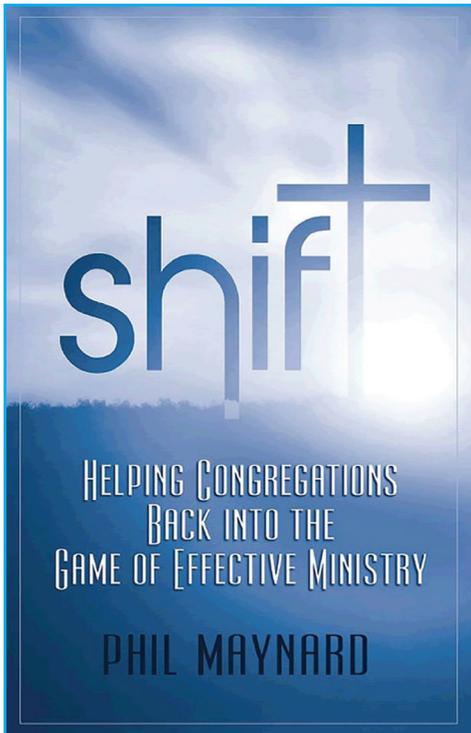


# LEADERS BOOK SUMMARIES

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## SHIFT: HELPING CONGREGATIONS BACK INTO THE GAME OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

### THE NUTSHELL

As a church consultant and denominational leader, I'm witnessing God breathe new life into churches with which I've worked. Congregations are making the "Shift" – actually a series of individual shifts that, when combined, shift the culture of their churches, bringing vitality and fruitfulness.

#### Shift 1: From Fellowship to Hospitality

While hospitality in contemporary culture has taken the form of "fellowship," whereby we, as Christians, welcome friends to our table. In the biblical tradition, hospitality was focused on welcoming strangers, including those who need shelter and nourishment, as well as those who know the pain of exclusion. We love because we've been loved. We welcome others because we've been welcomed. We invite others to discover God's grace because of what we've learned about the transformative power of God's love. This relational dimension is the engine that drives our witness in the community and larger world, our worship, and our maturation as disciples of Jesus Christ. When people show up for the first time in worship, they ask themselves, "Do I fit in here?" or "Did people like me?" The vital point here is that regular attendees engage newcomers in a way that makes them feel welcome.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After serving for several years as the Director of Congregational Excellence in the Florida Conference (UMC), **Phil Maynard** has transitioned to full-time ministry where he coaches, consults and trains.



Notice that I say “regular attendees” and not “the pastor.” It’s meaningful when regular people take the effort to welcome others. The pastor, on the other hand, is paid to welcome!

### **Shift 2: From Worship as an Event to Worship as a Lifestyle**

It’s been said that people remember less than 10% of what they hear from a worship message, but what people take away from the worship experience is based on more than what’s presented in the message. If put together well, the whole worship experience is built around a theme, and everything connects to and reinforces that theme. This includes selecting music that relates to the message. It means that the message is based on the selected Scripture and helps people apply the principles presented in the Word to their daily lives. It also includes using creative methods to present the message, so that the church moves beyond the standard lecture and reading methods. It includes interactive elements that encourage participants to respond to what God is doing in their midst. It includes visual supports that reinforce the message. It includes prayers and readings that tie into the message. It can even include the ways that participants greet each other.

### **Shift 3: From Membership to Discipleship**

The church exists to make “disciples,” not just “members.” To live out its mission of making disciples, the church must shift its focus from membership to discipleship. Membership says, “It’s about me.” Discipleship says, “It’s about God and others.” In my work with congregations across the country, I’ve found several practices that are essential to the development of a culture of congregational discipleship. It begins with clarifying the discipleship process. This requires being clear about what a disciple is and does and then designing environments in which people, with the help of the Holy Spirit, are most likely to move in that direction. Unless church leaders know the goal and the route their congregation is taking

to get there, the likelihood of people becoming mature apprentices of Jesus is slim. The truth is that a small group of less than a dozen people who together seek to become Jesus’s apprentices is the foundational relationship for nurturing spiritual growth in most churches. Each group needs to be balanced around developing caring relationships, developing a closer connection with Christ through study, prayer and teaching, and being involved as a group that serves beyond themselves on a regular basis.

### **Shift 4: From “Serve Us” to Service**

Service is about Christians joining Jesus in ministry to the world, using our God-given gifts and graces to engage others in ways that bring hope, healing and wholeness to life. This shift from “serve us” to service invites the church to consider how this dimension of discipleship is supported by the congregation, from helping disciples explore giftedness and passions to providing opportunities for engaging in various levels of service. It’s common to find congregations that provide resources to other organizations who serve those in need, such as providing backpacks for schoolchildren or food for community food pantries. These are all charitable acts, and we should support those who serve others in need, but they’re what I call “missional gestures.” They provide needed resources, but without the benefit of the church’s involvement or “getting our hands dirty.” I believe that every congregation should have a “ministry of engagement” in which the congregation actually interacts with those receiving the service. Congregations need to get to know people, understand their circumstances, be present with them, and be Christ in their midst.

### **Shift 5: “Survival Mentality” to Generosity**

Christians have been called to be a generous, because our God is a generous God. Everything we have, everything we are, is a gift from God. Everything belongs to God and is entrusted to us for our use. Part of our responsibility is



to use what God has provided, not just to meet our own needs but to meet the needs of those less fortunate as well. This is true for us as individuals and congregations. We've been blessed to be a blessing. The biblical standard for being given a blessing is giving a tithe, which is 10% of a person's financial resources. I believe that this is the minimum standard, even though this level of giving is a stretch for most Christians. Generosity means that we'll live on less than what God has provided in order to bless others more. Practicing generosity as a lifestyle frees us from our dependence on finding security in "stuff" and from being enslaved by our creditors. The Word is very clear in its acknowledgement that it's difficult to experience the blessings of God when we're having trouble paying for things we bought but couldn't afford.

Don't wait for the congregation to be ready or for your calendar to clear before getting started. There's never an ideal time to start a shift. I encourage pastors to simply select one that resonates with them and their leadership team, and begin addressing it.



# Meet Nelson Searcy

Nelson Searcy is an experienced church planter, coach and church growth strategist, consulting with many of the largest and fastest-growing churches in the world. He's also the Founding and Lead Pastor of The Journey Church in New York City. Started in 2002, this groundbreaking church sees the majority of its growth coming from new believers and currently meets in locations in Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, San Francisco and Boca Raton, FL.

Nelson is the recipient of the prestigious 2013 Donald A. McGavran Award for Outstanding Leadership in Great Commission Research. He's the author of over 75 church growth resources and 14 books, including *The Renegade Pastor: Abandoning Average in Your Life and Ministry*. He's trained more than 50,000 church leaders as founder of Church Leader Insights and the Renegade Pastors Network, which is designed to help pastors abandon average and strive for God's best in their personal lives and ministry.

For more accelerated growth, pastors also participate in Nelson's Senior Pastor and Advanced Coaching Networks. His continued mission is to help church leaders around the world cooperate with God in creating healthy, thriving churches.



## Best-selling resources by Nelson Searcy

### The Assimilation Seminar



This three-hour seminar on Assimilation discusses practical steps that will help you create an inviting environment for your first-time guests, one that they will want to come back to time and time again.

### The Ignite Seminar



This sermon series is a great tool to challenge your people toward a "Big Day," equip them to share their own personal faith with others and prepare them spiritually to be used by God.

### The New Believer Seminar



Do you have a process that helps people move forward from their decision to becoming fully-devoted followers of Christ? In this resource, Nelson Searcy has developed a valuable system that will equip you to follow up with every new believer God brings to His church.

### The Systems Seminar Package



Maximize the potential of your church to reach and disciple more people more effectively with these eight three-hour Systems Seminars by Nelson Searcy. Over \$799.00 value for only \$549.95!

### The Stewardship Intensive



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### The Staffing Workshop



Do you desire to lead a great staff, to reach your church's full kingdom potential and bring glory to God? This workshop is the result of years of reading, consultation and real-world experience (including 18 months of intense study and research).