

Church Leadership: A Love of the Heart Not a Career Path

Psalms 45 is a song written in anticipation of a marriage. It is written from hearts stirred by love. Embarking on ministry that is focused primarily on tasks, goals, structures, techniques, or programs will lead us inevitably into fruitlessness. The image of marriage and love from the heart is a frequent one in scripture helping us grasp something of the relationship between Christ and His church. We begin this network by exploring and assessing what the key heart motivations within leadership of the local church are. The goal of this session is to help participants refresh their hearts, reminding themselves of why they do what they do.

Mike Betts leads Relational Mission, a network of churches which is part of the global Newfrontiers family. He is the author of *From the Inside Out*, *Relational Mission: A Way of Life*, and a soon to be published book on corporate prayer. Mike is passionate about the church enjoying her inheritance in Christ, involving church planting, gospel expansion, corporate prayer, and seeing the next generation grow into all that God has for them. Mike is married to Sue, and they live in Lowestoft, Suffolk, UK. He is part of the eldership team at Lowestoft Community Church, which he, Sue, and a number of others planted over 30 years ago. At that time Mike and Sue sought help and advice from Terry Virgo, who had begun to serve emerging churches. Terry's work and relationships with churches became the start of Newfrontiers. In 2011, Terry handed over responsibility for Newfrontiers to a number of his spiritual sons, and Mike began to lead the network that is now Relational Mission. Relational Mission works predominantly in the UK and mainland Europe but with growing connections across the world. Its network includes some 70 churches of which 30 are church plant and pioneering situations.

I. Personal Relationship with Christ – being captivated and fascinated with and by Jesus

“Ecstasy and delight are essential to the believer's soul and they promote sanctification. We were not meant to live without spiritual exhilaration, and the Christian who goes for a long time without the experience of heart-warming will soon find himself tempted to have his emotions satisfied from earthly things and not, as he ought, from the Spirit of God. The soul is so constituted that it craves fulfillment from things outside itself and will embrace earthly joys for satisfaction when it cannot reach spiritual ones. The believer is in spiritual danger if he allows himself to go for any length of time without tasting the love of Christ and savoring the felt comforts of a Savior's presence. When Christ ceases to fill the heart with satisfaction, our souls will go in silent search of other lovers. By the enjoyment of the love of Christ in the heart of a believer, we mean an experience of the “love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us” (Rom. 5:5). Because the Lord has made himself accessible to us in the means of grace, it is our duty and privilege to seek this experience from Him in these means till we are made the joyful partakers of it.” John Flavel

A. v1 my heart overflows

v2 you are the most handsome

v2 grace is poured upon your lips

v6 Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever

1. How to keep the overflow
2. How to keep enjoying Jesus
3. How to keep in the love of God
4. How to keep growing and journeying with Him

II. Love for the church

A. The church is Plan A – She is beautiful

B. We serve this love of His life

1. He desires unity
2. He desires maturity
3. He desires full stature

III. Multiplication of Ministry

A. Context of Psalm 45 is marriage – desire is for fruitfulness of legacy

1. V16 – in place of your fathers shall be your sons
2. Genesis 9:7 You have been spared that you may be fruitful

Suggested Readings:

(Please note the suggested readings here are to support the whole network, and are not just for session 1)

Fathering Leaders, Motivating Mission, Devenish, David, (2011), Authentic Media Ltd, Milton Keynes

A Resilient Life, MacDonald, Gordon (2004) Thomas Nelson Inc, Nashville

The Spirit-Filled Church, Virgo, Terry (2011) Monarch Books, Oxford

God's Empowering Presence, Fee, Gordon. D (2009) Baker Academic

Apostles Today, McNair Scott, Benjamin.G. (2014) Wipf & Stock Publishers

The Emergence of the Church: Context, Growth, Leadership & Worship, Patzia, Arthur. G (2001) Intervarsity Press