do a hiring process, I am going to be involved in every single hire that we do. And then, I can release it. So it is mixed.

DAVE: Sounds like you are hands on to begin with. But once you've trained them, you can free them from it. OK. What is your sense of the pastors right now. Do they have a high amount or low amount of ownership over their ministry?

FLETCHER: I think a pretty high amount. And pastor and I would include in there directors. Because we have a lot of women directors.

DAVE: And how important do you feel it is to give your pastors freedom to set vision and direction for their ministries and who determines if that vision is in line with the vision of the church?

FLETCHER: We give a lot of freedom for that. We have a very broad sense of direction for where we want to go with our 3 main objectives and it is my role to work with them to hone their ministries so that they are in alignment with our own church vision. And ultimately, that would go to Mike. But, it is much easier to deal with the XP than the senior pastor in any church on that stuff, right?

DAVE: How do you emphasize the church's vision and values to your pastoral staff?

FLETCHER: Before I came, there was no executive pastor for 7 months with Mike. I hope you get a chance to meet him. So we will leave this meeting in a little bit after we are done with the questions and see if we can get you some time with Mr. Catalyst. Mr. Catalyst trying to do everything: preach and the XP role for 7 months. It was just crazy. So since I have come, Mike has been able to invest more time in things like regular staff meetings and I am a big one on vision and values and so was he. So it was very easy for us to say, "hey, we've got to work every time on vision and values. And so he does that in the staff meetings. That is a big piece for him.

DAVE: And the vision and values are the 3 that you had outlined.

FLETCHER: Right now that is the vision. The values are coming out.

DAVE: How do your pastors know what is expected of them and what process do you use to make those expectations clear?

FLETCHER: The first one since I have come is written job descriptions with job descriptions with percentages of time. Now we don't do success criteria at this point. I am just trying to understand who they are. And the first thing we want to do is right size their job descriptions. That is why the first version was a draft and then they are going to meet with me 4-6 weeks later to talk about the second version. So we want to do this slow and gentle alignment of all the staff and the honing of their gifts and abilities focused in the right direction.

DAVE: Eventually, will there be numeric goals attached to their jobs and what are these goals based on and how many are there and who decides what they are?

FLETCHER: Probably there will not be numeric goals. I am challenged by that in the spiritual realm. But I do believe in goals. And I believe in hard work. But if you are working hard soil and I am working easy soil I would look like a better farmer. That is not true. And who determines the soil? The people coming that God is calling for. So what do we need to measure? We need to measure faithfulness, we need to measure how hard you are working, we need to measure is it in alignment with what we are doing. Are you experimenting with new ways to reach that hard soil. So if you come to me and say, "hey, for 20 years I've been using a wooden plow and every 2 months I have to take a month off to remake the wooden plow." I would say, "have you ever tried this new fangled steel plow?" "No, don't believe in it." You may not be the right staff person here. Or you say, "man, I tried that. The aluminum plow, it bent. I tried the wood plow, it broke. I tried the titanium plow. It was expensive, but I haven't replaced it in 10 years and look at the crops that are growing now." So that discussion is going to happen with me and ultimately those results are going to go to Mike and he is going to evaluate because he and I have a very tight relationship.

DAVE: So you do measure, you just don't measure what everybody normally measures?

FLETCHER: Well, no. It is a both and in the church world. Measure the size of the youth group, High School group. How are we doing? And you look around and you say, "well, is this soil really all that harder than the next city over?" So if our youth group has 20 people in it and a church much smaller than ours has 300 kids, what is going on? It is more of a barometer for things to talk about than the success ratio that I am going to give you a bonus based on.

DAVE: I got you. When you deal with these measurements with your associates do you give them room to have influence over that measurement or that goal.

FLETCHER: Always. I think the best job description is the one that the person is giving direct input on. Now not making every call. So what I will do is like if you and I were to meet for your job description, you might give me 12 main things you can do. Then I would say, "hey David, let me just kind of organize these into some categories because maybe that is not your deal, but I do it all the time and I have done it for all 20 people on the ministry team." And you are like, "wow, that makes sense." And then you say, "well, can I move like this one from the first category to the third." "Sure." Then I will look at you and say, "you tell me what percentages of time you work because it is just you talking about it. I am not saying whether I agree with it or not, you just tell me." Do the same thing on goals.

DAVE: In the process you find out what they are passionate about and what they are good at. Very Andy Stanley like.

FLETCHER: He was my peer. We know each other well at DTS. We graduated the same year. But you know when people set their own goals with input because we are not autonomous because we are all in relationship then that is what they are passionate about, go for it.

DAVE: Great. How do you promote the idea of team on your staff? Is team important in your management culture?

FLETCHER: Huge. One, you celebrate generosity all the time. You always say thank you, you celebrate people in emails and you reply to almost every email that you get. No staff member is too low. You tell stories. So we have a guy in our facilities team who used to be a saxophonist at Disneyland. John is his name. And Beth and I when that saxophone group is playing would go to Disneyland to specifically hear that group and now see nobody believes that. It is like, "yeah, right, right right." But see I'm talking with John 1 day out here and I say, "Hey John, Beth and I were just talking about that quintet." And then I named off all the different kinds of saxophones in the quintet, and John was like, "hey, maybe this guy does remember us." And then I said, "Beth and I were talking and we remember 1 of the saxophones had little eyes on it, it was the big base saxophone." Which was huge, have you ever seen a base? It is like 5 feet tall or something, it is amazing. And he said, "Not only eyes, it had a tongue too." And then he said and he beamed, "that was mine." Nobody remembered that. Now happenstance, Beth and I...(interrupted by someone getting coffee) So if you want teamwork, the first thing you have to do is celebrate everybody. Just don't tell the story about your best performers. You have got to find John the saxophone player. Only tell the truth, but celebrate what you know about them. John was in my office the other day, he was doing some measurements. And I said, "John, sit down." And he was like, "Oh crap, what did I do now. The executive pastor wants me to sit down." Because you know there is a lot of power in that office. And I turned on some saxophone music from the San Francisco Saxophone Quartet, and it was Bach, and I played the whole 3 1/2 minute thing. Now if you think about it, because it is what I am passionate about, I am just sharing my passion. So, when we did this tent thing that takes massive teamwork. So we are redesigning the worship center, \$1 1/2 million remodel job, put a tent with 800 people in it and we had to put 400 people in 2 other venues, we did a prayer meeting out there, we say a huge turnout of staff. I don't know what happened. God just began to work in a new way and it required a lot more teamwork and everybody showed up and began volunteering in one Sunday morning. So it was just really cool.

DAVE: That was my next question is do you ever feel like you achieve a team synergy and what was the impetus for that?

FLETCHER: You know God was very gracious in the first 75 days here and may it be a continued thing. We saw it in a huge way on this tent project. All hands on deck and everybody showed up. I don't think anybody is in the back seat.

DAVE: How important is it for your staff to tell you when they are thinking something is strategically off or directionally off or a faulty idea?

FLETCHER: It is hugely important to me and so that is why I have relational office. No desk. Chairs. No paper. The exercise equipment in the corner is just fun for Steve and I, but it also lowers the tension level, because you are well-educated. You are getting more education. You are in a power role. All of those things conspire against you for people to tell you the truth. I am new. That is another thing. They don't know me for so long. And so I try and make it as easy as

possible for people to speak up and do blue sky time as much as possible. I am not always successful in that, but that is the heart of where I want to go. And then, that means the other people all have to show up, and I can't do anything about that. I mean if the pump is primed.

DAVE: That kind of leads to the next question, how do you cultivate an environment where people feel safe and can tell you what they are really thinking?

FLETCHER: Well, it is very hard because of power. So you can do those things. Now something Beth and I haven't been able to do yet is have and it is our goal beginning in about a month is to have every ministry team member over to our home for dinner. Just one couple, two couples at a time. Just let them see our house. Just let them see us off the clock. Just having a good time. And Just being with them. That will help too.

DAVE: Do you guys have any context where open debate of ideas is encouraged?

FLETCHER: Ministry team. All the time. It is a pretty fluid place. They have had a very healthy culture of discussing issues in the ministry team going back for probably 25 years to my knowledge. And people are very free in sharing their thoughts in a healthy way. So that is a very positive thing too.

JAY WILLIAMS INTERVIEW:

DAVE: OK. Let me start with your name and how long you have been at the church here.

JAY: I came to this church in 2000 so I have been here 13 years and my ministry is I came here to work with young families initially and about 6 months in the person who was in this role stepped out and the title of the role that I have been in is called Care and Concern. So we have a whole care and concern team that was care inside the walls of the church, disability, single parents, counseling, senior adults and then my focus was more care for the broken in the community and the needy and so really my focus and passion has been more care outside the walls of the church even though part of my job description was inside the wall. So I have been more about helping us to discover the world outside the walls of our church and our community.

DAVE: And you don't happen to remember Jeremy Clark.

JAY: I do. Well, I know who he is. I wasn't here when he was here. So, he is...yeah...Escondido. Is he the guy that wrote the book, he wrote dating books. Yeah, he was here before I was here.

DAVE: His parents go to my church that I am at right now. And so we kind of worked at the same church. A cool, cool thing. OK. And education background?

JAY: So I went to seminary here at Talbot. So I graduated there in '87 with an M. Div. That was a long time ago. And while I was in school I actually was attending church here and that's where I met my wife, so we were both involved in youth ministry here,

and so I met her. And then I was planning to move to Idaho and work at a church up there and things changed. So we ended up staying here. And then I moved to the Cyprus Free Church and I was there for about 15 years. So I did youth ministry there and then I did adult ministry for half the time.

JAY: So I am 53. I just turned 53.

DAVE: Wow. I would put you in your early 40's.

JAY: That's nice. Thank you.

DAVE: OK. So I know there is transition going on right now. So as best as you can, what would you say the new management philosophy of the church is as you understand it. What is the management style. What is the approach.

JAY: So in one sense there have been a lot of changes. There has been a lot of change within our staff team since Mike has come. And since David. David, I don't know how long he has been here...a couple of months.

DAVE: 75 days.

JAY: 75 days. So not even 3 months. And even before that there were some significant changes. So I would say the last 5 years have been kind of crazy with I don't know what you have heard. I mean there has just been a lot of change from the former senior pastor that left and the executive pastor that left. So a lot of change in staff and then we had staff reduction around that time too. So that was around 4 years ago. Then there was kind of a transitional period and a lot of change in there. He had a consultant that came in and was with us for a while and initiated a lot of change. And then he left. And then Mike has come. So I think what has come now is Mike has brought a lot of honest conversation. He has brought openness, a lot of energy and passion. And I think the chance to talk about a lot of stuff. So in one sense from the staff side it feels like there has been a ton of change, philosophical change, but in one sense from a practitioners' standpoint as they look at things. It probably feels like a ton of stuff to them, but in one sense it all feels like it is just kind of cosmetic. There hasn't been any real major change yet. I think there is some more significant change coming. But I think so far they have tried to tread lightly and try to be careful. But even though I think to the culture here it feels like a lot of change cause this place has had so much stability for so long in many respects. So I think they have tried to be careful. But yeah, I would say the more significant change is yet ahead. But on the other hand, there has been 4 or 5 staff that have been let go. So yeah, it has been...

DAVE: Would you say in your realm that you have a lot of freedom to do what you need to do or are you tightly managed or micromanaged?

JAY: I've had, I mean in my entire time here I have had a lot of freedom to do what I wanted to do. And I don't know that everybody would say that, but I would say that from

my perspective. And I came in with and I think as I tried to figure out who I am and how I can contribute to the team here and I think my focus became ministry outside the walls of the church to our own community. And so, I think I was given a lot of freedom and a lot of permission to start and do a lot of things. And even though I think in many respects a lot of stuff that I have done has been very new and different and against the grain here a little bit, I still was given a lot of freedom to do that and supported in that. Even though I would say the change was incremental and, you know, just breaking the ice from my perspective. To some people here, they'd feel like it was probably major. So yeah, and I have had a lot of freedom.

DAVE: Would you say so far as you can see the senior pastor, the executive pastor, would you classify them as hands on, hands off, or flying in and out of both and describe what that looks like.

JAY: So far, it has been to me it has felt kind of hands off. Like in my area, I guess nobody is telling me what to do, and in one sense I think some of the challenge has been in my particular area there is great passion on the part of Mike in what it means to be reached in our community and to be missional at home. And so, the passion that I have shared here and the work that I have done before, he comes x 100 here. So, I am super energized because I know it is not just a thing anymore, it is a major deal. But, how does that play out, what does it look like? He has got a lot of opinions and I am still kind of waiting a little bit. So I am waiting on a couple of major deals and I am trying to weigh it a little instead of just charge out ahead, but I am also trying to..He doesn't want to tell me what to do either, so I need to be moving ahead. I would rather move ahead and have him change the direction kind of along the way, but I want to be moving. So specifically, I am looking at a couple of areas like starting a non-profit. We are having a lot of conversations about within. That would kind of be under the direction of this church and what not, but would be in community. And we are also looking at a significant shift, and this has been a structure, the main structure here for discipleship is adult fellowship classes, adult classes. And so we are wanting to move to, we want to figure out how to bring missional communities into the mix here. And so, there are a couple of major things that we are sitting on. I am kind of waiting a little bit because we are trying to figure it out. So I don't know if I answered your question.

DAVE: You are doing great. What would you say the reason is people come to EV Free. Is it the pastor's personality? Most churches are personality driven. Is that why they are coming now?

JAY: I would say the growth that we have seen has been primarily him and his presence in the pulpit. Yeah, it has been a major.

DAVE: That is part and parcel of church ministry, especially a large church.

JAY: Prior to that, you know, I mean, when Dale was here for a lot of years, you know we had years of growth and what not, sustainability, but I don't know if I want to say it or put it in quotes, but you know the level of the difference between the communication

styles and their capacities are pretty significant. Mike comes here and in 6 months time there are 1500 to 2000 people back packing our door. You know, we opened a brand new service. We are packed for the first time. So I mean we have not had an experience like that in a long time, and so he is a known name around here as well. And to be honest, we don't even know who all those people are. We are still trying to figure out who are they and why are they here? I mean it is obvious they are here because he is the phenomenal communicator.

DAVE: What is your understanding of the church's vision and values? I know it is new but...

JAY: Well, that has been in process and we are working on that and I think Mike has been trying to lay a foundation for that. And we are here for a mission and I would say that in one sense this church would say we have always been about mission, but our understanding of mission has been, it has been far away and it has been overseas. Hey we have got a million and a half dollar mission budget. We send 70 missionaries. But for the most part I would say we didn't have a clue really about our own community and our own backyard. And so, I think that is all changing. And I think Mike is trying to wake us up to the call for all of us to be on mission wherever God plants us. I think that is the big vision and the big picture and if we are not doing that then we are missing why we are here. So that is a huge change. That represents big change here. Because I say we have been. I think sometimes the church can get focused on themselves and inward and play around with everything else and you really miss the major thing while we are here. And I would say we have been guilty of that.

DAVE: Is there a slogan that the church uses to try to describe this vision of the people or something like that? Some kind of a tagline that they say often or...

JAY: I would say I mean we haven't nailed that down very well. It is interesting, because we restructured before Mike came we restructured and worked on vision statements. You know, kind of the typical inward, outward, upward kind of a thing and we lined the staff according to that. And so, we are still kind of sitting in that, you know structure that we have. So that came before Mike got here, and then Mike comes here with great passion for, you know, it is not just a 3 legged stool where we just hope we do all 3, but we are here for mission. And you know, so he is preaching a series on it right now, and I wouldn't say that we have a tag line. I mean, we are here for the nations. You know, God is a missionary God and we are missionary people. That is kind of what he has been establishing for the last 8 weeks, kind of preaching that. And I think people are hearing it and loving it, but what does i really mean and, you know, we are still trying to figure that out. But he is working on a vision and mission statement. I couldn't tell you it right now. I would have to pull out the piece of paper.

DAVE: You guys are in the midst of transition. That is interesting. You feel like you are free to make decisions as long as it lies within the direction of the church?

JAY: Um yeah. In my area. Now, the areas that I mentioned to you with this non-profit and missional communities, those are obviously some big structural change, so we are kind of in process in figuring that out together, but I do feel empowered to do what I need to do.

DAVE: Who is the person who has the most direct input into what you are doing? And how often do you meet with this person and receive it?

JAY: Well, I am a part of a team and I actually now have direct report. And he was the global missions guy, and so technically he was my direct report. So I am on a team. But we are still kind of separate. Even though we are on a team.

DAVE: Have you met with Pastor Fletcher yet?

JAY: We have met once and we are meeting again. So it is interesting. We are in the midst of job description rewriting and all that, so I think it is all going to change to be honest.

DAVE: I am trying to be flexible with the questions. I understand you guys...

JAY: So yeah. Before I was the associate over this department. So, I was a part of the leadership team. And in the restructure, they changed that, so they moved me out of the department I was a part of. What they tried to do is put local and global together. And so they put me underneath Dan, and so we are trying to figure out that dance.

DAVE: I guess this is the underlying question, do you feel like you have a handle on what is expected of you in your role?

JAY: Um yeah. I would say it has been Mike and how much the issue, there have been very little conversations at this point. You know it is little soundbites here and there and some directional stuff and then I am just kind of running with it. So I have not been really getting a lot of I guess that would be management. You know, I think the big direction part I understand, and I understand our culture here pretty well.

DAVE: It sounds like you have got a lot of what is expected out of that revision and description.

JAY: Yeah, so my next meeting with Fletcher will be significant. Because at that point I think we will probably agree on what is my job description. And he is really putting an allocation of time. What are your tasks and what is the percent of time. He is putting that kind of stuff to that, so that will be very helpful.

DAVE: Do you feel a lot of ownership over your ministry? It sounds like you do.

JAY: I do. Yeah, I have been very passionate about it for a long time. But I have felt like I have kind of been in my own little silo here and I have felt like I have had significance

and I have had a lot of influence on the church, but to me it has still been...I guess for someone who when I see this isn't just supposed to be a department. This is supposed to be what we are here for. So that's kind of...And I am not trying to make my job more important than somebody else's, but that is kind of the area that I have been working on, so when Mike has come, it is now on steroids kind of. So what is this going to look like and I don't know. He just keeps saying, "You have no idea. You have no idea." "OK. Well, bring it on! I mean, I hope you overwhelm us with people." Because in many respects I think on the weekend off and stuff I think people are asleep and they are not clamoring to live missionally like what we want. But I think when you begin to here it all the time in the pulpit. We are trying to create a new normal, and so I think there is great stuff to come.

DAVE: How is the idea of team promoted in the management culture here?

JAY: Well, I think I would have to answer that in periods of time. You know, we have gone through these...So I have been here 13 years. And I would say that we have always prided ourselves in being a team, a great team. So for instance, I led the care and concern team for 12 years almost, and we had a great sense of team together. There were great relationships together. There were about 6 or 7 of us. We had a lot of fun together. We enjoyed meals together. There was a real sense of connection within our team. We didn't do a whole lot of ministry together, per se, but personally there was great connection. Then, before new senior pastor comes in, we changed up all the teams. Now I am on a new team. I don't have much of a sense of team right now at all to be honest. That's just kind of where we are at. So the place of connection is gone kind of, and so I am in a new place. I think we are creating a staff team, but you know there have been multiple people let go, so it has been kind of a hard time. But I think that he is building an open communication and so...

DAVE: Maybe it will build from there.

JAY: Yeah. I think so. It is in such transition. And what is going to be we don't really know.

DAVE: Have you had anything recently where you felt like everyone was on board. There was a synergy involved. Everybody doing something together, something like that recently?

JAY: We kind of did a mission event at Christmas that was new and different, and I think we had everybody on board because we were trying to make it a big deal and it was at a really busy time in the church calendar at the time. And so, I think that was pretty good. We just did in the midst of this missional series we did probably my biggest event that I have done. We call it Graceworks and it is a big weekend of community service. We did a week long thing and it was supposed to be an all in, everybody in, but it wasn't. In many respects, that was disappointing to me. I mean, we had been doing it, this was like the 5th year for this thing. But this year it was brand new because 2000 people were new here that we don't really know who they were, so we didn't really know

what to expect with them. And we got a new pastor who is teaching on what we are about has been incredible at the same time. So those 2 unknowns, I didn't know quite what to expect, but I mean from my side I am kind of disappointed in how it all went, but in many respects it went really well. But was it all in, no.

DAVE: And when you say all in, you are talking about everyone in the church?

JAY: Yeah. Church, staff.

DAVE: Do you feel like you can speak up when you see things are strategically off, directionally off, or there is a faulty idea? Do you feel the freedom to do that at this point?

JAY: Yeah. I think the invitation is there. I mean I think Mike has created a climate to really be honest, to push back, to disagree. I haven't done it much because for the most part I am all in right now because I love the direction we are going. And my personality is I am more hesitant, so I don't know. But do I have the freedom to do it, yeah. Would I do it? I don't know right now if I would just because of the nature of the transition and all that probably.

DAVE: When you have 2 years under your belt you will understand things more and you can decipher that better. How important do you think it is for the leadership to know that they know what you are thinking? Do they find it to be important? It sounds like you said yeah.

JAY: Yeah. I think so. I think what I am doing is critical and for the life of this church it will be a significant part. I know my role is that, you know, is critical and is a major part of what we are about and why we are here. So I definitely feel the weight of that. And I think our leadership does too. But I also know that there are lots of people...Mike could call some guy and get the guy that wrote the book on what I am doing kind of a thing. So that is reality. I feel appreciated, affirmed and loved here. But there is also a little bit of that insecurity that is there too.

DAVE: Are there any contexts at this point where ideas are openly debated in order to try to hone in the best idea, any kind of that?

JAY: Yeah. I think we have been trying to do that in staff where we started an evening service. And I think Mike has probably been thrilled with the dialogue on that. On the changes, we have went different places, the focus. Because we are trying to figure that and I think Mike said over and over again, he said he wants people to take risks and failure is OK as long as we learn from it. So he is definitely creating that. He is giving that message and wants to create that culture. So then to do that, you have to talk about it because you don't know. We are kind of diving in unknowns.

MICHAEL CALLAHAN INTERVIEW:

DAVE: Give me your name again.

MICHAEL: My name is Michael Callahan. I am the college pastor here. And. Yeah. It has been about a year. And so, before that, I was at Calvary.

DAVE: Did you go to Talbot at all, or...

MICHAEL: I just finished at Talbot.

DAVE: What did you get?

MICHAEL: M. Div.

DAVE: Nice! Yeah. I graduated from Talbot in 2004 with an M. Div. And it was a great experience for me. I really enjoyed it.

MICHAEL: Yeah. I had a phenomenal experience there. This last year was one of the best ones. It was really good.

DAVE: Right one. Yeah. You guys have got all the new buildings. When I was there we were like ____.

MICHAEL: Well. It is funny because most of my classes are still at Myers.

DAVE: No way.

MICHAEL: Yeah. It is really. I don't know the scheduling or what, but they will put a lot of undergrad classes over in the nice building. Wait a second. I thought this was supposed to be the Talbot building.

DAVE: That's how they get the money for it.

MICHAEL: Exactly. Seriously. The undergrad program is fueling _____. Yeah. Exactly. No. Barry goes to our church, so. The President.

DAVE: Oh does he really? That guy has the most beautiful eyes in the world. Every time they send a picture of him I am like, "look at those eyes."

MICHAEL: Dude. That is so true. It is so funny that you should notice that.

DAVE: All I get is the publications. It is like everything just goes straight to his eyes. And I am secure in my manhood, but...

MICHAEL: Yeah. You know what is funny about it is I thought the same thing. There are a couple of people that have piercing eyes and it is like they are looking right into your soul.

DAVE: Did you go to Biola before Talbot?

MICHAEL: I didn't. I went to Cal State Fullerton, so...

DAVE: Cal State Fullerton. That is right around the corner. That is weird. I am checking you out by what you are reading by the way.

MICHAEL: Yeah. Yeah.

DAVE: Expositors. I like expositors a lot. You know you can get that on CD ROM now.

MICHAEL: I have everything on Accordance. I spent an ungodly amount of money on Accordance software and have some of that as gifts through the years. It is pretty cool. I have all of Word Commentary on there, OT, NT, NIGCT. I have NIVAK. I have all the greek tools. I have an Anchor Bible Dictionary.

DAVE: You find yourself using greek before you preach?

MICHAEL: All the time.

DAVE: Good for you man. Keep it up.

MICHAEL: Greek was the most amazing experience that I've ever had. Hebrew was a different story. I like Hebrew. I don't use it though. Not as much as I should.

DAVE: No. I forgot all the Hebrew completely. But Greek has been a great tool. If you continue to refresh it is amazing. It becomes a working knowledge of it. I couldn't sit there. I use the tools. ____But I have, you know, it is the HDTV on the regular TV.

MICHAEL: It sure is.

DAVE: And so it has been a great tool. Cool.

DAVE: So let me go through this. I am writing a dissertation on management culture in a large church.

MICHAEL: Beautiful.

DAVE: And there are 3 tenants of my dissertation, and basically all the questions are written around those 3 tenants, so.

MICHAEL: Beautiful.

DAVE: We can go through the questions. Hopefully, it won't take that long. And then I will tell you more about it. OK. So how long have you been at the church? You said a year? Additional experience at Calvary Chapel in...

MICHAEL: Chino Valley.

DAVE: And then educational background Talbot. Great. So we will move on. How would you describe the management philosophy at EV Free right now. Now you are new so this will be good. You will have a new perspective of that.

MICHAEL: Yeah. Yeah. The change is more epic than I have ever... I mean I have always heard about change is hard. Change is one of those things. And I have always thought myself the kind of person who is like, "let's just change it." You know. I mean, I am out there. Our executive pastor, Mel. He left about a year before I got here and I think either right before that or right after that our senior pastor had left. It was Dale Burke. He is out of Dallas. And, you know, it has been a journey and a half because the management lost, but they are good people. Dave Fletcher is just an amazing mind. He has got a keen sense of organization.

DAVE: He is the XP of XP's.

MICHAEL: That is exactly right. I mean, it is funny. The first time I heard ex-pastor. I think I told him this. The first time I heard ex-pastor, I thought it was ex-pastor, like, you know, former pastor. Oh, oh yeah. So, you know, with that, though, you can sense that Mike is at the helm as far as the decisions that are made, the personnel, bringing on, stuff like that. He has delegated a lot of authority which is great for him because Mike was burning the candle at both ends. But because Mike came from a startup kind of background where he was the main guy at Rock Harbor. Even though the dual pastor role at Rock Harbor was very much in existence, Mike had a huge influence over his pastor. And then at Mariner's he was the sole guy, even though they kind of had an overarching, the best I can understand, almost like an Episcopalian kind of where he was the sole pastor of the Irvine Mariner's. But at the same time, he answered to the Senior Pastor over at a different Mariner's. This is the first time of him being the Senior Pastor and he is incredible. As good and as gifted as he is at teaching, he is even better at leading. But there have been times where we voiced to him like we need to know budgets ahead of time, you know, over here in the youth department especially. I don't know if you know, but I can brag on these guys. The high school ministry is huge. It is vibrant. They will easily pull in over 300 kids on a Sunday morning. On some of their events they will get, you know, close to 315, sometimes over that. Junior High is about half that size, but should be because they only have 7th and 8th, whereas you know high school has all 4 years. So these guys plan epic events, huge summers, I mean where they are working 60-70 plus hours. All that to say, the budgets, you know, we finalized the budgets. We had already planned out our summer because we needed to clear things. So that was one thing that was a big challenge for us. So we talked about that and stuff like that and I think it is all a learning experience because so many of us are new. But even Scott, Scott is my direct boss. He is the one that I report to directly as the associate pastor. He is still relatively new in his role, and he is incredible. He holds himself like he is 50.

DAVE: Great. Great. Do you feel freedom to do your job in college ministry.

MICHAEL: Yes I do.

DAVE: You get to make decisions there.

MICHAEL: Yep. It is great. You know. That is where Scott has freed me up. So the budget is my call. Everything gets signed from him. But, you know, I propose certain things that I would like to do, that I would like to see, this is where I am going, you know, and it is more of a, is this in line with your overarching vision as a student ministries pastor and it almost always is because we meet frequently. But Mike is really good at not being down into the details. And same with Dave Fletcher. They allow us to fly free.

DAVE: Great. So they are not hands on in the sense that they give you freedom. You have good direction it sounds like.

MICHAEL: Yeah. Exactly. They provide direction. This last January, Mike went away with the elders to an elder retreat where he prayed and he came up with 3 different mission objectives, 3 different things that he would like to see. One of them is he wants to see an increasing missional urgency. In other words, not just a global missionary initiative, but rather seeing our back yard and across the street as the mission field. You know, all of us kind of being on mission. The second one was fostering intergenerational cross pollination. You know, it is funny. Mike is a really good communicator. The elders are great communicators too, but they like to use big words. So this fostering intergenerational cross pollination is a tag word for hey, let's not just have the kids be with kids, the teens be with the teens, and the adults be with the adults, let's see if we can mix it up. And so our fourth service on Sunday nights is kind of the evidence of that. All that to say that the other objectives...

DAVE: So if I understand you right, the Sunday night service is really targeting everybody to come back Sunday night.

MICHAEL: It is an identical service to the 3 in the morning, but it is geared to have teens and college students and young adults interacting with folks who are in their 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's. You know, we have such a range of people within this church, you know, so we are trying that.

DAVE: So it is instead then. Instead of going to church in the morning, you go at night?

MICHAEL: Yeah. Exactly. But all that to say. You know, they are hands on in the sense that those 3 mission objectives served as kind of the scheme for us to create our year as far as events, as far as outreaches, all that stuff.

DAVE: So as long as, if I hear you right, as long as your ministry is, as long as you are taking your cues from the vision and values of the church, you have freedom to do...

MICHAEL: Absolutely. Well said.

DAVE: Well said. Would you say people are coming here because of the personality on the stage?

MICHAEL: Yes.

DAVE: Most churches are. What is your understanding of the vision and values of the church. You said 2. What was the third one.

MICHAEL: The third one was giving ministry away. We are big believers that we shouldn't be the professionals here. We want to engage people and we want to recruit them into a lifestyle.

DAVE: Great. Some of these you have already answered, so...

MICHAEL: Cool.

DAVE: Do you feel like you have a handle on what is expected of you in your role.

MICHAEL: I think that is a really good question. I think a lot of that is yet to come. And I think that is fair to say because we were severely overstaffed for many, many years. We enjoy the blessings of generous people and the answer I think in former regimes was to hire more people because if there was a need, well, let's get someone to do it. So, Mike is a real big believer in sliming staffs, and so as a result we have seen transitions and good people going. People who haven't had any problems with integrity, who haven't had any problems with ministry. If anything, the ministries have become more vibrant as a result of my coming, you know, this fresh vision. But nevertheless, they have been let go and all that stuff and all done in a very generous, very christian manner, you know, as best as you can do those things. They have given them generous severances. They have given them an ample amount of time to be able to transition out of the ministry. All that to say, though, some of us are left going what does success look like in our ministry? How would you like me to, you know, do these things. Is what I am doing here satisfying the needs. So for instance, we used to have clubs here on campus, almost like christian version of the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts. Back in the 50's, 60's, even 70's and 80's these were big. These were the ways that a lot of young people came to Christ. It was very much a vibrant ministry. Now though, it is not just where we are going, and so we had to let a really talented, godly, great woman go who was running the clubs because that is not what we were funding anymore. And so sometimes those of us who are kind of in that going, well, I hadn't heard a whole lot of vision about where my ministry fits in. I wonder if I am going to be assimilated into something else or I wonder if we are going to go in this direction. So yeah, maybe that answers that question.

DAVE: And do you have a job description?

MICHAEL: Yes.

DAVE: And who handles that job description with you? Is that Scott or...

MICHAEL: Directly Scott does. And he drew up the original one that was kind of like our contract when I got hired. David Fletcher since revised it and we sat down together and he is brilliant. He is a genius. "Lets do this...Let's work with this."

DAVE: So he actually sat down with you.

MICHAEL: Yep. Yep. Directly. And he always wants me to OK this with Scott because the way that our church structure works, and I don't know whether this will be irrelevant to you, but Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, so it is not kind of co. And then under the executive and really under the Senior Pastor are 4 associates. And those 4 associates are over different teams, and we all kind of fall in these teams. For a while, it was interesting. Ideally, you would only be on one team. For a while, I was on 3. So that kind of tells you they shuffle like that. And it is fine. It is all resolved. And it was a good thing.

DAVE: Do you feel like after that meeting going over your job description that that helped you have a better handle on some expectations of what you are doing?

MICHAEL: Yeah, it did.

DAVE: So it seems like that might be getting clearer as we go forth.

MICHAEL: It is. And he is having in about a week or two another meeting to follow up with that.

DAVE: You said you feel a large amount of ownership over the ministry.

MICHAEL: Definitely.

DAVE: What do you think the key is to be feeling a large amount of ownership.

MICHAEL: In one word: budget. Because as unspiritual as that might sound, if you believe that God is calling you to do something but people don't give you the tools to be able to do that then they are only behind you in word only. So in my former ministry, "hey, we are behind you and we want to see young people come to Christ." And they were good godly people, so I don't want to talk against them. But the problem was they didn't fund toward that. They funded toward men's and women's ministry and those became vibrant and it was beautiful and stuff like that, but they didn't fund toward us. So if someone can say, "I want to see you succeed," and not just like, "I'll give you money," but, "I'll give you money to work with. You have an expense account. But you have to bring an income. You have to be responsible." That kind of autonomy means that not only do they trust you but they really want you to succeed.

DAVE: The key word there is autonomy.

MICHAEL: Yep.

DAVE: What do you think the key is to outperforming let's say your numerical goals.

MICHAEL: I'm sorry, outperforming?

DAVE: Yeah.

MICHAEL: Yeah. So you are asking how can I succeed numerically? So you know, I think that one of the keys and I want to make sure I am answering the question correctly. One of the keys is keeping students in the know of what is going on. Entering into their world and understanding Orange County which is a whole different beast than San Bernardino County where I was ministering before. That everyone is busy. That is just the name of the game over here. So you have to make sure to get out information through different ways. You have to make sure you send my emails, but emails are boring. People don't usually read them. Facebook for sure, and you have to actually while you are there and you have them gather. You have the hub of the students, you have to make sure to say it. So three different ways of communicating. And, yeah, yeah...

DAVE: And how was the idea of team promoted in your context. Is the idea of team kind of a big idea in the management culture.

MICHAEL: You know, it is over here. What I mean is Scott is the associate, and he is over team 4 which means nothing to you, but it is student ministries team. So basically, he is responsible for children to college. Recently, young adults has come under that umbrella of responsibility, so I am also helping out with young adults, which means Scott is directly over that as well. But Scott prays with us every Tuesday morning at 9AM. He has taken us on retreats. Every summer, there is a student ministries retreat where he says thank you, you know, 50 times, and it is a beautiful thing. It is not repetitive, and it is not tokeny either. He really genuinely means it. So he fosters this team building aspect over here. Because we are all this tightly knit North Campus area we are able to stay together and hang out a lot more than these guys who are a little bit more reserved.

DAVE: Has there been anything lately where it is a big church. Let's talk about the team as not only just youth ministry in this building here, but both buildings all the pastoral directors, senior leadership, middle management and leadership. Is there anything you can point to recently where you have seen like a synergistic deal where everybody got together and did something together. It doesn't have to be like a fun thing. It could be that. But the idea is we had this objective that we had to get together and you saw that happen.

MICHAEL: Yes. We served the city of Fullerton at a luncheon. And we have done it twice now. This last year I think we did it in October. And it was one of the coolest things

that we have ever done. The city of Fullerton has experienced a pretty tough run lately. About 2 years ago there was a homeless guy that walking on the streets and some of the police officers beat him to a pulp and it was all over the news in the city of Fullerton and international even. People were calling the numbers on the websites and personal homes, in other words all that to say, the city of Fullerton, I mean they had good people leaving left and right because the city had gotten a black eye, you know. And it is very sad. And it is very unfortunate. But they need to be loved. And so Mike saw this vision of coming together and saying, "hey, let's minister to the city of Fullerton." So we put on a luncheon so that all what we would call either senior staff or ministry team, they were all servers. And other folks were too. The rest of middle management kind of area, they were actually helping with the food. We had set up crews, tear down crews. It was a whole church effort and it was a really beautiful thing. So we had an all staff which is everyone meeting the next Wednesday and everyone came together and agreed that that was one of the best things we had ever done.

DAVE: Sweet. Sweet. Yeah, that is the definition of synergy.

MICHAEL: It is.

DAVE: How free do you feel to speak up on things that you think are strategically off, directionally off, or like a faulty idea.

MICHAEL: Well, I'm actually shocked because I came from an environment where that was not welcome. And Mike not only welcomes it, but encourages it. He is a big believer in thinking out of the box and so he loves push back. I remember one time I asked him if I could offer some pushback. He said, "I always want you to offer that." He likes that. There is a guy in our meetings that he has in there for the sole purpose of being the devil's advocate. So I feel very free actually.

DAVE: Great. Great. In that context maybe, you can answer this question which is the last question. Do you ever have places where there is open debate or ideas can be battered about so you can get the best idea? Is that the staff meeting?

MICHAEL: Yes. Yes. And it is a really cool thing. Very healthy and, you know, good, good dialogue.

DAVE: Thanks man.

SCOTT BELON INTERVIEW:

DAVE: Let's start with your name and how long you have been working here.

SCOTT: My name is Scott Belon and I have been working here on staff for actually 12 years now. And I have been High School Pastor for almost 2 years.

DAVE: So this is a new role for you.

SCOTT: Yeah.

DAVE: Or you were in the high school and they just promoted you.

SCOTT: I did Junior High for 4 years. I did high school for a couple. I was a lead before Jeff. I did that for 6 years. So, 6 of that 4 in Junior High and 2 in High School and then the last 2 years they asked me to oversee the whole department also.

DAVE: It is a lot different in Junior High and High School ministry.

SCOTT: Totally different ball game. It is fun. Both fun in their own ways, but different ball game.

DAVE: I did Junior High for 10-12 years. I loved it with my heart til I grew out of youth, or I couldn't handle it any more. OK. Educational background, you said Biola.

SCOTT: Yeah, Biola. I am still finishing up at Talbot. ____ at Talbot for my first 4 years, 3 years I guess. I took a couple of classes a semester and then we had our first kid. I took some time off. I didn't realize that was going to turn into 4 kids over a period of 6 years. So I guess a year ago I started taking a class a semester and I will just complete out in the next couple of years and then finish out. Part ____ at the same time. It is hard to tackle the school thing and do full time ministry and take care of the family. So, I figure school is one of those things is a long journey and that is OK.

DAVE: And what are you hoping to get when you are done.

SCOTT: The degree?

DAVE: Yeah. What degree do you want to get.

SCOTT: It will be in Theology diversified Talbot. But hopefully I will be done.

DAVE: M. Div.?

SCOTT: Yep. Probably because I don't necessarily see myself as a teaching pastor. I mean, who knows, the Lord might direct that way, but at this point students are in my heart and, you know, if not that then work on families. That is kind of where I think most.

DAVE: All right. How would you describe the philosophy of management at EV Free Fullerton? How do they, what is their management approach?

SCOTT: Wow. Management approach.

DAVE: Do you see your leadership hands on, hands off or flying in and out of both?

SCOTT: You want me to answer these according to my role?

DAVE: Sure.

SCOTT: For me, I say very hands on. I have a lot more interaction with Mike or interaction with David. You know, I get to sit with them once a week with all the staff and also in semi-regular meetings with those guys occasionally just talking through other things that are going on. Part of that is especially in the last year and a half since I have been in this role hiring a new children's pastor, a new junior high pastor and a college pastor. So, I get a lot of hands on in the sense of a lot of interaction with them, and now especially the children's pastor, Mike wanted to be pretty proactive in that hiring itself. So I had a lot of interaction with him during that time. I would say though with the whole staff that the hand's on would be once a week. I would say with all the pastoral staff once a week is pretty normal. And with all staff would be once a month. And with little snippets of things in between there. But I think Mike. It is hard to gauge a little bit because Mike came in and we did not have an executive guy, so he was doing everything, taking on the whole church on his shoulders, you know, and so he had no time to do the things he loves to do. I guess he was having to do stuff he did not want to do. So I think when that changes and it is changing now, I think we will see more of a hands on approach that we just haven't been able to taste yet because of the transitions as a role being scattered and having to be that hands on guy, you know.

DAVE: Sure. Do you feel free to manage your area? Do you feel freedom, are you empowered to make decisions in your area?

SCOTT: Absolutely.

DAVE: So you don't ever feel micromanaged?:

SCOTT: I used to. Not anymore. Under our current leadership, I feel very empowered, very encouraged to lead, to take risks, to take chances and not be afraid to fail, you know, take opportunities and run with them. I love that. I love it.

DAVE: Would you say that this is a personality driven church. I mean, are people coming here because of the personality they see on Sunday morning?

SCOTT: The thing that is hard to gauge in that is you know I knew 75% of our church when Mike came, and then when Mike came we had an extra 1800 that showed up. So I think the answer has to be yes because of that. Right? I mean a chunk of our people came because Mike came. But there were a lot of people that were here before that who stuck through after losing Chuck to a guy who wasn't quite as big a name and relationships kept them more than anything. So I would say yes, but there is something deeper that kept people around here somehow amidst the chaos.

DAVE: What is your understanding of the vision and values of the church now.

SCOTT: My understanding of it? I would tell you that right now currently they are very unclear, and I think that is primarily because we just changed them right before Mike came which was kind of a mistake. And so Mike is creating new ones and they have been communicated to us as an upper leadership staff as far as the idea of you know being kingdom people with kingdom communities and the whole goal of reaching our local area with more of an intentional purpose and being missionally focused. But we just didn't have that before. That was never a part of our DNA. We were very global and very discipleship focused, but not very locally outreached, and so I think right now I think people will tell you I can say for me I have some clarity in the sense that I get to be in those meetings. But as a church, I think that they would be still figuring it out. And I think that that is OK. I think we are in a spot to do that right now.

DAVE: Well, it might be too early to change that, it would be like culture shock. Wait a second, we just did this.

SCOTT: Which I think is exactly why he hasn't rolled it out yet. Because I know that it is coming.

DAVE: Who's idea was it to change the vision and values without having a senior pastor?

SCOTT: Good question. I think our elder board went ahead with that, along with our exec guy prior to Fletcher. I think they were revising and knowing that we needed to make some changes and I think the hope was, I think that was honestly like if we don't make some changes no one is going to want to come. We are going to feel really old. And we were, we were incredibly old in the way we were doing things. And so, we created a new vision and a fresh perspective. All of that was done in the knowledge of ____ we got to make a change. Things are going to be different when the new guy comes. And so there was a little bit of a ____ feeling like man, we wasted a lot of time in these that we didn't need to invest our time in. So that's just one of those things...

DAVE: I heard him say that he wanted to do a intergenerational service. Are the kids embracing that right now? Are they coming to this service?

SCOTT: _____. I have the best problem ever as the high school pastor right now at our church in the sense that our kids want to be in the main service. And a lot of the ones who aren't in the main service right now aside from the ones who just sleep in or don't come or whatever, are the ones who are serving in some capacity in the children's ministry. So I have tried to gauge it based on hand raising and that kind of stuff. But it seems to me like there is maybe a sixty percentile or so that are in the service at some point.

DAVE: So they must have made the services feel a lot younger.

SCOTT: Well Mike just does that himself. Nothing is ____ for Mike. The worship style, yes, but we have a different service for more contemporary service. So, ____ remain the

same with Mike alone. I mean when Mike came in the first week he was here, we met, and I asked him, hey, can I take over a section of the sanctuary for high school kids. I want to start getting them in there. They will want to hear you. And he was like, "of course. If you get them in there, I will address them every single Sunday. So literally, every Sunday that we have been in the sanctuary he looks first thing he gets on stage on the second row and says, "high school, how are we doing?" And just addresses them and will joke with them at times to the message and just makes them feel like they belong there, you know? And it has caused us now in high school ministry, this fall the thing that we do we are changing. We teach on ____ on Sunday mornings. We are going to flip it because I don't want our kids to sit and listen to a second message after Mike's and be challenged with as many messages during the second service, come to high school, give them a whole another thing to chew on. So we are going to begin to unpack Mike's messages on Sunday mornings with the high school group and go big on Wednesday nights and let's try it. It is a risk we are taking, but it is very new. We haven't done that ever in the history of our high school ministries. It is the same as it has always been. So we are trying some new things because...

DAVE: When did you formulate the Wednesdays?

SCOTT: Small group stuff, classes, that kind of stuff. So it is very internal. I told our guys when I first went into high school ministry that was the first thing that had to change was the Wednesday night program because it was very inward focused. So it is good that this will give us some real freedom to say we are going to blow up Wednesdays and make them big. But we are really going to focus on having our kids be a part of the bigger body by unpacking Mike's messages and really wrestling through that on Sunday mornings. I will still keep the community feel of high school ministry. So we will see...We are preparing that as we speak...a journey.

DAVE: That will work with his personality. I mean, he has a personality that people will gravitate to and he has got enough depth to where adults are listening.

SCOTT: Yep.

DAVE: It is going to be good. Do you feel like you are empowered to make decisions? It is not like you are micromanaged. You already said that. Who is the person who has the most direct input on what you are doing and how often to you meet with that person?

SCOTT: The most direct input on what I do? Well it is Fletcher in his position now and Mike. I guess in all honesty Mike has a bigger influence in the sense that up to this point he has been the _____. Fletcher is just figuring out his role. At some point it will be Fletcher. So I get one of those hard questions to answer because of our transition right now. But typically it would be the exec guy and right now we are not meeting very regularly. That is because as you have probably heard he is getting to know all the staff members, sitting down, doing job descriptions so we just have not had a chance to do it. But Mike and I in the role between Fletcher being here and even since he has been here we will sit here at least once a week or so give or take we have broken it down to

talk through some of those things, some of the things that are going on in high school. If we are in a different meeting he will talk and we will bring that up and we will talk a little about what is going on and are you thrilled and so he has been pretty hands on in that sense too. I am still getting a ton of freedom, but definitely I am not afraid to give opinion.

DAVE: What processes does the leadership go through in order to establish expectations on your ministry?

SCOTT: I have no idea. I say that because I don't think we had a name. We don't have any currently aside from the fact that Mike would tell us if we are not taking any risks or not. If we are not taking any risks. That is his perspective and his vision. But we do not have...that is still being put in place now with Fletcher. We really had no accountability before. I think in a very unhealthy sense. There was no one really checking in who was asking the right kind of questions or just making sure that we were moving in direction and not doing anything as a whole staff, that we were making sure that we all kind of correlate together and that we were aiming toward the same vision and same direction. So we had 100 people going 100 different directions all running their individual silos. Part of our biggest problem in our church for a long time. It was one of the things that made our church successful in the sense that we had something for everyone. But at the same time we had everyone running in their own little finger of the hand and didn't know what the next one was doing so. So I think that is something that we need: some accountability, some insight, not micromanaging. I don't think anybody wants to be micromanaged, but a real sense of we are providing direction for you and come with the box to fit within and then have all the freedom in the world that you want to have in the box. We have not had a box at all. So, not from staff or elders really. It has been a while.

DAVE: You said Fletcher is bringing some of that. What has he brought so far that works into that?

SCOTT: Well. I think just conversation. I am in conversation I think to know that it is coming. Even creating a job description. I mean, I literally asked for my job description the other day to send to a buddy at another church. He was asking me for it and I told him to be aware. I ended up getting it from my HR guy. He says it was revised in 2011 written in 1986. But I'm pretty sure nothing has changed since 1986. That meant the revision we just looked at it. So just to have ___ up to date is huge. To know how do we spend our time. Is that good or is that bad and is there a way I need to adjust that. Are there places I need to invest more time that I don't? Are there places that I invest too much time that I shouldn't? You know. So that is literally the beginning stage. He is sitting with all of us in doing that. And then I will sit with all of our crew that works underneath us asking them the same questions too. And so, I think that is going to be huge, just to give us some clarity as to this is what you are hired to do, you know. And not that he is forcing that. We are kind of telling him what we do, but it helps us to refocus where we spend our time so there can be accountability. Otherwise, no one knows what you are doing, you are just doing. So whatever makes you happy.

DAVE: Very good. So you feel a large amount of ownership over the ministry that you are leading?

SCOTT: Yes.

DAVE: How is team promoted in your context. Is team an important value in the management style culture here.

SCOTT: Overall or within my specific area.

DAVE: Over the whole church.

SCOTT: No, I think it is. And again, a little bit of that is quirky at this stage simply because we've got a new guy coming in who is a strong leader and it feels like he is making all the decisions. But I think there is a real value to our time sitting in staff wrestling through the things that he is already thinking about. And one of the things that I think I appreciate about Mike in the way that he shows that the team is important. There have been multiple things that he has done that he has initiated and planned and tried, but we will come back to the team and say how is this working? And if the team is against it and not fighting for it he puts the brakes on. Like he listens to that, he is aware of that. He is not like, "hey, I think it should be this way, so screw you guys." I really sense this idea that the team's opinion is that when he makes a mistake and he jumps over it and it doesn't work right, he owns up to it and if it works right he takes credit for it, you know. But I think generally I think staff feels that we are figuring it out. But I think the team is important, they are trying to figure out what does the team look like at this point still for us at this point right now, you know. And I think the team has always been big here. I think our staff team has been a massive component. But I think in the first time in 3 years people can share their thoughts around the table where we have never had the freedom to do that in the past. So that I think for me in my person, I am the type of person that speaks to him a lot. He will let me speak up and share something. Whether or not it happens or not at least I have forum to be able to talk about it rather than ____out conversations that occur afterwards, so...

DAVE: That is a running theme that I have been hearing from you guys. Can you point to an objective that all staff gathered together to pull off in a synergistic way recently?

SCOTT: I think the clearest one would be the city of Fullerton lunch that Mike was kind of the brain child behind. He just said we wanted to love our city and so we wanted to call all the city employees in and we want to love them by serving a big tri-tip meal. We did it twice in the last 9 months, bringing them onto our campus, welcome them in. We feed them. Our whole crew here at the well takes care of all the food and all that. Our staff individually serves each table. Other support staff comes in and serves the ____and all that kind of stuff. And I think start to finish those have been some of the coolest things that have really spoke "team" to us in the fact that we have not only had a chance to be together doing those things and it has all been for the same purpose, but I think

the reward of seeing some of the fruit afterwards and knowing it is making an impact in our community is pretty cool. So people are mentioning us when they are pulling people over on the side of the road, and like, "oh, this is going on in your life. Why don't you go check out the church." The cops never would have said that 5 years ago, you know. And so that is really been for us super, super cool.

DAVE: I was going to say do you feel the freedom to speak up on things that are maybe strategically off or directionally off or a faulty idea, and it sounds like you have answered that with a yes.

SCOTT: Definitely.

DAVE: And that is a change from the past?

SCOTT: Yes.

DAVE: Is there a context where ideas are openly debated in order to achieve a better idea or the best idea?

SCOTT: Yeah. I think Mike invites that in his staff which is cool. And again, contrast to what we have done. In history if there was conflict in the meeting, we would stop the discussion and say that is for another time. But now, almost to the point where we can waste time debating things too long, you know. But to a plus in the sense that people have a chance to argue a point, wrestle with whether it is valuable and play either side and I think it is embraced. It is awkward for a lot now because it is new. But I think it is embraced in the sense people have been longing to be able to speak up, you know.