

A close-up photograph of a microscope's objective lenses. The central lens is in sharp focus, showing its internal structure. To its left, a lens with the number '100' is visible. The background is blurred, showing the rest of the microscope's body.

Analysis and

A photograph of a topographic map with a compass and a ruler. The map shows green terrain, blue water bodies, and brown contour lines. A compass is placed on the map, and a ruler is partially visible. A brown cord is draped across the map.

Decision-Making

**By
Kent R. Hunter**

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Chapter 1

A Divided House

Jim is the pastor of Immanuel Church in Wisconsin. He has served the congregation for 12 years but has experienced increasing tension. Early on in his tenure as senior pastor, Jim began to recognize that Immanuel is divided. As the years passed, this division became more apparent, and the conflict became more intense.

Jim became the lightning rod for criticism, slander, complaining, and disagreement. The volume and frequency of complaints and challenges made it feel like this group was half of the worshipping body.

Jim is an intelligent, gifted, and fun-loving person. Before his call into the ministry, he was an attorney. He brought his quick wit, enthusiasm for life, and desire for effectiveness to the ministry of this congregation. Many of the people within the congregation learned to appreciate his ministry. They became energized by his vision for greater impact on the community. Jim gathered key staff as well as a strong core of dedicated leaders who shared his vision.

However, the other group of vocal, discontented people continued to ferment as a major disruption within the congregation. They represented a group that was diametrically opposed to just about everything Jim and his leadership proposed. As the group became more vehemently opposed to the direction of the church, they increased their attacks. Jim was criticized for being lazy and unproductive. At the same time, he was identified as an aggressive dictator.

After more than a decade, Jim was frustrated, worn out, and ready to resign. His family had discussed leaving the church, and he had privately thought about leaving the ministry. Jim came to the conclusion it was time to quit—what else could he do?

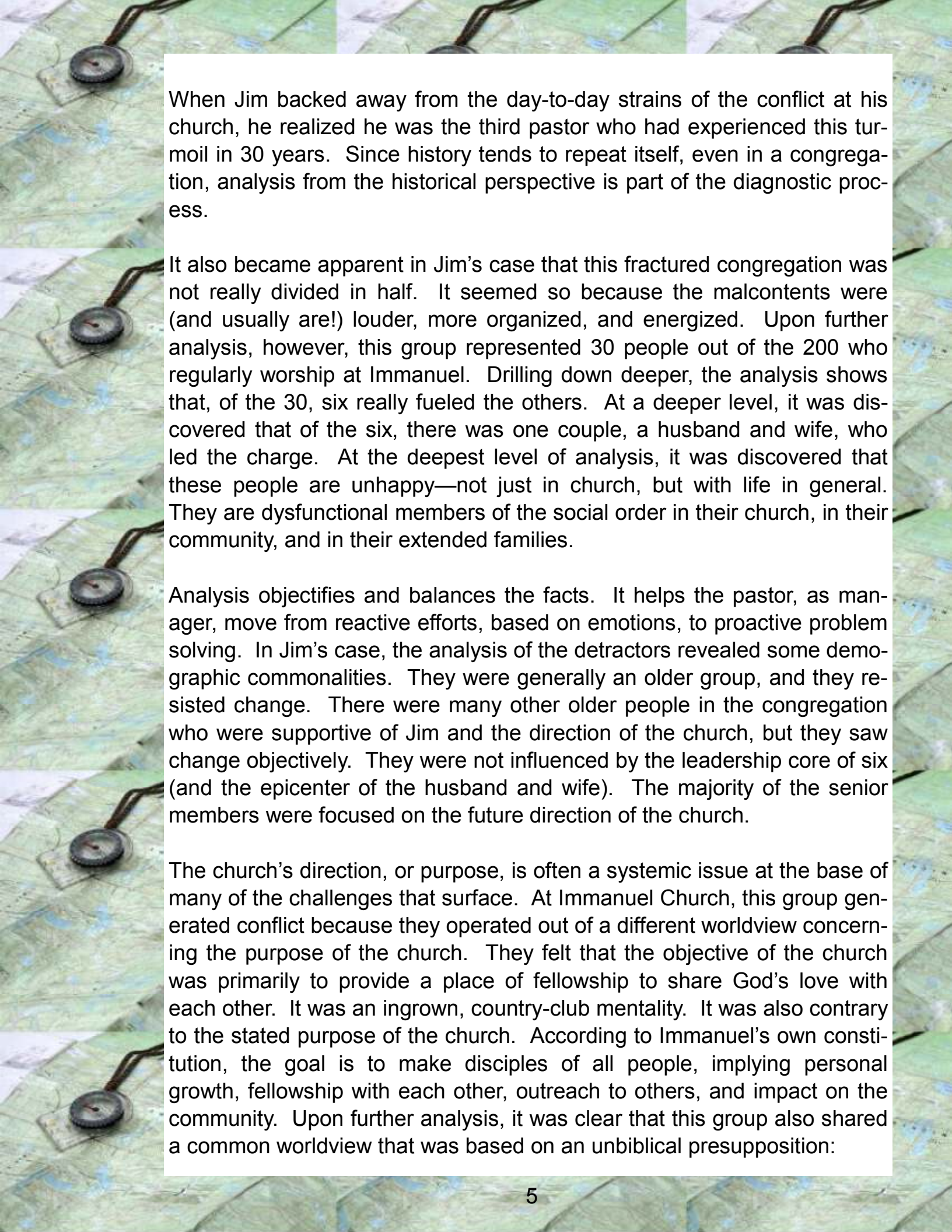
Time to Quit, or Time for Analysis?

One of the greatest challenges for pastors is the management of emotions. Since religion—Christianity—is located close to the seat of emotions, it can easily become subjective. When that happens, it is harder to see the light at the end of the tunnel. It is more difficult to weigh the challenges in the backdrop of the bigger picture, which often includes many blessings.

The Apostle Paul was no stranger to ministry challenges. In his second letter to the church in Corinth, he lists some of the difficulties faced in ministry. He speaks of hard work, several imprisonments, being whipped, stoned, shipwrecked, as well as being in danger from floods, robbers, betrayal from the inside and threats from the outside, going without sleep, being hungry and thirsty, without enough food, shelter, or clothing. Finally, he talks about being under pressure because of his concern for all the churches.¹ Yet, on another occasion, Paul, from his jail cell, writes the church at Philippi and encourages them not to worry about anything, but, through their prayers, ask God for what they need—always asking Him with a thankful heart.² In this way, Paul demonstrates how Christian leaders can put perspective on their difficulties.

The management lesson? It is easy to get too close to the challenges of ministry. It becomes difficult to see the forest for the trees. It is typical for pastors and church leaders to digress into symptom solving rather than dealing with the issues behind the issues. As one pastor said, “When you’re up to your armpits in alligators, it’s hard to think about draining the swamp.”

The pastor, as the most visible person within the church, often becomes the target for challenges and a magnet for complaints. This is part of leadership and it goes with the territory. Leaders in every sector of life experience the lightning-rod phenomenon. They include CEOs of companies, mayors of cities, and heads of state. At the congregational level, the senior pastor often takes the heat for whatever might be wrong in the congregation. This is a common and predictable reality.

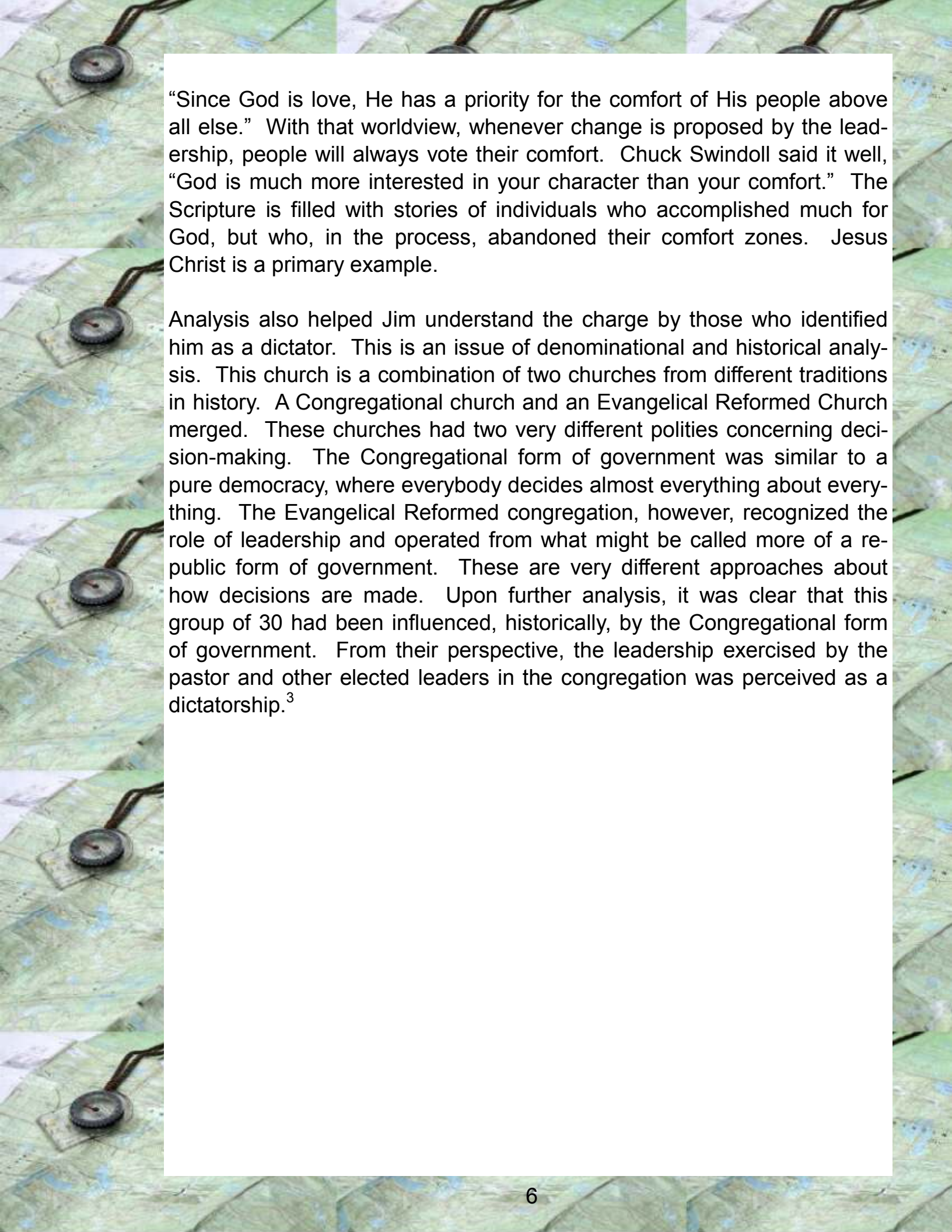


When Jim backed away from the day-to-day strains of the conflict at his church, he realized he was the third pastor who had experienced this turmoil in 30 years. Since history tends to repeat itself, even in a congregation, analysis from the historical perspective is part of the diagnostic process.

It also became apparent in Jim's case that this fractured congregation was not really divided in half. It seemed so because the malcontents were (and usually are!) louder, more organized, and energized. Upon further analysis, however, this group represented 30 people out of the 200 who regularly worship at Immanuel. Drilling down deeper, the analysis shows that, of the 30, six really fueled the others. At a deeper level, it was discovered that of the six, there was one couple, a husband and wife, who led the charge. At the deepest level of analysis, it was discovered that these people are unhappy—not just in church, but with life in general. They are dysfunctional members of the social order in their church, in their community, and in their extended families.

Analysis objectifies and balances the facts. It helps the pastor, as manager, move from reactive efforts, based on emotions, to proactive problem solving. In Jim's case, the analysis of the detractors revealed some demographic commonalities. They were generally an older group, and they resisted change. There were many other older people in the congregation who were supportive of Jim and the direction of the church, but they saw change objectively. They were not influenced by the leadership core of six (and the epicenter of the husband and wife). The majority of the senior members were focused on the future direction of the church.

The church's direction, or purpose, is often a systemic issue at the base of many of the challenges that surface. At Immanuel Church, this group generated conflict because they operated out of a different worldview concerning the purpose of the church. They felt that the objective of the church was primarily to provide a place of fellowship to share God's love with each other. It was an ingrown, country-club mentality. It was also contrary to the stated purpose of the church. According to Immanuel's own constitution, the goal is to make disciples of all people, implying personal growth, fellowship with each other, outreach to others, and impact on the community. Upon further analysis, it was clear that this group also shared a common worldview that was based on an unbiblical presupposition:

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“Since God is love, He has a priority for the comfort of His people above all else.” With that worldview, whenever change is proposed by the leadership, people will always vote their comfort. Chuck Swindoll said it well, “God is much more interested in your character than your comfort.” The Scripture is filled with stories of individuals who accomplished much for God, but who, in the process, abandoned their comfort zones. Jesus Christ is a primary example.

Analysis also helped Jim understand the charge by those who identified him as a dictator. This is an issue of denominational and historical analysis. This church is a combination of two churches from different traditions in history. A Congregational church and an Evangelical Reformed Church merged. These churches had two very different polities concerning decision-making. The Congregational form of government was similar to a pure democracy, where everybody decides almost everything about everything. The Evangelical Reformed congregation, however, recognized the role of leadership and operated from what might be called more of a republican form of government. These are very different approaches about how decisions are made. Upon further analysis, it was clear that this group of 30 had been influenced, historically, by the Congregational form of government. From their perspective, the leadership exercised by the pastor and other elected leaders in the congregation was perceived as a dictatorship.³

Chapter 2

Concepts and Tools for Analysis

Consistent and careful analysis is an important part of effective management for the local church. Theologically, it is a matter of good stewardship. It is using the intelligence and tools God has given for the purpose of objectifying reality, and making clear decisions based on factual evidence. Unfortunately, many churches operate with little information gathering as part of the process. It is the responsibility of the pastor, as manager, to encourage careful analysis, whenever possible. The Proverb says: “What a shame—yes, how stupid!—to decide before knowing the facts!”⁴

On the other hand, analysis is not the end of the process. A well-known author and leader of the McIntosh Church Growth Network, Gary McIntosh, has clearly pointed out: “Analysis is not a cure-all for everything that makes the church sick. Like the doctor’s thermometer, analysis is simply a tool to understand the symptoms. A thermometer never healed anyone, and neither will analysis heal a church. What it will do is help church leaders understand the issues so that they can make a proper decision on what prescription to make for the church.”⁵

One of the most valuable dynamics for analysis is to engage the services of an outside interventionist. Usually called church consultants, these trained analysts provide a valuable function for congregations. In fact, many churches have learned the value of a visit from a trained consultant every two or three years. This can be as valuable to the Body of Christ as an annual checkup for the human body by a physician. The church consultant, or interventionist, helps to identify the forest and the trees. The consultant is trained to analyze on deeper levels. In the process, the interventionist reports reality and makes suggestions. “...the intentional interventionist is willing to accept the responsibility to change the course of history....In other words, *interventionist* often is a synonym for change agent....The interventionist comes prepared to offer new options that the client had never considered.”⁶

The process of using an objective outsider insulates the pastor and the leadership from negative reaction. When pastors and leaders establish a direction that includes change, a church can become divided. A “we/they”

relationship can result. We, the congregation, are against them, the pastor and leaders—who are suggesting this new direction. However, when a church uses an outside, objective consultant, the interventionist becomes the “they” and the “we” is the united congregation, which often includes the pastor and leadership as well as the membership.

What you see through the activity in the local church is often not what is really going on. A German theologian and pastor of Mount Hermon Church in North Carolina makes this point: “Church leaders need to know that a good deal of what drives action (and inaction), in both individuals (including the leaders) and organizations, is either fully unconscious, semi-conscious, or intentionally hidden or disguised.”⁷ Norbert Hahn refers to Freudian principles and the work of the Frankfurt School of Social Analytic Theory, which has focused on invisible instincts, drives, and interests that animate individuals and organizations. Hahn notes that: “someone will ‘act out’ the unconscious anxieties of the organization—especially in times of change and when long-standing interests feel threatened.” This is certainly a part of what is happening in Immanuel Church and the challenges faced by Pastor Jim.

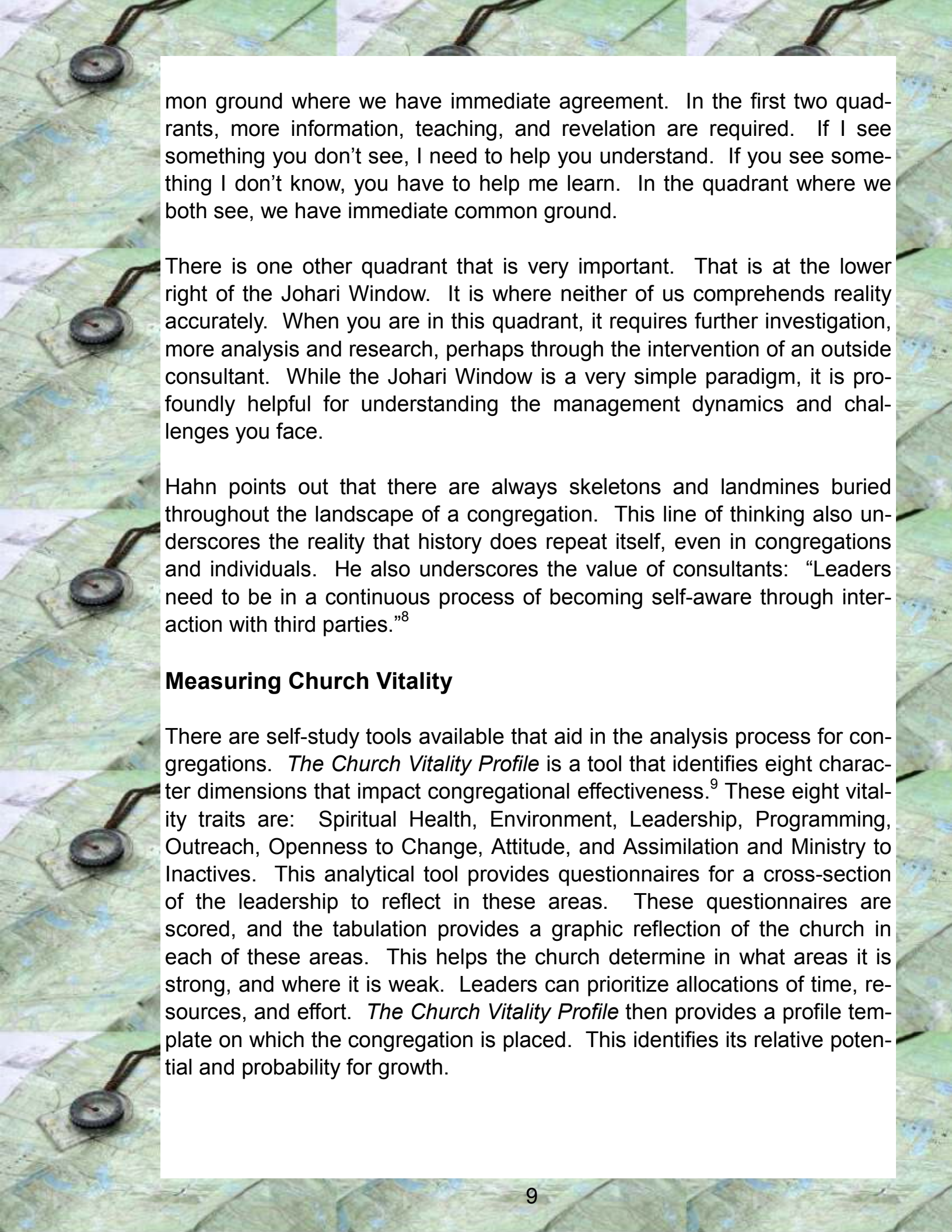
What Do You See?

A profound tool for understanding is the Johari Window. This is simply a window with four quadrants that help one understand how people interact. It will help you conduct analysis management as you face those who understand reality about the church from different perspectives.

Johari Window:

I see	You see
We both see	Neither of us sees

Notice that in every discussion, there are four areas of understanding. There is the area represented in the upper left-hand quadrant of the Johari Window. This is what I see and understand, but it does not include anything that you see. In the upper right-hand corner, the quadrant includes reality as you understand it, but excludes what I know. In the lower left-hand corner, the quadrant represents what we both see. This is the com-

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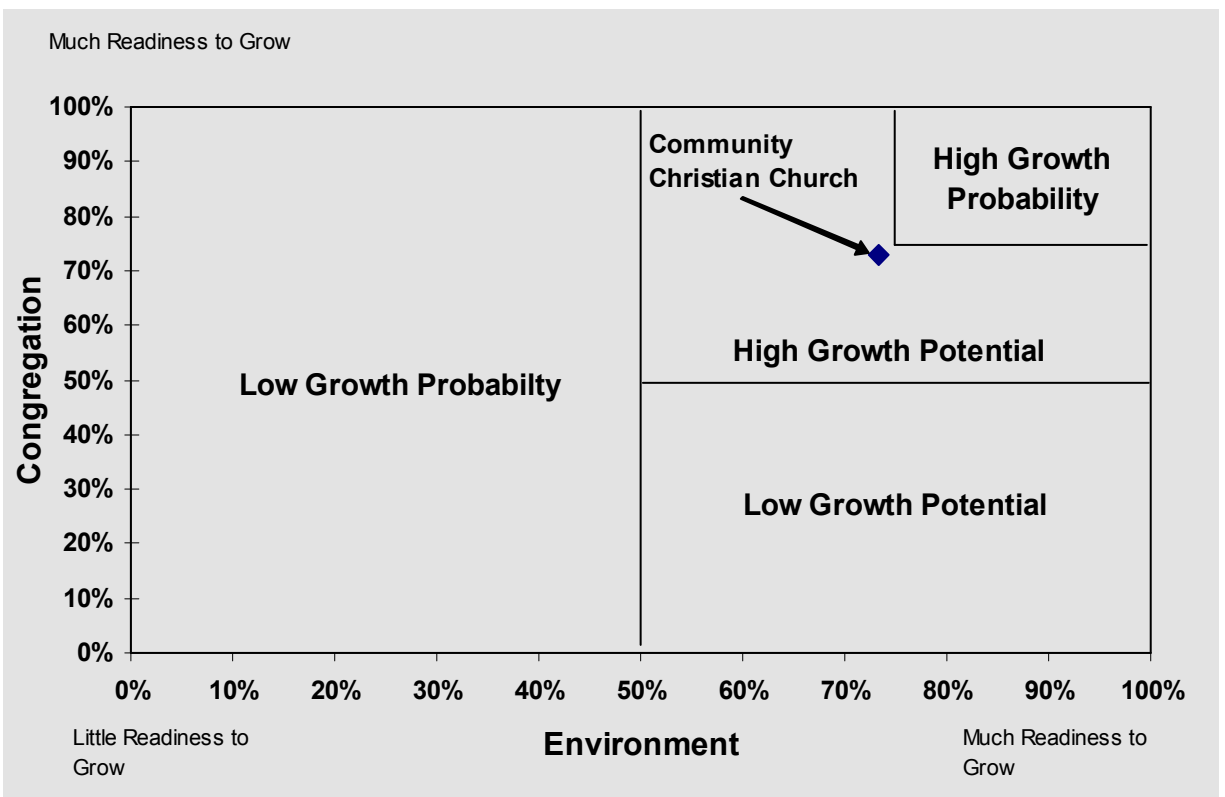
mon ground where we have immediate agreement. In the first two quadrants, more information, teaching, and revelation are required. If I see something you don't see, I need to help you understand. If you see something I don't know, you have to help me learn. In the quadrant where we both see, we have immediate common ground.

There is one other quadrant that is very important. That is at the lower right of the Johari Window. It is where neither of us comprehends reality accurately. When you are in this quadrant, it requires further investigation, more analysis and research, perhaps through the intervention of an outside consultant. While the Johari Window is a very simple paradigm, it is profoundly helpful for understanding the management dynamics and challenges you face.

Hahn points out that there are always skeletons and landmines buried throughout the landscape of a congregation. This line of thinking also underscores the reality that history does repeat itself, even in congregations and individuals. He also underscores the value of consultants: "Leaders need to be in a continuous process of becoming self-aware through interaction with third parties."⁸

Measuring Church Vitality

There are self-study tools available that aid in the analysis process for congregations. *The Church Vitality Profile* is a tool that identifies eight character dimensions that impact congregational effectiveness.⁹ These eight vitality traits are: Spiritual Health, Environment, Leadership, Programming, Outreach, Openness to Change, Attitude, and Assimilation and Ministry to Inactives. This analytical tool provides questionnaires for a cross-section of the leadership to reflect in these areas. These questionnaires are scored, and the tabulation provides a graphic reflection of the church in each of these areas. This helps the church determine in what areas it is strong, and where it is weak. Leaders can prioritize allocations of time, resources, and effort. *The Church Vitality Profile* then provides a profile template on which the congregation is placed. This identifies its relative potential and probability for growth.



When *The Church Vitality Profile* is administered on an annual basis, this relatively inexpensive analytical tool provides a benchmark of progress for each of the eight vitality traits as well as the general growth potential of the congregation. This is a reflective tool only, but over comparative years, it can be quite valuable.

Another excellent analytical tool for churches, which relates to a critical area for congregational vitality, is the *Vision Audit*. This was developed by Burt Nanus, Professor of Management at the University of Southern California's School of Business Administration. Nanus is also Director of Research at USC's Leadership Institute. The *Vision Audit* is a simple tool that can help a congregation gauge momentum. The *Vision Audit* includes four basic questions. Designed primarily for secular organizations, the word "church" can be easily substituted for the word "organization." This audit can be of great help in analysis concerning the momentum of your church. The *Vision Audit* asks these four questions:

1. Does the organization (church) have a clearly stated vision? If so, what is it?
2. If the organization (church) continues on its current path, where will it be heading over the next decade? How good would such a direction be?

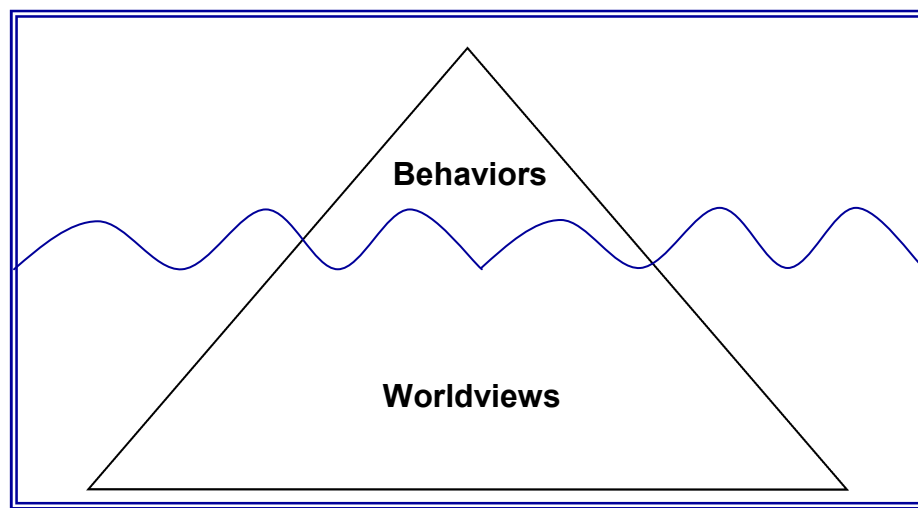
3. Do the key people in the organization (church) know where the organization (church) is headed and agree on the direction?
4. Do the structures, processes, personnel, incentives, and information systems support the current direction of the organization (church)?¹⁰

While vision tends to be an ethereal intangible, these questions tie visionary concepts with reality in a way that demonstrates a connection between momentum and performance. The *Vision Audit* would also be a good analytical tool to use on a yearly basis in a leadership retreat for your church.

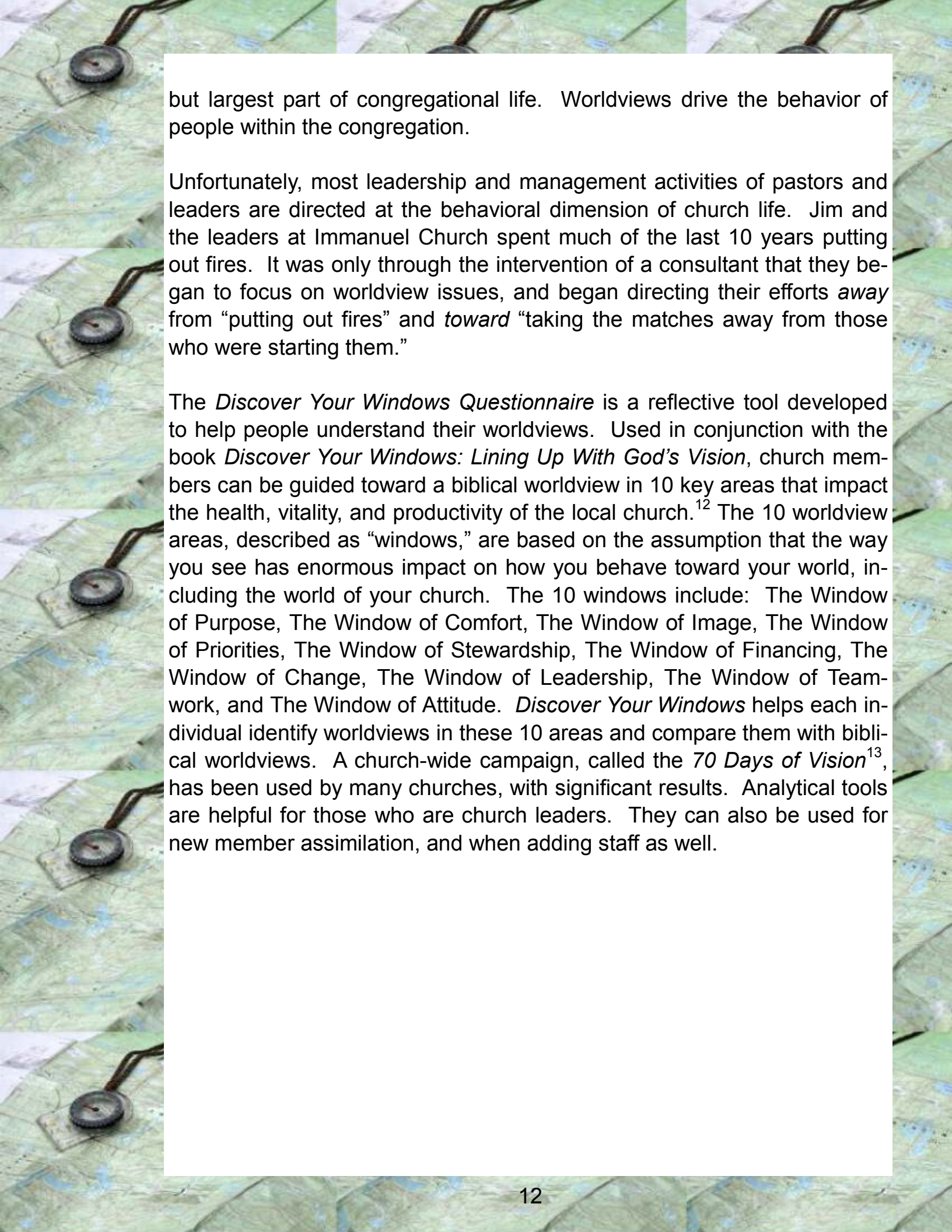
Another critical area of church behavior and productivity is worldview. It is also difficult to analyze because it lies below the surface. At the heart of the challenges that Immanuel Church faced were two worldview issues that drove the behavior of the discontented group of 30. They had unbiblical worldviews concerning (1) the purpose of the church and (2) comfort versus change.

Worldviews

Darrow Miller describes worldview in this way: “A worldview is a set of assumptions held consciously or unconsciously in faith about the basic makeup of the world and how the world works.”¹¹ A worldview is much like the hidden part of an iceberg. The behaviors of people within the church represent the tip of the iceberg.



Behaviors represent a small part of what takes place within your church. These behaviors are driven by worldviews, which represent the hidden,

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but largest part of congregational life. Worldviews drive the behavior of people within the congregation.

Unfortunately, most leadership and management activities of pastors and leaders are directed at the behavioral dimension of church life. Jim and the leaders at Immanuel Church spent much of the last 10 years putting out fires. It was only through the intervention of a consultant that they began to focus on worldview issues, and began directing their efforts away from “putting out fires” and *toward* “taking the matches away from those who were starting them.”

The *Discover Your Windows Questionnaire* is a reflective tool developed to help people understand their worldviews. Used in conjunction with the book *Discover Your Windows: Lining Up With God’s Vision*, church members can be guided toward a biblical worldview in 10 key areas that impact the health, vitality, and productivity of the local church.¹² The 10 worldview areas, described as “windows,” are based on the assumption that the way you see has enormous impact on how you behave toward your world, including the world of your church. The 10 windows include: The Window of Purpose, The Window of Comfort, The Window of Image, The Window of Priorities, The Window of Stewardship, The Window of Financing, The Window of Change, The Window of Leadership, The Window of Teamwork, and The Window of Attitude. *Discover Your Windows* helps each individual identify worldviews in these 10 areas and compare them with biblical worldviews. A church-wide campaign, called the *70 Days of Vision*¹³, has been used by many churches, with significant results. Analytical tools are helpful for those who are church leaders. They can also be used for new member assimilation, and when adding staff as well.

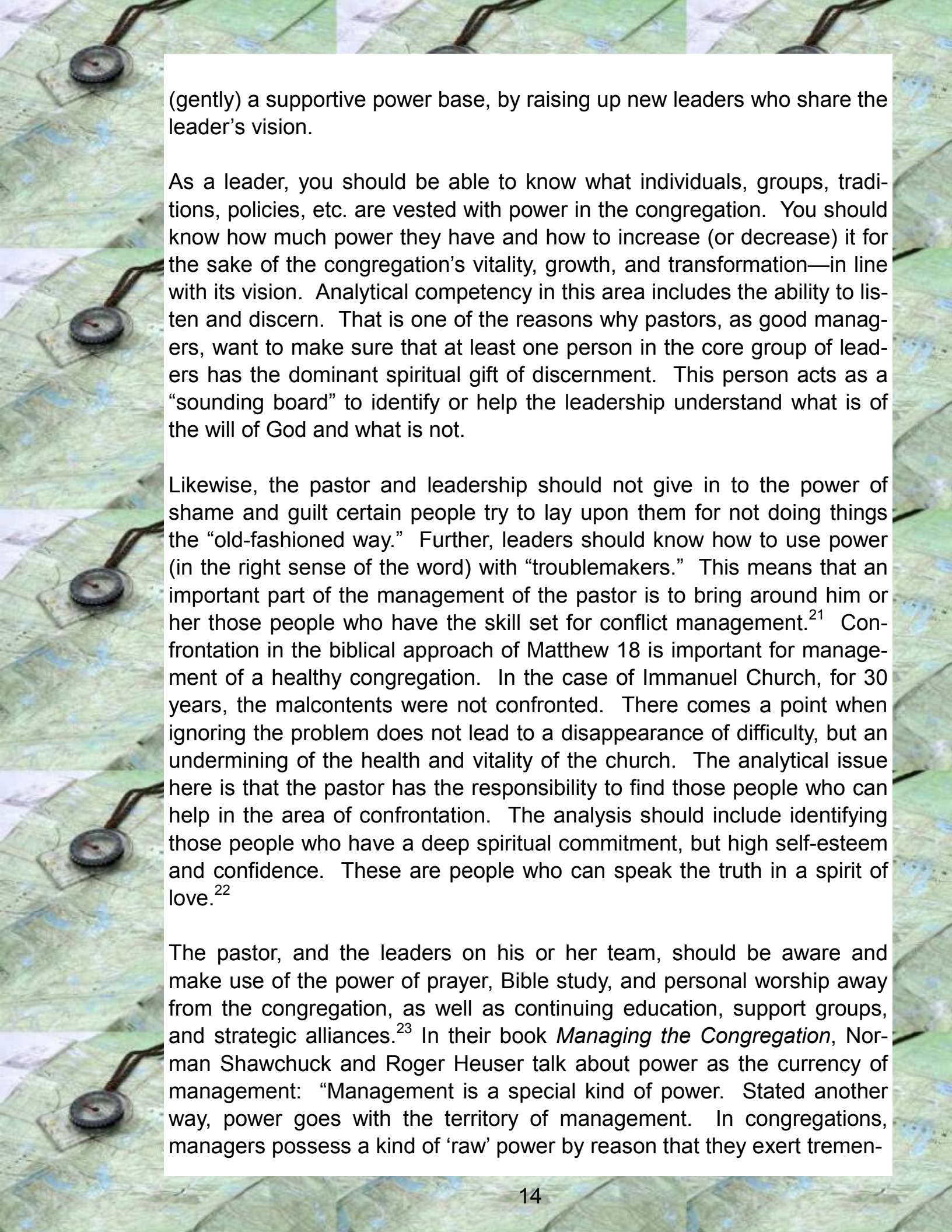
Chapter 3 Leadership

Most of those who teach and train Christian leaders recognize that leadership is key to an effective congregation. John Maxwell has shared, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in North Barrington, Illinois, concurs.

There are several tools used in congregations to help analyze potential leadership and leaders in places of good fit. One of the most common analytical tools is represented by several spiritual gifts surveys. Two of the most popular spiritual gifts inventories are the “Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire,” found in the book *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, and *The Spiritual Gifts Discovery Survey and Scoring Sheet*.¹⁴ There is also a book that expands on spiritual gifts analysis. It includes what the authors call Life Gifts, and explores personality types, values, and passions.¹⁵ *Networking*, produced by the Willow Creek Association, is another good approach. Mike Breen has a different but very useful tool to analyze each Christian’s dominant area of the fivefold ministries expressed in Ephesians 4.¹⁶ Other analytical tools for staff and leadership within the congregation include the *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis*.¹⁷ This instrument identifies nine prominent character traits as people relate to one another. Another instrument that is widely used in churches is the *DiSC Evaluation Instrument*.¹⁸ This tool identifies the type and style of a person, and is also helpful in analysis of individuals who work together on a church team. Another instrument that requires training and certification is *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*.¹⁹ One of the tools used by Church Doctor® Ministries in the Staffing Consultation is the *MinistryStyle Analysis*.²⁰

Key Influencers

Who are the power centers in the congregation? This does not require an analytical tool but is very important to the pastor as manager and leader. It is the ability to analyze and use power. Power is not necessarily bad. The power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Evil One are spiritual realities. The pastor and leaders in the congregation should have the ability to understand power in its various manifestations and know how to build

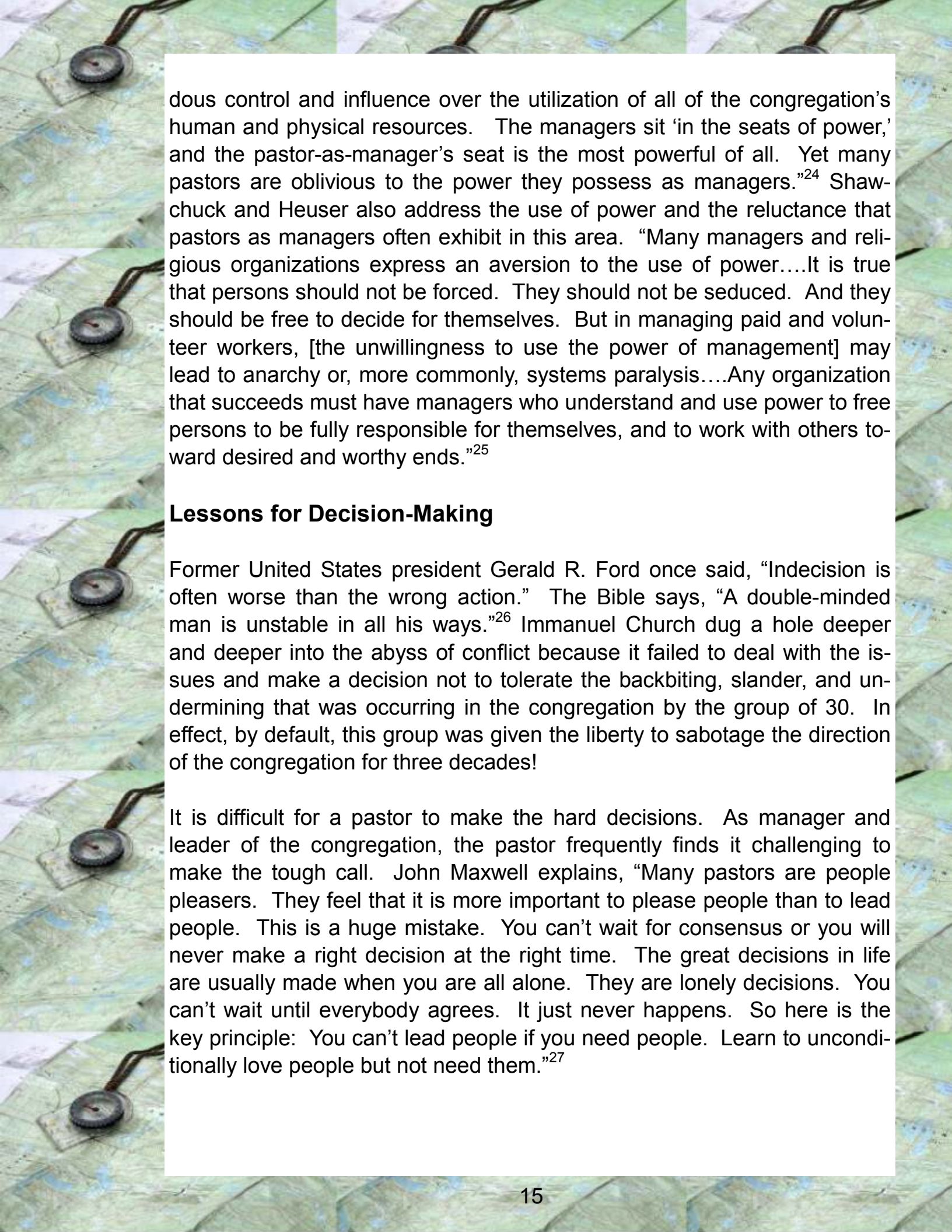
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(gently) a supportive power base, by raising up new leaders who share the leader's vision.

As a leader, you should be able to know what individuals, groups, traditions, policies, etc. are vested with power in the congregation. You should know how much power they have and how to increase (or decrease) it for the sake of the congregation's vitality, growth, and transformation—in line with its vision. Analytical competency in this area includes the ability to listen and discern. That is one of the reasons why pastors, as good managers, want to make sure that at least one person in the core group of leaders has the dominant spiritual gift of discernment. This person acts as a “sounding board” to identify or help the leadership understand what is of the will of God and what is not.

Likewise, the pastor and leadership should not give in to the power of shame and guilt certain people try to lay upon them for not doing things the “old-fashioned way.” Further, leaders should know how to use power (in the right sense of the word) with “troublemakers.” This means that an important part of the management of the pastor is to bring around him or her those people who have the skill set for conflict management.²¹ Confrontation in the biblical approach of Matthew 18 is important for management of a healthy congregation. In the case of Immanuel Church, for 30 years, the malcontents were not confronted. There comes a point when ignoring the problem does not lead to a disappearance of difficulty, but an undermining of the health and vitality of the church. The analytical issue here is that the pastor has the responsibility to find those people who can help in the area of confrontation. The analysis should include identifying those people who have a deep spiritual commitment, but high self-esteem and confidence. These are people who can speak the truth in a spirit of love.²²

The pastor, and the leaders on his or her team, should be aware and make use of the power of prayer, Bible study, and personal worship away from the congregation, as well as continuing education, support groups, and strategic alliances.²³ In their book *Managing the Congregation*, Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser talk about power as the currency of management: “Management is a special kind of power. Stated another way, power goes with the territory of management. In congregations, managers possess a kind of ‘raw’ power by reason that they exert tremen-

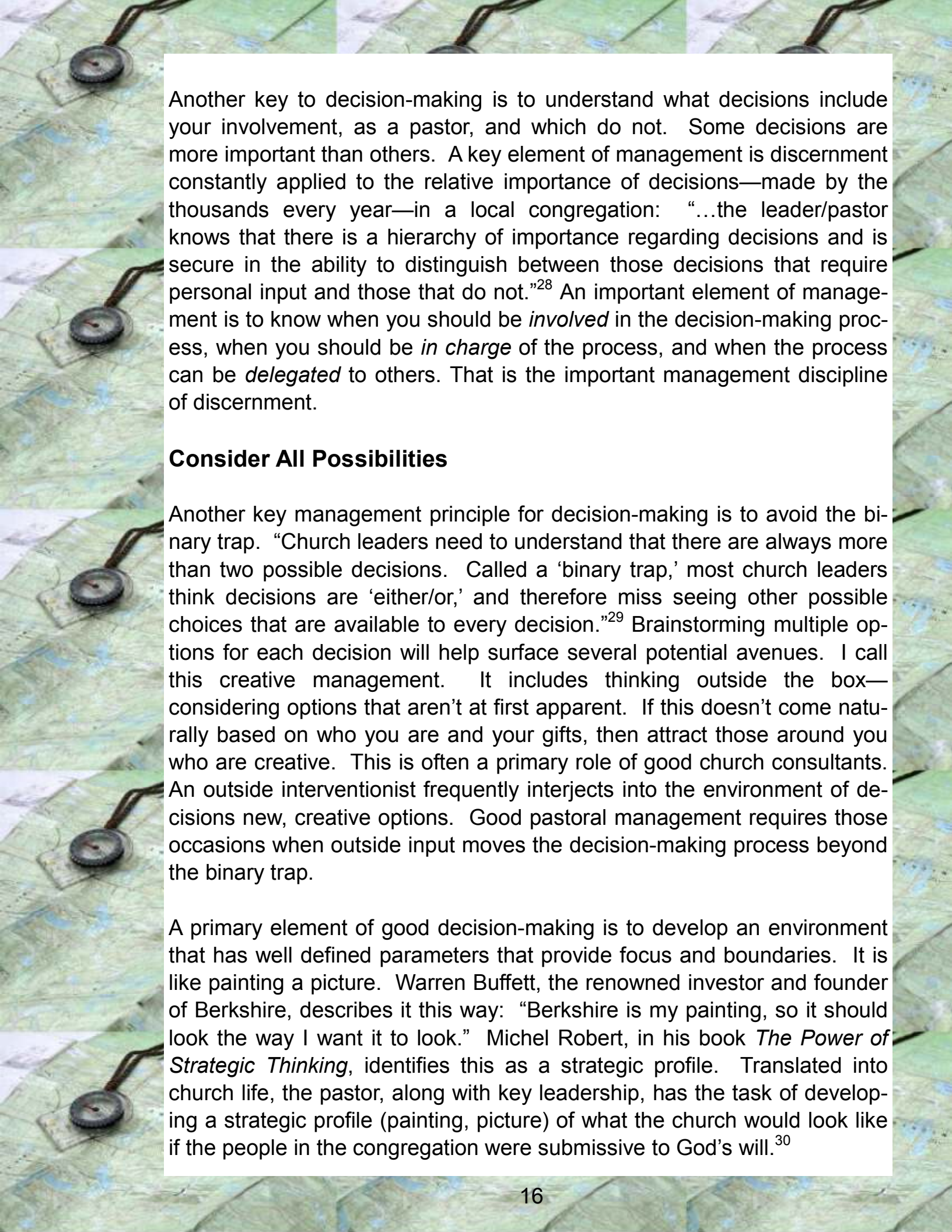
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dous control and influence over the utilization of all of the congregation's human and physical resources. The managers sit 'in the seats of power,' and the pastor-as-manager's seat is the most powerful of all. Yet many pastors are oblivious to the power they possess as managers."²⁴ Shawchuck and Heuser also address the use of power and the reluctance that pastors as managers often exhibit in this area. "Many managers and religious organizations express an aversion to the use of power....It is true that persons should not be forced. They should not be seduced. And they should be free to decide for themselves. But in managing paid and volunteer workers, [the unwillingness to use the power of management] may lead to anarchy or, more commonly, systems paralysis....Any organization that succeeds must have managers who understand and use power to free persons to be fully responsible for themselves, and to work with others toward desired and worthy ends."²⁵

Lessons for Decision-Making

Former United States president Gerald R. Ford once said, "Indecision is often worse than the wrong action." The Bible says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."²⁶ Immanuel Church dug a hole deeper and deeper into the abyss of conflict because it failed to deal with the issues and make a decision not to tolerate the backbiting, slander, and undermining that was occurring in the congregation by the group of 30. In effect, by default, this group was given the liberty to sabotage the direction of the congregation for three decades!

It is difficult for a pastor to make the hard decisions. As manager and leader of the congregation, the pastor frequently finds it challenging to make the tough call. John Maxwell explains, "Many pastors are people pleasers. They feel that it is more important to please people than to lead people. This is a huge mistake. You can't wait for consensus or you will never make a right decision at the right time. The great decisions in life are usually made when you are all alone. They are lonely decisions. You can't wait until everybody agrees. It just never happens. So here is the key principle: You can't lead people if you need people. Learn to unconditionally love people but not need them."²⁷

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Another key to decision-making is to understand what decisions include your involvement, as a pastor, and which do not. Some decisions are more important than others. A key element of management is discernment constantly applied to the relative importance of decisions—made by the thousands every year—in a local congregation: “...the leader/pastor knows that there is a hierarchy of importance regarding decisions and is secure in the ability to distinguish between those decisions that require personal input and those that do not.”²⁸ An important element of management is to know when you should be *involved* in the decision-making process, when you should be *in charge* of the process, and when the process can be *delegated* to others. That is the important management discipline of discernment.

Consider All Possibilities

Another key management principle for decision-making is to avoid the binary trap. “Church leaders need to understand that there are always more than two possible decisions. Called a ‘binary trap,’ most church leaders think decisions are ‘either/or,’ and therefore miss seeing other possible choices that are available to every decision.”²⁹ Brainstorming multiple options for each decision will help surface several potential avenues. I call this creative management. It includes thinking outside the box—considering options that aren’t at first apparent. If this doesn’t come naturally based on who you are and your gifts, then attract those around you who are creative. This is often a primary role of good church consultants. An outside interventionist frequently interjects into the environment of decisions new, creative options. Good pastoral management requires those occasions when outside input moves the decision-making process beyond the binary trap.

A primary element of good decision-making is to develop an environment that has well defined parameters that provide focus and boundaries. It is like painting a picture. Warren Buffett, the renowned investor and founder of Berkshire, describes it this way: “Berkshire is my painting, so it should look the way I want it to look.” Michel Robert, in his book *The Power of Strategic Thinking*, identifies this as a strategic profile. Translated into church life, the pastor, along with key leadership, has the task of developing a strategic profile (painting, picture) of what the church would look like if the people in the congregation were submissive to God’s will.³⁰

What Are Your Core Values?

What are the key elements that help you develop this framework for focused decision-making? They are: A philosophy of ministry, a mission statement, and a statement of vision.

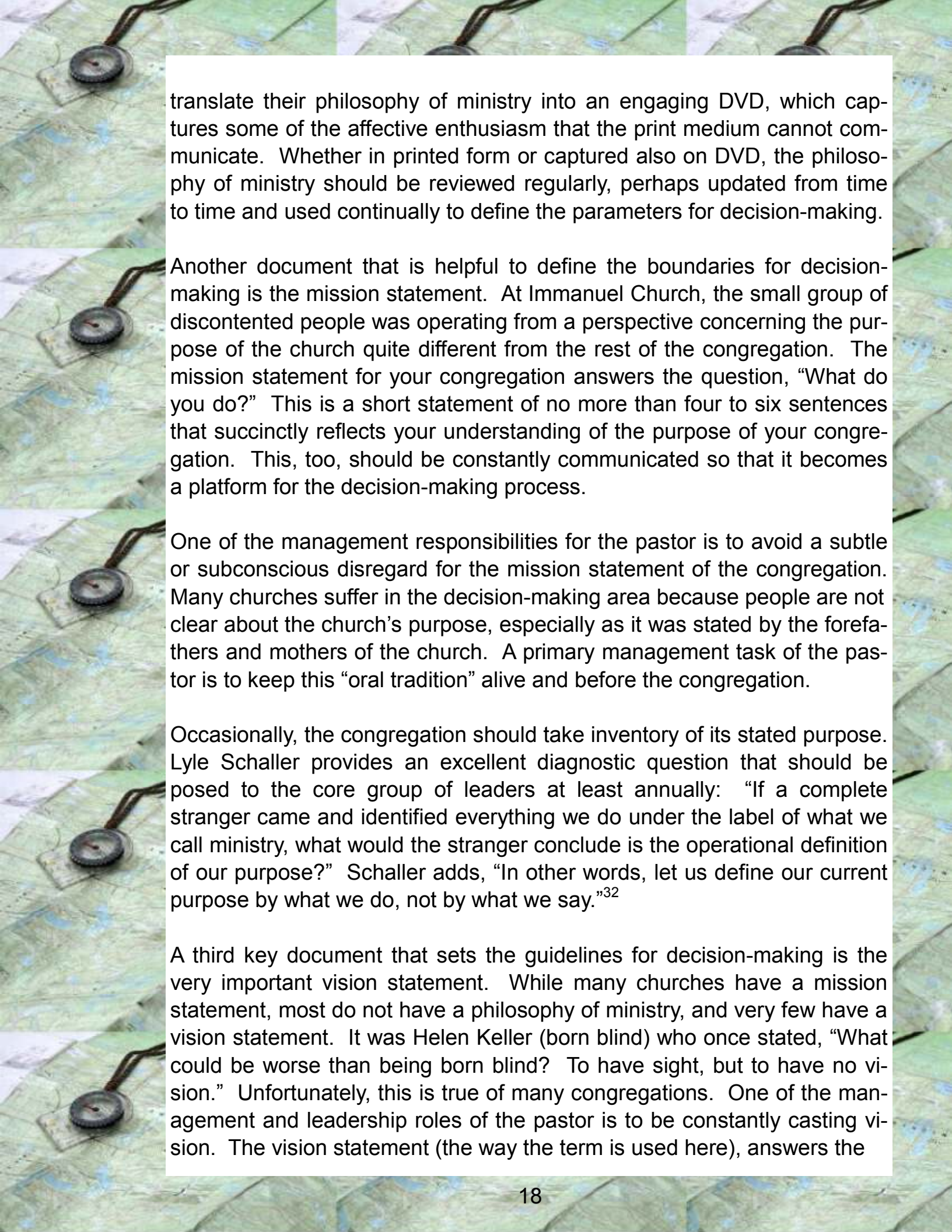
The philosophy of ministry is a statement of approximately 10-15 paragraphs that defines the answer to the question “who are you, as a congregation?”³¹ A philosophy of ministry statement can be developed by answering the following questions:

1. What is it that makes our church unique? How is it different from the churches around it? How is it different from churches, of similar size, within our own denomination, association, or fellowship?
2. What are our priorities? What is it that we do first? Best?
3. How would Christians in our community describe our church? What are we known for?
4. How would we describe this church to an unchurched neighbor who moved in across the street? What aspects of the congregation would we highlight if we were restricted to a five-minute conversation about our church?

This is similar to the way I might describe my wife, whom you have never met. I would describe her attributes. I would most likely focus on her strengths and overlook her weaknesses! I would tell you about her interests, how she spends most of her time and finds fulfillment. In a sense, I would describe her personality. Even though you have never met my wife, you would have a picture—a snapshot—of who she is.

Just as every individual person has a personality, so does every congregation. It is formulated by influences of its history, location, denominational background and theology, polity, key leaders, spiritual gifts of prominent influencers within the congregation, and many other factors.

Once you develop a philosophy of ministry statement, and it is owned by a large portion of the congregation, it should be printed in brochure form. It can be used to attract new people to the congregation. It will help those who visit as guests to know whether this is the right church for them. In the context of this discussion, it is a key tool for decision makers to be “on the same page,” regardless of the issue being discussed. Many churches



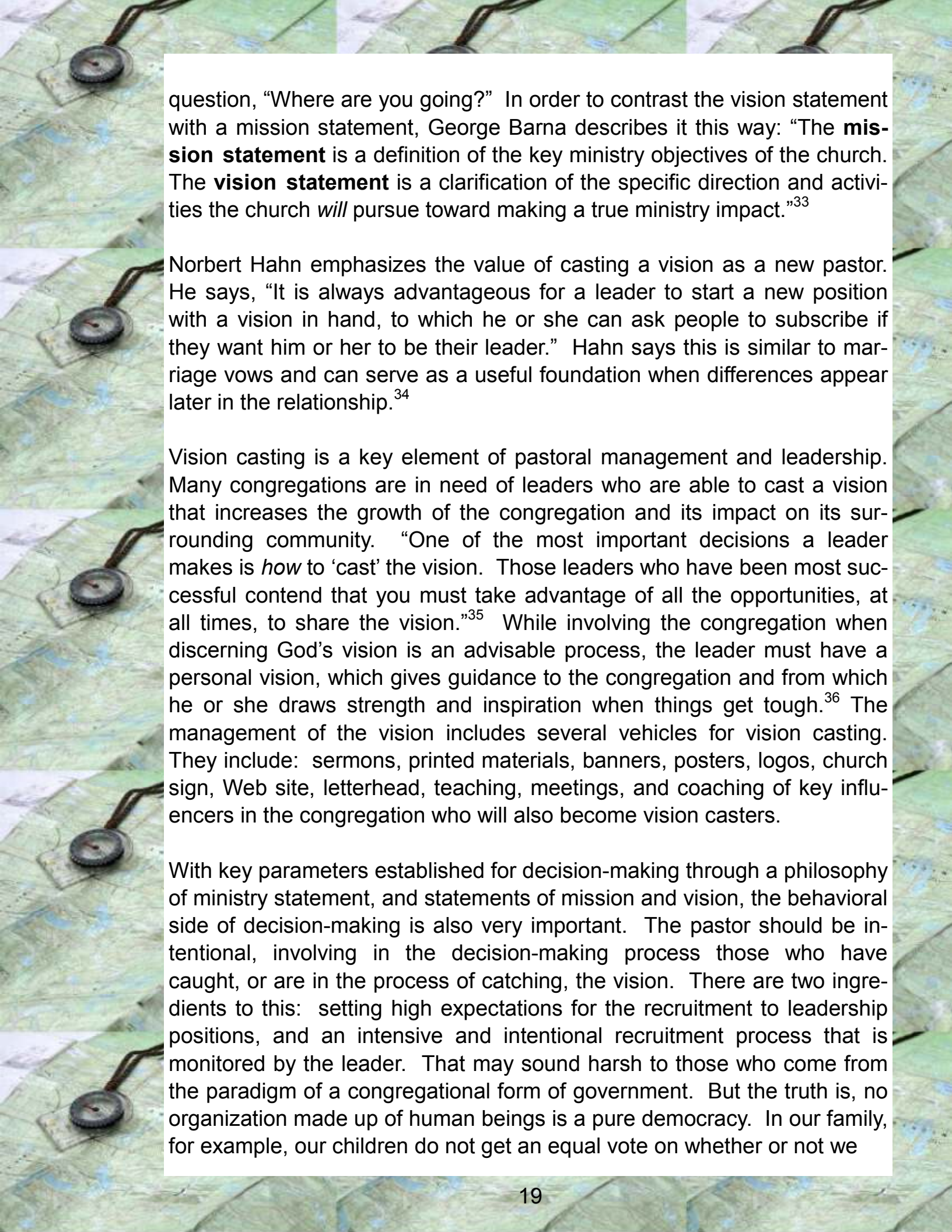
translate their philosophy of ministry into an engaging DVD, which captures some of the affective enthusiasm that the print medium cannot communicate. Whether in printed form or captured also on DVD, the philosophy of ministry should be reviewed regularly, perhaps updated from time to time and used continually to define the parameters for decision-making.

Another document that is helpful to define the boundaries for decision-making is the mission statement. At Immanuel Church, the small group of discontented people was operating from a perspective concerning the purpose of the church quite different from the rest of the congregation. The mission statement for your congregation answers the question, “What do you do?” This is a short statement of no more than four to six sentences that succinctly reflects your understanding of the purpose of your congregation. This, too, should be constantly communicated so that it becomes a platform for the decision-making process.

One of the management responsibilities for the pastor is to avoid a subtle or subconscious disregard for the mission statement of the congregation. Many churches suffer in the decision-making area because people are not clear about the church’s purpose, especially as it was stated by the forefathers and mothers of the church. A primary management task of the pastor is to keep this “oral tradition” alive and before the congregation.

Occasionally, the congregation should take inventory of its stated purpose. Lyle Schaller provides an excellent diagnostic question that should be posed to the core group of leaders at least annually: “If a complete stranger came and identified everything we do under the label of what we call ministry, what would the stranger conclude is the operational definition of our purpose?” Schaller adds, “In other words, let us define our current purpose by what we do, not by what we say.”³²

A third key document that sets the guidelines for decision-making is the very important vision statement. While many churches have a mission statement, most do not have a philosophy of ministry, and very few have a vision statement. It was Helen Keller (born blind) who once stated, “What could be worse than being born blind? To have sight, but to have no vision.” Unfortunately, this is true of many congregations. One of the management and leadership roles of the pastor is to be constantly casting vision. The vision statement (the way the term is used here), answers the

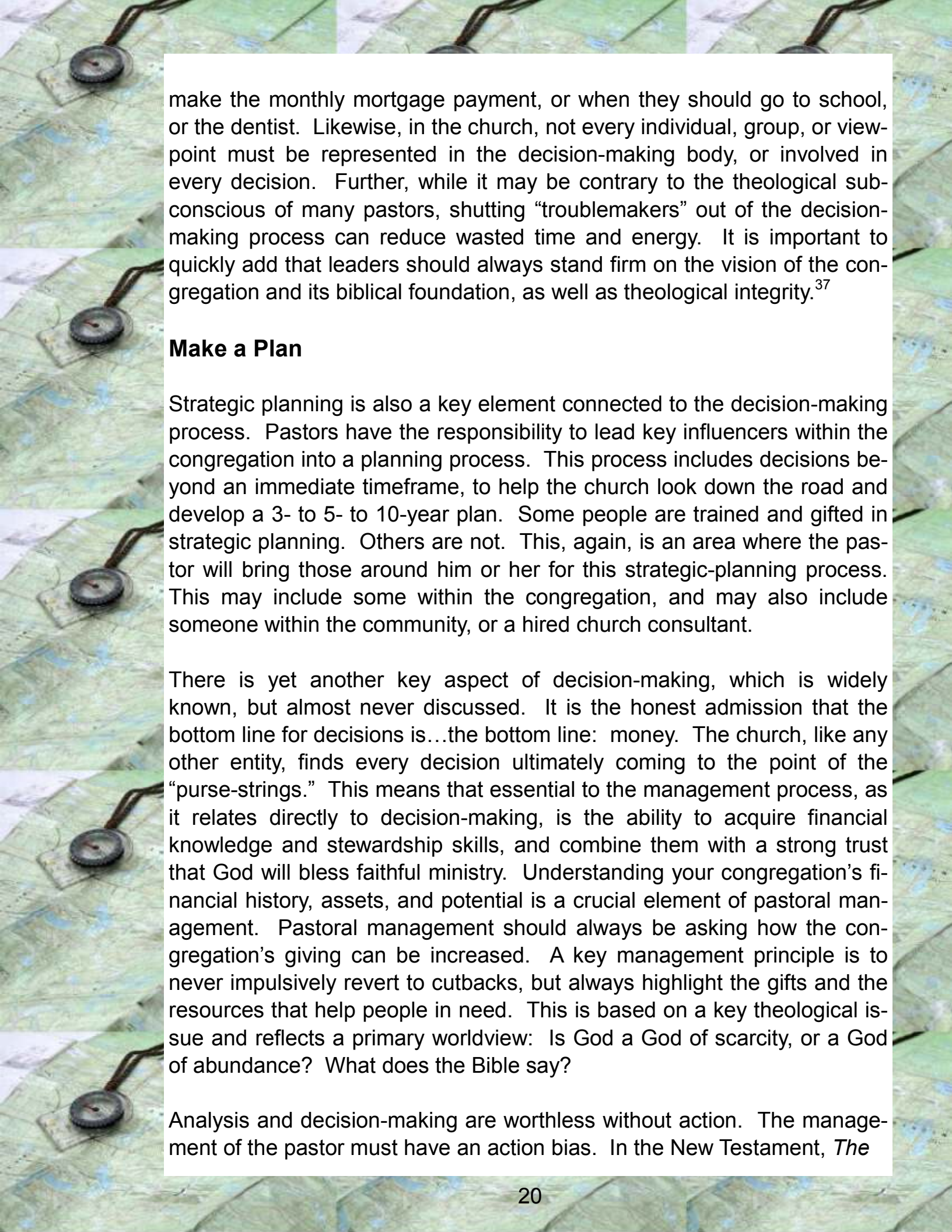
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question, “Where are you going?” In order to contrast the vision statement with a mission statement, George Barna describes it this way: “The **mission statement** is a definition of the key ministry objectives of the church. The **vision statement** is a clarification of the specific direction and activities the church *will* pursue toward making a true ministry impact.”³³

Norbert Hahn emphasizes the value of casting a vision as a new pastor. He says, “It is always advantageous for a leader to start a new position with a vision in hand, to which he or she can ask people to subscribe if they want him or her to be their leader.” Hahn says this is similar to marriage vows and can serve as a useful foundation when differences appear later in the relationship.³⁴

Vision casting is a key element of pastoral management and leadership. Many congregations are in need of leaders who are able to cast a vision that increases the growth of the congregation and its impact on its surrounding community. “One of the most important decisions a leader makes is *how* to ‘cast’ the vision. Those leaders who have been most successful contend that you must take advantage of all the opportunities, at all times, to share the vision.”³⁵ While involving the congregation when discerning God’s vision is an advisable process, the leader must have a personal vision, which gives guidance to the congregation and from which he or she draws strength and inspiration when things get tough.³⁶ The management of the vision includes several vehicles for vision casting. They include: sermons, printed materials, banners, posters, logos, church sign, Web site, letterhead, teaching, meetings, and coaching of key influencers in the congregation who will also become vision casters.

With key parameters established for decision-making through a philosophy of ministry statement, and statements of mission and vision, the behavioral side of decision-making is also very important. The pastor should be intentional, involving in the decision-making process those who have caught, or are in the process of catching, the vision. There are two ingredients to this: setting high expectations for the recruitment to leadership positions, and an intensive and intentional recruitment process that is monitored by the leader. That may sound harsh to those who come from the paradigm of a congregational form of government. But the truth is, no organization made up of human beings is a pure democracy. In our family, for example, our children do not get an equal vote on whether or not we



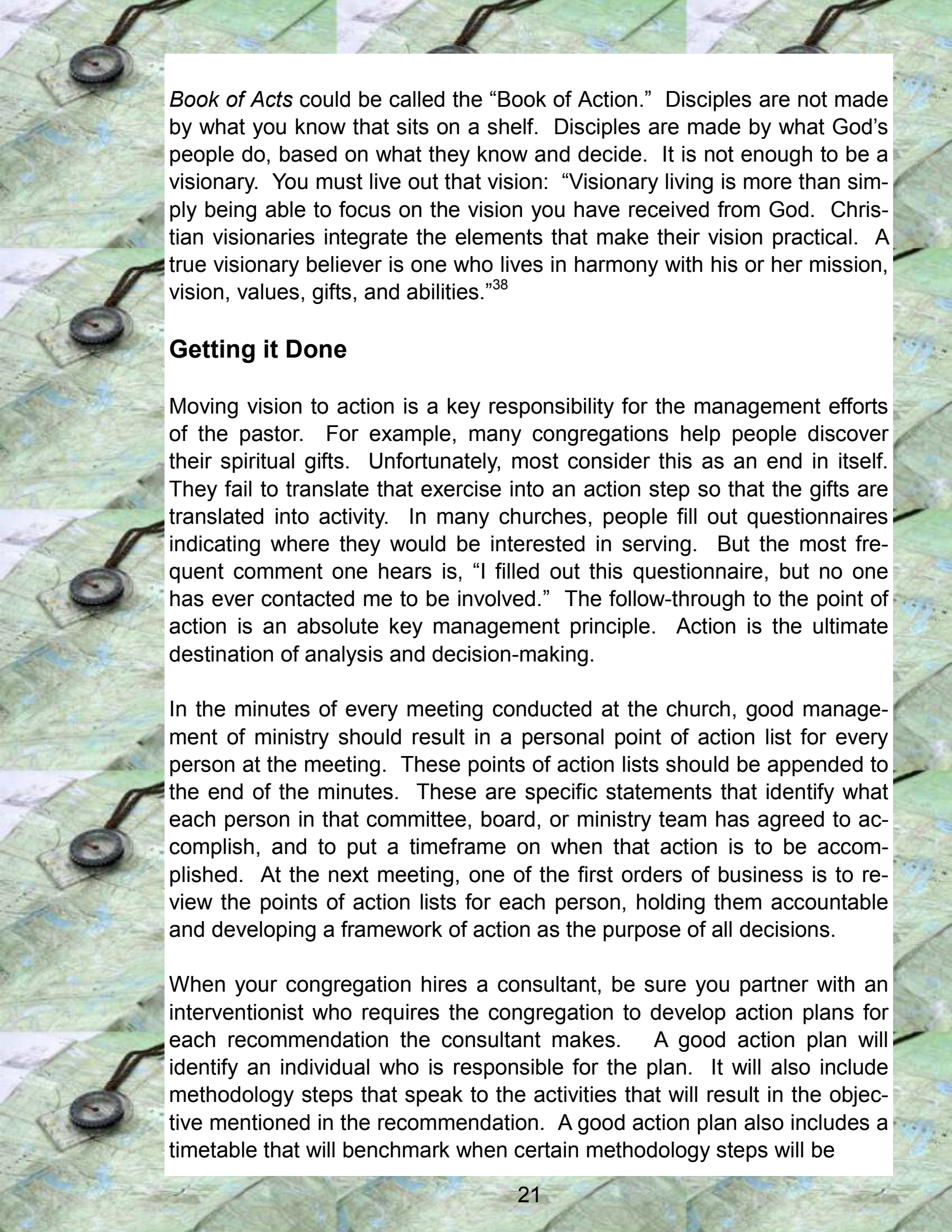
make the monthly mortgage payment, or when they should go to school, or the dentist. Likewise, in the church, not every individual, group, or viewpoint must be represented in the decision-making body, or involved in every decision. Further, while it may be contrary to the theological subconscious of many pastors, shutting “troublemakers” out of the decision-making process can reduce wasted time and energy. It is important to quickly add that leaders should always stand firm on the vision of the congregation and its biblical foundation, as well as theological integrity.³⁷

Make a Plan

Strategic planning is also a key element connected to the decision-making process. Pastors have the responsibility to lead key influencers within the congregation into a planning process. This process includes decisions beyond an immediate timeframe, to help the church look down the road and develop a 3- to 5- to 10-year plan. Some people are trained and gifted in strategic planning. Others are not. This, again, is an area where the pastor will bring those around him or her for this strategic-planning process. This may include some within the congregation, and may also include someone within the community, or a hired church consultant.

There is yet another key aspect of decision-making, which is widely known, but almost never discussed. It is the honest admission that the bottom line for decisions is...the bottom line: money. The church, like any other entity, finds every decision ultimately coming to the point of the “purse-strings.” This means that essential to the management process, as it relates directly to decision-making, is the ability to acquire financial knowledge and stewardship skills, and combine them with a strong trust that God will bless faithful ministry. Understanding your congregation’s financial history, assets, and potential is a crucial element of pastoral management. Pastoral management should always be asking how the congregation’s giving can be increased. A key management principle is to never impulsively revert to cutbacks, but always highlight the gifts and the resources that help people in need. This is based on a key theological issue and reflects a primary worldview: Is God a God of scarcity, or a God of abundance? What does the Bible say?

Analysis and decision-making are worthless without action. The management of the pastor must have an action bias. In the New Testament, *The*



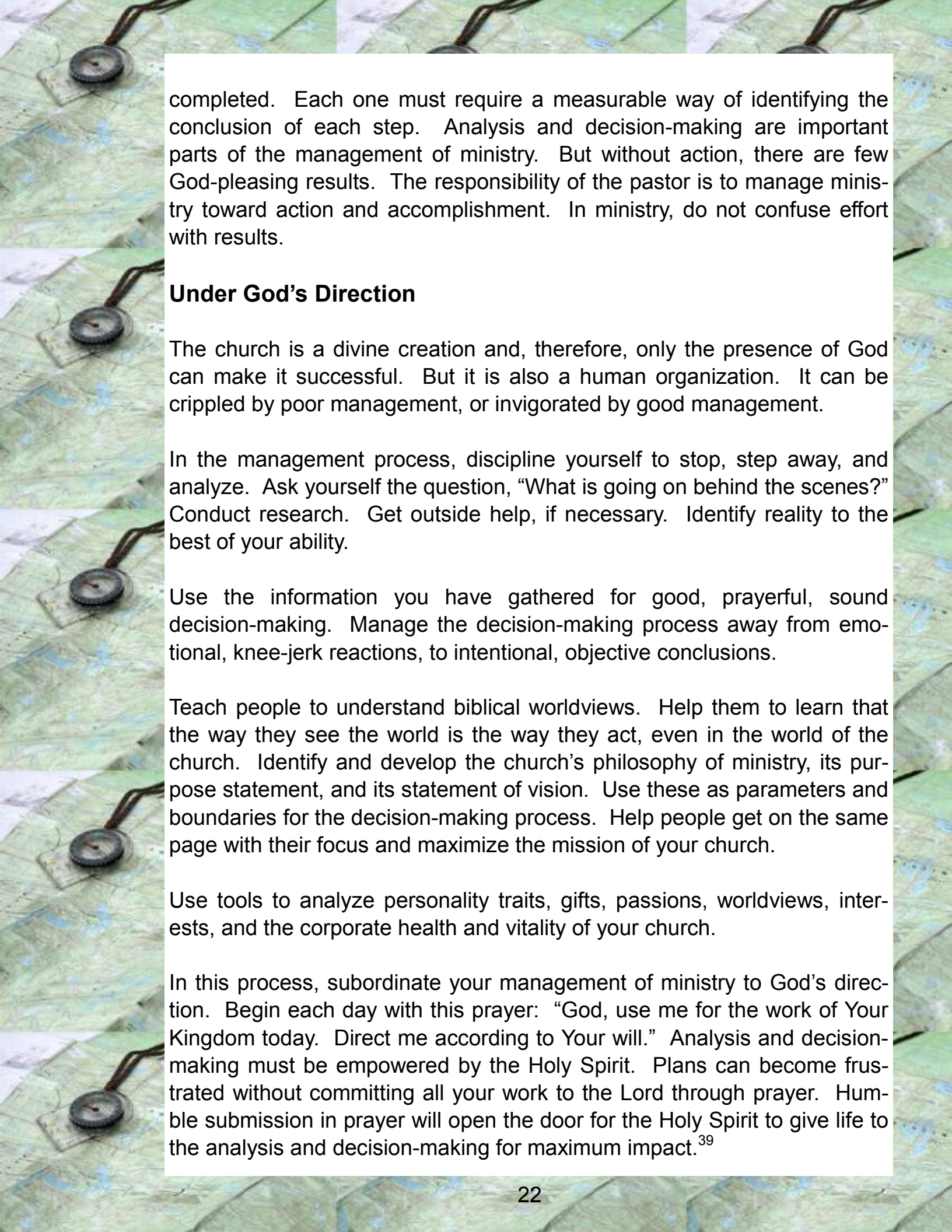
Book of Acts could be called the “Book of Action.” Disciples are not made by what you know that sits on a shelf. Disciples are made by what God’s people do, based on what they know and decide. It is not enough to be a visionary. You must live out that vision: “Visionary living is more than simply being able to focus on the vision you have received from God. Christian visionaries integrate the elements that make their vision practical. A true visionary believer is one who lives in harmony with his or her mission, vision, values, gifts, and abilities.”³⁸

Getting it Done

Moving vision to action is a key responsibility for the management efforts of the pastor. For example, many congregations help people discover their spiritual gifts. Unfortunately, most consider this as an end in itself. They fail to translate that exercise into an action step so that the gifts are translated into activity. In many churches, people fill out questionnaires indicating where they would be interested in serving. But the most frequent comment one hears is, “I filled out this questionnaire, but no one has ever contacted me to be involved.” The follow-through to the point of action is an absolute key management principle. Action is the ultimate destination of analysis and decision-making.

In the minutes of every meeting conducted at the church, good management of ministry should result in a personal point of action list for every person at the meeting. These points of action lists should be appended to the end of the minutes. These are specific statements that identify what each person in that committee, board, or ministry team has agreed to accomplish, and to put a timeframe on when that action is to be accomplished. At the next meeting, one of the first orders of business is to review the points of action lists for each person, holding them accountable and developing a framework of action as the purpose of all decisions.

When your congregation hires a consultant, be sure you partner with an interventionist who requires the congregation to develop action plans for each recommendation the consultant makes. A good action plan will identify an individual who is responsible for the plan. It will also include methodology steps that speak to the activities that will result in the objective mentioned in the recommendation. A good action plan also includes a timetable that will benchmark when certain methodology steps will be



completed. Each one must require a measurable way of identifying the conclusion of each step. Analysis and decision-making are important parts of the management of ministry. But without action, there are few God-pleasing results. The responsibility of the pastor is to manage ministry toward action and accomplishment. In ministry, do not confuse effort with results.

Under God's Direction

The church is a divine creation and, therefore, only the presence of God can make it successful. But it is also a human organization. It can be crippled by poor management, or invigorated by good management.

In the management process, discipline yourself to stop, step away, and analyze. Ask yourself the question, "What is going on behind the scenes?" Conduct research. Get outside help, if necessary. Identify reality to the best of your ability.

Use the information you have gathered for good, prayerful, sound decision-making. Manage the decision-making process away from emotional, knee-jerk reactions, to intentional, objective conclusions.

Teach people to understand biblical worldviews. Help them to learn that the way they see the world is the way they act, even in the world of the church. Identify and develop the church's philosophy of ministry, its purpose statement, and its statement of vision. Use these as parameters and boundaries for the decision-making process. Help people get on the same page with their focus and maximize the mission of your church.

Use tools to analyze personality traits, gifts, passions, worldviews, interests, and the corporate health and vitality of your church.

In this process, subordinate your management of ministry to God's direction. Begin each day with this prayer: "God, use me for the work of Your Kingdom today. Direct me according to Your will." Analysis and decision-making must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Plans can become frustrated without committing all your work to the Lord through prayer. Humble submission in prayer will open the door for the Holy Spirit to give life to the analysis and decision-making for maximum impact.³⁹

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- ¹ 2 Corinthians 11:24-29.
 - ² Philippians 4:6.
 - ³ For more information concerning church structure as it relates to decision-making, see the document *Restructuring the Church*, Corunna, IN: Church Doctor[®] Ministries, 2002.
 - ⁴ Proverbs 18:13 (*The Living Bible*).
 - ⁵ In personal correspondence with the author.
 - ⁶ Lyle E. Schaller, *The Interventionist* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), pg. 21.
 - ⁷ Norbert Hahn, in correspondence with the author.
 - ⁸ Ibid.
 - ⁹ *The Church Vitality Profile* is available from Church Doctor[®] Ministries, www.churchdoctor.com, (800) 626-8515.
 - ¹⁰ Burt Nanus, *Visionary Leadership: Creating a Compelling Sense of Direction for Your Organization* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), pp. 56-57.
 - ¹¹ Darrow L. Miller, *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1998), pg. 36. This is similar to a worldview definition described by James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976).
 - ¹² Kent R. Hunter, *Discover Your Windows Questionnaire* (Corunna, IN: Church Doctor[®] Ministries, 2003). The book is by Kent R. Hunter, *Discover Your Windows: Lining Up With God's Vision* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002).
 - ¹³ A *70 Days of Vision Campaign Kit* is sold by Church Doctor[®] Ministries, www.churchdoctor.org.
 - ¹⁴ C. Peter Wagner, *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow: How to Find Your Gifts and Use Them to Bless Others* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995). Kent R. Hunter, *Spiritual Gifts Discovery Survey and Scoring Sheet* (Corunna, IN; Church Doctor[®] Ministries, 1985).
 - ¹⁵ Jane A.G. Kise, David Stark, and Sandra Krebs Hirsch, *Life Keys: Discovering Who You Are, Why You're Here, and What You Do Best* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996). This book includes perforated cards at the back, which help to sort gifts and passions toward an organized system that can be computerized for developing a database to organize gifts and talent-directed ministries with the congregation. Another book that is based on a Bible study of spiritual gifts, which also includes a gifts discovery analytical tool, as well as perforated cards at the back that enable database development, is

- Gifted for Growth: An Implementation Guide for Mobilizing the Laity* by Kent R. Hunter (Corunna, IN: Church Doctor® Ministries, 1985).
- ¹⁶ Mike Breen, *The Apostle's Notebook* (Eastbourne, England: Kingsway Communications Ltd., 2002).
- ¹⁷ The *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis* requires certified training to administer. It is available from Psychological Publications, Inc., 290 Conejo Ridge Avenue, Suite 100, Thousand Oaks, CA 91361-4928.
- ¹⁸ *DiSC: Dimensions of Behavior* assessment tools (Mt. Prospect, IL: Center for Internal Change/Inscape Publishing).
- ¹⁹ *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (Palo Alto, CA: CPP, Inc. and Davies-Black Publishing).
- ²⁰ Denny Howard, *MinistryStyle Analysis*, WorkStyles@juno.com.
- ²¹ A good tool to help you understand your conflict management style is the *Conflict Management Survey* (Waco, TX: Teleometrics International, Inc., 1996).
- ²² Ephesians 4:15.
- ²³ Ibid, Norbert Hahn.
- ²⁴ Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to Serve People* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), pg. 233.
- ²⁵ Ibid, pp. 234-235.
- ²⁶ James 1:8.
- ²⁷ John C. Maxwell, *INJOY Life Club Tape* (Atlanta, GA: INJOY, Inc.), Volume 14, Number 2.
- ²⁸ George Barna, *Habits of Highly Effective Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999), pg. 42.
- ²⁹ Gary McIntosh, in correspondence with the author.
- ³⁰ Michel Robert, *The Power of Strategic Thinking: Lock in Markets, Lock Out Competitors* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2000), pg. 56.
- ³¹ The book *Your Church Has Personality: Find Your Focus—Maximize Your Mission* provides a step-by-step process of developing a philosophy of ministry (Kent R. Hunter, Corunna, IN: Church Doctor® Ministries, 1997). Another resource that deals with this subject is Harold J. Westing, *Create and Celebrate Your Church's Uniqueness: Designing a Church Philosophy of Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Resources, 1993).
- ³² Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), pp. 89-90.

³³ George Barna, *The Power of Vision: How You Can Capture and Apply God's Vision for Your Ministry* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), pg. 38 (emphasis mine).

³⁴ Ibid, Norbert Hahn.

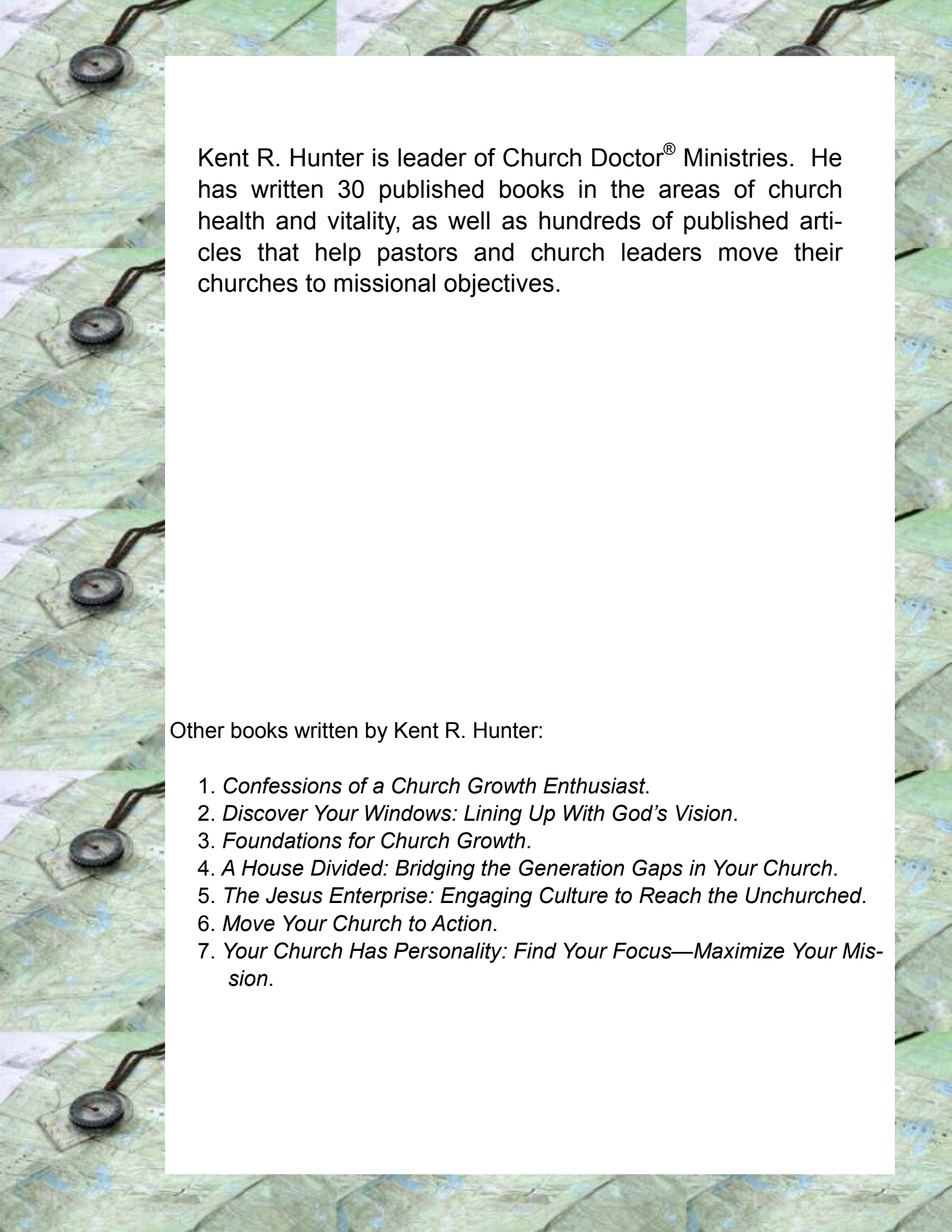
³⁵ Ibid, George Barna, pg. 143.

³⁶ Ibid, Norbert Hahn.

³⁷ Ibid, Norbert Hahn.

³⁸ Ibid, George Barna, pg. 122.

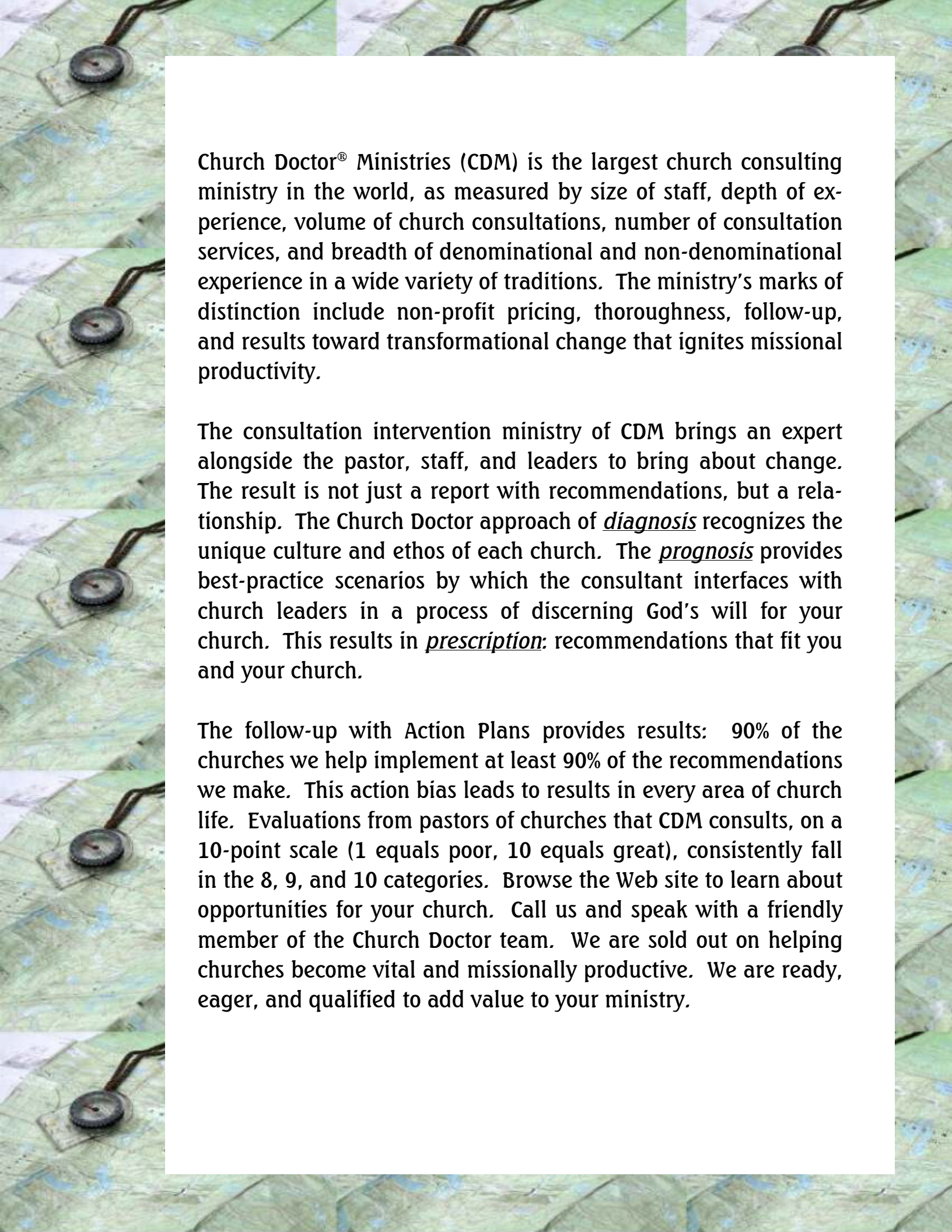
³⁹ Ibid, Gary McIntosh.

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Kent R. Hunter is leader of Church Doctor[®] Ministries. He has written 30 published books in the areas of church health and vitality, as well as hundreds of published articles that help pastors and church leaders move their churches to missional objectives.

Other books written by Kent R. Hunter:

1. *Confessions of a Church Growth Enthusiast.*
2. *Discover Your Windows: Lining Up With God's Vision.*
3. *Foundations for Church Growth.*
4. *A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gaps in Your Church.*
5. *The Jesus Enterprise: Engaging Culture to Reach the Unchurched.*
6. *Move Your Church to Action.*
7. *Your Church Has Personality: Find Your Focus—Maximize Your Mission.*

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