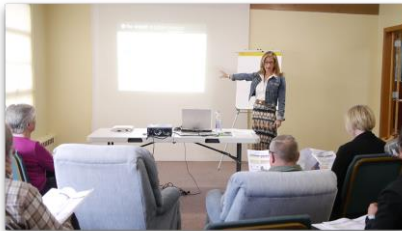




Missoula Church Focuses on Gifts to Build Vision

Integral to the church's vision is helping believers discover their gifts and releasing them into ministry and mission.

By Ron & Geri Swingle, Founders of R@HT



Staff Workshop



Gifts Workshop

Garden City Community Church, a congregation of 60-80 people, located in Missoula, Montana asked The Retreat at Hidden Treasure (R@HT) to partner with them in delivering a weekend of events centered on furthering the focus of equipping the people of Garden City to reach out to their community with their church mission of “*Living Missoula, Loving Christ.*” Pastor Joel’s heart has been to take Christ into the community by serving the people of Missoula.

After a few phone meetings with the church leadership and Pastor Joel, R@HT’s role was defined. Our objective was to support what the leadership was already engaged in regarding educating the congregation about spiritual gifts, helping them discover their own unique gift mix, and then moving them towards

creating their own Personal Mission Statement around which to align their life domains and resources. All with the larger purpose of equipping the church body to engage the surrounding community in ways that fit how they have been wired and shaped by God.

We broke down that objective into the two distinct groups to be addressed: The church staff and leadership, and the membership or congregation. Our intention would be taking the leadership and congregants beyond the Fortune Spiritual Gift study & survey they had already experienced, and into using the knowledge of their gifts to build the leadership team and engage the congregation in passion-specific ministry.

Church Feedback:

“People were impressed with Geri’s knowledge but most of all your openness to share your own heart. They loved the idea of seeing who in the church had similar gifting. For example, I already know of a pair of ladies meeting together each week, having known each other before but now bonding around their gifts.

Your Sunday talk...One non-member I have known for a long time, and who is very sensitive to spiritual nuances, told me Ron knocked him totally off his feet when he said, ‘I’ve got nothing.’ It was such a vulnerable and real talk, with well-chosen personal examples and aspects everyone could connect with. It was unmistakable that this thing we are going after is not our doing at all; it is Christ working in us to desire Him more. Powerful.

The Tools

The tools used in each stage of the rollout were essential success factors in meeting Garden City’s intended goals:

- **Study of Motivational Gifts** (*in small groups*), using Don & Katie Fortune’s book: *Discover Your God-Given Gifts*
- Having small group participants complete the **Fortune Gift Survey** in order to identify their own unique giftings
- Staff & Leadership completing Retreat at Hidden Treasure’s faith-based Strength Assessment, **The Call**, to further understand the layers of their wiring (beyond Motivational Gifts)
- The use of **group exercises** for taking the congregational participants beyond their newly-discovered Motivational Gifts, to considering other elements of their Personal Leverage that play into each one’s unique, God-given Personal Mission
- Creating a small group study using Retreat at Hidden Treasure’s **E-book on Creating Your Personal Mission Statement**

The Approach

Months before R@HT entered the scene, the church leadership initiated the congregation’s education regarding the Spiritual Motivational Gifts by offering a small group study using the Fortune’s book. The leadership was excited to see the enthusiasm of the congregation, demonstrated by the engagement of nearly half of them in signing up for the study! They knew they were on to something the church was ready for!

The Gifts Study culminated with all participants completing the Fortune Survey to discover their own unique Motivational Gift mix. This step impassioned the participants to desire the next step: finding appropriate outlets for using their gifts.

When the leadership approached The Retreat at Hidden Treasure about supporting their efforts to engage their congregation in discovering and using their God-given wiring, we employed The Call strength assessment with the leadership in order to take them beyond the Motivational Gifts, to discovering other essential layers of wiring: Occupational Interests, Thinking Style, and Personality &

Ron was super effective at showing the leadership team how our strengths were playing together to create persistent problems or imbalances. The resistance and misunderstanding of the past 6 months has vanished. The Elders are supportive of and understand what we are doing with small group studies. They seem to be ok with Team Charters and now that we have one done, we can easily remind them of how these work.

(One outcome of the team session) ...spreadsheets created to track each member so we know at what stage of ministry growth they started the summer, where they were just before you came, and where they are at the end of summer. We have gifting information on more than half the church members and on several couples thinking of joining.

Behavior Traits. This information became the basis of our focus on the team-building goal for our involvement. We used their Call results to show graphically how their wiring as a group created team strengths and weaknesses, potentially impacting decisions at all levels of church leadership.

We broke the congregational workshop participants into groups based on each one's strongest Motivational Gift. The response was very positive regarding the support and encouragement they received by being grouped with others who have a similar gift perspective. We used group exercises on *Passions, Personal Leverage, and Variables that Produce a Unique Expression of Your Gifts* to spur group discussion on these essential indicators for discovering Personal Mission.

Attention to a follow-up plan was essential for keeping the momentum going after the weekend workshop. Our E-book on *Creating Your Personal Mission Statement* (PMS) was used in the formation of a small group study on this topic, to be offered after the weekend workshop. Also important, was the final thought given to the congregational participants:

Where do you find yourself right now? Four options were given for their consideration:

- 1. DIY from here (download e-book)*
- 2. Want personal help (contact R@HT)*
- 3. Want more group interaction (join PMS small groups)*
- 4. Ready to go right now/know how you'd like to employ your giftings (contact info given for Follow-up Director).*

The final role for R@HT in the weekend of events was taking part in the Sunday service. The pastor and leadership wanted us to have the opportunity to speak to anyone who hadn't participated in the other events. We delivered the message God had laid on our hearts; it spoke specifically to those who have experienced broken or lost dreams. We used our own purpose journey to encourage those who have felt what it's like to know and experience their mission and then have it ripped from them or flattened through circumstances beyond their control. Our message: Don't give up. It's not the end of the story!

The study we just entered, creating a Personal Mission Statement, has had tremendous response...! We have a four-week class now, two groups of 9-15 meeting, and another round starting in August. So... it looks like we will easily meet our Chartered goal of moving 25 people to their next stage...and far exceed it! This means more than half the church is still on board and eagerly moving forward!"

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assessment/)

The Results

Both the measurable data and the testimonials confirm the success of the leadership's strategy of which the weekend workshop led by The Retreat at Hidden Treasure was the climax. With an average Sunday attendance of 40-50, to have 43 show up to participate in the Saturday Gifts session was way beyond expectations! And when the leadership announced sign-ups for the upcoming PMS small group study using the R@HT E-book, they were thrilled to have enough interest for two groups of 9-15, and another round starting in August. That translates into not only meeting, but exceeding, the leadership's newly-chartered goal of moving 25 people to their next stage of engagement! Or stated another way, more than half the church is still on board and eagerly moving forward in their pursuit of purposeful living!

About The Retreat at Hidden Treasure:

Our mission is to help men, women and married couples discover God's plan for their lives by facilitating and coaching them to exceed their

own limitations. We also do keynote speaking on topics around purpose, mission, and vision for women, men and couple retreats. We are passionate about working with churches and organizations ready to be mission-driven as well.

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