



**The Twelve Foundation Blocks:
Twelve Foundational Principles to Build a Successful
Lay Pastoral Care Ministry**

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The beginning of every pastoral care ministry is difficult and therefore, requires thoughtful planning. It also demands that certain vital questions are answered in order to be able to lay the solid foundation necessary for the building of a strong care ministry. Apostle Paul made a very profound statement to the people of Corinth, he said, "*By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone also is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds*" (1Corinthians3:10) NIV. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid which is Christ Jesus.

It is in light of this understanding that, Dr Melvin J. Steinbron, Founder and president of LPM USA through the leading of the Holy Spirit has laid the twelve foundation blocks, which are the materials required for the beginners to establishment the pastoral care ministry. The aim is to help other churches wanted to start the program, knowing the essential nature of the foundation blocks will assist them to make their ministry strong at the beginning. For that, they could be saved from the waste of "trail and error" process. There are three basic questions for those who wanted to begin the pastoral care ministry to answer which are imperative solid foundational blocks.

When these three questions are correctly and answered then the one has captured the totality of the pastoral care ministry. Like a building, these three questions deal with. (A) What is the purpose for constructing such building? (B) how to build the edifice. (C) What height do I want the building to reach? Now the questions:

1. **Shall we include this one? Why?** To be able to answer this question sincerely and correctly, the ownership or the leadership of the church should first understand what the pastoral care ministry is all about. Secondly, the leadership should know the corporate purpose of GOD for establishing the church through His son Jesus Christ. Thirdly, the leadership should have a clear vision for their ministry, and know how to tailor their activities and programs which will enable them to contribute effectively and adequately their quota towards the fulfillment of the corporate purpose of God. The corporate purpose of God for the church is achieved, only when the individual ministries accomplishes their divine assignment on the planet. They should, at this point agree to the fact that there is no other better biblical base principles, structures and programs that has the required quality materials to build such a ministry, than, the pastoral care ministry

2. **How shall we do it?** Like a building, after the builder has known the reason why the structure should be put up, then he has to employ an architect to tell him the kind of

foundation that will be required, the raw materials and the total amount required to complete the building. Therefore, when the leadership of the ministry knows their vision and purpose as well as their position in the corporate vision and purpose of God, which will show to them the plan or the mental picture of the type of ministry they are supposed to build.

3. **How well shall we do it?** The correct answer to this question is realized when the leadership of the ministry is clearly aware that the corporate vision and purpose of God for the church could be accomplished, when the individual denominations or ministries are achieving their purposes. Moreover, the purposes and vision of the ministries or denominations could be accomplish, when every single member of the congregation of these ministries fulfill his or her divine assignment that operate in them. In other words, for God to achieve His corporate purpose of the church, everybody in the congregation must realize his or her full God given potential and fulfill the purpose for which they were born into this earth. Nevertheless, God is doing this through the ministries. The pursuit of God or the number one priority of God is not the ministry, but the individual members of the congregation. God always want to extend His love and care to His children which He purchased by His own precious blood at the cross of Calvary and the rest of the people on this planet. The ministries therefore, are the means through which God can reach His son who are members of the ministries as well as those outside the church. To do this, the leadership of the church should know exactly and understand the Mission of the church of God so that it will serve as a guide for them to plan towards its fulfillment.

What is the mission of the church? **"The mission of the church is to represent the government of heaven on earth and to serve as ambassador of God recruiting citizens for kingdom of heaven"** In other words, God's passion is to bring everyone on the planet into His kingdom. Jesus Christ told his disciples in the book of Matthew 28 He wanted the good news about the kingdom to go to every nation of the world, before the end will come. We should note that Christianity is not just another form of religion where the church always preoccupied by ritual activities all the time, no. Christianity is about building a relationship between God and His children and among believers. The church is supposed to foster this relationship of love, care and unity between Christians and God.

It is very relevant to know that, the leadership of every church wanting to begin pastoral care ministry should clearly understand what God wanted to achieve through His church which he establish through his own blood. Therefore, it is only when the leadership want to achieve a greater things in the corporate purpose of God for the church and that will determine how well they can do the pastoral care ministry.

For those ministries who are already on line with pastoral care ministry must ask themselves tough questions about each block. This will help them to evaluate the present state of the ministry, if it is ask in a productive way. It is important for those churches already have the ministry on line to answer these tough questions about each

block. When these questions answered productively, it is another way to conduct evaluation of the present state of that ministry.

Are we doing this? Why? To answer this question correctly suggest that the leadership of the ministry maintains its position in the corporate vision of God, which is, the church contribution towards the achievement of God purpose of reaching out to all nation before the end will come. This requires the church desire to contribute its quota for the fulfillment of God's overall agenda for the planet.

In what way are we doing it? Periodically the leadership of the church should evaluate productively to find out what they have accomplished, are we using the right method? Are the members of the congregation receiving God's love and care? Is our foundation strong enough to hold on to the kind of structure they wanted to build?

How well are we doing it? How many people have we train to share the vision and take responsibility in the leadership. Are we employing the four cardinal principle of the LPM, which are prayer, availability, care and being leading by example? The following questions be answered correctly, for instance, do we spend time with God in prayer, do we attend meetings regularly, and does the church accept spiritual giftedness and divine call as essential for those who participate in creating adequate structure to develop the pastoral care ministry.

How can we do it better? The answer to this question is the application of the twelve foundational principles developed by Dr Melvin to save those starting the pastoral care ministry from avoidable mistakes. These foundation blocks will enable the church to start a lay ministry for pastoral care of the church and to test its strength and periodically use them to check the performance of the ministry and possible signs of shifting and erosion.

The nation Israel has twelve tribes, Lord Jesus chose twelve apostles and the New Jerusalem has twelve gates. Apostle Paul made a very profound statement in (1 Corinthian 3:10) Paul said "according to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every take heed how he buildeth thereupon" KJV. Like Apostle Paul, Dr Melvin J. Steinbron, being a wise master builder has developed twelve foundational principles for building a successful lay pastoral care ministry. Like a building blocks, each of the twelve foundational principles has a unique role to play to ensure the strength of the ministry. Right from the start, and then periodically use them to check the ministry for possible signs of shifting focus that can lead to total erosion.

VISION

He started with vision as the first foundational block for building a successful pastoral care ministry. He quoted (Proverb 29:18) where there is no vision the people perish. Vision is defined as "the ability to see farther than your eye can look. Eyes that look are common, but the eyes that can see are rare. In other words, vision is the picture of your end or destiny captured". The leadership of every ministry should have the ability

to see farther than their congregation or the people around them can see. However, in doing so the leadership must have a clear knowledge of the corporate vision of God for the church. He referred to 1Peter 5:1-4" Be shepherd of God flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.

God's corporate vision is to see that everyone practically receives His love and care. Nevertheless, He wants to do it through the leadership of the church as a vessel. God goal therefore, is to meet the needs of every member of the congregation, and those outside the church, the dying world as well. The vision of the church must be capture in the fulfillment of the corporate vision of God. The Great Commission, "God's love with skin on" goes beyond the boundaries of the church to everyone on the face of this planet. (John3:16) says" For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son" NIV, but not for God so love the church. It is therefore relevant that every activity or program for providing pastoral care and love, should tailor the fulfillment of their vision to be line with God mission for the church and the world as a whole. It is important to understand that, this could be achieved when the leadership and everybody involve is in constant communion with the chief shepherd. For, when God gives you a vision, He will not make you do it alone; it will require God to enable you to fulfill any vision within the corporate mission of God. That is why every strong ministry sustained by a vision that is regularly renewed and even enlarged in prayer.

OWNERSHIP (LEADERSHIP)

Let us first consider what Apostle Paul said in (2 Corinthians 5:19-20) "Christ Jesus has committed to us the message of reconciliation, we are therefore Christ ambassadors" it means that, we are the representatives of Christ on earth. In other words, we are representing the government of heaven on earth. We are accountable to the chief ambassador or our home government, kingdom of heaven. The church therefore, is a heavenly classroom for the training of the saints. In the embassy, the ambassador is responsible for everything that goes on at the embassy. In the same vain, the leadership of the churches is responsible for whatever goes on in the church and for that matter accountable to God and the congregation. I believe the founders and overseers are not owners but leaders, stewards or ambassadors of God. As I mentioned earlier on, Christ has commission the church, who are (the call out ones, the set apart or sanctified group), Is to represent the government of heaven on earth, and to serve as ambassador of God on earth, recruiting citizens for the kingdom of heaven.

The ownership (leadership) of these ministries must see themselves in the light of this context. In diplomacy, the ambassadors are not supposed to be original; always they speak the position of their home government, but not their own opinion.

Dr Melvin stated in the (monograph 3), "Our zeal often carries us into more commitment than our Lord calls us to make. He was focused. No matter how much there was to do in the world Jesus established a limit to what his disciples were to do.

Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel"(Matthew10).

We need to understand that our commission is great and goes beyond converting individual and giving them pastoral care and love, though that is of first importance. Can I suggest to you that, the disciples as at that time were still under the old covenant and for that reason; Jesus authorized them not to go among the Gentiles. However, these same disciples under the new covenant commissioned to go and preach the good news to all nations of the earth by Jesus this time no restrictions. Why? This time they were under a better covenant. In addition, that, nations have duties to God. George Washington summarized well the duties the nations have to God in a proclamation for the of Thanksgiving, observed on Thursday, November 26, 1789: "It is the Duty of all Nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his Benefits, and humbly to implore his Protection and Favor." Therefore, I believe that, the church cannot ignore the world and focus only on the church members alone but must work with God to extend His love with skin on to everyone on this planet. That is the key to GLOBAL PEASE the whole world is looking for can you see that with me. That is the essence of the Kingdom of heaven returning to earth. For the kingdom of God is righteousness peace joy in the Holy Ghost. Diplomacy is not the answer, not Democracy or any other sound political ideology no. The answer to global peace is GOD'S LOVE WITH SKIN ON. It cut across religious, political, cultural and social lines. That is what everybody need because that is what God gave to Adam and instructed him to pass it on to all generations after him. That is what God has blessed LPMI with through Dr Melvin; let us give it to the world. Better covenant goes with bigger responsibility.

Again, Moses responsibility was to provide leadership and care for only the people of Israel. Not to the extend of making the life of the Israelites attractive for other people outside to become citizens of Israel. However, under the new covenant the churches responsibility is not just to provide love and care to its members alone, but also to manage the ministry better enough so that those outside the church will love to join the church. We have better covenant therefore grater challenge.

For that reason, it is the duty of the leadership to form small group who share the vision and take responsibility God has for the church. The priority ministry for each in the group should map it with the aim at accomplishing God purpose for the church.

DESIGN

One of the foundation blocks, he talks about the fact that, Jesus gave the great commission but let it up to us to develop plans and mobilize people to do it. He charges us to "Tend the flock" we have to understand what that means under the new covenant with the great commission and create the strategy for doing it. In a way, that every member of the congregation will get involve for the provision of adequate and

effective care and love to the people. With the aim of touching the heart of the people out side the church and the world in general.

Planning is faith. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 11:1 wrote "Now faith is a substance of what we hope for and evidence of thing not seen" new international version. It is only when we determine our purpose, goals and objective under the overall corporate purpose of God for the church, and plan and creates strategy for doing it. Then it means that we truly believe in God mission and our own vision for the church. In addition, are therefore, showing the evidence in the form of strategies and plans for world to see that we believe what we have seen in the spirit realm before it happens in the physical world.

So when we study the twelve foundational principles carefully, and start to implement them fully in our ministries, then we are showing to the world, evidence that we believe pastoral care, love and unity for all men on the planet and that matter the kingdom of heaven on earth, which is the heart of the great commission is really happening.

CALL

He further stressed that, the leadership should accept spiritual giftedness and divine call as essential for those who participate in the pastoral care ministry, Every Christian is given gifts for ministry. Everybody has something to give, everybody is important. In Romans 12:4 Apostle Paul said like a human body every part has spiritual gift to contribute towards the fulfillment of God's vision for the world through the church as a vessel. He however, emphasizes those sharing the pastoral care vision and the leadership should confirm responsibility. He said that, affirmation given privately and publicly would help one persevere when the going gets though.

EQUIPPING

Steinbron further stressed on the adoption of the biblical requirement for "equipping the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12) He mentioned that, those who sense the call of God want to be equipped so as to do the best job possible for the Lord. Design a course to (1) equipping them to be and (2) equipping them to do. It is imperative that they understand the principle of "being with the Lord before doing for the Lord" and that God is more concerned about your relationship with Him than your ministry for Him. In addition the need to know the organizational, structure rational for reporting the reason for coming together frequently to share their experience.

ACCOUNTABILITY

He maintained that, its is not what is expected that gets done, it is what is inspected. Moreover, that experience has shown conclusively that when over sight lapses, the active commitment of lay people to their ministry fades. Therefore, providing reports and policy regarding reports by the ministry leadership group need to determine what they will do regarding reports.

AFFIRMATION

Dr. Melvin maintain that words of encouragement and appreciation with a pat on the back ignite the spirit Affirming a lay pastor for excellence, a giving credit, praise, honor, and recognition to another greatly helps established the work of another in his or her mind and it done publicly in the mind of others. When affirmation is done properly, it means that pastoral supervision is going on well. Occasionally, one- on- one affirmation is appropriate like noted, cards or a phone call from a ministry leader, Pastor or Pastoral staff will bring a lot of joy and a warm glow in one's spirit. He said this takes a very little time, but it is a case of a little being as lot a little by the one doing it but a lot to the one receiving it.

SUPPORTING

The principle member eight is supporting the lay pastor. People doing significant ministry need the security of knowing they have those to whom can turn the help and/or mentoring. They are partners in ministry but not solely responsible for caring the congregation. They need support in these three ways (1) shared responsibility for cases (support in difficult cases and (3) help with problems. The ministry leaders or pastors' staff should arrange for prayer partners for the lay pastors to support them spiritually.

FELLOWSHIP

Another foundation principle is Fellowship. He stressed that the community which ministry creates must come together for sharing growth and renewing. Ht mentioned that if people who are involved in the same ministry have an opportunity to come together frequently their lives bond is an amazing way. He said the bonding would keep them in the ministry and produce faithfulness. He mentioned that, it is the responsibility of those who lead the ministry to provide for this. All who minister must be able to move from community to community, then from community back into ministry.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is among the twelve foundational blocks for building a successful lay pastoral care ministry. He emphasized that; the ministry cannot be strong without frequent verbal and printed contact. He stressed, publishing, newsletter either occasionally or monthly with the aim to encourage, equip and inform. In this way, you will be calling people from the congregation into the ministry and it will make it easier in the lay pastors to be accepted by the people, because they know about it, and think well of it. Be in touch with other churches and the network. This can be one by exchanging newsletters, speakers; publication will raise e ministry strength from being in touch with one another rather than going it done.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is one of the foundational principles. He said taking time to see how the ministry to doing will keep it moving ahead. He stated that after the ministry has been on line for a time it is essential to evaluate it to see if it is being done the way you planned and it is performing as you expected. The questions that come to mind is (1) Are we doing what we set out to do. (2) Are we having the result we projected? (3) Are we using the methods and means we planned to use. (4) Do we need to make some changes? If, so what? You should do at least one evaluation a year.

MAINTENANCE

Finally, he stressed that in order to build a successful pastoral care ministry it is essential office work such as keeping records, processing reports, getting out the newsletter and as place where the materials for the ministry work are distributed. Regularly review of the flocks, review and update the structure, policy and participant's performance and the overall administrative work of a pastoral care ministry must take place.

These are the twelve foundational principles for establishing a successful pastoral care ministry. Of course, it is important to work it out in such a way that it will contribute towards the fulfillment of the corporate mission of God for the church.

End Note

I completely attributed to Dr Melvin J. Steinbron, Founder and President of LPM USA, monograph³, Book Can the Pastor Do It Alone, for the twelve foundational blocks principles and concept of pastoral care ministry.

Dr Myles Munroe, Book Applying the Kingdom Principles, Published by Destiny Images Publishers Inc. Shippensburg. PA 12257-0310.

Dr Myles Munroe, Book The Power of Vision, Published by Destiny Images Publishers Inc. Shippensburg. PA 12257-0310

Dr Melvin J. Steinbron, Book Can The Pastor Do It Alone?, Published by Regal Books A Division of Gospel Light Ventura, California, USA. Pp25.

Dr Melvin J. Steinbron, Founder & President of LPM USA, The Twelve Foundation Blocks, Monograph³ for LPM Korea/LPM Graduate School/PACE College.

Stephen K. McDowell' book Published by Providence Foundation, First printing 2004, Charlottesville, VA. Building Godly Nations pp 5