

THE LAW OF LEADERSHIP: REINVENT EDUCATION FOR THE PASTORHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER

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In the chapter on the Law of Leadership in **Future Church**, we described two “leader shifts” necessary to move from celebrity-based leadership to calling-based leadership. Here we supplement them with a third leader shift that has to do with training the vast array of disciples who are each called to pastor the parish God has given them.

As disciple-making abounds in Future Church, more believers will be trained and leaders developed in their character, their skill, and their ability to reproduce. But growth in doctrine will not be left out. In the intellectual maelstrom of our post-Christian world, a strong grasp of historic Christian teaching is more important than ever, and Future Church will seek to equip every pastor—that is, every disciple—with seminary-grade knowledge.

Since what we forecast in **Future Church** may sound like the end of professional ministry, some may think it hints at the end of theological education, but that is not so. Theological education must be more widespread than ever for Upper Room leadership, but it will have to be more church-based, more tied to the discipleship process, more accessible for students in different stages of life, and more gradated for different levels of lifelong theological study.

Our models will be new, but the concept is not. Perhaps the most powerful missional disciple-making movement in the history of North America was the Methodist Episcopal Church from the American Revolution to the Civil War. Especially before 1830, Methodists were considered low-class, rough-hewn, uneducated farmers and tradespeople (much as their descendants the Pentecostals were viewed a century later). Their preachers were derided by clergy of established denominations for not having college degrees. But in reality, Methodist preachers became educated in a non-traditional way. They were voracious readers who were supplied by their conferences with theological books to study while they traveled their wilderness circuits for hundreds of miles on horseback.

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Even one hundred years ago there was a higher expectation of learning for church leaders, even lay leaders, than there generally is in the present day. Today the Chautauqua Institution in western New

York is a summer-long commune for mostly liberal Protestant, classical-music-loving intellectuals to attend lectures and concerts, but it was originally founded as an annual eight-week training ground for Sunday School teachers. (One of its cooler features was a massive, landscaped, accurate topographical model of Palestine that a teacher could literally walk on to learn the Bible's geography.)

There will always be a need for resident experts in the church with the full range of theological and biblical knowledge (including original languages) who in turn will teach others. But as the pastors multiply in Future Church, we will need to create more delivery mechanisms that set high standards but provide creative ways for students to meet them.

One experimental example is being launched by the Calvary Family of Churches in metro Denver. To equip pastors and church planters, Calvary founded William Tennent School of Theology, named for a Presbyterian pastor in colonial New Jersey and Pennsylvania who gathered apprentices for training in a log cabin instead of sending them away to Scotland. Those men later became the leadership backbone of the Great Awakening in the middle colonies.

The vision of Calvary's school is to confer an accredited Master of Letters degree (common in the UK but rare in the US). Most students will be working day jobs while serving with pastors in Calvary's churches and elsewhere across the continent, especially in the Mountain West, where graduate theological education is hard to come by. For most of the year the students will study independently, then they and their families will gather for semiannual two-week retreats in—you guessed it—a log cabin in the Rockies for intensive teaching from theological scholars. William Tennent's educational model is designed to equip church leaders' minds for disciple making in as integrated, economical, and accessible a way as possible.