



HOW NOT TO START A CHURCH

**10 EXPLOSIVE MISTAKES
EVERY PASTOR DOESN'T HAVE TO MAKE**

JUSTICE COLEMAN

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TESTIMONIALS

“We launched Light Church just over a year ago and we are already seeing 350 people every Sunday, our teams are strong and healthy, our leadership is passionate and mature and the city is being reached with the Gospel! We are more than convinced that so much of this fruit is because of the intentional coaching and encouragement Pastor Justice has provided over this last year. This leadership development has been transformational for our church and I cannot recommend it enough for any church planter.”

Benji and Jen Horning

Light Church / San Diego, CA

“Momentum Coaching has been a game changer for our church. Each session has been challenging, yet life-giving. We are already seeing results from the implemented practices. Momentum will not only help your church grow, but help you grow as a leader.”

Ezra Stanton

Mission Church / Austin, TX

“Last Easter we had 120 people in one service. This Easter we had 250 in three services. I can not overstate the value I have received from Momentum.”

Jeff Fischer

Hope Chapel of the Valley / Winnetka, CA

“Because of Momentum Coaching we are reaching more of the un-churched than ever before. We have implemented an effective and focused assimilation class to plug people into the church and adding a second service!”

Leaf Zwerling

The Shepherd's House Church/Thousand Oaks, CA

“We have doubled our size under pastor Justice’s coaching. If you are looking to reach those far from God and ignite your church and leadership for God’s mission, I cannot recommend Momentum enough for any church leader.”

Ali Roohi

Centerset Church / Silicon Valley, CA

“Momentum has really helped me break through growth barriers through strategic planning, effective marketing and relational evangelism.

Trevon Evans

New Way Bible Church / Los Angeles, CA

“After 4 years of pastoring we experienced barriers to growth. Momentum has given me the tools and key learnings we needed and now we are beginning to experience amazing growth!”

Donnie Murry

Abundant Life / Long Beach, CA

“Momentum has helped me become so intentional in strategy and development in reaching the lost.”

Kevin Lewis

Lighthouse Church / Newbury Park, CA

“After 20 years of pastoring, God has used Momentum Coaching to rekindle the flame and provide fuel for the fire of reaching the lost in our city!”

Jeff Fischer

Hope Chapel of the Valley / Winnetka, CA

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Justice Coleman

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BIO

Justice and Maria started Freedom Church in 2011 in their Los Angeles apartment with 7 un-churched friends and a passion to help people experience God by keeping faith uncomplicated.

To their bewilderment, God blew their small dream out of the water as their congregation began to outgrow houses and venues with people saying YES to Jesus every week. In 2012, Charisma Magazine named them one of “Top 5 Fastest Growing Churches You’ve Never Heard Of.” Freedom is currently a multi-site church celebrating thousands of decisions for Christ and baptisms every year. Justice and Maria have three kids, no dogs, only watch PG rated movies and never ever text and drive. (two of those are not true.)

Justice is also the founder of Momentum Coaching Group, an organization that provides online courses

and coaching groups for church leaders to help them break growth barriers and reach the un-churched.



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IN TRO

A land mine is an explosive device concealed underground and designed to destroy or disable enemy targets. Because they are camouflage to the untrained eye, combatants are susceptible to unexpected damage or destruction. However, if recognized, all land mines are 100% avoidable.

If church planting was a literal war zone, I would be covered in shrapnel. I wouldn't be dead (not even close) but I would definitely have some ugly scars, a limp and maybe an eye patch. As I write this I think to myself, "is it insensitive to use a warfare metaphor when talking

about planting a church in Southern California? I mean, so many people have had it harder than us!"

Maybe it is insensitive. My mistake, but knowing what lies ahead for my fellow church planting pastors, I am compelled to warn you about the avoidable "leadership landmines." This book is for anyone starting a new church like I did at 26 years old and completely blind to the minefield that lay ahead.

The following explosive mistakes are called landmines because they are completely avoidable. You've been warned:

SUNDAY FOR THE SAINTS

This may sound counter-intuitive, but Sunday services are not just for church people. You might be thinking, Wait, isn't church a gathering of the saints? Aren't Christians the ones singing songs to God and interested in the Bible?"

Yes, but it is still a landmine.

Do you remember how challenging it is to get your friends to come to church with you? I don't mean Christians, that's easy, I mean the un-churched... people who think the church is full of cult members eating crackers and taking shots of grape juice.

YIKES.

**SUNDAY
MORNING IS
ONE OF YOUR
GREATEST
OPPORTUNITIES
TO REACH THE
LOST.**

Starting a church or planning your services primarily for people who are already Christian is a landmine. It is an explosive mistake that will blow up in your face because you will mostly attract other Christians and not the lost. Not only that, when your Sunday is just for the saints you run the risk of accidentally communicating that most of our efforts should go toward reaching other Christians.

When I look back on our church calendar year, 99% of the first-time decisions for Christ were made on a Sunday morning (not in a small group, event or outreach) Maybe we are just old-school, but at the end of every service we still give an invitation for people

receive Christ and surrender their life to Him by raising their hand or marking their Connect Card.

All I'm saying is when you plan your Sunday for the saints, you run the risk of missing one of your greatest opportunities to reach the lost. When you write your sermons and plan out your services, avoid the explosive mistake of aiming all that effort to the already churchied. In fact, teach them that Sunday is a place they can bring their un-churchied friends to experience God. What would happen if you created a culture where your team passionately embraced that 60-90 minutes each week as an outreach to the un-churchied?

- The parking experience will be better
- The coffee will taste better
- The song choices will make more sense
- The announcements will be tighter
- The sermon will be more practical
- The service might even be shorter

And guess what? Your people will love it because they love God and love people and want to invite their friends to hear the Gospel and get saved. Some of them may think they like when Sunday is tailored just

for them - the already Christian - but it is very likely that they are secretly too nervous to share their faith with their friends or family, so bringing them this Sunday is the most simple way for them to share the Gospel.

“He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.”

2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)

You might be tempted to think that creating a Sunday experience that starts with the un-churched in mind will “water things down” or keep you from “going deep,” but that is simply not true, it will actually make you step your game up. It takes more work, creativity and effort to create a space for all different maturity levels. When you are a church that thinks through all those details to meet people where they are, the un-churched and first time guests will sense that effort and feel the love.

Thinking Sunday is for the saints is explosive mistake that will make it harder from you to reach the lost and less simple for your congregation reach their friends.

COMPARI- SON

Have you ever heard someone say, “Don’t fall into the comparison trap?” That is almost correct, but comparison is worse than a trap, it is a landmine.

Church comparison starts when we begin to measure ourselves against someone else’s ministry or calling. At its core, this kind of comparison is fundamentally flawed because it requires establishing a standard of success that is subjective and self-determining.

If you are feeling insecure, just compare your church to someone’s struggling church. See! Now you aren’t doing so bad.

Feeling bold? Jump on Instagram and compare yourself to the 3% of churches in America that are over 1,000 and killing it. (Yes, 97% of all churches in North America are under 1,000 in attendance. See what I did there? I threw in a measurement in an attempt to help you feel better.)

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...”
Eph. 3:20 (NIV)

You know why we love to preach that verse? Because we all need to be reminded that God isn't comparing or measuring us against any other purpose than His!

Comparison isn't a trap that leaves you stuck, it is a landmine that will blow you up before you start.

When you compare your 9-month-old church to a 9-year-old church, you sabotage your own purpose. God has uniquely created you and your church to become who He has always intended you to be. You might not be able to see that yet, but God will reveal it to you as you keep your eyes on Him instead of others. Comparison will only leave you frustrated and tired because you will be working toward a calling that God

isn't blessing because it doesn't belong to you.

Who am I kidding? You are a church planter. You are driven and motivated to grow and reach the lost, sometimes comparison is the only way you know how to gauge how things are growing.

Let me give you a technique that might help.

If you absolutely must use comparison to measure your growth, compare yourself to *yourself*. That is right, compare yourself to who you used to be. Where were you 6 months ago? A year ago? I'm willing to bet you have grown tremendously and are doing better than you think. In fact, I believe this form of comparison not only honors God, but encourages you to imitate Jesus over any other pastor or church.

Other than that, stay away from the comparison landmine. It will blow you to pieces.

COMPARISON
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And besides, every time a church copies another church an angel in heaven throws up in his mouth.

BUILDING MINISTRY

In my experience most church planters and lead pastors are builders. It is possible that leading a church is not the first thing you have set out to build or there is at least some level of entrepreneurial coding in your DNA. You're a builder by nature.

You build things in your mind even if other people can't see it. You have the ability to construct something in a vision before it becomes a reality. You see what others can't see, because no matter the problem or lack of resources, you can find a way to make it happen. The question has never been "if"

you're going to build, just "what" you are going to build.

Buildings can be a landmine.

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

Matthew 16:18 (NIV)

Just a friendly reminder that God invites us into the building process of His church, but He remains the architect. God already has a vision of what He wants to build and it might not be a dope warehouse converted into a church with sick lights, haze and floating LED walls. (Well, maybe it is... just not in this season!)

God wants you to build people and the blueprint is Jesus.

God is a father who wants the world to be filled with a family of brothers and sisters who look, love and lead like his Son. This plan has worked for thousands of years and will always be the most powerful part of His church: changing lives and eternity!

Building the wrong things is a landmine that lays beneath the surface of our hearts and egos. You know you are headed for a landmine when the majority of your time, energy and effort is directed toward building anything other than people. In fact, even building “ministry” can be an explosive mistake.

Don't try to build ministry, build people and they will build the ministry.

It is easy to get distracted with all the challenges of managing an organization that literally exists to help people solve their greatest problems. As the church grows, the number of people and those problems seem to multiply, but that doesn't mean your job has to get more complex. Just because something is difficult doesn't mean it is complicated. Keep your eyes on what is most important to God. He is building His church and invited you to join Him. He is the architect, people are the focus and Jesus is the blue print.

**DON'T TRY TO
BUILD
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RE- CRUITING LEADERS

We started Freedom Church with a Bible study of 7 friends who were barely following Jesus.

In fact, I'm not sure all of them would have called themselves Christians, but we baptized half of them in my friend's freezing cold pool. (I might have told them it was heated, I can't remember... nonetheless, they are now eternally secure. It feels good to confess this.)

I remember the night I boldly announced that we were going to start a new church together and “launch team” meetings were soon to follow.

I also remember the crickets in the room when no one cheered.

This was concerning.

I knew this new church was going to be super lame if nobody showed up. It didn't matter how awesome the band or how life changing my sermon... if people far from God didn't show up to hear the Gospel, who cares?

It was at that point my attention started to drift from “lost” people to “found” people. I thought to myself, “If I'm going to have a church with hundreds of people then I need to find some other Christian leaders to help me out and legitimize this thing!”

Guess what I discovered? My most explosive mistakes would always be triggered by my own

**MY MOST
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insecurity. Rushing the process and recruiting Christian leaders from outside my church was like putting on a blindfold and walking through a minefield.

Within every Christian leader I tried to recruit lived a culture and mind-set that I wasn't ready for. As a new pastor it was hard enough to cast a clear vision for the people who were newly saved with no church experience. Recruiting Christian leaders from outside my church was surprisingly challenging because it often felt like we were seeing two different visions at the same time.

I once heard Rick Warren share with a group of church planters, "I can tell you how to build a big church, but I can't tell you how to build it fast."

In my experience, a healthy church grows at the pace that lost people are being found and discipled. The greatest help to starting a new church will always be the people who are getting saved within your ministry. They exuded contagious enthusiasm for your church vision because they are excited to help build something that will change people's lives the way it changed their own. You will also discover quickly that it takes more time than you think to re-train

experienced Christian leaders. Just because someone loves Jesus and is excited to help, doesn't mean they know how to build the church that is on your heart. Like we discussed in our last chapter, no two callings are the same and you have to spend time training every leader for your unique church vision.

“Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.” Phil. 2:2 (NLT)

Recruiting Christian leaders can be less of a shortcut and more of a landmine.

If you want to have a church that reaches the un-churched, do yourself a favor and keep focused on discipling new believers. Churches grow at different speeds, but one thing is for sure, if you compromise on church health you will compromise your church growth. Avoid the explosive mistake of pursuing established Christian leaders instead of developing new believers into maturity from within your own ministry.

After all, there is a reason why Jesus spent so much time with sinners and not-yet Christians, He was starting a new church!

CHURCH RESTAU- RANTS

The similarities between a restaurant and an experience at a new church are easy to see. They both depend on a chef, servers, customer service and good food. If any of those things are off, people will find a new place to get fed.

In-N-Out Burger: "Hello! How can we serve you today?"

Christy Christian: "Yes, I'd like 2 soft tacos."

In-N-Out Burger: "I'm sorry we don't serve tacos, only burgers."

Christy Christian: "Oh... the last restaurant I went to had tacos."

In-N-Out Burger: "I'm, sorry we only serve burgers."

Christy Christian: "Ok, I'll have a burger with bacon."

In-N-Out Burger: "I'm sorry, we don't serve bacon."

Christy Christian: "Ok, I'll try a burger."

In-N-Out Burger: "Here you go! Enjoy."

Christy Christian: "HOLY C**P! This burger is INCREDIBLE!"

We held our first "Volunteer Interest Meeting" a month after starting our new church. I remember walking into the room and being pleasantly surprised by the number of people who showed up with an interest in helping. As the team set up chairs and refreshments I

had the opportunity to chat with a few new guest and some familiar faces, it didn't take me long to realize exactly how I needed to start the meeting.

**IF EVERYTHING
IS IMPORTANT,
NOTHING IS
IMPORTANT.**

“Hello everyone! I'm so excited to see you all here and talk about volunteer opportunities for our new church. Before we get started I just wanted to make this one disclaimer: We will not be starting any new ministries for the next 6 months.”

Quite a few bright-eyed Christians lost their spark.

“You see, we are about 3 three things at Freedom and I want to share that vision with you and invite you to partner with us today. As a new church, we don't want to stray from that vision and we hope we can partner with you in your gifts and strengths to build His church together.”

Ok, maybe it wasn't that articulate, but I promise you the first thing I said was something along the lines of “Hey guys, if you came here today with an idea for a

new ministry you want to start, we aren't doing it. Sorry."

You know why In-N-Out Burger is the best drive-thru burger restaurant? Because they only do three things: burgers, fries and shakes. That's it. In-N-Out Burger has the shortest menu I've ever seen, but they are so good at those three things that there is always line of cars around the block.

Burgers. Fries. Shakes.

Does anyone complain when they don't add bacon? No way. (Side note: I once brought my own bacon through the drive-thru and added it to the burger myself. It was amazing!)

Nobody complains when they don't find what they want on the menu because they know exactly what to expect and they know it will be served well.

You may think the short menu and lack of options would keep them from growing, but apparently In-N-Out Burger thinks the opposite. You will find the following on the homepage of their website:

“Since 1948, we have maintained a simple philosophy – serve only the highest quality product, prepare it in a clean and sparkling environment, and serve it in a warm and friendly manner. We have built a reputation for fresh, made-to-order foods prepared and served by friendly, well-trained Associates.”

I don't know if churches are supposed to feel like restaurants. To be honest, there are a lot of things about this metaphor that rub me the wrong way. What I do know for certain is that un-churched people are familiar with being treated as consumers. You can blame society and our selfish natures for that. This is frustrating as church leaders because our goal is to create servants, not consumers, but our heart is still to serve people. Can I encourage you to stay hyper-focused on developing a crystal clear church vision? You can call it a short menu or a mission statement, but the big idea remains the same. A new church that tries to offer too many ministries is an explosive mistake. Keep your ministry menu short and avoid the landmines that lay where God has not led you to go.

FIND A NEED AND FILL IT

Do you remember your introduction to volunteering at church?

I was 21 years old and one of my pastors put his hand on my shoulder and said, “Justice, we have a need in our youth ministry and I was wondering if you could fill it? Would you be willing to teach a few Jr. High Schoolers for 30 minutes every other Sunday during service?”

I was honored.

And I was also trapped. What was I supposed to say? Saying NO to my pastor was like saying NO to God. It didn't matter that I had zero experience or passion for youth ministry, I couldn't let God down. The church had a need and I had to fill it!

It turns out my pastor saw something in me I didn't see in myself. He spent over a year training and investing in me. He taught me what the Bible says about church, spiritual disciplines (and practical disciplines!) and how to build a team. It was an incredible season and I felt like I was making a real difference with my life.

How was “filling a need” in the youth ministry a mistake? It wasn't, however, the worship team was a different story.

To be fair, there was no shoulder tap invitation to the worship team. Nobody saw something in me I couldn't see in myself. I can't sing or play an instrument, I just heard the church announcement that they were looking for musicians and our church policy was, “find a need and fill it.”

I saw a need. The conga drums.

Every week, I saw those drums just sitting there empty, waiting for a man of faith to step up and use them as an instrument to glorify the Lord. They were calling my name. The church needed me once again.

I joined the worship team and filled the need. It didn't matter that I didn't have any rhythm and couldn't keep a beat to save my life, I was convince the Holy Spirit would help me. After all, I was stepping out in faith to fill a need.

Sunday came. The Holy Spirit did not help me.

I quit. It was a nightmare and I haven't touched a conga drum since.

The "find a need and fill it" philosophy is a particularly sneaky landmine. On the surface it looks harmless... maybe the journey is worth the risk? It becomes an explosive mistake when a leader abandons a volunteer

MAYBE ALONG WITH "FIND THE NEED AND FILL IT" WE SHOULD AIM FOR "FIND YOUR GIFT AND GIVE IT."

to cultivate their gifts and learn the ropes on their own. When a young Christian eagerly joins a team to serve, their expectations are all over the place. Who's knows what they think is going to happen when they get behind the scenes of a church? They need the right leader to help guide them into a good fit.

“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Eph. 4:16 (NLT)

God has uniquely wired his church to serve Him. Those gifts and family members work together in a messy, but beautiful way within the Body of Christ.

Maybe along with “find the need and fill it” we should aim for “find your gift and give it.”

It takes more work, but at least you won't have to tell the conga drum player that God is calling him to the custodian's team.

THE EXPECTA- TION GAP

One time, my church-planter friend invited me to his new church and sent me to the website for directions. I was blown away by the pictures I saw online of his new 6-month-old church! The venue was packed, kids ministry was dialed-in, young people were worshipping all over the place!

I showed up on that Sunday to find 19 adults and 2 kids in an elementary school auditorium.

I hope my tone isn't lost in translation here... I'm laughing to myself, because we church leaders have all done this on some level before! Who doesn't want to put their best foot forward in pictures and online? But that's not what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about the expectation gap.

When exploring the unfamiliar, there is always a gap between what we expect and what we encounter. Without a way to know for sure, we work off assumptions and perceptions that often misinform our reality. Even though some level of expectation gap is inevitable, our goal should always be to close the gap, not open it. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, if we misinform someone's expectations, how can they not feel let down?

Widening the expectation gap is an explosive mistake that will sabotage your reputation before it even starts.

“A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold.”
Proverbs 22:1 (CEV)

Unfortunately, our culture has made it completely normal to exaggerate our lives online. In fact, it is almost encouraged to promote your highlight reel to the point of border-line dishonesty. Why do we, the church, think we can hype up everything beyond realistic expectation and it not cost us with the very people we are trying to impress?

“We are soooooo excited to see you this Sunday!”

Bro, I showed up. Not one person introduced themselves to me.

“Come to small group, community will change your life!”

I tried. They told me I could bring my kids, but then expected me to leave them in the other room unsupervised while we did Bible study.

“Follow us on Instagram!”

Ummm... is there another church account with your same name, because the pictures of your

**IT IS TIME TO
UNDER
PROMISE AND
OVER
DELIVER.**

congregation are all young hipster fashion models?

Are you laughing yet? I hope you're laughing, because I am. It is a guilty kind of laugh, because we have all done this. Whether intentional or not, we all contribute to the gap in church expectations and it is time to try something new.

It is time to under-promise and over-deliver.

What if instead of hyping everything up at church like it is the best thing in the world, (expect Jesus and salvation, because he always delivers!) we did our best to paint a picture of exactly what they might expect? What if we used that effort to create greater clarity of expectation and tried to close the gap before it gets too wide and accidentally mislead them?

What if we did such a good job under-promising and over-delivering that people found themselves pleasantly refreshed by the integrity of the church and our effort to serve them?

I think that would build trust.

Which brings me to my next point.

THE SPEED OF TRUST

I remember joining our church staff at 22 years old. I think I had been following Jesus less than two years and was incredibly nervous to say the least.

On my first day of work, Pastor Rudy called me into his office and he dropped a leadership bomb on me I will never forget.

“Justice, you are going to make mistakes. It is inevitable, but if you do this one thing, you’re going to be ok.”

“Tell me, pastor, please!”

“Guard your character. If your character is strong, you can make mistakes and people will give you grace. Keep a strong marriage and live with integrity, then when you mess up they will let it slide. They will say ‘Oh, that’s just Justice... we know Justice. It is okay.’”

Truer words have never been spoken to a young minister. In fact, it is the same advice I give to this day to every new staff member that joins our team. Guard your character. If you have strong character, you can afford to make more mistakes because people will give you more grace.

Pastor Rudy taught me that at the end of the day, ministry is all about trust.

Stephen Covey, in his book *The Speed of Trust*, writes:

“In a high-trust relationship, you can say the wrong thing, and people will still get your meaning. In a low-trust relationship, you can be very measured, even precise, and they’ll still misinterpret you.”

**SHARING
LEADERSHIP
IS ABOUT
SHARING
TRUST.**

It all comes down to trust. Do you trust this leader? Can your congregation trust him/her? That is the speed in which decisions are made; not just competency, but character. When they make a mistake (because they will, no matter how well you set them up for success) will it blow things up or is there enough trust to keep the blast to a minimum?

Sharing leadership is about sharing trust. Your congregation doesn’t expect you to never make mistakes, they just expect you to keep them safe from shrapnel.

SHARING LEADER- SHIP

“This doesn’t feel like our church anymore.”

That was a kick to the stomach I will never forget. It was coming from one of our most die-hard volunteers who moved to a new city to help us start a second church location. What she was summarizing with that statement was a series of small decisions by the campus pastor that had taken us off course just enough to change the vibes.

Vibes are important because they reflect your values.

It wasn't the campus pastor's fault things were shifting, it was mine. I rushed the process of training him for such an important role. He was actually doing a great job and the church was growing, however, it was growing into something different than the vision we believed God had for our church.

We hit a landmine because I shared leadership too quickly.

If I could do it all over again, I would spend more time intentionally training our new campus pastor on our church values. Values are the fundamental beliefs that naturally flow from who you are because they motivate your attitude and actions. Values are an internal radar for your passions and unique wiring.

**THE ONLY
THING MORE
IMPORTANT
THAT VISION IS
CLARITY OF
VISION.**

Pastor Chris Hodges of Church of the Highlands is famous for saying, “your design determines your destiny.”

I believe that is more true that we realize, especially as church leaders. There are passions within you that are connected to your design and therefore connected to the church that you lead. It is not uncommon for church values to reflect the personal values of the lead pastor. In fact, this is helpful and produces authenticity in leadership. It is away refreshing to see the leadership live out who they say they are. When church leaders don't just “talk the talk, but walk the walk” it builds strength throughout the whole congregation. My great mistake was not putting those values down on paper and creating a road map to train our leaders in the “why” behind what we do.

***“Without revelation people run wild, but one who listens to instruction will be happy.”
Prov. 29:18 (HCSB)***

The only thing more important that vision is clarity of vision. We can't just tell people where we are going, we have to tell them how we are going to get there. When building a church, the values are foundational.

Church values start off as descriptive of who you are, naturally reflecting the life and leadership of the church. As your organization grows, those same values need to become prescriptive as they align church growth with church calling.

When sharing leadership, be careful that the vision and values are crystal clear. If your leader does not reflect your values, sharing leadership too soon is one of the fastest ways to take your church sideways and into a mine field.

LEADING VOLUN- TEERS

We have all seen it a million times, a new church member gets super excited about what God is doing in their life, so they sign up to volunteer and give back. For three Sundays in a row they are the first one there and last one to leave. They have never been so fulfilled and excited, just check out their Instagram stories.

Then they suddenly disappear.

They disappear not just from volunteering, but from church entirely. What on Earth happened? What could make someone completely lose their passion so quickly? They seemed so happy and excited to serve.

I can tell you what happened without even meeting them because it has happened to all of us. Your new recruit had a bad experience volunteering.

I don't know what happened exactly, maybe someone was rude to them, feelings were hurt, hard work wasn't recognized... it could be number of different things because no church is perfect, so let's just call what happened a bad experience. Their experience volunteering at your church was so poor, rather than talking to their leader or a pastor, it was easier for them to just stop showing up all together.

In my opinion, this is one of the most heart-breaking parts of leading a church. I hate it. I

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want people to love serving God's church and using their gifts and talents to change the world. There are a few ways to help this problem, but at the end of the day, we can't guarantee every leader who oversees our teams is going to lead a perfect volunteer experience. After all, the leaders are usually volunteers too and they screw up just like we do.

Let me give you the best way I know how to minimize the fall out of a bad volunteering experience.

Have more fun.

Yep, I'm telling you this "strategy" will not only steer you away from more landmines, but it will help shape the culture of your new church into a movement of passionate Jesus followers who will have no problem recruiting others to their team.

At some point every pastor, no matter how awesome your church is, has to admit to themselves that the reason the new people aren't serving anymore is because the bad experiences out weigh the value they receive from being on that team.

I know... OUCH.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

The number one thing I ask our volunteers when I catch them in the hallway or a chat between services is, “Are you having a good time?”

I know that sounds superficial because serving God isn’t about “having a good time.” After all, it wasn’t fun for Jesus to hang on the cross, but this is much deeper than it sounds.

I want people to grow.

I’m notorious for asking volunteers if they are having a good time because I know what is going to happen if they say, “no.” They may love Jesus and the church, but if they aren’t having fun, something isn’t clicking... it is ticking. Sometimes the fun factor is just getting them out of a role they don’t feel competent or helping them onto a different team with a different leader. If we can help them have fun again, we might disarm that bomb all together. Who knows, they might even grow from it.

If you are going to create an environment where people work hard, then make sure they play hard, too. Create an atmosphere for volunteers to enjoy the family of God, develop life-long friends and make a difference in the world.

This is Christ's church! There is no other organization on earth that can offer that kind of eternal value.

MY MOST EXPLOSIVE MISTAKE

“If you don’t do something soon, your church is going to close.”

He was right. I had moved my wife and 6 month old baby to a new city to start a new church and things were not going as expected. We had put everything on the line and couldn’t be more excited about reaching people who were far from God, but our attendance was under 100 and it was time to be real with myself about how our church was in decline.

Thankfully I had a coach that was willing give me a reality check and a pathway to growth.

Fast forward 6 months later and we were reaching the un-church, cranking over 200 every Sunday and added a second service.

What made the difference? A coaching group.

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If I could do it all over again, that is what I would do. I would get in a coaching group sooner. Since that time I have been in a different coaching group of some kind every year. Now I lead groups and create courses online to help other pastors get unstuck and break those same barriers with Momentum Coaching Group.

What was my most explosive mistake that almost blew me up for good? My mistake was simply not getting coaching sooner. What got me where I was, was not going to me where God wanted me to go.

When we were under 100 people there was so much I didn't know about leadership, church systems, growth

barriers and the general nuts and bolts of how a church operates and grows. Maybe you're like me and passionate about Jesus and reaching the lost, you just need some guidance on the organizational side of running a church. I needed a coaching group give me a pathway to growth.

We recently invited 20 pastors into a coaching group with a crazy prayer and goal. What if all our churches could grow 20% in one year by reaching the un churchd?

We met once a month and went through my course and guess what happened? Every one of the pastors that finished the course grew by over 20% and many grew by much more than that! In fact, my own church grew over 20% and we launched an additional location.

The Momentum Course was born!

I'm excited to announce that same course is now available online on our website. We also have new coaching groups for pastors who would like hands-on training.

We also have new coaching groups launching this month, but space is limited.

We believe that momentum comes from God, He wants your church to grow and reach the un-churched even more than you do! Sometimes there are barriers to that growth that you can't see and we want to help you get those out the way so you can experience the full power of God for your church.



MomentumCoachingGroup.com

HOW NOT TO START A CHURCH

**“TOP 5 FASTEST GROWING CHURCHES
YOU’VE NEVER HEARD OF.”**

– CHARISMA MAGAZINE

Join Justice Coleman in his journey starting a new church in Los Angeles and the top ten mistakes he says, "every pastor doesn't have to make." In 2011, Justice and Maria started Freedom Church in their apartment with 7 un-churched friends and despite an untold number of mistakes, God blew their small dream out of the water as Freedom continues to grow as a multi-site church with thousands of decisions for Christ and baptisms across multiple locations. Justice is also the founder of Momentum Coaching Group, an organization that provides online courses and coaching groups for church leaders to help them break growth barriers and reach the un-churched.



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