

**FEATURE**

**LEADERSHIP NETWORK NEWS**

# The Engagement Matrix: Enlarging The Heart Expanding the Kingdom

by Eric Swanson

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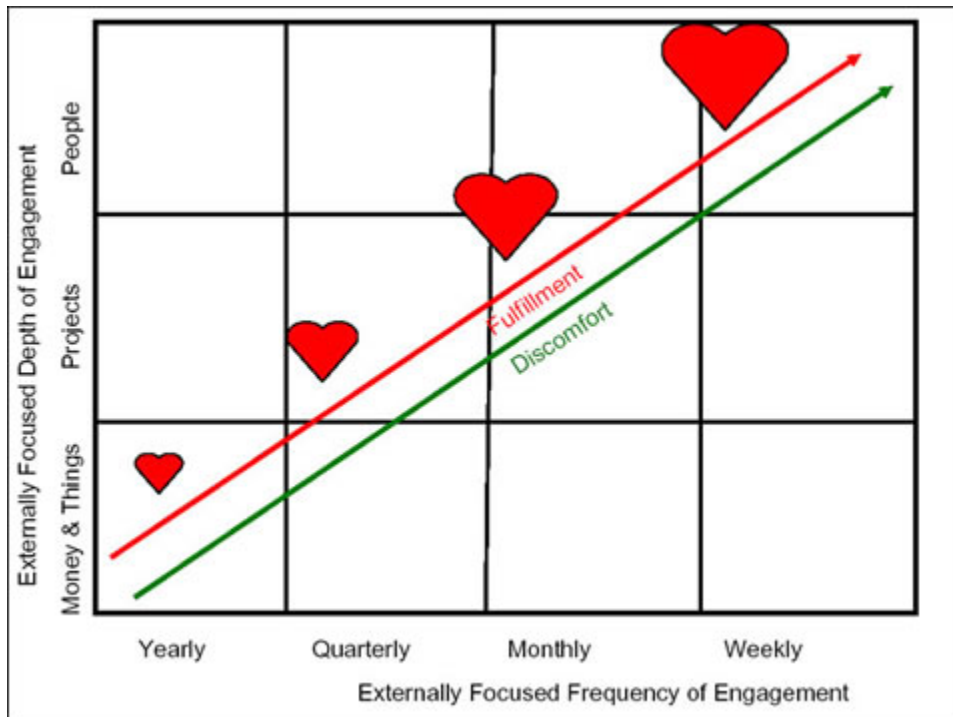
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A couple of years ago, I was talking with Eli Morris from Hope Presbyterian Church outside of Memphis. Over a plate of barbecue at Eli's favorite restaurant, he sketched three concentric circles depicting how he gauges the spiritual progress of folks at Hope. "There are people who give money and things," Eli explained. "There are people who engage in projects, and there are people who engage with people. Life change happens best when people engage with people. So we want to move people from the outer circle (those who give money and things) to the inner circle (those who engage in ministering to people)." Wow! Now that was a big idea.

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### Money and things

If we are honest with ourselves, we'd probably admit that giving money and things is pretty painless and doesn't stretch us much. Throwing a ten-spot in the plate, giving a toy for tots, a shoebox of love or a winter coat is a good thing. But we can grow and be stretched even more.



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**IN BRIEF**



**Innovative Church Ideas**

Looking for a little inspiration? Read about one dynamic congregation's innovative partnership with a local YMCA.

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**New Research Planned in Senior Adult Ministry**

Leadership Network is launching a new research initiative in Innovative Senior Adult Ministries.

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**CCN Broadcast: "Boundaries in Leadership"**



As part of the monthly "Ultimate Leadership" Training Series, award-winning author Dr. John Townsend...

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**LEADERSHIP NETWORK RESOURCES**

**Experiencing Urban Renewal**



When volunteers step outside of their comfort zone, and a church unites with local service organizations to care for a nearby impoverished community, the impact is immense. Discover how taking an Urban Plunge can affect more than just the lives of those in need. To get the whole story, download Alexandra McNabb's recently released concept paper for \$9.95. Just [click here](#).

**LEADERSHIP NETWORK FRIENDS**

"Since we became part of the Externally Focused Churches Leadership Community, an excitement is being anchored into the church culture as evidenced by the adopting of a formal goal to enter into community partnerships with agencies that want to improve the welfare of our area. People are starting to understand what it means to be externally focused and they are getting a vision for what might be able to happen."



Peter Semeyn, Sr. Minister  
Faith Reformed Church  
Traverse City, Michigan.  
[www.frchurch.org](http://www.frchurch.org)



### That 20 Million May Hear

The Los Angeles-based [Foursquare Foundation](#) is disbursing financial grants designed to accelerate high-yield evangelism in the world's most fertile regions. The vision is to reach 20 million additional people who will follow Jesus Christ, and to invest in proven and emerging leaders who will accelerate evangelistic efforts to transform people, cities, and nations.

### Busting the Summer Giving Slump

With the summer months being difficult financial times for churches and ministries, the June issue of the *Maximum Generosity* newsletter offers tips on overcoming the "summer slump" in giving. *Maximum Generosity* is a ministry of national and international speaker, author and consultant Brian Kluth.

### More Giving Good News

Charitable contributions by Americans rose 5 percent last year to \$248.5 billion, the first increase since 2000, according to a report from the [Giving USA Foundation](#). Churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious entities continued to receive the largest share--more than \$88 billion last year, or one-third of all charitable contributions in the U.S.

### Maybe You Missed These. . .



Check the Leadership Network Advance archives for these and other feature articles on church innovation:

- [Discovering and Deploying Leaders](#)
- [Inside the Multi-site Revolution](#)
- [Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out](#)

## LEADERSHIP NETWORK NEWS

**Innovative Church Ideas**

Looking for a little inspiration? Read about one dynamic congregation's innovative partnership with a local YMCA. And learn how another church found a way to "Embrace Teachers" in its community. These are just two of the Leadership Network "Connections" stories you can find at [www.leadnet.org](http://www.leadnet.org). Check back often. New stories are added regularly.

**New Research Planned in Senior Adult Ministry**

Leadership Network is launching a new research initiative in Innovative Senior Adult Ministries. This project seeks churches that are changing the paradigms of ministry to senior adults. Don Wilcox, a long-time Campus Crusade regional director, has joined the Leadership Network team to lead the initiative. If your church or one that you know fits this profile, contact Don via email at [don.wilcox@uscm.org](mailto:don.wilcox@uscm.org).

**CCN Broadcast: "Boundaries in Leadership"**

As part of the monthly "Ultimate Leadership" Training Series, award-winning author Dr. John Townsend (Boundaries and Hiding from Love) will demonstrate how effective leaders set loving and firm boundaries in the CCN satellite broadcast of "[Boundaries in Leadership](#)". There are four broadcast times for this special event on Tuesday, July 19, 2005:

Pacific	9A-10A, 11A-12P, 4P-5P, 6P-7P
Mountain	10A-11A, 12P-1P, 5P-6P, 7P-8P
Central	11A-12P, 1P-2P, 6P-7P, 8P-9P
Eastern	12P-1P, 2P-3P, 7P-8P, 9P-10P

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[◀ BACK](#)

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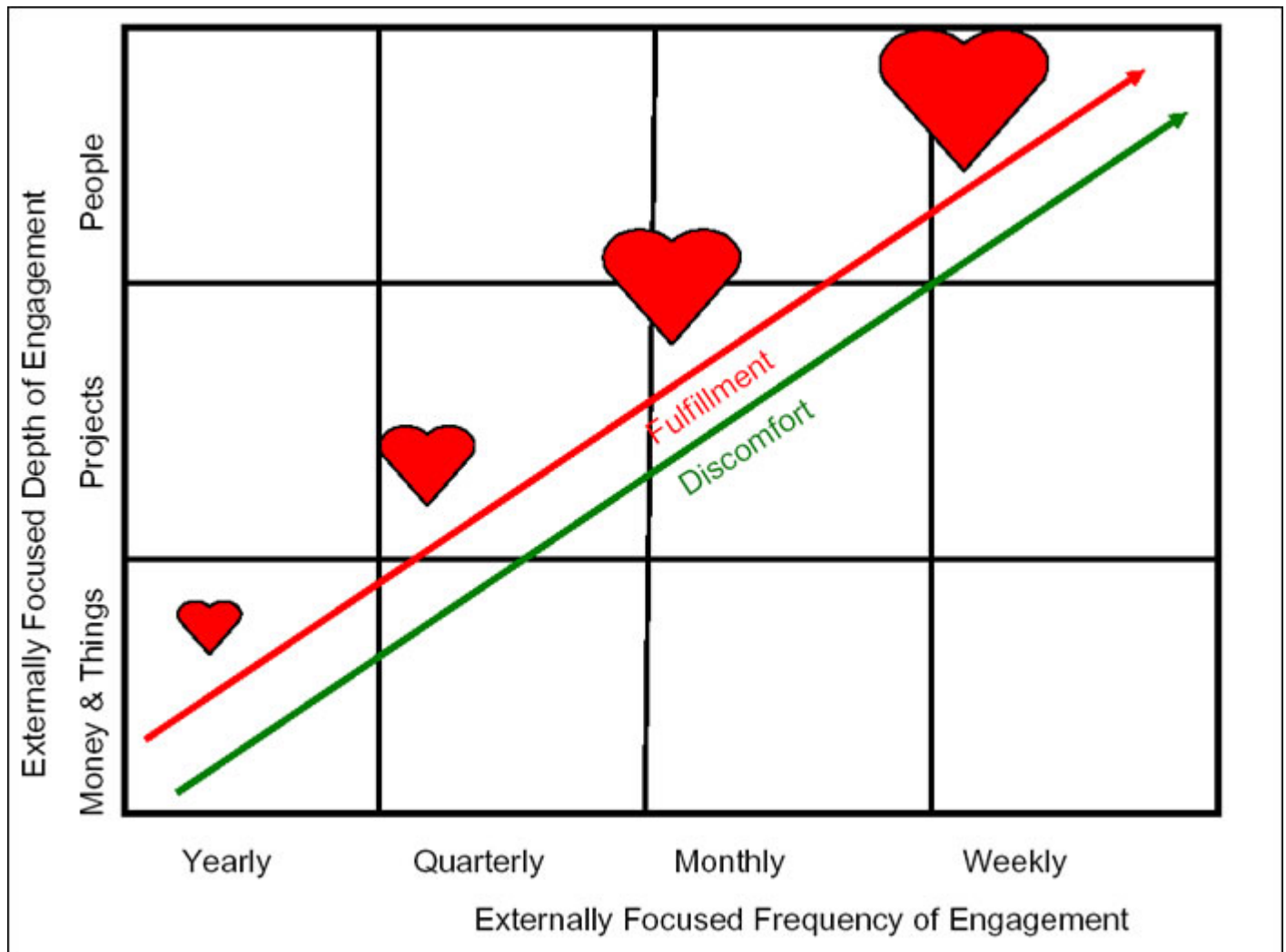
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### Projects

As we engage in projects, we give more of our time and talents to causes in our community God cares about. Projects might include building a Habitat for Humanity house, refurbishing rooms at a local women's shelter, etc. In early June of this year, my

church in Boulder, CO, joined with people from two other churches on a Saturday and Sunday morning to paint, landscape and clean five public schools in our community. Fourteen hundred people engaged in this incredible project, dubbed "SHAREFEST 2005."

Apart from donating their labor, participants wrote notes of appreciation to the faculty and staff of these five schools. After working Sunday morning, these three churches also had a combined worship service on the University of Colorado campus where they honored school board officials, faculty, and administrators. The school board estimated that we saved the district about \$300,000. Afterwards, some 1,500 of us gathered on the lawns of the campus to enjoy Memphis barbecue (there seems to be a pattern to my life). Serving in projects together brings joy and growth and helps make the invisible kingdom visible.

### **People**

As helpful as money and projects can be, lives are most likely to be changed when people engage with people. People feel their worth only when they are affirmed by other people. Good deeds can be done from afar, but good news can only be shared up close. Love is a shared experience. Engaging with people might include helping third-graders read, mentoring teenagers, training an unemployed person in critical job skills or working with orphans on a mission trip. As we engage with other people, God may use us to change the ending of their story.

Part of the path of spiritual formation is to help people move toward sharing their life and the love of God with others.

If giving of one's resources, talents and love is beneficial to both the giver and the recipient, it seems logical that frequency will increase the benefits to those serving and those being served. If giving, serving and loving are beneficial once a year, would not five times a year be even more beneficial?

To measure growth in a person's external focus, we can create a matrix with **Depth of Engagement** forming the vertical axis and **Frequency of Engagement** forming the horizontal axis.

With such a matrix, one could theoretically plot every person in a congregation to measure the depth and frequency of that individual's engagement outside the four walls. I'm not sure how an ideal congregation would look. But I think I can say with some degree of certainty how an ideal movement would look from year to year--an increasing number of folks moving from the lower left of the matrix upwards and to the right. With a greater commitment of time and greater personal involvement with people, hearts can be enlarged and the kingdom expanded.

- What part of this article created an "aha" moment for you?
- What mechanisms could you begin to put in place that would purposefully move the people you influence to an increasing depth and frequency of engagement in the needs and dreams of the world?
- With whom can you share this concept and matrix?

 BACK

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