

# AGWM Seminar with Melvyn Ming

July 1, 2003

Tape 1  
Session 3 What do you do right.

*This tape begins with music playing and then an opening prayer, followed by John Bueno's introduction.*

**John Bueno:** Faye has some announcements to share with us, but while she's coming, let me just make a couple of comments here.

It isn't very often that you have a lecturer that has the insight into so many different areas that connect with our lives. He was a missionary, as you know. He was one of the leaders at AGTS for several years. He's been a pastor. He's working now with churches and districts, and so he comes to us from all these areas of experience that certainly enrich what he has to say to us. And I was thinking yesterday during the sessions, when he was talking about the U.S. Church, and the importance to us—why is that important? And of course, he mentioned our financial base, our resources coming from these churches. But there is another element to this in the fact that we're getting our missionaries from that culture. So it is very pertinent to what we're doing; so it is something that we have to deal with. And I just pray that, and know that you all are taking it to heart, and that God will help us in the coming days as well to be able to do something about what we're hearing in these days.

It's a blessing, Mel, to have you here, and we are grateful that you've come. Faye, please.

**Faye Tidwell:** Just a quick thought. It's so exciting to have this time together. In Proverbs 11 tells us that without good direction, people lose their way. So being almost 35 years in AGWM, I really want to say thanks to John for seeing the need for the training and to help all of us be better leaders. And, of course, again to thank Mel for leading us on this journey, through his instruction, helping us evaluate and working out our own past and present, and it will help us for what will benefit us for the future.

And Mel quoted yesterday, Joel Barker, on page 8 of your notes—and aren't those notes wonderful?—and everything's being taped, and some of that we'll be getting transcribed. As soon as he finishes today at 5 o'clock, we'll be getting that to Word Processing and try to get that out to you on a CD. So we can thank Mel for being so generous with his time of being here, and also giving of the notes so that you can carry it with you.

But he quoted Joel Barker, "Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes time. And vision with action can change the world." And I think that's what he's helping us to do, is to get that new vision for the time that we are for the future.

What I want to say is, break today for lunch is 11:30–1:00. We'll be having a break; Mel's so good about keeping his schedule. That's why he's so easy to work with. And our coffee and our breaks are back in the back of the room, and you can, as long as it's not a distraction, you can help yourself. But lunch will be 11:30–1:00, and the Women's Connection will be meeting at 11:30 during the lunch time, so if they could just go first through the line so that we can meet in the board room. So if you'll just allow us to do that first, we would appreciate it.

So, Mel, come.

**Mel:** Well, it is a joy to be with you again today. I do consider it a privilege, and it's been so enjoyable to be able to visit and talk and interchange with people. It was interesting to read your responses. I kind of went through and collated the things that you had given me earlier, and one of the things that emerged—there were several dominant themes. I kind of want to, hopefully, in the course of the day, interweave and touch on some of those issues. In fact, I'm going to make one slight adjustment to one little activity based on some of your feedback. But if you would just kind of think of these things in tiers. What were the issues that you said needed to be addressed by AGWM organizationally?

Well over a third of you listed empowerment-related issues. The first session we're going to do, and what we do this morning, is going to address that issue without ever using that word, and we're going to talk about that. Then there was a group of five responses that all of these had, about a fourth of you, put them in some version: systems thinking, clarity of communicating vision values model, the shift to teams, clarity of roles and functions, and change. Those were the next tier. And then there was a third tier that five to ten of you indicated. One was a culture of more open discussion, coaching and mentoring, how to bridge better to the U.S. Church, and one that's always part of missions: finance. I wondered when that one would emerge, but it didn't come out—in fact, it was the last one, of the ones that had, if you will, consensus.

I asked you to do some homework; I'm going to wait to do that homework a little later this morning, because I had a little fun with some of you. When I catch you in the elevator or something, I say, "By the way, what are the values of DFM? What's the model?" And people all looked at me like, "You know we discussed that last year. I've got it somewhere." But it wasn't exactly on the tip of your tongue. So I want to talk a little bit later, because in the session, I was going to do with you on coaching emerging leaders, I was given some hints on how do you coach people on values, and I think I'll wait until I do that, and then we'll talk about the values. I think maybe that'll be more appropriate.

This morning, we're going to start off focusing on you as a leader. And then we're going to move, really, to how you manage and lead a team. And these two issues we're going to approach as one, but I believe you have a set of notes that say, "What do you do right? Can you do it with a team?" And that's where we're going to start, and hopefully this can help us as we move toward empowerment and teams, and several of the issues that emerge.

Now, for the first part of this time, I have several objectives that I really want. One is that I do want you to know your own strengths. You need to be able to say what you're gifted for, what you're made for, what you're shaped for, what your gift-niche is, you know, what is your passion, and you need to know at least one way to identify strengths of other people. You'll never have teams if you don't know your strength and the strengths of your team. It'll never happen, because it goes together, so we want to talk about some of those things.

But we in Pentecost, especially Assemblies of God, classical Pentecostals, we have a unique heritage. If you go back and trace our history, you'll find that when we came into being, we really merged several different streams of the evangelical world. What we had in common was our experience with the Holy Spirit, but we did have people, and if you read about, for example, who was at Hot Springs—we had people from several different,

if you will, theological streams come. For the most part, I think that has been a great strength of our Fellowship, because it forced us to have, if you will, a little balanced view, to avoid some of the real extremes. But there's also a little liability to it, because sometimes we do come from different sides of the equation.

Well, on this issue of knowing your strengths, it really, theologically, comes in very strongly, because we have one stream that was part of our founding that would have definitely come out of the Holiness persuasion. They had a strong emphasis on the depravity of man. They saw that people were depraved and totally without...and so they tended to view any view of strengths as pride, and pride was sin. And you end up with these kinds of connections. And they kind of really advocate a philosophy called "total weakness." They love to emphasize that we can do nothing in ourselves. Their favorite verse is, "Don't think more highly of yourself." They are, in a desire to not have pride, they're almost too afraid to admit strengths. By the way, a by-product, if you would ask anybody that's in the counseling field, there's good to that, but a by-product is that a lot of people that come out of that stream have very negative self-images and deal with self-acceptance and those kinds of issues.

We had another stream that was part of our founding that we might call it "total strength." Their favorite verse is, "I can do all things," and they tend to stop there. They tend to emphasize that we are children of the King, that we can do anything. They tend to see the faith and the power, and that we are children of God; He owns everything. They do tend to have as a by-product a positive self-image. Now, both of them have, if you will, a dark side. For example, many people from that stream fall into presumption, to arrogance, whereas many people in the other stream fall into a denial of the giftings of God. Now, it's that tension I mentioned because in the session we're going to deal with this morning, if we don't get our feet on the ground biblically, we'll approach this either from a pop-psych perspective, or if you will, a self-awareness perspective, and neither of those are consistent with our biblical foundation.

So we want to talk: What is that proper way to view strengths within a Christian? What is the way to look at ourselves and be able to affirm strengths without falling into presumption and pride and arrogance? And how do we balance that? There are many, many passages, and we'll develop some of them in the next few minutes, that deal with this. But a passage that I would like to use to kind of capture it is found on page 2 of your notes. It's coming from 2 Samuel 22:31–36. Now, I want to say a couple words about the passage you have on page 2. I have it written here in the New International Version. The truth is, I could have used any version, and nothing we're going to say about it would change. I could have used the King James, the New King James; I could have used the New American Standard—it wouldn't have changed anything. So this is not one that I've picked the version to kind of "shade" the picture. It just happened to be a version that many people use. A second thing I would tell you: On this paper, for visual effect only, I've divided it to where it looks like two paragraphs, but anybody who would have done the exegesis of the passage knows that it is one. I've just done that for visual recognition, so I do want you to understand that. Now what I'd like you to simply do is, without any elaboration, read the passage and then answer the four questions that are under it, based on the passage. Go ahead and do that.

*[Long pause in tape as they do the exercise.]*

**Comment:** Here are some important ideas on what shaped Western Pentecostalism and with it our FBO mentality.

Okay, let's just take a moment to look at this together. Many passages we could use to explain it, but this passage does it particularly well, because it concisely illustrates several things. Who is the focus in verses 31 and 32? **God**. Just to kind of visually see it, circle all the words that refer to God in those two verses, just to visually see how strong that is. Now, any way you look at it, there's no way to confuse who the focus of this is. And when it describes it, look what it talks about: perfect, flawless, shield, a refuge, and none is like Him, there's no equal, He's a rock, a solid foundation. It clearly illustrates the supremacy of God. There's none like Him, flawless, perfect. There's no question about the majesty of this God. He's not just a god; He's not just an idol. He is the supreme. Now, who's the focus, other than the three transitional words that start verse 33, who is the focus of verses 33 to 36? Us. In fact, if you'll notice, in every line there's a reference to us: me, my, mine, me, mine, my, me.

Now, I want to illustrate something here that deals with that tension between total weakness and total strength. In this passage, without question, it declares the supremacy of God. Flawless, none like Him, perfect, rock. And that perfect, flawless God, that God—notice the first three words in verse 33—it is God, that God chooses to do something in our lives. I want you to note this. For example, in verse 33, He arms me with strength; God gives strength. **If a Christian says they have no strength, they're denying the gift of God, because this verse doesn't say, "To a few people, He gives strength," "To apostles, He gives strength," "To prophets, He gives strength." His way is perfect.**

**Guidance; He provides guidance. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. Have you ever looked? A deer's feet are quite small, not like a cow, and they can clear a fence, they can climb rocks; they're very efficient that way. He helps me to stand on the heights.**

**Vision. We have one community in our district that you drive off a plateau and you look down, and literally, you can see every street alley in the whole valley. But once you get down to the bottom, you can't see as much. When you're on the height, you have a perspective, a big picture view.**

**He trains my hand for battle. Skill. He gives skill to us. My arms can bend a bow of bronze. Now I have friends that are archers, and I've got some that have wood bows and graphite bows and composition bows, but if you can shoot a bow of bronze, you're strong. You have power. You give me the shield of victory.**

**Now what was the shield of victory? It was a trophy. It was achievement. It was success. It was the ribbon at the end of the race. That's what the shield of victory was. And then, you stoop down to make me great.**

**Success.**

And what I want us to see is the relationship here. This God who's perfect, who's flawless, that there's none like—that God chooses to invest in people: strength, guidance, vision, \_\_\_\_\_, skill, power, achievement, success. **We can't claim the strength on our own, but He gives it to us. But to deny we have it is to deny God. And what I want you to see:** Both of those are a denial of God. Total weakness and total strength. One denies He gives man power; the other denies we need Him. But they're both a rejection of God. Now, for a person to say in your missions team, "I don't have anything to offer," is to deny God. Now let's be honest here. That's what it says. God gives. There's no respecter, there's no qualifier, there's no fine print, there's no disclaimer. He chooses to give these

things. Now we could talk many other versions and many other passages, but I think that clearly illustrates a balance here.

To say you don't have ability, strength, is to deny God. To say that you have them without God is to deny God. So there's a balance here, a certain tension.

If you look on page 3, I put a number of verses. Now on this one, I *did* pick the version on purpose, because I'm trying to illustrate a point. So if you look there, 1 Corinthians 3:5: "Who am I and who is Apollos that we should cause the quarrel? Why, we are just God's servants, each of us with certain special abilities, and with our help you believed." And then a little bit later there, "And now brothers, I want to write you about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of you. I don't want any misunderstandings about that." And then in chapter 12, verse 4, "Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them." And then two verses later, "There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to *all* for their particular service." And then in Ephesians 4, "Why is it that He gives us these special abilities to do certain things best? It is that God's people will be equipped to better work for Him, building up the church, the body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity." And then 1 Timothy 4:15, "Put these abilities to work. Throw yourself into the task so that everyone may notice your improvement and progress." And then 1 Peter 4:10, "God has given each of you *some* special ability. Be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings." Now, the reason I switched versions there, and I used this special ability, for example, the King James, almost always, it would talk about gifts. But some of us, when we see the word "gifts," we filter that to mean "nine," but the context is never that limited. God gives gifts to Christians, and nobody's exempt. There is nobody on your team that doesn't have something to offer. There is nobody that's part of your network and partnerships of ministry that doesn't have something to bring to the table. And one of the things we have to do is discover that. That's the whole value of synergy. You bring together the special gifts, abilities, strengths of diverse people. We look a little further on the page there: Why were we created? Well, God gives us these. It says in Ephesians 2:10, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance." We are to do something. We aren't just passive. We are to do good works. And then it talks about our creation and talks about, when it talks about how He created, it says, "Your workmanship is marvelous." God created great workmanship, the people that we work with. And then in Philippians 2:13 in the Amplified, "It is God who is at work within you, energizing and creating in you the power and desire to will and to work for His good pleasure." You see, to do work, to bring your strengths, to bring your gifts to the team, is in God's plan. God never meant for us to have spectators on our team. And that's why yesterday, we talked about, under the new organization, they require personal mastery, because people are to bring something to the table. They are to be contributors. Research tells us that you can store 100 trillion facts in your mind. Isn't it amazing you can forget your anniversary? We won't go there. Your mind can handle 15,000 decisions a second. Now think of that. Talk about multi-tasking. Fifteen thousand decisions a second. You can smell up to 10,000 different odors. Average person, by the way. You can run your finger over something 1/25,000 of an inch thick. You can't even see it, but you can feel it. God made incredible people, and there is no one God made who doesn't

have ability that He can use. He did not, as Ethel Waters used to say, make any flops.

**Everybody has something.**

Now I'd like to talk about a few key values in making strengths productive, and that's what we have to do. God has given strengths, now we have to make it productive. Here is an area where our American culture teaches us non-biblical values. We have grown up in a **culture that is taught to look for mistakes and weaknesses. Our culture does that.** In school, do they mark what you get right or what you get wrong? If you ask someone to critique something, do you expect him or her to tell you what you did right or what you did wrong?—even though the word has no negative bias to it. If two people are talking and somebody mentions someone, are they more **likely to tell you a problem or strength?** See, **our society, our media, our culture looks for the flaw, looks for the mistake, looks for the weakness. And that is not biblical; that is American.** And if we're going to be good leaders, we have to fight the culture and overcome it, because we must condition our minds to see strength, not weakness. And yet, we're going to continually fight a culture that tries to pull us back.

So, let's talk about some values here. We must learn. Notice the word **"learn."** **We must learn to see strengths and accept weakness in ourselves and others.** We fall into this perfectionist kind of idea. We can do 99 things right, but if we do one thing wrong, we'll focus on the wrong. We can see somebody who does many things right, but when we talk about them, we'll say what they don't do. **We have got to learn to see strength.** Now, when we talk about weakness, we're not talking about moral failure. Yeah, they had a few adulteries, but give 'em a break. No, no. We're not talking about that. We're not talking about heresy. But all of us have some quirkiness to us. I'm just about to the age now I can be eccentric and enjoy it. We all have certain little things about us that kind of gnaw at some people. The problem is, when we look at each other, we tend to look at those things, not the strengths. **And we have to teach our minds to see strength.** When we someone's face, when we **hear their name, the pop-up needs to be a strength, not a flaw.** Now, that is fighting a culture, because our culture does not condition us for that. It is not natural. There are very few people who do this instinctively. This is one you **must train yourself. Bring yourself under discipline there.**

We must train our minds to focus on strengths, ours and others, and build on them. Some people use what they call a **compensating technique.** They'll say this, "If you see somebody and think of a negative, think of a positive." And **it's called replacement.** But the truth is, in our culture, one and one does not equal equal. The negative will still dominate. You've got to bury the negative to come out equal. So we talk **about a 4 to 1 principle.** Every time you're working with somebody, and you **think of a flaw, a weakness, make yourself think of 4 strengths** they have before you let your mind go on. **Teach yourself to do it.** Eventually you'll develop a habit. Now, here's an interesting thing. If I work with mentoring leaders, **how to do this one thing, it takes most people somewhere between 28 and 45 days to change** their behavior on this, I find. If they **really work at it hard**, in about that much time, they can change their behavior. And they'll usually last four to six months before they fall back into old habits, and then they've got to go into **spring training**, and they've got to get their skills back again. Now usually it doesn't take very long. The more they do this over their lives, the longer the interval will be before they fall back, but they'll still be **falling back 20 years later, because culture is continually pressing them into its mold.** So whenever you learn the habit and you find

yourself starting to revert, immediately start working on it. Focus on it again. But you want to be able, when you're sitting around in a meeting and you're looking at people, in your mind you want to say, "What can they do?" not "What can't they do?" You want to say, "What *can* they do?" And you've got to make that so normative, because what will happen then, you'll start not worrying about titles and positions and hierarchy; you'll start thinking, "Well, they could do that. You know, they're probably better than me on this one." You forget about all of these boxes and you start thinking about the vision and the purpose and what we want to do together, and then you start having empowerment, but you also become a team. And it's a way of thinking. Now, we must maximize strengths if we're going to have greater effectiveness. You've got to maximize strengths. The answer isn't to focus on your weaknesses and work on them.

I'll tell you one little story. There's a church—and none of you, a couple of you might be able to figure out this church, but it would not matter at that point. A pastor went to a church running under 50. His personal strength was evangelism, no question about it. He was a gifted evangelist. And even from the start on the bulletin, it said under his name, "Pastor and Minister of Evangelism." That church grew from under 50 to 2000 in about seven years. It was a phenomenal thing. There were people being saved, literally, almost every day. It was growing and all, and all of a sudden, when it got to be 2000, he had been reading a lot of books and going to pastors conferences where they told him a pastor is supposed to be a shepherd and a manager. And he thought, "Man, I'm not doing that. I'm out here doing evangelism, and training people in evangelism. I'm supposed to be the senior pastor of this church." And so at 2000, they hired a minister of evangelism, and he started doing pastoral care. And this church that had grown from under 50 to 2000 plateaued. First time it had quit growing. At the end of three months, he was a nervous wreck. At the end of six months, he was talking to his elders about maybe the church had outgrown him, and he needed to leave, and they needed to bring in a new leader. At nine months, he was right on the verge of collapse. Church hadn't grown at all—first time. His elders were loving people who knew him, were mature; they took him out and said, "Pastor, what you're doing isn't right. God never equipped you to do this. God made you an evangelist and our leader. We can hire somebody to do pastoral care. We can hire somebody to do management. We can't hire somebody to be you. We want you to let go of this stuff and go back to being you." The next Sunday he got up at church and told the church that story. And the person who had been the minister of evangelism became the minister of follow-up. He became a minister of evangelism, and in two weeks they added a pastoral care [minister]. They grew from 2000 to 6500 without ever plateauing again. They never stopped.

You see, all of us allow expectations to shape us, not God. But you have to maximize your strengths to be a blessing to the group you serve. If you're working in your weakness, you're hurting them. You've got to work in your strengths. So we've got to maximize it, in ourselves and others. Now, Ecclesiastes 4:9, "Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one, for the results are better." This is the concept of team. Leviticus 26:8, "Five of you will be able to defeat a hundred, and a hundred will be able to defeat 10,000." Synergy kicks in. I love the quote in your notes there by Charles Swindoll: "In a world of one-man shows, it's refreshing to find exception." You know, there are kings.

**Comment:** See some of what John Eldridge has to say about the same ideas

Now, number four. We must learn to recognize that strong people always have strong weaknesses. You've got to know that. Now any of you that read biographies, one of the things that shocks people who read biographies is they see these people who did incredible exploits, but you also see their flaws. I mean, by the way, talk about the Bible: David, a man after God's own heart who commits adultery. I mean, there's some tension here. Solomon, the smartest guy who ever lived, couldn't figure that he'd have done better with one wife. I mean, there were some flaws sometimes in these things. Here's what you find though: The greater the strength, the greater the weakness will be. And we have allowed ourselves to be so afraid of the weakness that we lose the strength. These are two diagrams. The one on the left, this is somebody who can really bring something to the table; this is someone who can add to the team. This is somebody who can empower us in our mission. This is somebody who can change our country. The one on the right is safe. And you can always tell, by the way, when an organization has hired someone safe. You say, "How's so-and-so doing?" "Well, they won't hurt us." Which means they won't help us either. You see, we get so afraid of the weakness that we tend to lose the strength. Now, you all know, just working with people, there are some people that are incredible strategic planners. They're just great at getting all their ducks in a row. They're great at all these things. And they have trouble getting along with their mother. They just don't have the high relational skills. And you've got other people who can get along with anybody, but they haven't figured out how to go to lunch. They'll just sit here and enjoy everybody. But on a team, you need those kinds of people, but you have to put them in their strengths, not their weakness. Don't make the strategic planner the head of the social committee, but put them in their strength, because it's in their strength that you leverage the giftedness of God. See that's where you get that; that's where it kicks in. When you put them in their strengths, you can cover their weaknesses with other people on the team. Get away from perfection. There was One perfect, Jesus Christ. The rest of us aren't. But a team, collectively, can be much stronger. So we have to learn to deal with that.

Now, how do you know your strengths? Many, many people do not know what they're good at. I mean, I'm really serious. In America, we have this epidemic of low self-esteem. You ask people, "Well, what can you do?" "I don't know. I just try and serve God." Well why don't you serve Him by figuring out what He wants you to do? We've got to move on, so let's talk about some ways that you can know your strengths, on page number 5 there. You just ask, "What can I do? What are my skills? What are my abilities?" You'll find, by the way, many people coming into missions now are coming in later in life; they've already had established careers. They have skills and abilities they've had before they ever "applied." We need to recognize those there; they bring a lot to help us there. What can I contribute? All of us have things we can do that can help the organization that we're with. Now, this may vary in the mix, but one day I thought about the first three churches I served. What they needed from me was different in each one, but I could make a positive contribution in all three. And many of you are on different teams, different fields, different areas; you change roles and all. When you change roles, your contribution may change, because the team makes a difference. And that's okay, but you have to question, "Okay, in this team, in this field, in this area, in this role, what can I bring to the table? What is it that I could add value to this table?" That's probably a strength. What are things that seem relatively easy for you to do that other people have

difficulty with? You know people say, “How do you do that so fast?” That’s probably a strength. You don’t even know it, probably, by the way, because you just do it intuitively. Those are often strengths you have. What do other people recognize and compliment in you? Someone says to you, “Man, you’re really good at…”—whatever. It’s probably a strength. Knowing the limitations of my role and position, what can I go ahead and do anyway? Every job has limitations. You know, a lot of times, you talk to young people, and they think, “If I just get up, I won’t have all these limitations.” And most of you realize the higher you go, the more limitations there are. But an ineffective person focuses on the limitation. An effective person focuses on, What can they do in spite of the limitations? And so if you meet somebody, by the way, and they say, “Boy, if I just had this, or just could do this, I could be successful.” The truth is, they wouldn’t. If they had it, they wouldn’t be. The effective person says, “Well, we can’t do a lot of things, but here’s what we’re doing.” And it’s a whole mindset of, do you want to have results, or do you just want to have it easy? Well, a couple ideas there.

Now, we have a couple of tools we’re going to use to help you identify your strengths. Now I’m doing this for a couple reasons. One, I want you to know your own, but two, you’re going to mentor people. You’re going to coach people. All of you are in the personnel business. That’s what this is about: bringing up leaders, raising leaders up, both missionary, nationals, and partners. So if you look on page number 6, we’d like you to [End of side A.]

No, individually, as a person, this is on you, your strengths. [Tape is apparently stopped as people fill out the worksheet.]

So first, we’d like you to share just one thing on each question. So get together; just move your chairs. Find out which person’s birthday nearest to today, and then share at least one answer from each question.

[Lots of talking and interaction.]

If you’re coaching, mentoring people, and you use a sheet like this, if they have trouble answering the first question, you know, they’re having trouble writing on the first, almost always it means they haven’t tried enough, and that can come from one of two eithers. Either they are a perfectionist and they won’t try it until they can do it perfect, or they don’t have a lot of self-confidence. And either way, you’ve got to push them into trying things, or they’ll never discover what they can do. Just make it manageable, first off.

If people have trouble answering number two, it means their team or organization is not creating a culture that provides feedback. Kind of like the Swedes that got married and he said, “You know, when we got married, I told you that I loved you, and if it ever changes, I’ll let you know.” Well, most people like to hear it occasionally. The truth is, often we only tell people what they do wrong, and they often end up changing what they do right and turning it into a wrong, because they didn’t know they were doing it right. So we need a culture that has it.

On number three—this isn’t absolute, but it’s true more than you would think, if you mentor a lot of leaders—if people have trouble on number three, it often means in their devotional life, they don’t do much listening; they do all the talking, because they’re not letting God speak to them and tell them what He shaped them for. And that’s often a matter of needing to wait on God a little more. That’s not always true, but it is often, if you coach a lot of people.

What I would tell you, on everybody that's on any team you're on, you need to know their answer for number four and five, because that's where you're going to leverage their strengths. You need to not only know it about you, you need to know it about everybody else on your team, because that's where you can bring in their strengths and leverage it.

Now, some people, I will tell you, have trouble with a sheet like that we just had because of learning style. They're the ones who hated essay tests. They didn't like all that blank space; they liked multiple choice. For those people, go to page 7. We have a thing that does the same thing with a different learning style. Now this one's really quite easy.

We're going to have you do it, because I want you to experience it. You're going to have five minutes to fill it out. Now you just read, down the left column, they have these paired leadership strengths, and then in the first column, for example, on Analyze/Evaluate, Things I Do Well and Enjoy Doing, if you like doing that, put a check mark. If you don't, leave it blank. Then the third column, Things I'd Like to Do Better, maybe you do it good, but you'd like to do it better. Remember, by the way, most people that are good at something want to get even better. Personal mastering. Check that. And then if other people say, "Boy, you're good at analyzing things," put a check mark. Just go down the list. When you get to the end, look for the things you have checked in all three of the columns, and then out of those pick your top three. You're trying to get your top three strengths out of this page. It's pretty easy to do, but I'll give you five minutes. *[Break given to complete sheet. Tape picks up during review.]*

...that we're wanting to help you do, provoke yourself and people you mentor. It's impossible to have great teams without a leader who doesn't know their own strengths, because you always build teams to your weakness. And you've got to know your strengths to know who you need on a team. The second thing is, you've got to know the strengths of the people on your team to make sure you put them in the right role, because they can be a great person, but you can put them in the wrong role if you don't know that. So you're continually working at learning your strengths and theirs, and this is where empowerment comes in. You empower people in their strengths, and that's why you find that, organizationally, it become a far more relational network, far less positional there. And these were just a couple of tools that you could use to begin to help people.

Let's look at page 8 for a moment. Couple of hints for maximizing strengths in a ministry or organization. First hint, redesign in possible job. I can show you a pattern that probably 90 percent of the time you can figure out what happened. You have a role, and you have put a good person in it, and they burn out. You put another good person in it, and they burn out. You put another good person, and they burn out. Why did that happen if the first person before that burnt out was successful? Probably we created the role based on somebody with an unusual gift mix, and now we'll never find that same gift mix again. So anybody we put in there is going to look good in part and fail in part, but they'll be burnt out because of the parts they're not good at. So you get this person that is just tremendous at preaching revivals to mass crowds and wonderful in small groups—it's not a normal combination. And you try and replace them, and the person will either be good with the crowd or be good with a small group, but will generally burn out because they aren't both. You've got to redesign the job based on more normative gift mixes. Now, if the person was just lazy, then that's just their problem. I'm talking about good people that

are trying hard. If you start burning out a couple people, don't keep throwing in people to be burnt out. Change the design. The system isn't working.

Another thing: You have to make jobs demanding and significant. Nobody wants busy work. Nobody wants just to have a title. Really, when it's all said and done, there's no fulfillment in just having an office. I don't care what the office is. If it doesn't in some way relate to your values and what you're about, you just kind of go home at the end of the day and think, Why do I do this? And that is, by the way, why so many people are now in transition. They don't feel significance where they are.

One of the observations: When I went home last night and went up to the room, Martha and I were talking, and, by the way, I don't think I had Martha stand. [Introduces his wife.] She's also my partner in ministry. We travel 160 days a year in our motor home coaching pastors, and so if you're going to live in a motor home, you'd better get along. We have a great time together, and we love discussing. We were back in the room last night, and I said, you know, there's one observation I have based on today. For a topic for the future, which I seriously think you need to consider, I don't think, as a group, you're real in touch with some of the generational issues. And I don't mean that bad, but I don't think you're in touch with some of these generational issues. For example, and I'll just illustrate on this point right here. In the church that I pastored where we had a missions committee that supported some of you, the man that headed our missions committee—when I went there, it had always been headed by a pastor, and I wanted it to be headed by a lay person—and he was a man, 60 years old, and most people would not have known this, but he made a goal early in his life to give money to missions. He started giving ten percent tithes, ten percent missions, living on 80, and then every year it went up. By the time I came there, he actually lived on 20 percent and gave 80. Now, he made a lot of money, but he was still in the same house he was when he started, because he had vision. He didn't know much about management, but he knew a lot about vision. Remember, he's 60 years old. I said to him, "I'd like you to be the chairman of the missions committee." "Oh, I couldn't do that, Pastor. That's got to be a pastor." He saw significance in the role, and he even thought, *Maybe I'm not up for this*. But if I had talked to a 30-year-old and said, "You want to be chairman of the missions committee?" they'd say, "No, I don't need any more busy work." If I would have said to them, "I want you to head a task force that can help change the world." "Hey, I'm into that." See the difference? The 60-year-old related to title and position. The 30-year-old related to vision. You've got to be able to articulate significance to their culture, and they have to see what they do as significant. If they don't, they're not bringing anything to the table. A third issue: You do have to learn to evaluate people on their strengths. Everybody's got weaknesses. Continually be asking yourself, before you get mad at anybody, what can you do? What can they do to help us? Think about that. That can enable you to make a real difference.

Now, I want to give you one tool before we break, to learn to think about the strengths of other people. You need to know the strengths of everybody you work with. By the way, you need to know the people you report to, the people who are your peers, and the people you lead. And you need a technique, because most of us don't do that. So if you look on page 9, we have one example—not that you necessarily need this example—but here's a strengths profile. Now, since you're sitting by region, maybe you shouldn't put their name in the blank. But we want you to pick somebody who is in your team, maybe

they're not here, maybe somebody you lead, but pick a person, and then fill out this on them. Let me just give you some ideas. You want to list their strengths, so for example, in number one. **What if they have a strength that's** not listed here? Write it in the margin. This is your sheet. It's not perfect. Just write it in. After you've kind of identified as many strengths as you can about them, what are four or five strengths that you see that **are their top ones**? Now I will tell you, keep this a living document. The more you work with them, you'll discover something that they're good at you didn't know, and if it's stronger than what you have, cross out what you have and write in the new one. You're always wanting this to be current. And this is for nobody but you.

**Then, what do they really enjoy doing? See, some people are good at something they don't enjoy. I'll give you one example.** My wife, she'll crow when I say it this way, but I'm good at accreditation. I can get anything accredited. There's nothing to it. You just got to know the system, and you work it. You know, I get no \_\_\_\_\_ out of accreditation. I can do it. I'm good at it. But, you know, I don't want on my tombstone, "He was good at accreditation." It just does not turn my crank! So, just because somebody's good at something doesn't mean they want to do it. **What are they good at that they like doing?** That's the key. Because, by the way, that's where they're going to make their grade in, their contribution, **because that's what energizes them; that's what keeps their passion alive.**

Now, number three, if there's anything potentially negative on this form, it could be number three. What do they see as their strengths? If their self-perception is good, it's wonderful. What if they're wrong? You're going to have to deal with them all the time. They're sure they are God's gift to teaching, and nobody wants to listen to them. They're always going to want to teach the best courses, and you're going to have to figure creative ways to find obscure courses that they can be in. So, you're just going to have to deal with it.

And then, number four, **what strength can have the greatest contribution to this team or this ministry? That's the one you really got to leverage.** So when you get to an issue that that's up, it's you.

Now if you fill this out on everybody you work with, all of a sudden, your mind starts thinking about them. You're sitting in a meeting on passports, and you're thinking, **"You're good at this. You can do this. You can bring this."** You're not thinking about, "You have this title." You're thinking about passion, **the outcome, the work.** By the way, many of you that have had me in class know that if you ever make an appointment to see me, the secretary will always wait a minute or two if you work for me, if you're on one of my teams, **because I always read this before I talk to [you]. Because when you walk in, I'm maybe going to tell you you're doing something** wrong, but I want my picture in my mind **what you do right.** See, I don't want the issues to be the victory, so I always have my secretary warn me, "So-and-so is here to see you." I'll look at it, put it away, and when you walk in, I want that frame of reference. Why do I do that? **Because I tend to drift the other way.**

Okay, fill this out on one person just to feel what it's like. When you finish this, you can take a break. We'll start back at a quarter till eleven.

*[After break.]*

As a leader, especially trying to move into a team-empowered organization, it demands that leaders know their strengths and the strengths of their team, and whatever techniques

you need to discover that, you should use. But I would say a healthy thing on a good team is to be able to talk about your strengths with each other. We don't do that. We talk business, because it's a little embarrassing. But the fact is, if we understand our strengths come from God, it is to give glory to God that we do these things, so just some techniques there.

If you'll look on page 10 of your handout—we do want to talk about this. You do have to remember: You have to accept weakness to get strength. If you want to have world-class leaders, if you want to have people that can change nations, if you want to have people that are going to make eternal differences, you've got to accept some weakness to get strength. It just goes together. I love what you see in your notes there the quote by J. Oswald Sanders. He said, "Leadership is the ability to recognize the special abilities and limitations of others, combined with the capacity to fit each one into the job where he will do his best." And that's what this is about. It's helping people not have title, but get into a role where they can do their best. They can bring something successful. I do love the way Ephesians 5:17 is in the Good News: "Don't be fooled. Find out what the Lord wants you to do." I mean, it's rather direct. In 1 Peter 4:10, "Each one of you, as a good manager of God's different gifts, use for the good of others the special gifts you have received from God." The reason you're on a team is to use those gifts not for yourself, not for glory, not for acclaim, but to bless the team you're part of. That's where God has placed you, and it's key. Now, like everything there is, excess can go bad. Some people get arrogant, presumptuous, so in your notes, I put this Achilles heel of strength. Confidence, which is needed—you have to have confidence to lead boldly—can lead to feelings of infallibility. Quickness can be over-hastiness. A sharp wit can become abrasiveness. Alertness can become a narrow focus. Dedication—workaholism. There's a dark side. All of us have to guard against the dark side, but we do need to leverage the strength.

Now, here's how this fits with teams. When you first start off, it begins with a leader. By the way, there's a whole body of literature in the secular business world right now about discovering your strengths, because they recognize leaders have to know that. But once you've done that, and then you've started identifying the strengths of the people around you, then you have to manage your and their contribution for maximum return. Peter Drucker coined the term, "Contribution Management," but we have to learn to manage it. You see, it's one thing to have the gifts, but if we never use people in their gifts, if we never leverage it, it's like not having them. So we have to learn to do that. First Peter 4:10, the Living Bible, says, "God's given each of you some special abilities. Be sure to use them to help others." And that's where that interdependency is. So I've got a couple of objectives for this part of our time together. We do want to define that we mean by contribution management and, in the business literature, that's a rather specific title. We want to look at some benefits. Then we want you to see how it can lead to greater effectiveness, and this is very related to teams—strategic teams, task force teams, all kinds of teams—but that's what we would like to do.

Henry Ford said this, "You can take my factories, burn up my buildings, but give me my people, and I'll build my business right back." You see, ultimately, missions is not a building, it's not a school, it's not an apartment, it's people. Frankly, if we have the people, we can do it. It's interesting, by the way, the number of churches that break 10,000 in America that never had a building. Never owned a building. Sometimes, our

**Comment:** This is where the indigenous principle breaks down at times. We do not see how we need each other – see Alex Alerjo here.

structures shape us more than we shape our structures. And they can sometimes be a liability, so we have to watch that. It is people.

**Comment:** Your system is perfectly designed to yield the results you are getting. Willard p.58 note his comments about Spiritual formation for people, institutions self or others.

**Now, what is contribution management?** It's managing our efforts—it's self-management—in such a way as to produce maximum results for your church or ministry. It's managing myself so that we get not adequate, not acceptable, but maximum results. I have a videotape of a staff meeting that one of the people I network with got for me. And it was interesting. Here was a church that had just celebrated one of their high points in history—number of people saved, number of people in attendance—and this was the first meeting afterwards. You would have expected them to be celebrating, glorying, high-fiving each other. And the very first question is: Could we have done better? You see, it wasn't enough that they had done well. They wouldn't to know, did we do what's best. And that's what contribution management is. It's not just saying, "We did okay." It's knowing we did our best. It's knowing that we produced the most we could have, and I think that is a huge issue for us in terms of discussion. Now, why is this important? Well, I think, biblically, the entire concept of stewardship is related to this. To want to give an account, and He's going to look for the return, and the one who doesn't use it, what does He do? Well, He takes it away; He throws them out. The whole concept of managing what you've got, the concept in Scripture of leadership and management has to do with getting returns. Did we get the good returns on what we invested? Well that's what it is. It's a spiritual issue, not just, if you will, a business or management issue. You notice in your binder, 1 Timothy 4:5, "Put these abilities to work. Throw yourself into the task, that everyone may notice your improvement and progress." You know, I think that that's an issue. Now, let me give you some principles, and you're going to notice these principles really connect very much with some of your values, your purposes, and your mission, and you'll just kind of see this very quickly.

**Comment:** So how to reconcile what the Cambridge guy is saying in When Management becomes religion – stewardship is an issue.

The first one is, if you're going to have an organization, whether it be an area, a field, a region, or \_\_\_\_\_, everyone has to be treated like \_\_\_\_\_. This is not, by the way, lowering the esteem of the top and bringing everybody else up to it. Why do we have words like VIP, which means there's some non-VIPs? Everything about our system of hierarchy says some have, some don't. This gets reflected in our culture, and our culture then either helps or hinders our system. So for example, if you've read any of the work on teamwork from re-engineering the organization, all the way through, all the organizations that implemented teams but did not change the hierarchical culture failed. Teams were created, because everybody said, "You don't believe it! You still have the executive perks, the executive washroom, the executive parking places—we're not equal! We're not all in this together! You just want more out of us for no money." And it failed. But organizations who changed their culture, they could see the results. If you're going to treat some as haves and some as have-nots, you'll never have an empowered culture. It's kind of interesting to me.

Sometimes I go to speak places that they've never seen me or don't know me or anything, and because of my name and all, they're not exactly expecting someone who looks like me. I'll be standing around in the lobby before a district council, and I'll have people that are just totally rude to me, unbelievably rude. Just act like you're not even there, you know. Then I'll speak, and God blesses, and the Holy Spirit moves, and some

things—and those people want to take me to lunch. There's something so ingenuous about them that you don't want to go to lunch. You see, we should have **treated someone with dignity whether they have title or not, whether they were pastoring a church of 20 or 10,000, whether they're the custodian or whether they're the CEO.** Until we learn to do it not from manipulation, but for values—and by the way, our doctrine of priesthood is \_\_\_\_\_. That's just it: We stand equal before the Cross. But at church, we often behave that some are more equal than others.

If we're going to move to contribution management on your team, **you've got to move as if everybody's important, everybody's valuable, everybody has something to offer, everyone is part of this organization.**

Then you have to know, **Who are your ministry targets or customers?** Who is it, ultimately, that DFM serves? The truth is, I would say it is the lost of the world. You interact with others, but if we can't get up and talk about people being saved, people being filled with the Spirit, **people whose lives are being changed by discipleship, people who are being called into ministry, people who are being energized in service—if we can't do that, why do we exist?** See, our entire world is outside of the Church. All of our customers aren't in it yet. That's why we talk about world \_\_\_\_\_, and sometimes we forget that. We think our customers are the insiders. No company that thinks their customers are the insiders will ever succeed. **You do not sell products to the employees.** You sell them to the outside. Your customers are always outside of you. So here is this interesting tension as a leader. You've got to be continually thinking,

What should we be doing to reach the lost? What should we be doing to reach people we do not have? **What could we be doing to transform people that do not yet know you?** At the same time, we've got to build influence with the people we serve. Those are the people inside. Here's this tension. You've got to, continually in your mind—you exist for the people outside, but you have to have influence with the people inside. By the way, you do one or the other and you lose. **If you have influence, but you don't focus outside, you're just a bureaucratic organization.** If you only focus on the lost, you won't have the resources to do it. See you've got to do both, but you've got to teach your mind: Your job is not serving those already in the Kingdom. Jesus even said, “I didn't come for the healthy, but the sick. Go out and compel them.” He didn't say, “Go to the inside and ask them.” **Your customers are out, but you have to have influence with those in, and you have to build it—credibility, communication, bridges.**

**Then you have to look for the unused potential. I think, in many** ways—and I'll brag a little bit, you know; we have our heritage here. I was a part of A/G history, and I loved the way we went into countries when we couldn't do what we normally could, but we did what we could do, and today we have a church. I praise God that we didn't say, “Well, it's not our way, so we won't go,” that we could look for the unused potential. That was potential. It just didn't look like it normally did. We've got to look at that all the time. Okay, now we're in some of these multinational partnerships. We can see all the problems in that. **And by the way, anybody who has worked in multinational partnerships**

knows there are headaches. I mean, just talk to the business world. They are a headache, but they also have potential. It's astronomical. Our world has changed so much.

I lived the last three years in Arlington, Washington, a little town north of Seattle. I'm reading one day in \_\_\_\_\_ World magazine about a \_\_\_\_\_, you know, kind of a geek, and it said the best place to buy this part is at \_\_\_\_\_ Industries in Arlington, Washington. Never heard of this place. How in the world could there be a place that you can buy stuff like this I didn't even know about? Didn't think much about it; kind of lost track. A month later, I'm reading in Motor Home Magazine, published out of New York, the best place to get this antenna is \_\_\_\_\_ Enterprises in Arlington, Washington. What?! So I got my phone book out. I thought, *It can't be*. And I found it. It wasn't a half-mile from my house, and I thought, how can this be? So I go over there. I drove past it. I couldn't see it. Finally, I thought, *It's not there*. And I went in behind a warehouse, and on the back of the warehouse on a little door, there's this one little sign about this big, \_\_\_\_\_ enterprises, open Tuesday through Thursday from 9–1. There's no window. Two national media magazines! I was curious, because it wasn't Tuesday through Thursday, 9–1, so I came back Tuesday through Thursday. Here's a guy and his wife, and I walked in, kind of looked around, and told them I'd seen their article. Man, it was just a warehouse. So I asked him about a part, and he said, "Yeah, it's probably over there a few aisles. You'll find it." Not real high customer service. So I found my part and came back and said to him, "How's business?" He said, "Oh, we did a couple million last year." Right. Nice showroom. I see. He laughed. He said, "All I need is the Internet and UPS." He said, "All my business happens around the world. They don't even know who I am." The paradigms have changed. "You know, I can't afford a nice showroom. I guess I can't go into business." We do that all the time. We create barriers without looking at the potentials. What can we do?

Those four principles are kind of underlying, if you will, contribution management. If you look at the study of this in the business circle, they say every person as an employee, a stockholder, a participant in any organization contributes one or more of three things.

They either contribute direct results, so if this is a shoe factory, they make shoes. If it's a real estate company, they make sales. If it's a pharmaceutical, they make pills. If it's an education, hopefully they produce quality education. Every organization, to justify itself, has to have some kind of results. And so there are people that they focus on direct results.

Then, vision and values. As people that have to, if you will, be the articulators of the vision and values that guide this enterprise. Somebody has to be lifting a picture up, painting a picture, communicating it, so that people embrace it. And then somebody has to be developing personnel. Human resource management, they call it in the business circle. The problem happens when someone is contributing the wrong thing. By the way, remember I told you most churches in America are at 75? The reason being, most pastors of churches of 75, is they love direct results, and they won't let it go. Until they let it go, it'll be 75. Up to about 75, you can run it as an extended family, you know, Mom and Pop \_\_\_\_\_ store, that kind of thing. After that, you do have to develop leaders and you have to guide the vision where it doesn't fractionalize. But to have the time to do that, you've got to let go of the direct results, or you'll never have the time. So that's the way it happens. We can show this. You can picture it; it's not hard to see, and

yet a lot of people have not thought about, *What should I be contributing?* They are just contributors. Sometimes they're making the wrong contribution. It's not that it's bad; it's just not what's best for the organization.

The story could be used very easily of McDonald's with Ray Crock. McDonald's brothers had two of them who couldn't do anything more. Ray Crock bought McDonald's. Now when Ray Crock bought McDonald's, the truth is, the McDonald's brothers were cooking the hamburgers, their wives were running their \_\_\_\_\_, and kids were basically cleaning the place. It was a family store. And he saw the potential of more. He started franchising it out. Well, it wasn't long until Ray Crock didn't cook any hamburgers except for publicity programs. What he did was go around the country talking about: thank the customer, make sure the food's consistent, make sure the restrooms are clean. Values. And he trained people. He trained store managers first, as they got bigger, when they got to about 75-100 franchises. All of a sudden they created McDonald's University to train their employees, managers and all, and what did Ray Crock do, he traveled the country. "Hey, make sure the store's clean. Smile at the customer. Make sure the food's the same whether they get it in Brooklyn or Dallas." He's communicating this, and he's telling the stories about the employee, you know, the person left their credit card, and the employee jumps over the counter and chases him down, and gets a satisfied customer. He's telling all the oral stories that make the values live. Did he cook the hamburgers? If he had wanted to still cook hamburgers, there would have still been two of them. See, as an organization or ministry grows, leadership has to be content to let go the contribution that's not appropriate for them. And that is hard, if what you loved was that contribution.

Now, you can picture this many ways. I talked a little bit yesterday. A number of people, for example, on issues mentioned things role clarity and certain expectations and some of that. Everybody in this room, whether you like it or not, the truth is, you've got to do the second one, and second, the third one. Because if you're all doing the first one, this organization is stuck, because you're at the place in the organization—if you're not communicating vision, we don't have it. If you're not communicating the values, then the truth is, we are wondering. If you're not developing personnel, we don't have a younger future. And you have to accept the responsibility for the contribution that God has placed on you. And a lot of us, in truth, we like doing it. We would rather do it than lead it. But if you're in this room, your role says you lead it.

Now, I want to show you a related issue to this, coming from a different part of research, but it does illustrate the same point. This is what I've just described, in the business literature of contribution management, primarily from Drucker and his kind of cronies. I'm going to show you another piece of research that comes from another camp, but is very compatible: the needed leadership skills for different layers of leadership. I would argue, by the way, that everybody in this room is either middle or top. And I'm not saying that hierarchical. If you know me well enough, you know I don't think that way. Now, let me just show you how this works. This is what is used by headhunters, people who are recruiting executives. This is how they decide who to, if you will, market. If you're looking at the supervisory or, if you will, entry leadership level—line leaders,

entry leaders, first-level leaders—the person has to have technical skills, because they're managing technical groups. So if it's a teacher, now they're a principal over an area, but they've got to understand teaching, because they're still in the building. They have to have a lot relational skills. They've got to be able to work together and resolve conflicts and problem-solve—it's all human relationships there. That's why, by the way, you can have somebody that is the best in the world at technical skills that can't become a leader. By the way, most geniuses can't, because they excel at the technical, but they don't have the personal.