

Church Leader, We Raised These 10 Critical Issues 23 Years Ago (via fax no less!)...

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Leadership  Network *Advance*



## Fax from the Past - Our Top 10 Issues for the Church from 1995

*By Ron Edmondson, CEO*

I have encountered plenty of cool discoveries in my short tenure as CEO of Leadership Network. This is an organization with a huge, though often unknown, footprint in the Kingdom. I especially love hearing the stories of impact by those who experienced life-changing moments through one of our group experiences over the years. Of course, I experienced that personally, in one of the senior pastor groups in which I participated, but mine is of fairly recent history; having only been in vocational ministry for 16 years and participated in Leadership Network within the last decade.

One of the coolest stories I've heard, however, is from something we called Net Fax. Every Monday morning Leadership Network would send a fax to thousands of churches. Pastors and ministry leaders have told me it was one thing they looked forward to receiving and always read. One pastor said he would tell everyone in the office not to use the fax machine on Mondays until Net Fax arrived, to make sure he didn't miss receiving it.

Well, it's time to dust off your fax machine. Net Fax is back!

No, not really, but I have enjoyed going through the archives of Net Fax and discovering some of the ideas of innovation Leadership Network was sharing more than a couple decades ago. I think some of them are actually worth sharing again. (Inside information: I've been trying to create a marketing plan where we would mail a free fax machine to churches so we could officially revive Net Fax. Surely fax machines are cheap these days. So far that suggestion has not received any traction. Ha!)

Let me share a previous Net Fax with you. **Here's a Net Fax from March of 1995.**



A SERVICE OF LEADERSHIP NETWORK ... HELPING CHURCH LEADERS MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

Number 15      March 20, 1995  
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## LIVING IN AN AGE OF WHITEWATER Ten Issues for the Future

We are living in an era of unprecedented change...the "in-between" times as human history is moving from one age to another. Futurist Alvin Toffler calls the period 1950 to roughly 2020 a "hinge of history" as the old is dying and the new is being born. Others have referred to these times as trying to live in an age of "whitewater." Regardless of the metaphor, it is clear that these are times of great challenge and opportunity for the church. The 21st century will be more like the first century than any of the 2,000 intervening years and the thinking that brought us to the present will not take us into the future. The following are ten critical issues for churches wanting to navigate 21st century rapids.

**LEADERSHIP**...the acquisition of new skills to lead congregations by vision and values and through transition, the use of functional teams, and a recognition of a new partnership between laity and clergy in doing the work of the church are essential for a 21st century congregation. Know your personal and organizational core competencies.

**CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS**...recognize the impact of not only an aging population but one that is growing more multi-ethnic and pluralistic each day.

**STRUCTURE**...the principle of "form follows function" will be used in any effort to re-structure or re-organize. Simplification, systems, and process will be the keys.

**REACHING PEOPLE**...21st century evangelism is relational and centered in the marketplace. It is also focused on the goal of making a disciple, not getting a decision. Three key themes for people are meaning, identity, and community.

**LEARNING AND MENTORING**...the revolution in learning is moving the emphasis from training to learning and lifelong learning. Life transition skills are becoming important as is mentoring, especially to a generation of people under 35.

**MINISTRY**...multiple ministries and lay led ministries are the future. Gift assessment and placement for service of lay persons becomes all the more significant.

**WORSHIP**...will be more experiential and participative and remain the primary flashpoint for change in congregations. Effectively communicating in a visual age and personal spirituality are both challenges and opportunities.

**STEWARDSHIP**...the key words are impact and options. Traditional revenue streams are changing and new generations of givers want more options, greater accountability and to make a difference with their giving.

**MISSIONS**...is both local and global and short term with new networks of 21st century Christians.

**DENOMINATIONAL EROSION**...will continue for mainlines, evangelicals, and everyone else as less and less importance is placed on denominational distinctives. The key role and shape of denominations will move closer to the local congregation.  
Do you have a first century passion for a 21st century world?



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*(click or tap on the image to access a full-size version)*

What kinds of conversations were stirred by those receiving that fax in 1995? Keep in mind, this was before email was universal. In fact, while email had existed since the early 70's in some form, in 1989 some predicted it would be replaced by the fax machine. Email wasn't widely used until a few years later. (Source: <http://go.leadnet.org/e/95302/2019-01-24/36kq76/288551479?h=zwLiwfrpgCqcXgjmP6otgoTNRqy9LFwyNiyIb6sJlg0towerdata.com/blog/history-of-email-marketing>)

Why do I share this with you now? Well, I think it's interesting to see the predictions of 1995 to the churches. How did we do? Some of those certainly did come true it seems. It also caused me to wonder what the 2018 version of this Net Fax would be.

Even more, however, this Net Fax, and many of the others I've read, remind me our

mission as an organization is still needed in the Church. The church still needs to know “what’s around the corner”. One of my charges at Leadership Network is to help the Church be a positive influence in our communities, so ultimately we can change the world. Living out that mission will require new ideas and innovations and new models of delivery. As we experience continually changing cultural dynamics, the Church needs the trusted and unbiased influence Leadership Network brings.

It may not be via fax machine (although I’m still holding out for that idea), but Leadership Network is committed to continuing to help the Church in the days ahead.

With that in mind, I would love to hear from you. What is one thing in this Net Fax, which you find interesting? What would be one thing you believe would be different in a 2018 version? What issues should Leadership Network be speaking into these days? Thanks for sharing. Everything I’m hearing from you in these early days helps me learn and grow.

As always, please let me know how we can best serve you!

God bless,

Ron Edmondson  
CEO

## **SHOULD We Even Look at the Percentage of Staffing Costs**

*By Dave Travis, Senior Consultant*

In my last post (here) I began the discussion highlighted in our Free “Seven Vital Benchmarks in Church Compensation” that addresses the percentage of income of the church compared to salaries. I showed that over a LARGE dataset of over 1000 churches that percentage number remains remarkably consistent at the 50th percentile.

That percentage is consistent across those churches almost regardless of size range.

We now get into some of the issues as to philosophy of compensation which deals with another question: “What is the appropriate level of compensation for our team based on our church income?”

**This is where the question becomes more interesting.** Allow me to address several issues here.

**1.** Many church leaders look at the 50th percentile as the standard, not just the mathematical statement. In other words, they see they are over/under and then use that number to justify increases or cuts.

But the number is just the number. It is a consistent number but also note that some churches can do it at the 25th percentile (overall 47%), while some do it at the 75th percentile (58%.) Those percentiles also mean there are 25% of the churches higher or lower than those percentages.

2. I believe different approaches to church staffing lead to different measures of compensation. Some models of doing church are less capital intensive and more staff intensive. Some are the opposite. In some discipleship/formation systems are light on staff and some are heavy.

Ages of congregants matter as well as to the staffing ratios.

Dr. Warren Bird, the primary researcher on this study for many years, and I have debated this point for a long time and we tried to devise some questions that would get at the “church program model” to compare to these types of ratios. Sadly, we didn’t have room for them in our survey this time.

3. “Wait a minute! We use lots of part-time staff!” We get this a lot too. But fortunately, and this will be in a future post as well, Dr. Bird calculated all the costs of staff including part-timers in the calculations.

The challenge of course for report writers like us is that often, even on the same church team, part-time staff can have very different arrangements on compensation, even for similar hours worked.

The standard we use for the calculation here is just a dollars to dollars figure to equalize those different arrangements.

Finally, and I think most importantly, when I am doing succession planning or strategy planning with a church on a consulting basis and these questions arise, normally staff and governing board leaders are trying to keep staffing costs at a certain percentage level they feel is appropriate and right for their situation. That is good wisdom being applied. But in every case so far, what I generally find is that **while the church feels “well-funded” they are actually below the capacity of what their congregation could do in giving generously to God’s work.** While there are multiple reasons for that, I always show them that giving more emphasis to helping people develop their hearts to be more generous and their walk with God in this way would show a higher income for the church as well. In those cases the percentages devoted to staffing would likely fall over time.

If I can help you get connected in any way just drop me an email at [dave.travis@leadnet.org](mailto:dave.travis@leadnet.org).



## Things You Want to Know About

*Opportunities and resources for you and your team*

### **Next Gen Leader Groups**

I can't overstate the impact of our days together in Austin, TX. I came back different; even my wife sees it. The last few months have been the best I've had in years!" These are the words that shot out of Jeff's mouth. Jeff is the Executive Pastor of a large and growing church in Arizona. For the last six months he has been part of an Executive Pastor Leader Group with Leadership Network. His Lead Pastor Adam, has simultaneously been part of the Next Gen Leader Group for Lead Pastors under 45.

Each Leader Group consists of 15 of the sharpest church leaders across the nation - pastors who carry monumental responsibility in leading the church forward. They grapple with complex issues including multi-site, leadership development, staffing, capital campaigns and new innovations to multiply the vision of their church. They develop deep roots with one another, learning from one another and being mentored by the best church leaders across the nation. **The goal is to dramatically advance the Kingdom impact of the church across North America.**

If you are a Lead Pastor or Executive Pastor and your church has 1,000 or more in weekly church attendance, and you are interested in applying for or finding out more about our 2019 Leader Groups, please contact [darren.young@leadnet.org](mailto:darren.young@leadnet.org) for Executive Pastors and [jeff.kossack@leadnet.org](mailto:jeff.kossack@leadnet.org) for Lead Pastors.



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