

# Bridging the Pastors and Workplace Leaders Gap

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Kent Humfreys[1] provides some excellent insight on building bridging the gap between Pastors / Christian Leaders and the Laity along with suggestions for Pastors in Equipping the Laity. Here is a quote from his book which is also posted on Lausanne World Pulse:  
<http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1265/04-2010?pg=all>.

Please understand that a small minority (perhaps one to five percent of the ?professional vocational ministers?) do understand the problem and are modeling the biblical paradigm. Another fifteen to twenty percent may think they understand (and may even preach it), but they do not model it. I am convinced that a full eighty percent of ?ordinary? believers do not understand their calling as full-time ambassadors of Christ.

## Obstacles for Pastors and Christian Leaders

Let us first address some of the reasons why pastors and leaders of Christian groups are hesitant to build bridges and let the walls come down. They believe in the ?priesthood of every believer,? but have not seen a biblical model of it. They do not see the wall they have created that separates the ?professional? and the ?ordinary? believer. They have confused teaching with equipping and modeling. They have elevated programs and buildings over relationships, and growing their local church over building God?s kingdom. They have allowed walls to exist so that they will not have to be vulnerable to a small group or other individuals. They hate to give up control and are intimidated by strong lay leaders. They do not understand the difference between leading followers and equipping leaders. They enjoy the platform and attention of the crowds. They have elevated the teaching of the mind over the changing of the heart. They are afraid of partnerships with other churches, other denominations, and even other strong leaders in their own churches.

But these walls would not exist if the ?laity? were to exercise their position, go to their pastors, and work together to tear the walls down. However, most ?ordinary? believers are quite content to pay and let the ?professionals? do the job.

## Obstacles for the Laity

Let us now address some of the reasons laity have chosen to let the walls remain. They have little or no idea of the biblical teaching of the ?priesthood of every believer.? They think the ?professional? has a ?special? call, and that they are very ordinary. They have no understanding of the principle of biblical ?calling.? They do not understand the biblical model of the equipping ministry of the saints. They do not see their responsibility to be doing the ministry where they live, work, and play. They have bought into the fact that they are to help the pastor and the professional church staff to do their ministry. They would rather pay hired ?professionals? to do it than to have to do it themselves. They would rather tell the pastor what to do and have him take care of them, pray for them, preach for them, entertain them, and make them feel good. They like creating heroes and putting pastors on pedestals as celebrities, then they love to take them down when they fall. They do not feel qualified, trained, or gifted. They do not want to be full-time ambassadors for Christ and on call twenty-four hours a day. They want the freedom to do their own thing. They are afraid God might call them to be missionaries to some far-off land.

## Suggestions for Pastors in Equipping the Laity

What can a pastor do to break down the walls? Let me share a few suggestions I give in my book, *Shepherding Horses*. 1) Instead of trying to build your church or create programs, try to build bridges of long-term relationships and concentrate upon a few at a time. Do not worry about what others will think or about losing your job. Follow the model of Jesus. Seek to understand the issues those in your church are having, particularly in the workplace. Go and visit them in their workplace. In fact, volunteer to be a chaplain in the workplace one day a week. It will change your ministry and how you

preach. Affirm each of your people in his or her calling. Equip them to minister where they live, work, and play. Commission them as ministers formally in front of the entire church. Release them to serve God where they are.

#### Suggestions for Workplace Leaders to Build Bridges with the Pastor

Below are suggestions to help workplace leaders build bridges with their pastor. Invite your pastor out to lunch. It may take months for him to be vulnerable and open up, but take the first step. Share with him a struggle you are facing. Ask him how you can pray for him. Promise total confidentiality. Share with him some of the ways God is using your workplace position to impact others for Christ. Give him real examples and he will be greatly encouraged. Invite him to be a part of your small group of workplace leaders that may meet weekly or monthly. Eighty percent of your pastor's issues are the same as yours. He is the CEO of a church, a volunteer organization. It has some unique challenges of its own. You and your spouse could take your pastor and spouse out to dinner. Try to keep the conversation on family and hobbies, instead of just church business. The walls will begin to come down. Get together and dream of ways that both of you as leaders can encourage your congregation to get "outside the walls" of the church into the city, nation, and world. Use your unique gifts and learn to work together.

Thanks to Mats Tunehag for directing us to this text.

[1] Humphreys, Kent. 2008. *Shepherding Horses: God's Plan for Transforming Leaders*. Whitsett, N.C.: Diakona Publishing. Excerpt also posted on Lausanne World Pulse: <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1265/04-2010?pg=all>