



Cultivate Mission

Stephanie Lutz Allen



*Cultivating opportunities to participate
in God's mission in the world.*

To **CULTIVATE** means to:

- ◆ Till the land for new growth
- ◆ Create openness to change
- ◆ Foster the development of new skills.

I partner with churches in cultivating an environment where people can imagine God's call for their lives and their church, and bear fruit in their calling.

MISSION:

Our starting place is God's mission, which helps us see opportunity instead of peril in the world outside our doorsteps. Action flows from a sense of mission (purpose). Consulting provides a framework and accountability to intentionally design purpose, and effectively live into it.

Philosophy of Consulting

The Cultivator's View

Leadership is about seeing the world from God's perspective...

...pausing from the action for spiritual discernment (reflection)...

...continuing with renewed energy and direction.

Cultivating work is about getting a higher view to see the patterns. I design process for churches to find their unique answers to these questions:¹

- ◆ Who is God calling us to *be*? (identity)
- ◆ What is the *community* in which God has placed us? (context)
- ◆ What is God calling us to *do*? (ministry and mission)
- ◆ How is God calling us to best *organize what we do*? (structure)

¹ From Craig Van Gelder, *Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books).

Cultivating an environment where people can live into God’s call involves change at a deep level. This means learning new attitudes and behavior over time, a process fueled by spiritual discernment. This learning happens through reflection... leading to new action... leading to further reflection. Congregations engage in this learning most effectively when they are captivated anew with God’s calling for them, rather than out of a sense that “we need more members!”

What is the learning?

- ◆ Learning about the congregation’s identity and purpose in light of God’s calling.
- ◆ Learning about the context-- how to reconnect with the community context and experiment with this reconnection.
- ◆ Learning how to implement the renewed purpose through strategic planning and examining best practices.

In attempting change, churches sometimes start by adopting another church’s best practices. But without the original DNA behind the development of those practices, it is often ineffective and fuels conflict or frustration. My work is designed to cultivate learning through a consideration of each congregation’s particular faith tradition, the demographics and stories of the community context and an integration of the Scriptures, theology and the social sciences. When the time is ripe in our process, examining best practices is one tool at our disposal.

Congregational revitalization is an iterative process, and thus my goal is to train the congregation to continue the cycle of learning, experimenting and planning long after our consulting work is completed.

Services

Together we cultivate churches where:

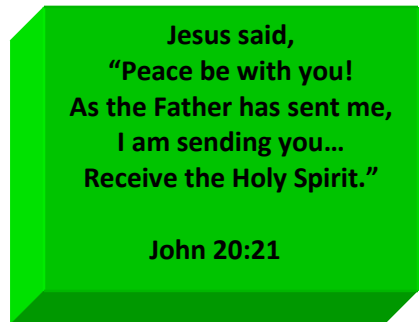
God’s peace can be experienced.....

.....*Peace be with you!*

Christ’s incarnational presence is discerned the current opportunities.....*As the Father has sent me...*

God’s call to be sent into the world is heard and responded to.....*So I am sending you.*

God’s Spirit at work can be discerned.....*Receive the Holy Spirit*



DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Cultivating God's Peace:

Church Healing and Conflict Resolution

Conflict is mediated to with an eye towards training the group or congregation in healthy approaches to conflict within a spiritual community. Conflict is not bad, but a natural part of interaction in churches. A healthy approach to conflict is needed in order to experience creativity and discernment in considering what it means for the church to be the people of God sent into the world.

Staff Synergy

Process is constructed to help staff understand differences of working styles and job descriptions in order to open lines of communication and collaboration in effectively living out the church's purpose. Staff members develop in their own self understanding through individual assessments and interviews. The goal is for staff to experience peace (shalom), the wholeness and right relationships that Christ longs to bring.

Cultivating Christ's Commissioning of Leaders:

Leadership Development

Leaders are coached toward cultivating their capacity to reframe both their situation and their role as a leader among the people of God. Coaching involves an element of spiritual direction, in which leaders are challenged to think through where God is at work in their situation in new ways. The practice of leadership is like an art. As an artist carefully chooses a frame of focus, so leaders can learn different ways to frame the complexities of their situation. Leadership is also a performance art, one done in the context of a set of relationships, thus self awareness and skills with others are fostered. Tools used to coach: Assessment tools (360° and personality), dialogue upon Scripture and reading materials.

Homiletic Coaching

Through on site visits and audio/video recordings each preacher's individual strengths are built upon. Preaching is analyzed and coaching provided to cultivate skills in delivery and content. The style of preaching is accommodated, and the focus is on reaching a variety of listeners within the preacher's chosen style. The ultimate goal is connecting the Scriptural call to be the sent people of God with the reality of people's fragmented lives. In this part of worship, how can people experience the transforming love of God and the call to participate in God's work in the world?

Cultivating Christ's Commissioning of the Church:

Discovery Planning Process

A strategic planning process designed to cultivate an environment where the people of God can dream and plan towards being the people of God in their community. The process begins with discovery of the congregation's situation and community context, seeking to increase the capacity for communication and spiritual discernment. Based on these discoveries, the congregation gains clarity and cohesion around their purpose, then gives the process legs with visioning and implementing specific ministry plans. This process is customized to the congregation's current needs and capacities. Does the congregation need a full blown strategic planning process? Or do they need to enter into one part? What are the capacities of the leaders involved and how does that need to be expanded but also accommodated? What would be the process the congregation needs at this time to reflect/act around these questions:

- Who is God calling us to *be*? (identity)
- What is the *community* in which God has placed us? (context)
- What is God calling us to *do*? (ministry and mission)
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Welcoming Worship

Using on site analysis of the total Sunday morning experience, this process cultivates a church's capacity to welcome the guest. The goal is fostering worship where people experience the transforming love of the Triune God. Many churches describe themselves as friendly, yet that usually translates into friendly with each other. The congregation is trained to have the courage and skills to make the Sunday morning experience reflective of the radical welcome we each experience in God.

Consultant Profile

Stephanie Lutz Allen combines her experience as a social scientist, theologian and church leader to enable congregations to fulfill their calling. Trained as a social science researcher, she bases her assessment not just on skills of intuition, but also disciplined rigor gained in the academic setting. She is a leader who knows the joys and hardships of leading change within a congregation. Ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian (USA) in 1990, she brings experience from serving two churches who sought to reconnect the gospel within their context, that of a University community in urban Minnesota, and that of young families in a California suburb. She successfully enabled the California congregation to reverse their aging trend, and attract a new generation of young families, who are involved in the church's leadership today. Active in



business consulting, Stephanie adds the dynamic of coaching and training leaders/managers in a variety of settings.

Education:

M.S. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA
M. Div., Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA
B.A. in Communications & Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA

Pending Education:

D. Min. in Congregational Leadership for Mission, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN (pending, May 2010)

Summary of Experience:

- ◆ Three years in church consulting.
- ◆ Seven years as an associate pastor reversing the mainline aging trend and attracting young families to the church.
- ◆ Two years as co-pastor at a University church dealing with transitional issues.
- ◆ Four years building a new ministry to commuting University students.

Detailed Resume:

Consultant to Churches, 2005 to present
Associate Pastor, 1996 to 2005
 Gilroy Presbyterian Church, Gilroy, CA
Co-Pastor, 1993 to 1996
 Bethany Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, MN
Campus Pastor, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 1989 to 1993
 University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Publication:

“The Vision and The Gift,” *Best Stewardship Sermons*, 2005, RSI Publications.



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