
A2J SPECIAL REPORT

The Pastor's Leadership Style and its Impact on Church Revitalization

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Those who give their energies to equipping churches, whether as a consultant, coach, or denominational leader, quickly learn that there is little “exact science” in their efforts. Ideas that seem extraordinary in one setting fail to live up to expectations in another. Best practices sustain their value but don’t produce comparable results in every place where they’re practiced. Our own ideas, though proven in at least one previous location, can hardly guarantee to succeed in all others.

A great number of variables, such as local church history, congregational vision, available abilities, and community population growth exert their unique combinations on a local church in such a way that any hope of a single effective strategy for church health and growth seems almost naïve. And, while many great stories dot the church’s map, the number of repeatable successes drops off precipitously when the same leader seeks to reproduce his successful approach in a second setting. Hope of a “magic bullet” or a “one-size-fits-all” model has faded dramatically amidst the evidence of real-life experience. This likely shouldn’t surprise us given how seldom “one-size-fits-all” actually fits in any other of life’s arenas.

Important among these many variables, but one that has yet to be significantly studied, is the impact of varied leadership styles to be found among the pastors who lead these targeted congregations. We know that pastor skill sets vary dramatically and can limit what’s possible with the tools we provide, though it doesn’t seem productive to our work to focus much attention there. Beyond capacity issues, the differences among pastors, even when operating in their strengths, surely plays a role in their efforts to apply the methods we teach and strategies we design, and could prove to be one critical variable we have been overlooking.

There’s much evidence that those of us who invest in the local church’s health, revitalization, and/or its growth have yet to discover or understand how differing personality/leadership styles among pastors are likely impacting our efforts. Most of what we offer to the congregations we assist can’t realistically accommodate too much variation. We likely lack time and resources to offer multiple paths to what we generally perceive to be a single destination—a more effective local church. Available church health models tend to vary little from one another and neither do the steps and strategies we give to the local leader who would apply them. We do manage to find enough success stories to fill the speaker lists at the conferences we populate, but stories of enduring impact from those events aren’t frequently reported from among those who attended.

Could it be that what we insist must be done truly can’t be done by many of those with boots on the local ground? Could one of the reasons we’ve not yet seen the results we desire be our failure to truly unlock all the doors that might lead to desired destinations? One prominent church growth author actually suggested that only pastors with a certain leadership style can succeed in helping a church turn things around—a group he limited to about 20% of all pastors. Is he right or have we simply found only one way to do it, a way that only really fits the capacities of that small group of pastors? If he’s right, then are we really left to conclude that God called the remaining 80% to a task they are incapable of fulfilling?

It seems far more likely that a greater understanding of the 80% and our ability to find paths for them holds remarkable potential. Truth is, the high-capacity leader with the magnetic personality doesn’t stand in the pulpits we’re generally seeking to help. That author rightly observed that the aggressive-style pastor with natural leadership instincts is a limited breed, but aren’t there paths for the less aggressive types to make their mark as well?

The discovery of such paths must start with a better understanding of those who will travel them. That's the purpose of this writing—to bring into focus the wide variety of ways that pastoring is done with the goal of, then, identifying the contributions every pastor can make to the journey of his local church, and ultimately, to the kingdom of God itself.

While Ephesians 4 provides a slate of leadership offices that validate the role of pastor, there is much variety within how that role is expressed that affects our ability to define true ministry success. It's true that there's likely a sizeable gap between what Ephesians 4 intends with its labels and the way that we use them, but that's not in focus here. What we can affirm from the apostle's intent is that the role of pastor is God-given, though there's little clarity concerning what that role should look like or who might be best suited to fill it.

In reality, all types do. While most available career paths come with a slate of preferred styles and skills, the best fit for pastoral work is less clear. To hire a car salesman brings to mind a specific image of the right type of person for such an assignment. The same is true with an accountant, though that's a very different image and a completely separate set of candidates. Lawyers have a look, bankers have an expected style, and it's often not difficult to determine if there's a doctor in the room. While some roles have wider lists of expected characteristics, most still come with a fairly standardized picture of the kind of person who could be expected to succeed.

Not pastors. They can be aggressive or passive, extroverted or introverted, relational or effectively aloof, intellectual or homespun, intense or phlegmatic, careful planners or “seat-of-the-pants” kind of leaders, serious or light-hearted, generals leading your army or corpsman helping you dig your foxhole. Some are at their best when a crowd has gathered, while others excel when only a few have drawn close. Some see the future with extraordinary clarity, others don't see past today but they clearly see you. Some pastors can administrate, while others are better counselors. Some easily generate smiles in the church nursery while others easily distribute peace in the hospice unit.

Simply put, all pastors are not created equal. The requisite qualifications for this office often have less to do with who you are and more to do with Who has called you. And He has called an incredible variety of personalities and leadership styles to fill this critical role. So, why would we assume only one personality/leadership style is intended to function effectively in this role (i.e., the one that fits our training/coaching approach) or must we consider the differences among pastors and find effective ways to maximize each of their unique natures and styles?

Before we begin taking steps down a road of discovery, there's one more thing to help motivate our journey. Consider the gap between many of our conference speakers and those to whom they speak. Often our podiums draw the cream of a certain crop, those perceived to have succeeded where the rest of us long to thrive. Most often these are the naturally influential, the risers to any challenge, the by-the-horns bull takers who served as president of their kindergarten class before assuming leadership of their megachurch. They're remarkable communicators with amazing things to communicate. The scale of their successes is of the highest order, which is why we invited them to headline our event.

But that gap...it doesn't take too many conference registrations before our attenders start figuring out that they'd probably have to actually be that speaker in order to effectively do things like he's done them and experience success stories like the ones he's telling. And, the more one finds himself on the short end of this gap, the more likely his own efforts have begun to carry a definition of success that he is unlikely to ever meet.

We must find more paths so the contributions of different types of leaders can be better understood and celebrated.

PERSONAL NOTE: A number of years ago, I was attending a conference for church consultants and was privileged to sit at a breakfast table with two of the featured presenters, Aubrey Malphurs (the guru of church strategic planning) and Gary McIntosh (likely the most prolific writer on the smaller church and the aforementioned author). Realizing the uniqueness of my opportunity, I asked Gary (he said I could call him that) about his book's suggestion that would limit the pool of potential church revitalizers.

My question was dripping with the enormous respect I have for him and his incredible contributions to our work, but still seemed a bit pointed, "Do you really think only 20% can succeed at church turnaround or could it be that only 20% can effectively do things the way we've designed them?" Aubrey Malphurs perked up and told me he was currently working on a project that focused on the varied leadership styles of pastors. I've not yet seen that work but, in that moment, I felt like he was on my side.

Over the next three minutes I surmised that maybe it was our methods that were too limited and asked these industry leaders to wonder with me what might happen if we could find the keys that unlock the door for the other eighty percent. They seemed quite genuine in allowing their enthusiasm to run unbridled with mine as we finished our breakfasts and headed off to the next session. Their final words left me encouraged, "if that could happen, the potential would be enormous."

What follows is an effort to start in that direction. To understand the differences in leadership styles and natural capacities must precede any effort to equip those who live them, especially when most of us, in the work that we do, operate comfortably within an established framework that may be trying to force square pegs into our proven round holes. Most of those we work with (up to 80%) aren't wired like we are so understanding them doesn't come instinctively. But if we can understand and value their different natures, maybe we can add to our key ring and open a lot more doors. *If that could happen, the potential would be enormous.*

WHY THE DiSC?

There are, of course, numerous tools available for exploring the differences to be found among pastors. Options abound for obtaining personality profiles, strength discoveries, natural styles, and even temperament analysis. Many of these are quite useful, depending on their alignment with whatever one desires to measure, and can provide interesting insights into differences such as the type we seek. There is, however, a clear choice if leadership style or work-related differences are in focus—the DiSC profile.

The DiSC is a personal assessment tool used extensively in the employment world to identify work-related traits and leadership styles that can help match individuals to specific career paths. It is often used to enhance work productivity, improve teamwork, or anticipate leadership approaches or areas of weakness. While the DiSC does measure elements related to personality, it does so within the context of interaction with others, specifically as relates to an environment seeking greater productivity, such as a workplace. As such, the DiSC proves to be a highly valuable option for measuring the type of leadership styles germane to our review's specific needs.

The DiSC is often used to predict an individual's likelihood of success within a certain career path. Ideal profiles for specific jobs are first identified from among those successful within that industry and then future candidates for such jobs are evaluated according to these established profiles.

As we have said, history has demonstrated that the role of pastor has provided no single profile that is to be preferred above others—a point that will be evidenced repeatedly throughout this report. The four primary DiSC styles of dominance (D), influence (I), steadiness (S), and conscientiousness (C) have each produced large numbers of effective pastors and many congregations have benefited from the leadership of several, if not all four of these styles. Though the nature and perhaps the scope of that effectiveness is often unique to a specific leadership style, there is no doubt that each of the four primary DiSC profiles can and will continue to serve the office of pastor successfully.

Another advantage of the DiSC when considering our specific interest is that this tool can measure one's actual profile, as well as an "applied" profile. The actual profile describes the individual's true nature and style, while the "applied" profile indicates how the leader sees what is expected by those he leads or required by the role itself. The difference between one's actual profile and what one believes is expected in the work often proves to be a primary source of work-related stress. Given that pastoral work comes with a sizeable and often unrealistic list of expectations from numerous sources, seldom will a pastor's actual and "applied" profiles align perfectly.

While understanding pastoral stress is not primary among our purposes here, we will see that some of this information will be quite valuable for helping pastors succeed in their work or remain healthy in their efforts to do so. For example, later in this document, we will come to understand how a "values-driven" pastor will struggle with the need to identify and communicate vision for the congregation that he leads. In our roles as consultants, coaches, or mentors, not only can we come to understand that struggle, but we can make a real difference if we find ways to lessen its impact and help these pastors successfully meet these expectations.

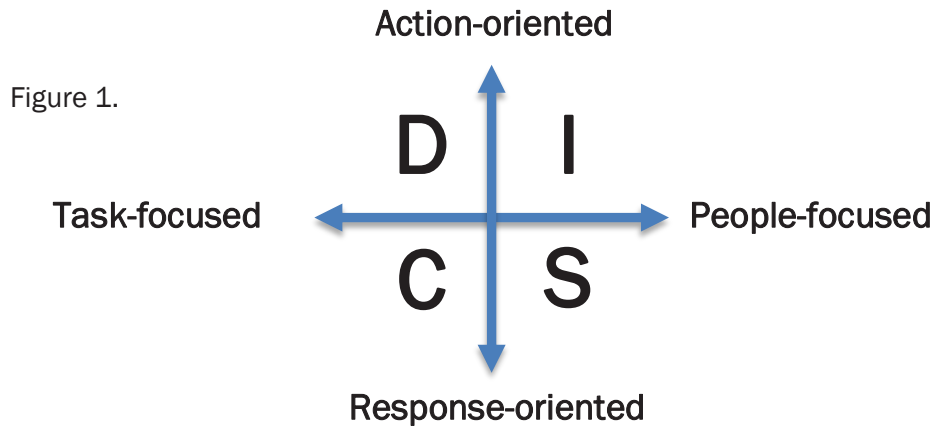
Still, our primary goal relates to a pastor's actual DiSC profile. This is the tool that demonstrates the unique individual and leader whom God has called to fill this vital leadership role. Understanding each of these primary profiles and what each looks like when applied to pastoral work can potentially help us better equip such pastors with more accurate descriptions of success for their work and clearer paths for achieving it.

THE FOUR PROFILES

To gain the full benefit and insights of the DiSC profile the use of a highly developed assessment instrument is most ideal. Numerous organizations and consultants can guide a pastor through completing the DiSC and understanding its findings, and before we draw firm conclusions concerning an individual pastor's profile, such an experience is warranted.

For the sake of general discussion, however, one's dominant personality/leadership style can generally be determined by the juxtaposition of two simple questions: 1) *When working with a group of people on a project, are you mostly motivated by finishing the task or interacting with the workers;* and 2) *When you see a job that needs to be done do you wait until others start doing it and then help them or do you jump in and either take charge or*

*begin to do it yourself?*¹ One's answers to these two questions help place you on the following quadrant grid of the basic personality/leadership styles discussed in this document:



Again, the full DiSC experience offers far more insight and evaluation than we can achieve with such a simple analysis; however, even this simplistic approach can demonstrate the diversity of the four primary profiles quite clearly. In truth, most pastors (and people for that matter) will exhibit a combination of these styles to some degree. Only 4% of the general population identify exclusively with one style, while one in six actually blend three of these in their natural style. The remaining 80% form a strong majority who identify with two of these profiles as a part of their true leadership style.

So, how do we account for this diversity in our present consideration? It seems most appropriate to identify one's primary style for our purposes, knowing that there is room for variation within each of the above quadrants. So those whose DiSC profile labels them a "C-D" would align best with the "C" for our purposes, while the "I-S-C" should focus on the statements related to the "I." The secondary and tertiary components of their true style are certainly meaningful but probably say more about their comfort in understanding and working with those of these other styles, rather than their own preferred approach to leadership.

A complete description of these four profiles isn't necessary for our purposes, but surely some clarity is essential. These brief descriptions will suffice:

The "D" Profile

Those who are generally more task-focused than people focused and identified themselves as the "take charge" types who approach opportunities with a more aggressive style operate from the "D" profile in their efforts as leaders. While numerous descriptors have been associated with each of the four profiles, the "D" is commonly seen as dominant, direct, and determined to get the job done.

People with the DiSC D-style personality tend to place a strong emphasis on shaping the environment and overcoming opposition to accomplish results.² The D Personality Style tends to be direct and decisive, sometimes described as dominant. They would prefer to lead than follow and tend towards leadership and management positions. They tend to have

¹ Gary L. McIntosh, *There's Hope For Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), pp. 29-31.

² <https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/disc-styles/dominance>

high self-confidence and are risk-takers and problem-solvers, enabling others to look to them for decisions and direction. They tend to be self-starters.³

D-style pastors often appear to be strong natural leaders. While in subsequent pages we will more fully break down each of the styles in the role of pastor, we can note that only 9% of the general population operate from this profile, a percentage that has also proven fairly consistent with identifying the number of “D”s among the pastoral community.

The “I” Profile

While I-style leaders share the aggressive nature of the “D,” they differ due to greater their focus on people rather than tasks. These leaders are influential, energetic, persuasive, often charismatic, impulsive, and generally outgoing. They are “people” people, and are generally among the most visible in any room.

People with the DiSC I-style personality tend to place an emphasis on shaping the environment by influencing or persuading others.⁴ The I Personality Style is not afraid to be the center of attention. They are enthusiastic, optimistic, talkative, persuasive, impulsive, and emotional. This DiSC type will trust others naturally, truly enjoys being around others, and function best when around people and working in teams.⁵

In the pastor role, I-style leaders also seem to be natural leaders, maybe even more so than those who are operate with the D-style. They comprise 11% of the general population, and we find a similar percentage of I-style leaders among pastors.

Before we consider the remaining two DiSC profiles, it’s worth noting that though “D”s and “I”s combine to make up only 20% of the general population and similarly the pastors who serve them, a much higher percentage of these two styles can be found among denominational leaders, church planters, megachurch pastors and conference speakers. In fact, it’s reasonable to suggest that the majority of this report’s intended audience fit into one of these minority categories.

“D”s and “I”s are also those leaders previously mentioned as perhaps better capable of church turnaround, though far more pastors from the remaining two styles actually fill pulpits with such need. Because they are high achieving and aggressive in their work, D-style and I-style leaders stand out among their peers and their leadership capacities are the most easily recognized.

The “S” Profile

Like the I-style leader, those with an S-profile are more people-focused than task-focused, but these leaders aren’t often the aggressive, take-charge types. Instead, they treasure deep relationships and tend to move at a steady (and slower) pace.

People with the DiSC S-style personality tend to place an emphasis on cooperating with others within existing circumstances to carry out a task.⁶ The S Personality Type is known for being steady, stable, and predictable. They are even-tempered, friendly, sympathetic with others, and very generous with loved ones. The “S” is understanding and listens well.

³ <https://discinsights.com/personality-style-d>

⁴ <https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/disc-styles/influence>

⁵ <https://discinsights.com/personality-style-i>

⁶ <https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/disc-styles/steadiness>

Preferring close, personal relationships, the “S” is very open with loved ones but can also be possessive at times and hold them close.⁷

If you’re searching for the majority of people and pastors, you’ll find them here among the DiSC’s S-profile. Two-thirds (67%) of the population operate from this paradigm, as do roughly two-thirds of today’s pastors. As we will see, these shepherd-type leaders are among the very best at caring for the flock and growing healthy sheep, though perhaps not as adept at rapidly growing the flock.

The “C” Profile

The final of the four profiles is a task-focused leader who like the “S” isn’t the aggressive, take-charge type either. These friends tend to be the analytical types. They are conscientious, careful, and more detail-focused than the other leadership styles. Some DiSC organizations define them as compliant due to these individuals generally finding comfort in following the rules.

People with the DiSC C-style personality place an emphasis on working conscientiously within existing circumstances to ensure quality and accuracy.⁸ “C” personality styles are accurate, precise, detail-oriented, and conscientious. They think analytically and systematically, and carefully make decisions with plenty of research and information to back it up. The C DiSC style is perfectionistic and has very high standards for both themselves and others. Because they focus on the details and see what many other styles do not, they tend to be good problem solvers and very creative people.⁹

The remaining 13% of the general population and pastoral community identify with the C-style profile. As we will see, integrity and doing things right top the list for these individuals.

There are so many valuable insights to be gleaned from an in-depth study of these four styles and how they relate to one another. Some of these naturally work well with other types, particularly those from adjacent quadrants (see Figure 1). Those from the opposite diagonal quadrant tend to be our greatest challenge and the source of a great deal of workplace stress and conflict. Of course, this makes sense given that those in the diagonal quadrant (D-S and I-C) did not answer either of the two questions in the same way that we did. We simply see the world very differently than those from the diagonal quadrant. Yet, those of the opposite-corner style are likely the friends we need most for the health and effectiveness of anything we lead.

Again, the DiSC profile offers much to our understanding of people and leaders, but our current priority centers on these styles among the pastors that we seek to help. The subsequent sections will explore the pastoral role and the varied ways that it is engaged. Some of what follows will generalize various points and we have already noted the variety of individuals to be found even within a specific profile. It is hoped, however, that these generalized traits will be sufficient for not only understanding the varied styles of pastors, but also offer insights into individual leaders that can prove beneficial to our efforts to help them succeed.

⁷ <https://discinsights.com/personality-style-s>

⁸ <https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/disc-styles/conscientiousness>

⁹ <https://discinsights.com/personality-style-c>

LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS

Pastors often differ from one another at the very core of their natures. Who they truly are shapes their priorities, their values, their motivations, the contributions they can make, and even the environs that can bring out their very best. Little wonder a one-size-fits-all idea of how to pastor effectively fails to provide what's truly needed.

Using the pastor's DiSC profile, we can begin to understand these differences. Let's start with the pastor's "leadership base" as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

	"D"	"I"	"S"	"C"
1. Leadership base	Strategic-base	Motivational-base	Relational-base	Ethical-base

By "base" we mean the natural foundation or the "default setting" for each of these leaders. When engaging a leadership challenge, each leader's reaction will most naturally come from this base.

The D-style leader

Both task-oriented and aggressive, the "D" will look for ways to strategically respond to virtually every challenge. From ministry projects to orders of service, even to relationships and personal interactions, the "D" processes strategically, viewing virtually everything in his day as a task to be fulfilled. While the majority of D-style leaders can be described as "big picture," there are many who are detail-focused as well. The latter are likely to make use of thorough to-do lists to measure their daily or project-to-project achievement. The former may not organize themselves in this way, but they will still find ways to chart their progress and achievement according to some type of task structure. The "D" is a doer and thrives on feelings of accomplishment and productivity, and can become frustrated if there is little evidence of progress.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A number of years ago, the Nebraska Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God commissioned a study of the DiSC profiles among rural pastors. The study involved multiple districts within their same geographical area. The results uncovered no D-style leaders among the reasonably large number of pastors studied (91% were either S- or C-style leaders, the remaining 9% were I-style leaders.) While a number of factors may contribute to this result, among them must surely be the perception of limited opportunities for achievement in such settings, though more recent years have seen the development of many strategic initiatives aimed at rural America, which would be more likely to appeal to the D-style leader.

The I-style leader

While the "I" is also wired to initiate action in the majority of situations, the focus shifts dramatically. The I-style leader seeks to bring energy, even excitement, to as many of his activities as possible. Operating from a motivational base, the "I" thrives on the involvement of others. Working alone is not impossible for the "I," but such moments don't hold the same appeal as opportunities to rally the troops or perform in front of others. Like the "D," the I-style leader wants to achieve, but is motivated more by the opportunity to lead the effort than by the achievement of the task itself. These leaders are often quite charismatic and an audience or the opportunity to "shine" will bring out their best. As such, they excel in the pursuit of the "big picture" and seldom thrive when mired in detail.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Though we have only begun to discuss the differences to be found among pastors, we have already identified an observation that's important to our thoughts. The "D" and "I" pastors we have introduced are typically best suited to engage the church health and growth strategies that we design because they bring strengths in either strategic planning or motivational leadership, or sometimes both. Strategies that depend on these kinds of leadership abilities are easy for these leaders to engage because they connect naturally with their core leadership base. Of course, we have only introduced two of the four DiSC profiles among pastors and these two represent only about 20% of the pastors we seek to assist.

The other two personalities do not aggressively engage challenges and will only respond when certain criteria are present.

The S-style leader

While every pastor must make the effort to engage relationships, this aspect of pastoral work is the wheelhouse for the S-style leader and the principal means by which he or she leads. As we have seen the S-style dominates the population, and likely represents two-thirds of those who fill the pastoral offices of local churches. In a pastoral model dominated by D-style thinking, the "S" is often relegated to pastoral care or some other role away from the true leadership function of that setting. But, as we will ultimately see, this error in leadership mindset will likely prove catastrophic to the mission of the Church.

S-style leaders are not natural change agents. Instead, they seek to build affirming connections with people as the greater priority. Change can stretch or even threaten relationships, so the "S" pastor finds real comfort only in the change that also feels acceptable to his people. The "S" sees change as a means to an end, and that end is usually what would be best for all of us. Conversely, the D-style leader will often prioritize change and its strategic agenda over people—an approach that the S-style leader cannot accept.

As relational leaders, S-style pastors are the kind that people get close to, admire and value, and attach to with great loyalty. They are the epitome of the shepherd metaphor Jesus tied to the nature of this work. These steady leaders don't move quickly, but bring a consistency that people are able to trust most easily.

The C-style leader

Armed with either heightened creativity or analytical capacity (or both) and generally an above average focus on detail, the C-style leader operates most naturally from an ethical base. These leaders prioritize doing what is right. They tend to see rules and requirements as important guides to proper action and believe that excellence is found in how well one does the work rather than in any results that might be produced.

C-style leaders champion causes, especially those where wrongs can be righted. They treasure thoroughness in their study and orthodoxy in their ideas and actions. Some can be easily recognized by the determination with which they may correct the ideas of others, but these leaders do not view their actions as critical, but only as providing beneficial guidance toward the best outcomes.

As task-oriented leaders, "C" pastors can engage strategic approaches, but may struggle to stay focused on the most productive of their steps. As we will see in a later section, "C"s can sometimes mire themselves and others in busyness that may not contribute significantly to the local church's greater goals. Still these leaders demonstrate an integrity that proves valuable, especially to those who seek a trust relationship with their spiritual leadership.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Now that we have added the other 80% of pastors to the conversation, we can begin to see the challenge facing our current efforts to assist pastors and congregations. Approaches that depend on strategic focus or motivational energy simply do not fit the core ministry base of the S- and C-style leaders. If these pastors must act like “D”s or “I”s to do the job successfully, the results desired seem unlikely.

As we all know, the breadth of expectations placed upon pastors is already beyond realistic. They are expected to excel in numerous arenas and even feel required to operate simultaneously from strategic, motivational, relational, and ethical foundations. Of course, that’s simply not possible for any of us. We also know that curbing congregational expectations would be difficult work at best, but perhaps reshaping some ideas of what comprises ministry success could be achievable, at least among those who operate in our leadership environments.

Once we more fully understand the unique nature of these leaders, we will be ready to explore such considerations.

SETTINGS AND STRENGTHS

The differences illustrated in Figure 3 move us to consideration of the next areas of Leadership Foundations. Each of these four DiSC profiles determine both the differing locations and leadership functions where pastors find their greatest success.

Figure 3.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
2. Leads best from the...	Board room	Podium	Restaurant booth	Chalkboard
3. Strongest in...	Strategic-thinking	Presentation skills	Building partnerships	Skill development

The D-style leader

Given his abilities as a strategic leader, it makes sense that the D-style pastor would find great comfort and success leading strategic meetings, especially when the agenda of those meetings centers on strategic thinking and planning. “D”s don’t usually appreciate lengthy meetings, especially those made longer by unproductive conversation or relational activities. Efficiency matters to the D-style individual and staying on task is of paramount importance.

As we consider each of these styles in these two contexts, we would be wise to recognize that these environs and functions can be places where the other three DiSC styles can struggle. For example, the “I” will enjoy the board room as long as the topics maintain some level of excitement and anticipation of what we might do together. The actual planning or the development of strategic steps can fail to engage the I-style leader who’d rather talk about the big picture vision and how it will feel when we achieve it.

The S-style leader will appreciate the working together aspects of the board room, but not necessarily the tasks that must be addressed there. Interaction and group dynamics are gladly pursued by these relational leaders, but emerging with a plan will usually feel like someone else’s goal. Slow, steady progress is sufficient for the “S” and will likely create some frustration for any D-style participants.

Likewise, the “C” doesn’t always win in these settings. Their attention to detail and heavier focus on internal motivations can lead the “C” to either become fixated on lengthy and

unproductive “rabbit trails” or lead them to question every step in a manner that seems negative to those of other DiSC styles.

While the “I”s, “S”s, and “C”s can learn to manage the board room and the strategic sessions that are critical to this setting, it is really only the “D” who can be expected to respond with true strategic instincts and thrive in such an environment.

The I-style leader

It’s no surprise that the “I” finds his or her wheelhouse at the podium, especially when excitement and motivation are on the agenda. The I-style leader gains energy from the attention of the room and can often identify the meaningful opportunities that can be achieved. It would be unfair to interpret this love of attention in any negative tones (though sometimes the “C” will see it that way), as the I-style leader generally prioritizes the good of the group over any self-interest. But full of energy and armed with the self-confidence that has grown from their successes in these settings, the “I” is ready to lead no matter the *what* or the *where* of our destination.

Again, let’s consider the others and the challenges that the podium and presentation skills can bring to them. While the “D” is often a natural leader, learning how to communicate with those he or she leads can be a process for these aggressive, task-focused leaders. “D”s can be impatient and demanding of people, expecting them to either get on board or get out of the way, which can create forward momentum, but may not motivate one’s followers in the most effective manner.

The S-style leader can also learn to lead from the podium, but these relationally-focused friends tend to see the room as many individuals rather than as a collective army to be mobilized. Often an “S” has a better developed ability to communicate one-on-one or in a small group and can find an effort to manage a room full of relationships simultaneously more than a bit overwhelming.

As a task-oriented detail person, the “C” will also find the podium less than his most natural environment. The C-style leader can excel at teaching, particularly when defending truth or demanding righteous action, but may not always come across as personally appealing. Hearers may accept the *have to* of a “C”s call to action, but it may be that only other “C”s, and perhaps a few “D”s, will find their “want to” in the challenge.

Now “D”s, “S”s, and “C”s can learn to respond in an appealing and effective manner when standing before those they lead, but they will typically lack the necessary instincts to do so naturally or when challenged. This is why some of these pastors will communicate awkwardly under stress or even say things that can be harmful to their leadership efforts. Of course, we know that leading a change journey in a local church will create many such moments, and the manner of a leader in responding when challenged can “make or break” one’s leadership success. The I-style leader amazes in such moments, showing remarkable poise when challenged, and almost instinctively responding in admirable ways.

The S-style leader

You might have chuckled a bit at the Figure 3 entry that suggests that an S-style leader is most effective in a restaurant booth as that may not seem much like a leadership environ, but S-style leaders typically have their greatest impact when you get up close to them. An “S” often seems like the nicest person in the room, the kind of person that makes you feel seen and values you enough to give you his undivided attention.

We all know that some people prove to be more likeable and worthy of respect the more you get to know them, while others prove more appealing at a distance. We certainly wouldn’t

suggest that “D”s, “I”s, and “C”s aren’t genuine and truly wonderful when you draw near, but “S”s are more naturally comfortable when you do. Close relationships are what they are made for.

S-style leaders are highly approachable and their manner is genuinely disarming. While they lead effectively, the gap between us never seems large as walking side-by-side is well within their comfort zone. Somehow their authenticity isn’t forced and their friendship is real. That’s why they do some great leading over a cup of coffee or an enjoyable lunch outing. When we say that partnerships are their strongest contribution, we mean that they bring people to the desired agenda one at a time, through relationship, rather than via approaches of mass recruiting.

Again, other leader types have to work at this. Each of the other DiSC styles tends to rely on established roles for shaping their relational ideal. There’s some level of distance inherent in how they engage people that underscores a leader/follower paradigm. Certainly “D”s, “I”s, and “C”s have quality friendships, but these are often either outside of their leadership role or defined by it.

“D”s aren’t as focused on people as they are on what they’re trying to achieve, so the “D” must be careful not to treat people as a means to his end. When that happens, no malicious intent should be attached, but the D-style leader is simply more focused on getting the job done than building friendships as he’s doing it.

The I-style leader loves people but may enjoy them more as an audience. Those who have an I-S DiSC profile balance their group and personal relationships better, but still see moving the group as more efficient than an individual focus.

“C”s find it easiest to build relationships with people who think like they do. Friendships are usually limited to a few or even one really close one. That doesn’t mean that a “C” doesn’t make a good friend—many do—but clearly facts and task performance form a “C”s contribution to any effort. Relationships aren’t how they get things done.

As with the other traits, those who don’t operate from a natural relational base can learn to be effective in this arena, but their instincts are still more comfortably aimed elsewhere. The S-style leader is always thinking of how any current idea or moment is impacting those he or she leads. As such, the “S” will easily discern the temperature of the room whether that room is maximizing its potential or not.

The C-style leader

Finally, the C-style leader can present some real variety here, depending on how they see their most valuable contribution. Because “C”s tend to enjoy introspection, they are often more self-aware than others, though that tendency can become unproductive and easily turn into self-criticism.

Generally, the C-style leader loves the teaching environment, whether that involves a classroom podium or guiding others in completing a process. “C”s do things right and make things right. They don’t often envision new horizons, but they are quite adept at improving our ability to experience the one we already see.

As such, “C”s can be very effective in training settings and may be the best at developing and implementing systematic processes to achieve an organization’s goals. They can be suspicious of the real benefit of an exciting event but will defend the benefits of processes that others might engage with less energy. C-style leaders make great equippers because they naturally engage both the “why” and the “how” of any assignment.

Again, the other styles can struggle in such environs. “D”s appreciate process and understand its value, but they generally lack patience with what process requires. They tend to move more quickly and sometime fail to allow the time necessary for process steps to be established firmly.

The I-style leader might be willing to affirm that processes matter, but they don’t typically want to engage them themselves. “I”s can cut corners to get to the end (and its celebration) more quickly. They will more naturally skip needed steps in their pursuit of the big picture and the “C”s effort to slow them in favor of doing things right will often be seen by the “I” as critical and negative, something the “C” usually doesn’t intend.

The “S” can struggle with the corrective elements of keeping people on the right track. While the “S” isn’t permissive or more accepting of missteps, these relational leaders can sometimes be afraid of challenging the errant steps they might observe.

The C-style leader seems to see what needs fixed almost instinctively. They don’t need to be slowed for the good of the organization or the current effort as they move forward carefully, and usually in a systematic way that makes the path repeatable for others. They teach and coach well, especially in the more traditional meanings of these terms where the coach is the one who must call the play and help us know the steps to make it work successfully.

Again, each of these environments and functions are a vital part of the pastoral assignment and each of them must be managed well by every pastor. But no leader excels or instinctively thrives in every one of them. We might be tempted to identify one such setting or assignment as more critical than the others, but that choice may simply reveal the priorities of our own style.

MOTIVATION

Before we leave this idea of leadership foundations, there is one more expression to consider.

Figure 4.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
4. Inner motivation	Do what needs to be done	Do more than the rest	Do what we can	Do what’s right

Each of us, at our core, find a central motivation that drives us, sometimes consciously, and sometimes unconsciously. Instilled in us by a myriad of possible sources likely too numerous to explore here, we simply have learned that this motivation brings whatever acceptance, approval, or satisfaction that we inwardly desire. This motivation drives how we set our priorities, and therefore, how we develop the instinctive behavior that defines us and what it will be like to be led by us.

The D-style leader

For the “D,” achievement is the major driving force. The D-style forms as we gain affirmation for our accomplishments, or sometimes because we remain desperate for such affirmation. So, the D-style leader lives under the direction of a “do what needs to be done” mantra.

As a task-driven leader, the “D” measures one’s life according to productivity. When meeting new people, the “D” isn’t impressed with the “what do you do” kind of conversations that focus on job titles, but may perk up when learning what you have done while in that role. For

our purposes, it is important to see that this is how the “D” reviews himself. In the absence of achievement, the “D” will experience a declining sense of self-worth.

The detail-oriented “D” can find satisfaction in checking off items small or large from the to do list. This is especially true of those with a D-C profile. The big picture “D,” however, requires the opportunity to accomplish larger projects and initiatives to maintain his energy.

As we will discuss more fully in the next section, this *need to achieve* causes the “D” to find his motivation outside of himself—to see a mountain that needs climbing or a mission that needs fulfilling. The D-style leader is always on the lookout for new horizons that will challenge. In the ministry world, planting a new local church, funding significant missions projects, or rescuing and reviving a struggling congregation are just a few of the projects that demonstrate potential opportunities for these leaders.

To maintain is to die for the D-style leader. There is little satisfaction to be found in doing what we’ve already done unless we can do it significantly bigger or better. Consequently, these pastors can get a reputation for always wanting to do “something else”—something different than what we’ve done or even something other than what we just started. The thirst for change can instill much needed new life, but it can also begin to exhaust those who try to keep up.

The I-style leader

The I-style leader will also be motivated externally, often by the same type of challenges that bring out the best in the “D,” but for a different reason. For the “I,” the pleasure is in leading the way, and ultimately in doing more than others have done.

For the “I,” the question “what do you do?” is the measuring tool for self-worth and the chance to provide his own answer is often why he asked the question in the first place. Now, we should not see such tendencies in the dark tones of self-centeredness or through any other negative-sounding lens. I-style leaders have an innate ability to draw our attention and should be applauded when they lead us to accomplish meaningful things. They are generally team players as life isn’t fun for the “I” unless others are with them. Besides, every style has its potential traps and we will discuss those more in a subsequent section. For our current purpose of understanding motivation, we simply need to see that I-style leaders want to make a difference and they are most satisfied when that difference is bigger than before.

Since the emergence of the Baby Boomers as the ruling generation in the local church, I-style leaders have thrived in the role of pastor. The Boomer value system that insists “bigger is better” launches the I-style leader down some of his favorite paths. The “I” can be an amazing church planter provided the church grows at expected or greater rates, but will become quickly frustrated if it doesn’t. Like the “D,” the I-style leader loves new challenges especially when they seem to hold more potential for success. Ministry efforts that don’t meet initial expectations can be quickly discarded by the “I,” even some that might have later thrived with a little more patience.

As we have noted, the “D” and “I” leadership styles are typically the best fit for the overwhelming majority of ministry strategies we rely on. (Of course, this shouldn’t surprise us when we realize that most of these strategies were developed by “D”s and “I”s.) Those who are motivated to do more and reach higher are a natural fit for ideas of success that center on the achievement of more. Again, however, these motivations drive only a minority portion of the army of shepherds that many of us have been called to assist.

The S-style leader

Since we began by noting aggressiveness as one of the two questions that form our style quadrants, it follows that motivation would be one of the more significant areas of divide among these leadership styles. S-style leaders, for example, prove to be very different than the others in the area of motivation, and remembering that two-thirds of both the population and the pastoral roster dwell here makes it critical that we understand this difference.

The “S” does not find primary purpose or motivation in external opportunities, but in things more internal. People are the primary agenda—not more of them, but strengthening them. The S-style leader’s first focus is most often given to what we are doing with what we already have. Strong relationships and personal growth are “front burner” for the “S,” and the projects or goals we might achieve are secondary or simply what results from our personal growth.

A few years ago, a meaningful conversation with a newly-elected leader brought this motivation into focus. The mantra that this new leader had inherited set an organizational target of “*a huge number of healthy churches*” (*actual number omitted here*). It was an aggressive dream initiated by the aggressive leader that had previously filled the chair. As we reflected together on the challenges ahead of this new leader, I randomly thought to ask, “Which of the words in this target mean the most to you?”

“Healthy,” he responded. His answer didn’t surprise me because his heart was quite evident. I then asked how he thought his predecessor might answer the same question and that answer was equally obvious, “*the huge number.*” Herein, lies the difference with the S-style leader. These relational leaders tackle such a challenge believing that getting churches healthy will ultimately allow us to produce more healthy churches. A “D” or an “I” will find more energy for targeting *the huge number* of churches and then hopefully find ways to get them healthy or perhaps to make them healthy along the way. S-style leaders believe deeply in the old proverb that directs us “teach a man how to fish” and are willing to invest the time to do it. So, we’ll “do what we can” and any hope of doing more will depend on how we might grow our own potential.

Now you’re already thinking of the discipleship potential to be found in this type of leader. S-style leaders may start new things, but we must be content with slower progress when they do. They don’t tend to maximize shallow personal connections, but they desire to “go deep” and they need the time to do it. For the “S,” bigger doesn’t motivate like better can. That’s why we need some broader definitions for successful ministry than just more nickels and noses.

The C-style leader

Another leader that is motivated from the inside out is the C-style leader. While the “S” is generally motivated by what we CAN become, the “C” passionately pursues what we SHOULD become. There is an “oughtness” to the C-style leader’s motivation. Of course, as a task-oriented individual, the “C” is driven by more than what we’re becoming, but can be heavily focused on what he or she believes we are supposed to do.

“C”s live within the rules. Their environment has either taught them the blessings of doing things right or instilled the insecurity that comes when such discipline is lacking. I’ve met many C-style pastors who were raised in very disciplined environments where adherence to established expectations brought the greatest rewards. Still, other C-style leaders live on the cutting edge of creativity where their attention to detail frees rather than restricts them. While these may seem like opposite extremes on a behavioral continuum, in truth they are both expressions of the core “C” sense of responsibility to “be what I am intended to be.”

The “C” generally possesses an analytical focus that can occasionally become critical, but is usually focused on whatever steps can be taken to make something better. “Doing things right” matters a great deal to the C-style leader, whether that might address individuals internally or focus on the things around us that we need to engage. Often championing a cause brings out the best in the C-style leader.

As a pastor, the C-style leader will also bring strong focus to discipleship, though maybe with less people skills than the “S” can offer. Since rules provide a comfortable world for the “C” personality, he may be especially adept at providing steps toward specific life-change and will focus heavily on the daily application of biblical teaching. The “C” will want to gather with people, but may bristle in those settings where relationship-building seems to be the only goal.

One of the reasons why there can usually be a DiSC profile most suitable to a certain profession, is that the primary measure of success within that profession is easily agreed upon. Car salesmen sell cars. Architects design buildings. Doctors relieve suffering and guide their patients toward healing. But for pastors...the list is lengthy and each of the four leadership profiles can find plenty of work to do.

VISION vs. VALUES

There may be no other finding in this study as significant as identifying and exploring the differences between vision-driven and values-driven leaders. Given that so much of today’s focus on church health and growth places vision as the critical centerpiece for building strategy, the discovery that not all pastors are wired to succeed in this way seems important.

Figure 5.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
5. Leads best with...	Vision	Vision	Values	Values

As demonstrated in Figure 5, D- and I-style leaders are natural vision leaders. But S- and C-style leaders operate more naturally with a values-driven approach. While both vision and values require attention in achieving the kind of alignment necessary for a healthy church, the effective paths for developing these essential components must be reconsidered based on two potentially different starting points.

Definitions

Let’s begin by understanding how these two orientations differ. Vision-driven leaders are drawn most easily to external challenges—a goal to reach for together, a hill to climb, a destination to target. Vision-driven leaders see opportunities others may not see and they aggressively set out to engage them. Usually, these goals can be defined objectively, such as a building to construct, an attendance target to reach, or a financial threshold to raise. Vision-driven leaders are naturally drawn to these clearly defined demonstrations of achievement.

Values-driven leaders, however, possess a deeper passion for more internal pursuits. Their hearts are more easily triggered by helping us aim to become the people we are called to be or the kind of place we’ve always dreamed we’d become. Of course, these types of goals are more subjective and it can be harder to prove our progress toward them. Nonetheless,

values-driven leaders are convinced, either consciously or subconsciously, that changes in us will ultimately lead to greater changes in the achievements of our organization.

Now, we don't want to suggest that every "D" and "I" is a vision-driven leader or that no "S" or "C" can be. Nor would there be any exclusivity that might prevent a "D" or "I" to identify more with the values-driven side of this divide. Still, the nature of these DiSC leadership styles makes our general breakdown the one most likely to be evident as we consider a room full of leaders.

Significance

Why does this matter? After years of working with leaders across the style continuum, a pattern has clearly emerged. S- and C-style leaders commonly react to the need for vision with a discomfort, even an evident trepidation. For many the need to identify a vision for their organization feels like a call to predict the future or to commit to pursuing a destination, the validity or possibility of which seems uncertain. *How can I know what's supposed to happen in my church over the next five years?* Surely, part of their challenge stems from their less aggressive leadership style, but most would rather work on what needs to be done today and leave the end results up to God.

Conversely, these same efforts with leaders frequently reveals that vision leaders struggle with patience for the work of developing clear values. To them, values can seem like busy work or unproductive detail assignments that are hard to measure and provide rare affirmation of success. Vision-driven leaders want to give full energy to chasing the vision and prefer to believe that our culture will shape itself as we get there. I-style leaders may see values as details they'd rather not get mired in, while D-style leaders find values frustrating in that they seldom bring a sense of completion.

Motivation

There are times when a study such as ours runs the risk of over-generalized descriptions. As we said in the beginning, most of us operate from a leadership style that blends at least two of these four DiSC profiles so building the walls too high between them can be misleading. That said, when it comes to vision- or values-driven leadership, each of us will find ourselves most comfortable within one camp or the other. There are certainly vision-driven leaders that can do a good job with values and a few values-driven leaders that prove quite capable in their pursuits of vision, but that is likely because these friends have learned how to use their preferred approach to help them produce the other (a path forward that we'll consider in a moment). For now, we simply must acknowledge that none of us are truly both vision-driven and values-driven in our nature, but one will always exceed the other, even if we've yet to determine which of these we prefer.

This acknowledgement is important as we discuss motivations, because we may feel some level of offense at what this divide might suggest of us. Vision-driven leaders typically respond well to extrinsic motivation—the pursuit of reward or avoidance of punishment. Extrinsic motivation can be demonstrated in competition or the pursuit of recognition. Now these types of motivation are quite common among us, even though we may find them a bit uncomfortable when applied to ministry settings. An elaborate consideration of this type of motivation isn't possible here, but we can acknowledge that winning and being recognized for it can contribute greatly to self-worth, especially for the vision-driven leader.

Intrinsic motivation refers to inner satisfaction or a sense of internal reward. We act because we enjoy the action, even when there might be no external acknowledgement of our achievement. Values-driven leaders often have learned to operate from this type of motivation, sometimes by nature and other times out of necessity (their efforts often go

largely unseen). These leaders look for smaller indicators of their progress, like individual stories of life change or incremental improvements that *may not matter to others but are a big deal to us*.

Now all of us hunger for both extrinsic and intrinsic evidence of our significance. Vision-driven leaders don't just play for the trophies and values-driven leaders do enjoy the occasional public acknowledgement, but there simply aren't enough trophies to go around and only God can see everything that should be celebrated.

The point to be made is that when our efforts of helping pastors and churches prioritize external evidences of success and the extrinsic acknowledgements they bring, we are likely cultivating dissatisfaction or even feelings of failure among those who can't win at the game we've designed. Strides forward in shaping a Christ-honoring culture in a local church are just as valuable to a local church's journey as seasons of numerical growth and often provide more enduring results. To this we surely say "Amen," but until we find ways to help pastors "grow" the health of their church's culture and affirm their efforts to do so, a preference for objective measures, like nickels or noses, will continue to come through loud and clear.

Paths

Vision-driven leaders gather people to a clear purpose and destination and can often measure their progress with objective evidences of achievement. Conversely, values-driven leaders more effectively draw people to inner passion and often find any measure of their progress to be more subjective evidences of changing character.

Values-driven leaders most easily focus on the culture of an organization, while vision-driven leaders seek its destiny. Both are essential and one is surely not more important than the other, but the variation is one of natural or instinctive focus. You don't have to tell a values-driven leader that "culture eats vision for breakfast" as Peter Drucker once stated. What you may have to tell that leader, though, is that vision is still essential.

Likewise, you don't have to find ways to get a vision-driven leader to dream of the possibilities potentially ahead of his organization, but you may have to tell him that even the clearest of dreams aren't enough. As a consultant, mentor, coach, or denominational leader, your help will be needed by vision-based leaders in their efforts to reshape culture, while values-driven leaders will need your help determining where their cultural efforts are leading them.

Let me explain. Vision-driven leaders should be encouraged toward excellence in their pursuit of vision—this is the arena from which they will lead. But once that destiny is determined, thoughts of the culture needed to get there must take center stage. Defining values is hard work, but moving from currently-held values to those we must now aspire to will likely determine whether or not the vision will be fulfilled. Intentionality in values is the key to a vision-leader's ultimate success and the congregation's ability to sustain the progresses they enjoy.

Conversely, values-driven leaders need to do some great work in identifying the values of their organization. These can come first and most naturally will for this type of leader. They need to drip with passion as these are the foundation from which everything else will flow. But then, values-driven leaders need to consider what things will look like when these values dominate our hearts and show up in our attitudes and actions. *What kind of place will this be? What kind of people will we have become?* Describing tomorrow from where we stand today is the essence of vision. Those we lead need to see that picture—they need to know

where we're going in order to find the motivation necessary to commit to becoming the new people our values suggest.

Vision without values is like the Great Commission without the Greatest Commandment. You can crisscross the globe, but without our Kingdom's seminal behavior, it's likely not disciples that you will make.

Values without vision would be like having the heart of the Greatest Commandment without the eyes and feet of the Great Commission. Love for God and others was never intended to be stationary, but to propel us across every boundary.

So, now that we have distinguished between vision-driven and values-driven leaders, what do we do with these insights? The following are suggested:

- Perhaps we need to begin with a new awareness and emphasis of the seasons in a healthy church's journey. While there are times where expansion and growth become possible, seed time and "weed time" must occur before any such harvest is possible. Seasons of strengthening the congregation, developing its culture, and shaping its people in Christ's image are just as essential to fulfilling our potential as times when an increasing crop can be celebrated. In fact, the Scriptures suggest that these less visible indicators of progress are actually our main assignment, while the results are more in God's hands. What if growing people actually seemed as important to us as growing churches? (I'm not questioning our intent, but wonder what those we lead think we're really after.)
- Likely what we measure needs some expansion or even alteration, since such measures form the targets we draw for others. Metrics, like those the A2J Team has begun to develop, offer a better opportunity to prove qualitative successes and more clearly demonstrate impact than many of the objective results we have traditionally leaned on. For example, discovering how many of us it takes to reach someone with the Gospel each year is likely a far better measure of missional effectiveness than service attendance or even the number of responses recorded there. A fresh look at what we measure can also help us communicate our true priorities more clearly.
- Such reorientation of our priorities will also lead us to begin affirming more pastors in their contribution to the overall effort. Some values-driven pastors may never experience dramatic seasons of growth but their contributions are no less valuable to their local church or our overall effort. Of course, it will take some time and consistent messaging to convince those we lead that our adjusted focus is genuine, but if even one pastor finds encouragement where he's been living with discouragement, wouldn't that effort be worthwhile?
- Of course, we'll need to expand our toolkit too. Now our efforts to help pastors must offer road maps for the variant paths they are truly made to travel. Relational and ethical pastors need to see how they can maximize their skill sets for congregational good.

In truth, my hope is that simply by stirring your thoughts concerning the values-driven leaders you engage (likely 80% or more of your pastoral audience), your creativity will be equally stirred and the results produced will exceed my thoughts and help all of us to be more effective.

MEASUREMENT

As we continue to explore the differences among pastors revealed by their DiSC profiles, let's briefly consider how they truly measure leadership.

Figure 6.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
6. Leadership is measured by...	Production	Influence	Trust	Integrity

Leadership is influence, or so reads the prominent leadership literature over the past few decades. In reality, leadership can be defined in many different ways, depending on the priorities one attaches to a person's decision to follow. “Influence” is a fine definition, but we should note that it is one we learned from an I-style leader (or perhaps an I-D) and the leadership world he has significantly influenced. Now, we've no argument with this or with him, but those with other DiSC profiles will see leadership, and any effort to expand it, a bit differently. Influence isn't wrong as a definition. It just doesn't say enough for many.

The D-style leader

Honestly, for the “D,” leadership demands production. There is no other way for the “D” to see you as a leader unless you have done something. The D-style leader isn't impressed with titles. When you meet a “D” at a dinner party, he or she will push past the conversation about “what you do” and want to know “what have you done.”

Likewise, the D-style leader will see himself or herself through the same lens. Often the “D” will struggle to receive affirmation for a job well done unless he or she sees the job as meeting a significant goal for the organization or overcoming a sizeable challenge. The “D” knows that we don't need a leader unless we're going somewhere, so he or she thrives on the opportunity to pursue change. Likewise, we should also note that the D-style leader will become bored with managing an environment when it feels like status quo has taken over. The “D” wants to lead change and will enjoy managing the fruit of that change for a time, but then is ready to move on to the next challenge, where something else can be produced.

The I-style leader

As already stated, the “I” sees leadership as influence. As a people-focused individual, who's with us and how many indicate the successes of leadership. As we've already seen, the “I” tackles challenges by “raising an army.” This underscores the I-style leader's belief that leadership is influence.

As a leader, the “I” is in motivation-mode nearly all the time. He or she is sensitive to how people are feeling about the challenge before us, so the I-style leader will want to keep the environment encouraging. If there's little evidence of positive progress, the “I” can become discouraged, after all, in a largely volunteer environment like the world of local church leadership, how people feel about what they're a part of is a major factor in their sustaining of ongoing efforts.

The I-style leader is drawn to opportunities to expand influence—those who heed my voice. He or she will want to develop deep loyalties among those who would become closest to that leader and the “I” will reciprocate that loyalty almost to a fault. Add an ever-broadening crowd to our efforts and the I-style leader will thrive, both personally and for the good of the organization.

The S-style leader

When we listen to an “S” or “C” define leadership, we get something very different. This can be partly due to the fact that these styles don’t have to be leading in order to be fulfilled. They can be just as content serving the goals of others and are more interested in what is happening in all of us rather than what we’re achieving or how many of us are engaged in the effort. That doesn’t mean these individuals aren’t leaders for, as we have seen, a great many of them are called to and engaged in such responsibility.

For the relational S-style leader, the idea of leadership is all about trust. People follow the “S” because of the character they have seen up close and the commitment this leader has shown to what is good for all of us and for our efforts together. S-style leaders build influence, but not in the way that an “I” will build it. Podiums and larger group settings aren’t where the “S” typically impresses, but rather in the more personal settings. I have even seen S-style leaders who struggle as a communicator in the large group setting build incredible levels of leadership among that same group through what some might call more “behind the scenes” moments.

That, of course, doesn’t mean that S-style leaders aren’t good public communicators. They absolutely can be and many clearly are very effective in such settings. The difference is that these aren’t the environments where their influence is truly built. It may seem awkward to define leadership as trust, as the “D” or “I” would believe that trust is a condition of leadership rather than its definition. But for the S-style leader, trust is the evidence of their leadership role in the lives of those they lead.

The C-style leader

Like the S-style leader, the “C” has a more internal sense of leadership. For the C-style leader, integrity is the critical target. While this is similar to trust, the idea of integrity is more a state of being where trust is dependent on relationship. Integrity suggests that the individual will always do what is right and both influence and productivity subsequently flow from that confidence.

For the “C”, trust is also downstream from integrity, but this type of trust doesn’t have to be built through personal encounters. Integrity doesn’t require that I have drawn close enough to trust your heart for me. It builds trust that confirms that the leader will do what is right for every individual, even if my personal benefit is lacking.

Perhaps some will view the differences between integrity and trust as mere semantics, but there is a major difference in how these form into leadership. Integrity emerges by watching your actions, primarily with the tasks you tackle. Trust, grows as I watch your actions, principally with people like me. Either will lead to the growth of the other, but the C-style leader will target an integrity that leads others to productive effort, trust, and enduring influence, while the S-style leader will aim to build trust, which will lead to influence, hopefully productivity, and a confidence in the leader’s integrity.

Perhaps most important in this section is the acknowledgment that other leadership styles view leadership through a different lens than we do. As such, their efforts to become effective leaders require us to understand that their goals and the type of leaders they can effectively be will differ from our own. There’s simply more than one definition of leadership and certainly more than one way to become an effective leader.

TOP PRIORITY

The more clearly that we begin to see the differences between these leadership styles and how they impact those who lead congregations, the more evident their different orientations and methodologies become. The different styles not only understand leadership in unique ways, but their priorities differ dramatically as well.

Figure 7.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
7. Top priority	Purpose before people	Purpose needs people	People before purpose	People need purpose

Values can be another way to express what we mean by priorities. Our values create the culture around us and reveal how our leadership instincts will lead us to act. While values are learned or shaped by experiences, they become “second nature” to us and we believe them to be the best guides for our thinking and actions in any situation. Of course, other leaders prove to be “wired” differently and as our awareness of these other mindsets grows, we can discover that our instincts aren’t necessarily the only “right” approach, but they are the one that we can engage most successfully.

The D-style leader

Purpose before people is the subconscious mantra of the D-style leader. Success in what we are trying to accomplish dominates the thinking of these leaders, which leads to high levels of focus. The D-style leader’s commitment to purpose is the source of his or her great achievements and most significant contribution to the organization.

Of course, the potential for imbalance in this priority can be a weakness, especially in the local church where most of the participants are volunteers and the quality of their experiences greatly impact their ongoing involvement. The “D” must be intentional in his or her awareness of people as this will always feel secondary to the task at hand. The D-style leader will have no difficulty calling for self-sacrifice for the good of the project, but may struggle to understand what such sacrifice requires of those who are motivated differently.

This is where the “D” can benefit greatly from the insights offered by the “S.” The relationally-motivated members of his team are generally the most difficult for the D-style leader to understand as they simply do not think the same way. Those of an S-style are keenly aware of how the team is doing and can be a great resource to the D-style leader, if he or she learns how to value their insights.

The I-style leader

For the I-style leader, the focus shifts dramatically to the people. At his or her core, the “I” believes that the *purpose needs people*—every goal can be accomplished if people can be engaged to pursue it. As a naturally visionary leader, the I-style leader can picture the success ahead of us and revels in the satisfaction and affirmation such completion will bring, both internally and externally.

While the I-style leader lands firmly among the people-focused quadrants, he or she may not be keenly aware of how individuals are feeling in the midst of the project. The “I” tends to be “big picture” and is determined to always be positive, and may flee conflict or negative feelings among the people involved. Again, the “S” is a helpful source, especially if the “S” can help turn the negatives in a positive direction.

While the “S” is always valuable to these aggressive leaders, it’s the “C” that is needed even more by the I-style leader. The “C” and his attention to detail can weary the I-style leader as the questions asked by these task-focused friends can sound like criticism or doubt to the ears of the “I” who thrives in a positive environment. But the “C” may be helping us understand why some of the people are struggling and how to eliminate some of the sources of difficulty. The I-style leader must learn to trust and value the insights provided by the “C”s on his or her team.

The S-style leader

We’ve already noted that the “S” brings a people-awareness that can be valuable to any team. As the leader, the “S” will always think *people before purpose*. For the S-style leader, projects are seldom worth pursuing or need to be delayed if they can’t be achieved in a manner that maintains comfortable relationships with those involved.

This is likely one of the factors that impacts a local church’s ability to embrace change. Given that likely 2/3 of pastors are S-style leaders, their unwillingness to risk discomfort or conflict will hinder the pace of change. With every available opportunity, S-style leaders are asking themselves, *how will my people respond to this idea* rather than how the idea might help us be more effective.

There is a natural difficulty between the S-style leader and the “D”s on his or her team. The “D” is always ready to move forward aggressively, and will see the S-style leader’s concern for people’s feelings as a type of weakness. Often the S-style leader’s care for the people brings a needed wisdom to the pace of change, but the “S” needs the voice and the aggressiveness of the “D” to keep the purpose clearly in view.

The C-style leader

Finally, the C-style leader’s internal mindset says *people need purpose*. As we have said, the C-style leader is motivated to do what is right and he or she will see taking right actions as good for the people we are leading. The “C” isn’t externally-motivated by achieving the purpose like the “D,” but selects purpose based on what should be and what is good for us to engage.

Every organization must have a clear reason-for-being and know the path to achieving it. Because of the C-style leader’s focus on detail, he or she may need some help seeing the “big picture” clearly as the “C” can, at times, become mired in unproductive busyness. The “D”s and “I”s on the team can be a great help to the “C” in this area.

Given his or her focus on doing what should be done, the C-style leader must be careful to avoid guilt-based efforts to motivate others. This is an easy trap for these leaders. For that reason, both the “S” and particularly the “I” on the C-style leader’s team are quite valuable. They can contribute a greater “people awareness” and help this leader maintain a more positive environment and approach to motivation. For the C-style leader, the “I” is the most difficult to understand, but he or she needs these upbeat and energetic friends to help sustain the efforts of the people and their enthusiasm for the work we are doing.

In this matter of internal values or priorities, it seems essential to note clearly that one’s approach is inherent to the leader and not easily adjusted. Every leader, regardless of style, will need the insights and help of others to bring a more balanced focus. A key challenge is that likely that the most needed mindset or alternative priorities are those possessed by the DiSC profile quadrant that the leader struggled most to understand (the opposite diagonal quadrant: D to S and I to C).

KEY ABILITY

Next, let's consider the key ability that contributes significantly to each of these leaders' successes. As those of us who consult with or mentor pastors seek to help these leaders operate in their strengths, we can find each leader's greatest contribution here. At the same time, our insights into these abilities can also underscore why other types of leaders may struggle with these important leadership behaviors.

Figure 8.

	"D"	"I"	"S"	"C"
8. Key ability	Delegate	Celebrate	Model	Challenge

The D-style leader

As an aggressive, task-focused leader, the "D" possesses a natural expectation that others share his or her commitment to the task or project at hand. Of course, the level of that commitment likely doesn't match the full expectation of the D-style leader, but this assumed commitment leads the "D" to delegate easily. As a strategic leader, in fact, the D-style leader believes that delegating or handing out assignments is his role in leading the project. The "D" can see what needs to be done and who is available and capable to do it.

It's noteworthy that the other styles have more of a struggle with delegation. The I-style leader can be effective here, but will want to remain the visible leader over all that is occurring under his or her leadership. I-style leaders delegate assignments, but struggle more with delegating authority or fuller levels of responsibility.

The "S" can lack the certainty that others will want to do what could be assigned to them, always being aware of others' feelings. As such, the S-style leader will try to make the tasks seem easy and not inconvenient in hopes that people will be willing to do them. Of course, such simplifying of effort can cause the task to feel less meaningful to the one who might take it on. If the task really does require more than what the S-style leader is willing to ask of others, then the S-style leader often ends up doing the more difficult parts himself.

C-style leaders aren't great delegators either, but usually for a different reason—they question whether others will give the attention needed to do the job the way it needs to be done. As detailed leaders who do things right, the "C" struggles to believe that others are engaged at the same level as he is, so the C-style leader needs to stay close to all assignments and "make up the difference" where necessary. This shouldn't be seen as arrogant, as though the "C" thinks he alone is truly capable. Rather, the sense of responsibility to make sure things are done right simply overwhelms the C-style leader's ability to truly delegate.

Delegation is a common theme in today's leadership conversation. For the "D" it proves to be the best way to get the job done and, of course, "D"s write more than their share of leadership content. Indeed, the ability to delegate is a skill leaders must possess, but we shouldn't assume it to be an act that every leader can engage easily.

The I-style leader

There is nothing frivolous about the ability to celebrate and this is one of the great strengths of an I-style leader. Every leader knows that maintaining morale on the journey can be one of the greatest challenges for a leader (just ask Moses), and the "I" proves most adept at doing

so. *On his team, every day is a party*, is the way one person described life with his I-style leader.

The I-style leader takes great satisfaction in every step forward and wants to enjoy its achievement for a bit before moving to the next effort. Naturally wired to motivate and much preferring a positive environment, the “I” maximizes encouraging moments through celebration and will keep his troops encouraged by bragging on them whenever possible. It’s generally fun to follow an I-style leader, as long as there’s reason to celebrate.

Conversely, the other styles struggle a bit here. The D-style leader often moves quickly from one task to another, unlikely to stop and celebrate anything until the full project is completed—*if even then*. The work itself motivates the “D” and he or she can forget that others may not share that same style. For the D-style leader, celebration requires stopping progress, while the “I” sees celebrating as a necessary means of gaining energy for the next step.

The “S” likes a good party, but is more likely to celebrate people than progress. You want an “S” to plan your birthday party or retirement celebration, but these leaders don’t typically use celebration as a means of leading us forward, at least not in the larger group setting. The S-style leader will celebrate you, but tends to have more subjective goals for us (cooperation, support of one another, etc.) and these are more difficult to celebrate because we may not know exactly when we have achieved them.

Like the “D,” the C-style leader can be so consumed with ongoing projects that celebration feels like stopping the forward movement. Also, as a cause-oriented leader, the “C” often won’t allow himself any feelings of satisfaction until the cause is conquered—and for many causes, the work may never end. Task-oriented leaders can celebrate a successful event, but they tend to do so while already planning to aim even higher next time.

Celebration can be a key contributor to an organization’s momentum, and thus, as much a part of forward movement as any other aspect of the group’s effort. The I-style leader is the most likely to see celebration in such a light and do it really well.

The S-style leader

The key ability of the S-style leader is modeling the character and conduct he or she longs to achieve in those being led. This is not to suggest that the S-style leader is less effective in communicating such things. Indeed, the S-style leader usually communicates character and conduct goals quite well as these are central to his or her focus. Still, it’s the modeling of these desired goals that demonstrates the S-style leader’s greatest contribution.

As a pastor, the “S” teaches us to be friendly by being friendly. He or she teaches us self-sacrifice by demonstrating deep commitment to others. Under an S-style leader, we learn by watching. In fact, we can even forget this leader’s matching words because the actions speak so much louder. People follow an “S” because they are attracted to how he acts on the journey rather than because they are drawn to the destination.

This is not to suggest that the other styles act inconsistently with their messaging, but they do not depend as deeply on modeling for their leadership impact. D-style and I-style leaders find the pace of leading by modeling too slow. They surely don’t want their own actions to hinder progress, but find that their voices more effectively achieve a faster pace forward. The C-style leader will value the integrity of a leader’s actions matching his ideals, but still sees such actions as tasks themselves, rather than as expressions of character.

As with delegating and celebrating, modeling is a critical leadership function. For D-, I-, and C-style leaders, modeling the desired result is something the leader can’t not do as it will

hinder the leader’s effectiveness (that’s a double negative on purpose). The S-style leader doesn’t see modeling through this more negative “have to” lens, but intentionally and purposefully sees it as a positive tool for success.

The C-style leader

The C-style leader finds his or her passion is stirred most greatly by the sense that something is not right and someone must do something about it. For this reason, the ability to challenge others can be a skill that the C-style leader has honed throughout his or her lifetime. “C”s can be analytical and detail-focused so they often have an ability to break down every action or idea into its component parts in order to rebuild it in the right way. This ability, likely practiced since childhood, often finds the “C” making his case, bringing correction, or arguing a matter in hopes of keeping everything and everyone on the right track. So, the C-style leader has often mastered the ability to challenge others, convinced that such actions are for the common good.

Others can use challenge effectively as well, but they do so for other motives and do not rely on this skill as central to their leadership efforts. The “D” and the “I” will challenge us toward “bigger picture” achievements, but more as motivators than correctors. Certainly the “I” and even the “S” will want to avoid actions that seem combative or confrontational when they let their passion for a matter be seen. The C-style leader, however, will risk discomfort for the sake of doing what is right.

Passion is significant for every leader but is expressed in different ways by each, especially in the ministry setting. For the “D” pastor, passion is often aimed at tackling a challenge while the “I” looks for ways we can make our mark. Passion in the “S” pastor runs deep, but is usually expressed more in actions than words.

For the “C,” passion also fuels the need for accountability—another critical leadership function. And like accountability itself, being challenged or corrected is an experience we tend to see as negative though we know it is something that we need in order to achieve our best. Of course, the challenge of the C-style leader goes well beyond correction. Remember, this leader is always calling us to things we simply must do.

TAKES ACTION

This brings us to a brief summary of what we have concluded thus far about the leadership styles of pastors and the beginnings of considering how we can best assist them. When operating in their strengths, each of these leaders will take a different approach to how they set out to accomplish their pastoral work and our best place would be to supplement their natural gaps.

Figure 9.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
9. Takes action by...	Developing a plan	Raising an army	Building a relationship	Championing a cause

The D-style leader

As a strategic leader, the D-style pastor will tackle most challenges by *developing a plan*. This is why these leaders have little difficulty engaging church health and growth efforts that focus on a strategic approach. When assisting these leaders, you’ll want to assure that they choose a mission-focused vision, but will need to give greater attention to the culture they

need to build if they are to achieve it. Seeding their strategic planning with some best practices ideas is often all that remains for these leaders as they are generally capable of designing a path and remaining focused on what is required to get there. We must, of course, remember that likely less than 10% of pastors are truly strategic leaders who can effectively map out the road to desired destinations. We may also need to aid the development of the D-style pastor's people skills, especially for those whose aggressive style is more extreme.

The I-style leader

Conversely, the "I" seeks to raise an army, believing that getting multiple people in the room will yield better strategy and greater ownership of the project. Again, helping assure that their vision is mission-focused is important, but the greater work will be in helping them prioritize the shaping of the culture their vision will demand. These leaders tend to struggle with patience for such a focus but any achievement of their vision will be unstable and shallow if the culture doesn't strengthen their hold on the new ground they have taken. Of course, strategic planning will also be needed as these leaders motivate toward a goal quite well, but don't as easily develop steps to achieve that same goal. Likely, pace will also need your contribution as the I-style leader will want to move faster than we truly can or think we have come further than actually have.

The S-style leader

The "S" always finds his or her answers in building relationships so this leader may focus more easily on existing relationships. The S-style leader can build key relationships with those who can contribute to our efforts, but usually needs help defining the effort itself. With these leaders, you'll need to point them beyond their current walls. They need help with vision and usually find it by asking questions like *what do we want for them* or *what do we want to see God do in their lives* when the "their" means those who are not yet among us. The S-style leader won't need much help identifying values or the needed culture, but will need some assistance with strategies, especially those that require outward focus. They will also need encouragement to move forward more quickly as the S-style leader will default to a pace that waits for everyone to want change—a day that seldom comes quickly.

The C-style leader

As expected, the "C" will look for ways to champion the cause. He or she wants to lead from passion since triggering a matching motivation in others will require less need for him to help others maintain vision. As with all of these leaders, you'll want to make certain that the vision chosen demonstrates clearly the mission of Christ. Because these leaders are cause-oriented, some can choose projects or goals that aim too much congregational energy toward arenas that are too narrow and neglect other aspects of the Church's most fundamental work. C-style leaders will naturally focus on culture and need little assistance there, but will need your help choosing strategies that produce results. The C-style leader can become very busy, but some of that busyness may not be producing what is needed so helping him or her keep the "main thing" in focus may be necessary.

Now that we have observed the various strengths of these different leadership styles, we turn our attention to areas of vulnerability, fear, and perceived weakness. As a coach, mentor, consultant, or even friend to pastors, your awareness of these different triggers for insecurity or leadership struggles may allow you to anticipate moments where intervention will be needed. Because pastors are often expected to manage their disappointments and

stresses without burdening others, your knowledge of the situations that more likely challenge each leadership style can be beneficial.

VULNERABILITY

Pastoring can, at times, place a leader in situations that bring an abnormally high risk of various actions that can undermine and even eliminate one’s opportunity to lead. The nature of those actions can vary from behaviors that cause a loss of influence with a few or more extreme conduct that can deeply damage one’s family and future. While we are all aware of the types of temptation that confront the pastor (power, sex, money, etc.), we may not be as aware of the different types of moments that can place a pastor in a vulnerable state, especially those that are unique to his or her leadership style.

We’re not surprised to find that there are circumstances that make any of us more vulnerable. Exhaustion, feelings of failure, and temptations toward pride threaten us all, but there are also times when vulnerabilities stem from our unique style and are more threatening to us than they might be to those who operate from a different profile.

To understand these vulnerabilities more clearly, we include the settings that bring out our best because their absence or “opposite” experience can make us vulnerable to insecurity and loss of purpose.

Figure 10.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
10. Responds to...	Problems/ challenges	People/contacts	Pace/consistency	Procedures/ Constraints
11. Vulnerable in...	Management	Isolation	Change	Disorder

The D-style leader

As a strategic leader, the “D” thrives when there is something to achieve or to solve. The opportunities presented by new challenges bring out the very best in the D-style leader. The “D” knows in his heart that we only need a leader if we are going somewhere and it is that new ground that motivates him.

Conversely, an environment that requires us to manage the ground we’ve already taken can frustrate the D-style leader. Yes, there can be fresh challenges in improving our current situation, but the “D” is not as motivated by subjective change. He wants to see results. The day-to-day rhythm of managerial-type tasks cannot hold the D-style leader’s attention for long. He needs a fresh challenge. This is why a D-style leader will not linger in a smaller or slower-paced setting for long.

When a “D” feels as though his work is to manage the status quo, the D-style leader may become easily distracted. In such settings, his work ceases to bring the significance and satisfaction he craves, so he can begin to search for other places and challenges that can satisfy these emotional needs. This can lead to disrupting the current environment with changes that are less productive or changing leadership positions and leaving the current ministry. It can also take a downward turn toward seeking significance in other relationships and activities that can harm both the leader and the church itself. D-style leaders need meaningful challenges in order to find healthy fulfillment.

The I-style leader

As an aggressive people person, the “I” simply needs people. The “I” thrives in settings where there are people to lead toward a meaningful destination. Because the I-style wants his efforts to stand out, he will usually look for new activities or for ways to achieve greater excellence in current activities. For example, the “I” will want this Sunday to be better than last Sunday, this year’s outreach to be more successful than last year’s outreach, and our latest efforts to meet or exceed the efforts of others. Some other leadership styles (particularly the “C”) may see this as shallow, but I-style leaders are made to motivate others (and “C”s frequently question motives).

Make an “I” work by himself and his energy will fade. Moments of isolation feel like a party where no guests attended. While the “I” lives to motivate others, he needs others in order to feel motivated himself. The I-style leader feels that if there’s no one to lead then he must find someone and he will lose focus on the task at hand. If an “I” is forced to work alone or in isolation for long, his need for others can spark unproductive, even disruptive behaviors. Because, in some ways, pastoring can be described as a “people business,” and there are many opportunities for visible leadership, the role of pastor can appeal greatly to the “I,” but serving in too hidden a place seldom can hold his attention for long.

The S-style leader

The “S” thrives in a stable environment. He or she prefers settings where the work or the expectations don’t change significantly so his focus can center on the deepening relationships. While a “D” or an “I” will immediately attach negative-sounding words like “status quo” to an unchanging environment, the S-style leader can see the positive potential in such stability.

The “S” also treasures consistency in people. Erratic people never earn the trust of an S-style leader. Tell an “S” that we want to get better every day and he or she might think you’re saying that we’re simply not good enough. Where other leaders find purpose and satisfaction in change, the “S” more likely feels disruption that must be settled down so stability can return.

Rapidly changing environments and inconsistent people create vulnerability for the S-style leader. When one is motivated by identifying the people and establishing the processes that can be counted on, any sense of chaos can cause the “S” to shut down or even flee. S-style leaders can embrace and even lead change, but they do so for very different reasons than those that motivate a D- or an I-style leader. Frankly, that reality is one of the major reasons why this entire research conversation is believed to be necessary.

The C-style leader

How we do things is a major part of the C-style leader’s motivation. This detail-oriented, process-friendly leader does his or her best work where the parameters are clearly defined and the rules are followed by all. The I-style leader often finds the rules to be constricting, more hindrance than help, but the C-style leader is confident that operating within these established guidelines is the most efficient path to success.

While some recent leadership literature has suggested a path for “thriving on chaos,” that path is not suited for the C-style leader at all. Rather, a disorderly environment creates vulnerability for the C-style leader. This is not to suggest that all “C”s have clean desks and tidy offices (frankly that’s more likely to be an “I” whose most aware of appearances), but their minds tend to be quite tidy with every compartment in its proper place.

As we have seen, the C-style leader insists on doing things right, which can be very good for an organization. Still, sometimes getting it right or not moving forward until everything is perfectly aligned can slow necessary progress or even cause us to become mired in details

that don't justify the level of attention the C-style leader might give them. At any rate, the C-style leader's vulnerability here is often expressed in stalling progress or withdrawing (either loudly or silently). In more extreme cases where chaos or disorder have become overwhelming, the C-style leader may flee to environments over which he has greater control. "I"s and "D"s can find dismantling "everything" in order to rebuild it as quite exciting, but such actions often cause the "C" to leave the room, either mentally or physically.

As we have now moved into some of the limitations, or even weaknesses, of these leadership styles, we can be tempted to think of identifying these areas as being critical of the various leader types. Such is certainly not the case. As consultants, coaches, mentors, or helpers to these pastors, we simply must be aware of those settings and circumstances that are more likely to magnify their weaknesses or put them at a leadership disadvantage. There is no intent of criticism. Honest identification of a pastor's unique potential difficulties is likely just as essential as discovering their unique potentials for success.

FEARS

Ministering to a pastor's "felt needs" can make a significant impact both for the pastor's effectiveness and in building the trust in your relationship that can increase your level of influence with that pastor. While pastors, like everyone else, have many such needs, chief among them would be the inherent fear attached to a pastor's leadership style.

Figure 11.

	"D"	"I"	"S"	"C"
12. Fears...	Passivity	Negativity	Conflict	Manipulation

The D-style leader

For the aggressive, task-oriented D-style leader, patience can be a struggle. "D"s are doers and they respond to challenges by taking action, so these leaders will deal with their own insecurities by looking for ways to impact their situation. Of course, many leadership moments require patience. Often the implementation of leadership decisions needs time to unfold before bearing the intended fruit. Because the D-style leader sees the potential of the task more easily than the impact experienced by the people, he or she can be ready to move on to subsequent steps too quickly.

In strategic processes, like the Acts 2 Journey, D-style leaders are often more interested in "fixing something" rather than engaging processes that seem less active like defining values and understanding their organization's culture. If a "D" moves too quickly, any change achieved may be limited to a surface level impact and fail to endure once the D-style leader has moved on to the next phase of his plan. With the D-style pastor, you will likely need to work on the pace of change, almost always encouraging him or her to slow down or give completed actions the needed time to truly penetrate the congregation.

The I-style leader

We have already discussed the I-style leader's desire for a positive environment. Negativity tends to sap the energy from these leaders. For some, the emotional valleys brought on by setbacks or disappointments can be as deep as the heights of the peaks achieved in times

of success. Helping a pastor deal with emotional ups and downs may seem like an assignment for a counselor and you may decide that other types of professionals are needed for such work. However, in most cases your leadership focus will require you to help these pastors better manage how their negative moments impact their actions toward those they lead.

We are certainly not suggesting that every I-style leader will mismanage times of difficulty, but this leader's desire for positivity can lead him or her to perceive the constructive contributions of other team members incorrectly. The detailed questions of a "C" can easily be interpreted as negative, especially if that team member is questioning our motives as we lead or seems to be slowing down our progress with his insistence on following procedures. The "S" team member's suggestion that more explanation is needed as some are struggling to understand current decisions can feel negative as well.

We can help the I-style leader better interpret the questions and concerns a leader will encounter and help him or her avoid the mistake of neglecting those who might express them. Ultimately, these leaders want everyone to climb the hill with us so the reward for patient effort with challenging moments will be worth it.

The S-style leader

Conflict is the principal fear associated with the "S" profile. The S-style leader doesn't fear problem-solving, but becomes very uncomfortable when problems create interpersonal conflict and especially when that conflict must be addressed. Of course, the "S" knows that resolving conflict is a necessary part of building the deeper relationships he or she desires, but the "S" will engage such moments reluctantly, if at all.

With coaching, the S-style leader can usually learn to manage the conflicts that arise between himself and others, but navigating the conflicts among others is more difficult. When an S-style pastor learns of conflicts in the congregation, particularly those that likely need to be dealt with, he or she can withdraw from the involved parties in hopes that they will address their issues on their own. Because the "S" strives for peace, he or she is seldom willing to risk the possibility of a conflict escalating, especially when feeling unable to control how others will respond.

Of course, leading change in a local church will almost always bring some level of conflict. Anytime we choose a new direction, those who want to stay put or travel another path will resist. Efforts to change culture by addressing hindering values or behaviors will certainly require defending and even fighting for the new paths. S-style leaders are comfortable with change provided everyone is willing and in agreement—and that's seldom the case for the S-style pastor.

The C-style leader

While the C-style leader tends to be more detail-focused and can be quite analytical, one shouldn't assume that emotional investment is lacking. In truth, the "C" can feel things deeply. Remember that this leader is driven from within, determined to do what is right, and ready to champion a cause.

His or her greatest fear is manipulation. The C-style leader often is very emotionally invested and any hint that others lack the same genuine commitment will cause these leaders to feel vulnerable and exposed. C-style leaders are often "all-in" and being misled or feeling "lied to" is particularly offensive. As task-oriented leaders, actions must align with words in order to build and maintain trust, but actions must always be rightly motivated. The C-style leader asks *why are we doing this* more often than asking *what can we do*.

This fear of manipulation can, at times, put the “C” at odds with the I-style leader, especially when the latter’s insistence on positivity isn’t supported by reality. C-style leaders generally despise what they perceive as “hype” as, to them, it feels like manipulation. Conversely, the “I” is often quite genuine in seeing the same moment as bringing necessary excitement and energy to the meaningful task at hand.

As we have stated, the natural fears associated with each DiSC profile reveal some of the pastor’s “felt needs.” These fears trigger insecurities that can lead the pastor to attitudes and actions that prove counterproductive to the leadership effort. A consultant can help these pastors first by conveying understanding of the emotional struggle these fears often bring—especially those that differ from the consultant’s own leadership style. Then, finding effective strategies for these moments can make a great difference because every journey toward greater church health and effectiveness will require that these fears be confronted.

RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

While we have already discussed the S-style leader’s struggle with conflict, this is an area that highlights key differences among these leaders. One could argue that few factors impact a leader’s effectiveness more completely than the manner in which he or she responds to conflict and surely there is no factor that can more quickly affect a leader’s longevity in the current role.

Figure 12.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
13. Response to conflict	Fight back	Flight; withdraw	Avoid	Tolerate; ignore

The D-style leader

While most of us will quickly admit that dealing with conflict isn’t our favorite activity, D-style leaders engage it more willingly than others. Of course, that isn’t necessarily a good thing. When challenged, the “D” may choose to fight back. While at first glance this may seem to indicate a bravery that others don’t possess, in truth, it can also indicate less concern for the feelings of others. Remember, the “D” is an aggressive, task-oriented leader who often needs help in managing the people issues.

The D-style leader knows where he is going and what he is trying to accomplish. Productivity trumps all else, so the D-style leader will see conflict as something to be fixed in order to get the job done. A consultant or coach may need to assist the “D” with greater patience, slower and more carefully chosen responses, and deeper sensitivity to the needs of those he leads.

The I-style leader

With the “I” we return again to our awareness of the I-style leaders need for positivity. Obviously, times of conflict often take the environment in the opposite direction. The “I” is generally concerned with how he or she is being perceived by others, and times of conflict open the possibility of being misinterpreted, misunderstood, or not liked. So, the I-style leader would much prefer someone else to resolve the conflicts so he or she can maintain focus on positive steps forward.

The “I” doesn’t want to be viewed as the disciplinarian or judge as such roles can later interfere with being the motivator of those who “lost” in the conflict situation. For the I-style leader, the coach or consultant can help by refocusing the “I” on what is beneficial for those

he or she leads. Those who are in conflict need this matter to be resolved so they can move forward with us—and *we need to help them*. Once the I-style leader sees how the conflict is preventing those he leads from joining us in the cause, he or she can more easily find a motive for taking necessary action. The “I” will most naturally be focused on how others perceive him or her and will need your assistance to place the focus elsewhere.

The S-style leader

We have already seen that the S-style leader will naturally seek to avoid conflict, but that desire doesn’t necessarily come from the same motivation as the “I.” The “S” is generally already most concerned about what the conflict is doing to others and can allow it to continue, even if it means he loses in the process. The S-style leader will often prefer sacrificing himself and letting others “win,” even at the expense of truth or what is good for his own leadership effectiveness. When it comes to conflict, the “S” will prefer to “wait it out” to see if the conflict will resolve itself without any need for action.

The S-style leader needs encouragement to take that needed action. He or she will almost always downplay the potential impact of the conflict as a justification for avoiding it—even expressing his or her willingness to just deal with whatever comes in order to keep the peace. Of course, the “S” tends to see peace where it may not truly exist. As with the “I,” the coach or consultant can help the S-style leader most by helping him or her see that resolving conflict is in the best interest of those involved, even though the internal issues are very different between these two leaders. The “S” always wants what is best for those he or she leads and learning how to resolve issues effectively is essential to the life that the S-style leader wants others to have.

The C-style leader

As a task-oriented person, the “C” will often tolerate or even ignore conflict, as long as it doesn’t get in the way of his own to do list. The C-style leader may decide that people need to work out their own issues, even if someone has issues with him. He may be thinking he just needs to *keep people focused on what needs to be done and they’ll have less time or energy for conflict*. This mindset fascinates given that the “C” himself is determined to do things right and can become melancholy or even resistant when that standard isn’t met. The C-style leader will want his own concerns addressed, but may prefer to let the concerns of others go unresolved—*unless he feels them too*.

As with the “D,” the C-style leader’s engagement of conflict needs to be based on what is good for the group he leads. Now, the D-style leader likely needs to engage more slowly, while the C-style leader may need a nudge to get involved. When surrounded by a growing level of emotional turmoil, the “C” will often choose to “get lost” in his work. The coach or consultant can help the C-style leader by focusing on how conflict is hindering the effort. Additionally, the “C” can be encouraged to engage when he understands how those in the conflict are feeling and how those feelings are impacting their commitment to the cause. Helping these leaders see conflict as a cause they need to engage can produce the needed change in thinking.

WEAKNESSES

By now, you may have already begun to surmise some of the inherent weaknesses of each of the four DiSC leadership styles. Surely there are several natural “blind spots” to be associated with each of the profiles, but our focus will center on the key weakness most likely to impact the pastor’s effectiveness as a leader.

Figure 13.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
14. Say weakness can be...	Mercy	Attention to detail	Making decisions	Unproductive busyness

The D-style leader

The leader that is driven by the task and the strategy developed to complete it often fails to understand the needs of those who pursue that task with him. This difficulty runs deeper when that leader must confront what he perceives as inadequacies in others that prevent them from sharing his same level of commitment. For the D-style leader, showing mercy is a struggle. Usually, these leaders have found some measure of success in their efforts to be productive and they can lack the people skills or awareness necessary to understand why others can't will themselves to similar productivity.

In the work of pastoring, mercy is necessary equipment. We minister to needs, many of which arise because of our inadequacies, failed decisions, or long histories of familial dysfunction. The “D” can lack patience and grace in such circumstances. Even his portrayal of the Gospel and relationship with God can become very determined, rule-oriented, and productivity driven. Without sufficient accountability, some D-style leaders have become authoritarian or autocratic until those they lead have found it necessary to rebel.

D-style leaders need those with the “S” profile as significant influencers in their lives. They can be tempted to view S-style leaders as needed only to handle the more relational responsibilities of ministry, but they truly need such people influencing them, not just working for them. Having worked with many strong D-style leaders, we have observed that only through the ongoing influence of a respected S-style leader will a “D” be “softened” in his approach to people.

The I-style leader

With the I-style leader, the approach to weakness is a bit different. For the “I” the weakness is a lacking attention to detail. While with the “D” we want to improve his level of mercy so he can be more effective in pastoral work, but with the I-style leader, we have no plans to change him.

The “I”s lack of attention to detail is, of course, driven by his big-picture thinking and motivation toward vision—and we need the “I” to be exactly that. To move an “I” toward greater awareness of detail is to undermine his strength. Instead, we must surround the I-style leader with those of the other three profiles who can manage the pieces of the dream we're chasing. Usually, the “I” has such strong people skills that he or she genuinely values such assistance and will want to master when to insert himself in a project and when to step out of the way of those who are making it happen.

For the I-style leader, the challenge will be achieving a good balance between motivating the team and investing their morale versus not slowing them down with unnecessary intrusions into their work. The “I” often thrives on attention and can begin to frustrate “C”s and “D”s with too much storytelling or rallying of the troops. The I-style leader is not made for detail and needs to learn how to stand clear when details are getting done.

The S-style leader

The one leader that we must learn to help more effectively is the S-style leader. As we have noted, two-thirds of our pastors align most with this DiSC profile, and the common weakness is a reluctance to make decisions. We have already noted that these leaders often want

everyone on the same page before moving forward. They are reluctant to risk the “relational capital” they have accumulated by making decisions that some may find unpopular. Insisting that these S-style leaders act like D-style leaders is never going to be effective.

One way to address this area of weakness is to help the S-style leader shape a healthy decision-making process. By cultivating team leadership principles, appropriate streams of input, and schedules for implementation, the S-style leader can grow comfortable with a process of decision-making that appropriately involves others. The work of pastoring can place great pressure on the leader to make decisions and take action alone. This will never work for the S-style leader. Armed with a team and an established path for making decisions and moving forward, the S-style leader’s relational skills can produce a wonderful journey.

The C-style leader

It’s of note that we have attempted to address the D-style leader by changing him, the I-style leader by identifying who needs to be working for him, and the S-style leader by working with him and giving him a process. For the C-style leader’s natural weakness, a fourth strategy is needed. This weakness—unproductive busyness—can be the most difficult to address.

Analytical and given to detail, many C-style leaders struggle to discern the relative value of each detail. Like an artist who sees the tiniest brush stroke as equally important to his work as the more vivid parts the rest of us see, the “C” can treat every process, guideline, or established step as critical to a project, even when some are truly of minor significance. The “C” often fits comfortably in a “bureaucratic” environment with many established policies and procedures—or he or she will want to create one. Doing things the right way can mean requiring certain steps that really aren’t as necessary to success, and it can be very difficult to argue against such efforts as the “C” can often defend his requirements as critical to the pursuit of excellence.

While we want each leader operating in his strengths, the “C” leader must, at times, give up control and learn to empower others, especially when determining how to get a job done. We often need to help the C-style leader see that the right way can be more than one way. We also want the “C” to learn to connect every assignment to its desired end result—to identify how each step or requirement contributes to the bigger picture. This kind of accountability will challenge the C-style leader and likely require the aid of a few trusted leaders.

In the end, it is not accurate to say that leaders must simply “staff their weaknesses.” The D-style and C-style leaders can’t delegate their mercy and temptation to unproductive busyness, but must learn to address them directly. The “I” and “S” need others, but they also need to understand their own role in making such contributions beneficial.

TENDS TO IGNORE

One additional idea of weakness needs to be explored, that important item which the leader will ignore as he or she pursues leadership effectiveness. We must consider this because ignoring these matters is likely causing difficulty for the leader or hardship for those who follow. Because we have already learned much of the tendencies of each of these DiSC profile pastors, much explanation is likely not required at this point, but by identifying these natural “blind spots,” those of us who assist pastors can focus our efforts in the areas identified.

Figure 14.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
15. Tends to ignore...	Feelings	Constraints	Need for change	Need to delegate

The D-style leader

Again, the D-style leader is an aggressive, task-oriented individual who will tend to place the project at hand ahead of the people who are working with him. The “D” is typically less aware or concerned about the feelings of others. In fact, in extreme cases, the D-style leader can be tempted to think or even suggest that those who aren’t committed to the task should remove themselves from the group.

Now, if you the reader are a “D,” you may believe such thinking is needed at times, but the shepherd metaphor most commonly used of our role in Scripture suggests otherwise. This document can’t be given to a full discussion of this, but we need to understand that very few pastors have the leadership capacity to succeed if they frequently draw lines in the sand. The D-style leader shouldn’t allow the feelings of others to immediately thwart his efforts, but he must learn how to address and effectively minister to those feelings if people are to stay on what will hopefully be a long journey together.

The I-style leader

For this aggressive, people-focused leader, constraints such as rules or guidelines can be seen as hindrances to moving as quickly as the I-style leader wishes to go. The “I” will usually not overtly state that such rules don’t matter, but the I-style leader will need to see a rule’s purpose or value to our mission before choosing to adhere to it. More likely, the “I” will be open to rewriting rules as we go so that we can achieve our goal successfully.

In no way are we suggesting that this is careless or selfish behavior. The I-style leader will simply take a “why?” or “why not?” approach to rules shaped by the status quo. Of course, this behavior is particularly frustrating to the “C” and even the “S” as these profiles tend to find security in the established order, but the “I” can develop new paths, or even new paradigms, because he or she feels less constrained by what has been established.

The S-style leader

We have already noted that the S-style leader is less drawn to change than the other profiles. As such, his or her awareness of the need for change can be a blind spot. Because the “S” is motivated internally and can be heavily focused on the needs and feelings of those he or she leads, the disruption caused by change must be seen as worth the pain it causes before this leader will conclude on his own that change must be pursued.

To a “D” or an “I” this cautious approach to change can feel like a lack of leadership. In truth, however, the S-style leader is demanding a higher motivation for change be demonstrated before he will be stirred. The more aggressive profiles don’t need much reason to pursue change. For them, just the idea of change is exciting and full of potential for satisfaction. Goals of personal achievement or being better than others aren’t the motives that move the S-style leader. The “why” of change must be truly missional or clearly important for us before this supposed blind spot will be overcome.

The C-style leader

Finally, the “C” will easily overlook the need to delegate. C-style leaders tend to be either remarkably creative or highly analytical, or both. They can do things that may seem to exceed the capacities of others. As such, it can be difficult for these leaders to trust others

to do a job as thoroughly as the “C” feels is needed. Theoretically, the C-style leader can understand the potential value in delegating, but this leader often has a difficult time with actually doing it.

Of course, if the C-style leader doesn’t delegate effectively, the organization becomes limited to that leader’s own capacity and much potential is lost. Still the “C” demands high levels of trust with others before giving responsibility and especially authority. Usually, this can only be overcome by helping the C-style leader design processes for developing people and equipping them with the values and skills that are necessary for achieving that needed level of trust.

HIGHEST CHRISTIAN EXPRESSION

The fact that each of the DiSC profiles can be repeatedly demonstrated to be effective in the role of pastor is not by accident or without design. It seems quite clear from Scripture’s multi-faceted description of Christ’s Church and the requirements of those who would lead it, that such diversity is intended for this role. In truth, one leadership style cannot be sufficient for leadership if we are to be God’s people and fulfill His mission.

One place where this is demonstrated can be found in the four different ways these leadership profiles view the desired end result of his efforts. The idea of our label—the highest Christian expression—is an attempt to describe what we see as the greatest demonstration of our connection to Christ. *What is it that we are trying to produce? When are we being what we are intended to be? What comprises the primary motivational message that a pastor will call us to?*

It is absolutely critical that we accept two realities. One, there is more than one such focus that can hold the top spot in our expression. Two, each of the foci we’ll identify are essential to truly being “in Christ” and fulfilling His mission in this world. Put simply, while each of these leadership styles will prioritize a different highest ideal, all four are truly needed priorities.

Figure 15.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
16. Highest Christian expression	Go	Believe	Love	Obey

The D-style leader

For the “D,” following Christ can focus heavily on doing for Him. The D-style leader finds his greatest affirmation in productivity and directives such as the Great Commission provide a ready point of engagement.

As we have said, the D-style leader operates from a foundation of vision. He or she is motivated by external challenges, opportunities to take new ground, do what hasn’t been done or clearly must be done. Such opportunities will likely dominate the D-style leader’s focus and their absence will be a source of potential frustration.

Indeed, Christ’s command to “Go...” must be taken up by every Christian. This is fundamental to our sense of mission and the “D” will find great purpose in pursuing it and calling on others to join him.

The I-style leader

As another vision-based leader, the “I” finds his own motivation in external opportunities, but his response is to call others to join him. His is a call to *believe*. Whether the call to believe is focused on the faith that brings connection with Christ or the confidence that we can fulfill His mission, the I-style leader seeks to rally others to engage the moment at hand with full-hearted commitment.

For this reason, the I-style leader will place great emphasis on those settings where the people are gathered. It is here that he or she can present the call to respond. Remember that the “I”’s ideal setting is at the podium so the call to believe or to follow becomes central to his or her idea of Christianity’s essence. Such belief is the motivator to action that the I-style leader’s efforts rely on.

Without question, we are called to believe by Christ Himself. The Apostle Paul told us that the “just shall live by faith” and both testaments challenge us to believe in God’s plan and His power to bring it to pass. The “I”’s emphasis on believing drives the pursuit of the same kind of external opportunities that capture the “D”’s vision, but the latter’s heart is captured by the act of going itself. The I-style leader differs in his focus is on the faith that motivates him.

The S-style leader

For the “S,” to follow Christ is to *love*. Ultimately, the apostles interpreted much of Jesus’ teaching as prioritizing love above all else and the S-style leader gladly adopts this central theme. One can easily see how love would attract the “S” who is so heavily motivated by relationships. Love is also something to be nurtured within us, the very place where this values-based leader looks to find his contribution.

While we may not have enough information to project a DiSC profile on each of the apostles, the emphases of John, the brother of James, seem to demonstrate his “S”-like thinking. For John, there is no evidence of relationship with Christ without a growing love for one another. His writings, particularly his epistles, capture the way an S-style leader sees efforts of discipleship and the mission he must engage.

Given that two-thirds of all people identify most with the “S” profile, and the percentage of pastors is similar, *love* should sustain its place as the central theme of Christianity. Of course, if we attempt to turn S-style leaders into one of the more aggressive types that we think can be more successful, we may inadvertently nurture a different priority for these leaders than the One who called them intended.

The C-style leader

Obey is the key word for the C-style leader, and like the others, its case for the center of Christianity can be clearly defended. The “C” is drawn to the idea that love for Christ is principally demonstrated by our obedience to His commands. Such obedience is our greatest act of worship. If John’s message especially appeals to the S-style leader, then the “C” may identify most with Jesus’ half-brother James when he demanded that, “Show me your faith by your works.”

In Scripture, obedience is clearly the best evidence of faith. It’s not difficult for us to see how this particularly appeals to those who land in the more task-oriented quadrants, especially the C-style leader. The “D” will see obedience to the *Go* as the necessary response, but the D-style leader is a bit more motivated by where we are going and what hill we are climbing. The “C” focuses internally, finding the expression of obedience itself as the end, not the means.

So, who's right? Which best captures the most fundamental expression of Christianity—*Go*, *Believe*, *Love*, or *Obey*? It's possible that our own answer to such a question may reveal our primary leadership style. Surely, we can agree that all four are fundamental to the life of the individual Christian as well as to the principal message and activity of the Church.

In fact, it may be that the most critical of these four would be the one that is needed in any given moment. Clearly, we need all four, but wouldn't each take center stage at certain times? For example, the Apostle Paul gives *love* the pre-eminent place, even above faith, as he concludes 1 Corinthians 13 (his treatise on the proper motivation for expressing spiritual gifts). Why? Surely *love* is the most critical expression in the matter before him and the most lacking in the Corinthians current behavior. Elsewhere, we hear the same apostle place *believe* at the center of Christian expression and can make the case that this was at the center of his own transformation. Of course, his entire life is driven by *Go* and he never soft-pedaled *obedience* either.

The point is that we need all four of these expressions at the center of our idea of Christianity. In truth, *go* without *believe* will not produce the Church. *Obey* without *love* doesn't produce a Christian either. Every possible combination of these four Christian expressions reveals their interdependence. There will be times where one requires greater emphasis than the others, but this need for all four may also demonstrate why all four DiSC profiles (or all four leaders) are necessary for the health and the growth of the local church.

AND HE GAVE...

In fact, the Church's need for various leadership capacities is evident in what Paul tells us about the leadership gifts Christ has raised up to equip His Church. Ephesians 4 demonstrates that the Church will need four or five different types of leaders or leadership functions in order to become all that Christ desires.

A full treatment of the various gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 won't be attempted here, but some general ideas are possible. Surely, the application of certain of these gifts to the western Church of the 21st century presents a few challenges as these labels have been taken as titles by some, rather than simply describing unique function. For example, some today are labeled "evangelists" more because of the itinerant nature of their ministry than the nature of their message. Likewise, "prophets" in modern times tend to operate much differently than in biblical days. "Apostle" is a title that some have used to side-step accountability, such that some have taken a more cessationist-view of this particular gift, even though they insist that all other gifts mentioned throughout the New Testament remain available. Again, these matters are too great for our consideration here, but their mention is important to understanding our interpretation of the gifts themselves.

What is highly germane to our purpose is the observation that the leadership functions described by these gifts remain intact for the Church and those who perform these functions (all of them) often do so from the role of pastor. There are pastors who tend to function like evangelists in their ability to gather others around the "good news" message that Christ commissioned us to spread. There are pastors who excel as shepherds, nurturing the "flock" of God not just in their tasks but by their very nature. There are also pastors whose calls to repentance and obedience mirror the work of the prophet who seeks to get God's people back on the right track. There are even those who break new ground, both in places and methods, much like we see the apostles of old doing in the biblical record. And what we will

discover is that the journey of every local church will likely find each of these giftings in the pastor’s chair at various times.

Now, one caution. As we consider the possibility of a connection between the Ephesians 4 leadership gifts and the four DiSC profiles, we must be careful not to suggest anything more than the possibility of a “loose connection.” While one profile may have much in common with one of the Ephesians 4 gifts, in NO WAY can we suggest that every pastor with that profile should be identified as possessing or even “being” that particular gift. The point is not to connect DiSC profiles to Ephesians 4 labels or functions. Instead the point is to again demonstrate that the work before us will require all four (or five) of both lists, if we are to be equipped for every good work. Armed with this caution, we can now see how the DiSC profiles bear some similarity to the leadership gifts promised in Ephesians 4.

Figure 16.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
17. May connect best to traits of...	Apostle / Prophet	Evangelist / Apostle	Shepherd / Teacher	Prophet / Teacher

The Ministry Gifts

Before we suggest any possible connection between the diversity of DiSC profiles and the leadership gifts promised to the Church, we must briefly define the gifts themselves. Again, so much more can be written here but a simple grasp of the differences among these gifts is sufficient for our purpose:

- Apostle: The purest definition is *one who is sent at the direction of another*. We can easily capture this in the idea of a messenger and, having read of Jesus’ commissioning of the Twelve, we can just as easily assign such a label to their assignment. For our day, apostolic work might likely best connect with efforts to bring the Gospel to new people and places, those places where the message has yet to be received. Surely, any individual who shares the Gospel with a friend who has yet to receive is functioning as a messenger of Christ, but we are probably most comfortable applying this term to the work of those who do so on a larger scale, such as those taking the Gospel to the unreached, those planting churches among the unchurched, etc. We need not affix the label to such individuals, but can use it to describe the nature of the work that they do.
- Prophet: The purest definition here would be *one who speaks for God*. In modern times, it has seemed more appealing to attach this role to those who will suggest destinies or anticipate blessings or successes, but the biblical idea of prophet speaks more often to current realities than to future ones—and often those words are more corrective and cautionary. Perhaps the clearest way to view this role would be *one who calls us back to God and to what is right*.
- Evangelist: As we have mentioned, this label is often equated to itinerant ministers today, but *one who brings the message of good news* is more likely what Paul intended. So, a deacon named Philip demonstrated this gift, not because he traveled to Samaria with the Gospel, but because it was the Gospel that he brought to Samaria. The work of an evangelist is to proclaim the Gospel and call people to faith. This is a work to which all Christians are called, but the scope or magnitude of the work of some likely demonstrates the idea intended by this gift.

- Shepherd: Because “pastor” is the term we use for nearly every ministry leader regardless of which leadership gift they generally demonstrate, we use the term “shepherd” here to help focus us on the nature of the work intended. The key idea encompasses everything involved in *the care of God’s people*. This suggests proximity and ongoing relationship between the leader and those he or she cares for. Like all the others, this work can be evident in any believer, regardless of any assigned title or leadership role, but the sense of this leadership gift would be seen best in those who function regularly and significantly in such a manner.
- Teacher: This may be the easiest idea for us to grasp today as our understanding of the term more clearly matches the original biblical idea than the others. *To bring understanding of truth* defines both role and function within our ministry context, and has done so since at least the time of Ezra (but surely before). But again, while the function can be seen among many believers and in many moments, there are those whom God uses specifically in such a manner that may be what is intended by the “some” he gave for this work.

Some may align the Shepherd and Teacher gifts in such a way that yields a list of four, rather than five types of leaders. That would certainly offer the kind of “nice fit” with our other list of four that our western minds find attractive, but we needn’t require that here. The clear suggestion of the Ephesians 4 passage is that these varied gifts, whether four or five, were given for the purpose of edifying or building up of Christ’s Church. We need the work of all of them within the local body of Christ and beyond, and we will likely experience each of them in the pastor’s chair at varying times, depending on how God directs our community of believers.

So, what relationship might exist between these gifts and the leadership profiles under discussion? As we consider this, the same word of caution feels necessary at every point of such a discussion. The leadership gifts of Ephesians 4 likely intend to describe the nature of the needed work among us and not the leadership style of those who do it. Our individual leadership styles can be the combined product of personality, experiences, natural talents, and so much more that has formed who we are. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, however, are just that—gifts. These arise from calling and supernatural equipping, likely much more than from “natural” causes. Though Jeremiah was called by God to the prophetic work before he was born, we shouldn’t conclude that he exercised that prophetic voice in the nursery or that he showed signs of his future work throughout his childhood. His work, like all who find themselves within the Ephesians 4 list, came about by the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. These are gifts, and sometimes they defy our nature or prove that we’ve been equipped with something we didn’t have before.

Still, we can see how the various works or functions of these ministry gifts might attract our developed leadership styles. So, armed with our caution not to suggest that “this one is that,” we can engage such a discussion.

The D-style leader

As we have seen, many “D”s are strategic leaders, always ready to chase new horizons, and usually most intent on expressing their faith through the Christ’s call to “go.” For these, our description of the work of an apostle fits well.

But those who pursue task over people can also connect with the work of the prophet, especially when the message to be conveyed might be corrective or at least uncomfortable. Remember that the “D” will engage potential conflict and he or she is less reluctant to step into the hard moments that are necessary to get us back on track.

So, the D-style leader isn't necessarily an Ephesians 4 apostle or prophet, but his leadership style often aids his effectiveness with their kind of work.

The I-style leader

For many I-style leaders, one can immediately see a connection with the work of an evangelist. The aggressive people-focus and the focus on *believe* as a core Christian expression can find the "I" to be quite effective in proclaiming good news.

Certainly, many I-style leaders find themselves at home in the work of an apostle as well. Motivated by the external challenge of new horizons, these leaders can prove quite effective in their work among places where the Gospel has yet to be adequately proclaimed.

Again, we wouldn't suggest that all "I"s are evangelists or apostles, but we can see how these ministry gifts find an easy connection with the strengths of the I-style leader.

The S-style leader

The relational focus of the "S" brings the shepherd gift immediately to mind, doesn't it? Patience, nurture, and genuine care can be the "wheel house" for many S-style leaders. Indeed, most of the imagery provided by the shepherd analogy fits the basic approach to life that we often see in those with an "S" profile. Even the picture of the shepherd fighting off attackers will fit the "S" who is usually only quick to engage conflict when those he loves are threatened.

The S-style pastor finds great satisfaction in the development of people so the role of teacher may also provide a meaningful fit. Likely, the idea of shepherd and teacher merge comfortably for the S-style leader as he or she will typically see the latter as a function of the former. Other leadership styles may not unite them as easily.

So, we can note that there is something about S-style leaders that easily connect with the assignments given to shepherds and teachers. These roles benefit from longevity of relationship, and that longevity is a strength to be found among S-style leaders.

The C-style leader

Finally, the passion for doing what is right that we find in many C-style leaders can connect with the work of a prophet. The "C" tends to be task-oriented so tackling an assignment that may challenge people would be easier for the "C" to engage than for those with the "S" or "I" profiles. The C-style leader does try to avoid or ignore conflict, but will engage it if righteousness or integrity are at stake.

The work of the teacher can also be appealing to many C-style leaders. Remember, we said that the "chalkboard" provides a comfortable leadership arena for these leaders and bringing understanding to truth can be a great fit for many of them. However, the "C" may not equate "teacher" and "shepherd" as easily as the S-style leader because the shepherd assignment may call for a level of people-focus with which the C-style leader may struggle.

C-style leaders can certainly function in the work of an apostle when called upon, but the aggressiveness often required in such a role may not fit as easily. Rather, the potential connection between the C-style leader and the roles of prophet or teacher are likely more common.

One final time, we engage the caution of suggesting these connections. Without doubt, the Holy Spirit can call leaders who operate with any of the four DiSC leadership styles to whichever of the ministry gifts He may choose, but seeing the potential connection between certain ministry gifts and certain DiSC profiles can be beneficial.

The greatest benefit is simply in seeing the variety that is needed for the Church to be built up. Just as we need each of the four or five ministry gifts to provide for leadership within the body of Christ, we will also need every one of the four leadership styles to bring their strengths to the effort.

When assisting a congregation, the ministry coach or consultant may find a review of the pastoral leadership history of the congregation to be enlightening. Usually, such an effort will reveal that different DiSC profile leaders have sat in the congregation’s lead pastor chair over the years. Now the congregation would not be expected to have called such a variety of leaders intentionally, but may have pursued a new leader because he or she brought strengths that the previously leader may have lacked. You’ll find that, in times of transition, often a congregation will replace a vision-based pastor (“D” or “I”) with a values-based pastor (“S” or “C”), and volley back and forth in such a way with subsequent leadership changes.

In fact, as we will see with our next section, this has been the case with even our core idea of the nature of a pastor, at least in America, over the past 70-80 years.

DECADAL DOMINANCE

Not only would we argue that each of the four DiSC profiles can be intended for and are effective in the role of pastor, but we can also note that each of the four personality/leadership styles has taken their turn in the most common definition of pastor over the past several decades. By most common definition, we mean that a pastor with this leadership style was generally viewed as the “typical” pastor or significantly shaped the cultural definition of pastor for that generation. When someone would mention a pastor, this perceived “typical” pastor proved to be the picture formed in the mind of the hearer. As stated, each of the four leadership styles have had their turn in filling this idea.

Figure 17.

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
18. Decadal dominance	2000s - current	1980s - 1990s	1930s -1950s	1960s - 1970s

At one time, the idea of pastor was easily and generally equated with the metaphor of the shepherd. As the leader of the local church, the pastor was one who cared for the people, feeding them from God’s Word, and guiding the any growth in the “flock” through relationship. In such times, local churches often took on a neighborhood or parish model. The local church was a community to be a part of and pastors more often measured themselves by their commitment to the people rather than the numbers they might report.

In these days, the “S” pastor was prominent. Churches were typically not large, but became close-knit (though open) families that impacted their communities through more relational-style approaches. In America, the “S” pastor definition can be easily seen in this dominant position from at least the 1930s and into the early 1960s. It’s also noteworthy that in the entertainment world, the portrayal of pastors even as early as the late 1800s more often fit the “S” pastor, though television and movies aren’t necessarily the best research sources.

But as America changed, so did its idea of pastor.” In the early 1960s, the “S” pastor’s relational style began to give way to the “C” pastor. As the 1960s became increasingly tumultuous and morally unhinged, the local church found it more necessary to raise its voice

and proclaim its moral foundations. The Christian worldview that had dominated so much of culture was now under the attack of a cultural revolution that sought to discard the yoke of established authorities. The “C” pastor more naturally brought a needed focus to the ministry priorities laid down by the once dominant “S” pastor. While the “S” is ideally suited for relationship and community, the “C” pastor more effectively gave that community an identity, built around ethical behavior and moral responsibility.

One could argue that this shift didn’t happen quickly enough or with sufficient aggressiveness as culture shifted faster than the Church could seem to respond. Prayer in schools was outlawed and legalized abortion became a reality, all before the Church could adequately muster its forces. But, these kinds of changes certainly impacted the pastor’s perceived role as the keeper of our moral ground. Deeper research would likely prove fascinating as possible shifts in approaches to preaching and other ministry activities might be explored. The “C” personality/leadership style which began to emerge as dominant in the mid-1960s continued as such until the early 1980s.

But then America changed again in a way that altered the Church. The Baby Boomer generation began to settle into leadership roles in every arena of life, including the local church, and this remarkably large generation brought its own set of values into every such setting. Ideas like “bigger is better” and “quality counts” reshaped the priorities of the local church. The megachurch arrived on the scene in full force. As people shifted their shopping habits from the smaller, family store to “big-box” warehouses and their economies of scale, they also brought that same mindset to their worship settings—and such settings would require a different kind of pastor.

This next step in our cycle saw the “I” pastor emerge as the solution. The I-style leader brought big-picture thinking in ways where the “C” pastor had proved limited. While the C-style leader’s passion for righteousness had enhanced the Church’s role of rescuing many from their immoral paths, the Church’s established place in the culture seemed to be diminishing. One answer was found in the “I” pastor’s aggressive approach and ability to motivate people toward an outward focus. Many charismatic leaders began to fill the pulpits of growing congregations, providing a much-needed catalyst toward the local church’s evangelistic mission, especially where the seeds of decline were sprouting. As in every generation, people not only rally around ideals, but also those who articulate them most effectively. Among Evangelicals, these were golden years where conversion growth gained new impetus. The hunger to make a difference amidst the rise of baby boomers brought questions the “I” pastor proved well-equipped to resolve. And under the direction of these new aggressive pastors with drawing power and motivational prowess, the era of the large church began to flourish.

The era of the “I” pastor as the dominant idea of the “typical pastor” continued into the 1990s, and is still strong in many places today, but the greater emergence of another aggressive-style leader also began to be evident. The “D” pastor proved capable of leading the larger church too, though his style was more strategic, than motivational. As methods changed, the “D” seemed best equipped to make use of them. Multi-site and small group foci took some of the attention from the church’s large weekly gatherings, a strategic shift that the “D” saw more favorably than the I-style leader who thrived in the bigger room. Add a few high-profile moral failures among the American Church’s biggest personalities (usually at least perceived as high “I” leaders) and somehow the D-type leader seemed more trustworthy.

In the previous time period (mid 1980s through the 1990s), the idea of pastor had been dominated by larger personalities. These leaders (the “I” pastor) are aggressive, vision casting, and outward focused. Their key ability, however, is to motivate around passionate ideas and their natural charisma frequently plays a large role in their effectiveness. However, the aforementioned declining trust in large personalities and the rise of leadership ideas like Jim Collins “Level 5 Leadership” paved the way for a perceived “safer” shift away from ministry personality and more toward ministry purpose—the arena of the “D” pastor.

So, in the mid-to-late 1990s, one can see how the D-style leader’s priorities naturally built on or gave clearer focus to the “I” pastor who preceded him in the dominant definition of pastor. Today’s picture of the successful pastor is expected to be aggressive, strategic, vision casting, outward-focused, and purpose-driven and there’s little doubt which leadership style fits this model most effectively. The “D” has easily responded to the idea of “pastor as leader” and even reshaped the role around this priority.

Of course, at every stage of past century’s shifting idea of pastor, each of the four leadership styles continued to fill thousands of pulpits across the country. And, the percentages of each more likely remained aligned with the population rather than any emergence of dominant styles within the role itself. Even today, where the “D” style holds our attention, the overwhelming majority of pastors identify most with the “S” profile, as do most of the people who fill America’s pews.

The point here is that just as the type of pastor a local church needs will shift over time—often with each significant pastoral transition—so the pastor that the nation sees as succeeding has shifted, usually according to what we think we need in this season.

What’s Next?

If we will effectively equip pastors and churches for health and growth, we must recognize that while dominant personality/leadership styles contribute much to each generation’s current definition of pastor, this dominant status achieved by any such style is likely cyclical in nature. For example, the “D” pastor has only achieved his prominent place in recent years (1990s-current), and it seems likely that we will see another shift within the next decade.

The cyclical nature of the dominance achieved by these personality/leadership styles is driven by perceived need. Just as there are times when we need an Apostle and other moments where the Prophet is most in demand, so these personality/leadership styles will emerge when the limitations of the one currently in prominence must be overcome. Each brings great strengths and value to the role of pastor, but each is also limited in certain areas. So naturally, the relational “S” will give way to the more message-focused “C,” while the latter will often be replaced by the more aggressive “I” who can rally people toward mission. But the “D” may be needed to fill the shoes of the “I” when the purpose no longer needs the personality.

Will this order continue? It seems likely that the prominence of the “D” pastor will begin to diminish when his relational inadequacies become too much to bear. As a new generation’s values begin to infiltrate the local church’s leadership priorities, large purpose-driven efforts may give way to the desire for greater intimacy and closer connection to those who lead—a world achieved more easily with an “S” pastor. We have already seen the growing shift from mega-gatherings to multiple strategic sites—an “I” to “D” shift in many ways, though a bit motivated by “S” ideals. It seems probable that a hunger for greater accountability and

intimacy will bring a further shift back to independent, smaller gatherings (where “S” and “C” leaders are a better fit).

So significant questions confront us—do we believe the era of the “D” personality/leadership style is here to stay or do we anticipate a shift toward the style that can excel where he is weak (the “S”)?

And, what is the current hope and place in these recent decades for the once-dominant “S” and “C” pastors? These pastors came of age in decades where the idea of “pastor” connected to relational impact or to the ethical foundation of the community. While these pastors likely still outnumber the “D” and “I” pastors at the local church level (some researchers indicate as much as 80% to 20%), they are often inadequate to pastor according to the currently preferred “D” model, especially if that’s the model we seek to impose on every setting.

It is not uncommon for “D” and “I” leaders to refer to these “S” and “C” shepherds as “chaplains” rather than leaders, indicating the perception of these pastors as maintainers of status quo and unable or unwilling to pursue purpose through needed change. As we noted initially, conferences speakers and the writers of how-to books are most often “D” and “I” leaders and the current success measures (numerical and economic growth) seem to justify their hold on that position. Additionally, it is likely that the percentage of “D” and “I” leaders in sectional, district, and national leadership roles within denominations and other organizations is much higher than one will find in local church leadership, potentially skewing the view of the “S” and “C” leaders even further.

If we continue to insist that “S” and “C” leaders learn to function like those with “D” and “I” profiles, does their success really seem likely? Are our ideas of success inadvertently conveying that the megachurch is the “end game” all are to seek? More positively, what might occur if we can pave meaningful paths of success for a majority of pastors who are wired to make a different contribution to the church’s healthy journey than the ones we currently celebrate?

If you are ready to accept the premise that this document set out to prove, that there are dramatic, God-intended differences among those God has raised up to pastor in this hour, what must we do?

CONCLUSIONS THAT SEEK BEGINNINGS

NOTE TO THE READER:

The role of a researcher is to delve deeply into what currently is or previously has been in order to provide maximum opportunities to understand those present or past realities. While surely there are implications for the future to be found in nearly every research effort, the wise researcher should know and maintain his place.

Except that in my case, I am one of you too.

These pages, which have expanded well beyond my original anticipation, express a path that I am walking toward a treasure that I, too, am desperate to find. Research that calls for a shift in thinking can seem to criticize what has been or those who have participated in its unfolding, but there's no such intent here. Rather, my hope is that you will hunt this treasure with me—for I believe we must find it.

These next few paragraphs present some of my responses to the question, "What should we do?" But they are only my responses. Yours are equally, or likely even more important. We need solutions that bring more effective help to the pastors we aid, especially those who operate most naturally from the "S" and "C" profiles.

Personally, I am a "D-C-S" leader, one of the roughly 15% of the population for whom three of the four styles are significant (For me, any trace of the I-style can only be seen with a microscope). I offer this self-revelation only perhaps to suggest from where my capacity and desire for research tasks possibly originates, along with my longing to truly help those pastors who feel forced to play a game they can't seem to win.

Let's help them...please!

Below are my summary observations from this research that suggest possible next steps to consider, but we need to hear yours as well.

Sincerely...Dr. Mike

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP – Be prepared to help "values-based" leaders in their pursuit of vision.

As we have seen, S- and C-style leaders generally demonstrate far more passion for values than for vision. Yet, we know that clear vision is critical to the leadership assignment—people need to know where we're going and in the local church they need to be moving in a missional direction.

While D- and I-style leaders can more easily find direction in the potential for achievement around them, S- and C-style leaders are more motivated to look within. So, questions like, "What do we want for the people we encounter?" or "What do we want people to experience when they encounter us?" may provide an easier path to formulating vision. These are the type of thoughts that S- and C-style leaders can be very passionate about.

For many of these leaders, a single word may capture the core passion they feel. Words like *belonging* or *refuge* or *hope* can describe the this kind of place we want to be. When we help values-based leaders pursue vision, finding that core word that expresses their hearts can be a meaningful first step. Then that idea can be expanded a bit to communicate its fuller

nature, but the vision statements of these friends likely shouldn't move too far from this single idea.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP – *Be prepared to help “vision-based” leaders in their identification of values.*

D- and I-style leaders are clearly vision-focused. The windshield of their lives is filled with possibilities so these leaders might only need our help with focusing on a single direction and sticking to it, as new directions can be easily distracting to many of them.

The greater need of these aggressive, vision-based leaders will be in identifying and prioritizing the values or priorities that are necessary for the journeys they desire to take. Like an excited traveler with map in hand, these leaders may need you to help them pack their suitcase. You see, many vision-based leaders are so passionate about achieving their goals that they can presume that the goal itself is enough to keep us on track and produce what is necessary to achieve it. Reshaping people and environments so that we can actually thrive in the new place doesn't feel like forward movement to many D- and I- leaders and they will need your help to do quality work on their culture. In our experience, once these leaders have identified the vision that excites them, they want to move quickly to the action steps or strategies to get there. But, how tragic to hike to a beautiful mountain lake only to discover that you never learned to swim.

Help your vision-based leaders begin to see the work on values through the lenses they already use. For the “D” portray these values and the steps to nurture them as tasks to achieve and help them identify indicators of progress that can feed their need for achievement. For the “I” take these same steps and help them see how they can strengthen the assembled army and use those indicators of progress as points of celebration. Help these leaders build strategies to achieve values and begin to see the necessary culture of their local church as a goal to achieve alongside the vision that culture will allow them to embrace.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP – *Maximize strengths; minister to weaknesses.*

Perhaps a good first step in applying the content of this report to our coaching efforts is the simple acknowledgement of the differences we've discussed. Now, some of our point has been built around the idea that there are certain behaviors and capacities, especially “D” or “I” approaches, that an “S” or “C” cannot effectively engage. But the greater point is found in what they CAN do. Once we've acknowledged the evident differences, we must take the second step of affirming those differences and learning to celebrate what each can bring to the leadership effort.

So, we steer our attention away from what a leader can't do and give full focus to what they can do. We rummage through their box of strengths looking for ways we can help insert them into the leadership equation. A strengths-based approach for many pastors is long overdue. Helping a pastor maximize those areas where he's already found success can create a momentum, one that can bring the necessary energy or even people resources to help address areas of weakness.

In this document, we have identified some key arenas of weakness for each of the leadership styles. As you work with these leaders, minister to these areas, but don't expect to eliminate them. Focus on the leader's strengths and help them find ways to prevent those weak areas from slowing their momentum or even sabotaging their leadership efforts. The weaknesses will remain as they are a part of the package that includes their strengths, but

we can help limit any negative impact with coaching and with the help of those with other styles.

Simply put, find ways to maximize the creativity or analytical capacities of the C-style leader for his local church. Help the S-style leader use his easy relational style for maximum benefit. Their leadership seasons can prove to be essential in deepening discipleship and equipping each individual for whatever days of expansion may lie ahead. Don't temper the aggressiveness of the "D" or the "I" leader either. Maximize those strengths for the opportunities available to the church right now and look for available resources to help soften the weaknesses that every leader brings with them.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP – *Return discipleship to its place as our central priority.*

It seems likely that if we were to refocus our sense of mission on the mandate to make disciples, the need for S-style and C-style pastors would become even more evident. That's certainly not to suggest that D- and I-style pastors lack such motivation, but the current priority of church growth over health can be quite distracting.

At its core, discipleship can be seen as teaching people to obey the commands of Christ within the context of relationship with them—at least that's what Jesus modeled. When you look at the capacities of the four DiSC profiles, the connection between the "S" and the "C" to this aforementioned core assignment is remarkable. (Maybe this is why 80% of those Christ has called to this work bring these leadership styles with them.)

If discipleship assumed the top spot of the ministry agenda, how might our coaching and consulting efforts be adjusted? How might our measurements change and our reasons to celebrate be altered? Those are probing questions that will require us to work together in finding answers. What we must ask is that if the army of pastors before us has been gifted by God for the work we're called to do, why are their stress and exhaustion levels so high and our perceptions of decline so intense? Is it at least possible that we have taken a part of our work that we're told God would handle—*growth* (1 Cor. 3:7)—and made it a task for us to chase ourselves?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP – *Prioritize health over growth.*

In the big picture of our coaching or consulting with pastors and churches, we must lend our voices to the pursuit of health over growth. The pursuit of health can generally be expected to produce growth, but chasing growth often undermines the development of health in the local church. Certainly growth, rightly motivated, is a future we all want to celebrate, but by now our experience should be loudly screaming that growth is a better viewed as a byproduct than a target.

As we know, this is the unique nature of the kingdom of God. We hear clearly Christ's command to bear fruit but then must heed to the metaphor of the Vine and the branches. If you understand Jesus' point, a branch's capacity for fruit-bearing is actually determined by what is happening on the "other end of the stick." We don't bear fruit by trying to bear fruit, but instead by strengthening our connection to the Vine and allowing His life to flow unhindered through us. Fruit then happens. It proves to be the natural and expected result of the life within the branch.

In the same way, growth—the healthy, sustainable kind—can be expected to emerge from the healthy local church. If we try to grow the church ourselves, we're prone to cut corners, lean on human ingenuities, and sacrifice the deeper, more time- and resource-consuming efforts for the sake of gathering a crowd.

Of course, health is harder to measure which makes it less affirming than the easy calculations of growth. And certainly, cultural values will affirm growth as the end game for every organization, but as we have said, it's people we're supposed to be growing, not churches.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP – *Monitor the expectations we communicate.*

This is hard one. Imagine a world where pastors weren't led to believe that increased attendance was the primary sign that they were doing their job well. Of course, we bristle at the suggestion that growth is the only success measure that we affirm, but that message may still be coming through.

Let's take a step back and ask, *Is growth God's plan for the local church in every season of its journey?* I think we can at least agree that pastors have been led to think this to be true. Listen to our stories or look at the merits that qualify our conference speakers and we see that such a message may be coming through. And given that less than one-third of churches on a good day are actually growing, well, that means a lot of us are scrambling to avoid the impression of failure.

Now, our intent isn't to be critical, but to explore some other possibilities. Could it be that a God who created an earth with four rotating seasons and describes the work of His Kingdom along the progressive patterns of seed time and harvest might have also built different types of seasons within the healthy journey of His Church? Or is the local church designed to live perpetually in amidst Springtime flourishing or autumn harvesting?

Winters come—times when some vestiges of life are hidden and deeper efforts that nourish the soil are occurring underground. Summers both bless and threaten us as warmth brings activity but its extreme can crack soil and burn up our crop. And while early Autumn brings harvest, its latter stages confront patterns of change and plans for a future Spring must put into action.

What if a pastor's leadership style is ideal for winter and the deep work of equipping for a season of growth that another may be assigned to enjoy? What if another excels at taking that which has sprouted in Springtime and nurturing those seedlings through the hot and dry places ahead? My analogy might stumble at points and will certainly look different from the beaches of Florida, but the point is that perhaps a local church's healthy journey is intended to be marked by seasonal shifting where certain leaders are intended to help us get stronger rather than larger.

Noah, a prophet, did his job but he would be viewed as a failure as an Evangelist. 120 years of empty altar calls might be the record for futility, but no one would label him by such a standard. He simply had a different assignment—one that was essential to the plan of God. Could it be that some among us also carry our own different assignments?

This is surely a topic for another setting, but our reflection on the various leadership styles must at least acknowledge the possibility that if an "S" is a different-type pastor than a "D," maybe God has intended him to fulfill a different assignment as well. So how can we expand our ideas of success to include him?

As previously stated, the goal of this document and the research it contains is to launch conversations, not conclude them. As you reflect on the different leadership styles demonstrated by pastors and the possible implications this might suggest, our hope is that

you will add your suggestions to the conversation. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can find the needed solutions together.

YOUR POSSIBLE NEXT STEP -

YOUR POSSIBLE NEXT STEP -

YOUR POSSIBLE NEXT STEP -

SUMMARY

Figure 18 offers a summary of the leadership styles as they apply to various aspects of pastoral leadership described in this report and demonstrates the essential differences these styles exhibit.

Figure 18

	“D”	“I”	“S”	“C”
1. Leadership base	Strategic-base	Motivational-base	Relational-base	Ethical-base
2. Leads best from the...	Board room	Podium	Restaurant booth	Chalkboard
3. Strongest in...	Strategic-thinking	Presentation skills	Building partnerships	Skill development
4. Inner motivation	Do what needs to be done	Do more than the rest	Do what we can	Do what’s right
5. Leads best with...	Vision	Vision	Values	Values
6. Leadership is measured by...	Production	Influence	Trust	Integrity
7. Top priority	Purpose before people	Purpose needs people	People before purpose	People need purpose
8. Key ability	Delegate	Celebrate	Model	Challenge
9. Takes action by...	Developing a plan	Raising an army	Building a relationship	Championing a cause
10. Responds to...	Problems/challenges	People/contacts	Pace/consistency	Procedures/Constraints
11. Vulnerable in...	Management	Isolation	Change	Disorder
12. Fears...	Passivity	Negativity	Conflict	Manipulation
13. Response to conflict	Fight back	Flight; withdraw	Avoid	Tolerate; ignore
14. Say weakness can be...	Mercy	Attention to detail	Making decisions	Unproductive busyness
15. Tends to ignore...	Feelings	Constraints	Need for change	Need to delegate
16. Highest Christian expression	Go	Believe	Love	Obey
17. May connect best to traits of...	Apostle / Prophet	Evangelist / Apostle	Pastor / Teacher	Prophet / Teacher
18. Decadal dominance*	2000s - current	1980s - 1990s	1930s -1950s	1960s - 1970s

*Intended as estimates and not precise measures