**Handout #2-1 – Connecting Passion, Abilities and Resources**

Right now, we are going to use the New Beginnings Report (and all its accompanying data and analysis) to try to assess three areas of our congregation’s life:

**What kind of ministry are we passionate about in this congregation?** We will take a look at program, the appreciative inquiry questions, and outreach ministries.

**What kind of ministry/program are we currently really good at, given our congregation’s ages and our opinions about what we do well?**

**What financial assets, revenue sources, and leadership resources do we have to live out our mission?**

Our task is to take the data from the report and make a group decision about the relative strength of each of these areas of our congregation’s life.

Before we move to analyzing the report, let’s take a few moments to try to understand why we’re looking at these three areas of our congregation’s life. This construct comes from the work of Jim Collins, in his book, Good to Great. In this book Collins suggests that organizations that are growing have strength in all three areas. He also says that these three strength areas overlap, so that there is a clear center which is understood to be the organization’s core mission or reason for being.

To help you understand a bit more about Collin’s assumptions, take a few moments to think about your own personal mission for your life. What is it that you are passionate about in life? What is it that you are really good at? What resources do you possess (financial, relational, educational, etc.)? How do these three realms of your life overlap?

To help you think about this missional focus for yourself, let’s look at an example of someone who seems to have achieved all three aspects of a personal mission in a way that the aspects or areas of life overlap. Take a look at NFL quarterback, Peyton Manning.

There is no question that Peyton is passionate about football. From a very young age he wanted to be on the football field and he loved playing with his father and brothers. Secondly, his skills are champion-level – he is one of the best quarterbacks of all time. Third, even before he was winning professional games, he found a way through sponsorships, college scholarships, and family support to pay for what he could be best at, and what he was clearly passionate about. He also credits his family, friends, teammates, and coaches as valuable resources.

To better understand God’s call on our personal lives, it helps to discern these elements (passion, what you are best at, and resources) and find the places they overlap. This may very well be the kind of person God is calling you to be.

Now the group will work together to take these same principles of assessment to look at our congregation’s current life.

**Handout #2-2 – Where Passion, Abilities and Resources Meet**

**Use this page as a guide to understanding the three circles. As you think about the data from the New Beginnings Assessment, ask yourself these questions:**

1. **What are the people in our congregation deeply passionate about?** We LOVE to do this (or these particular things). Time flies when we do this. When we know we’re going to do this, we all anticipate it with great excitement! We believe in it and are willing to sacrifice other things in order to focus on this.

2. **Which ministries or programs are we really good at?** These programs or ministries are what we’re known for – the ministries and programs that make us unique in the context/neighborhood which is ours. Our “best at” is that ministry or ministries that we were created for! It is that purpose to which we feel “called.” Our “best at” allows us to utilize our God-given talents and gifts and apply them in a rich and meaningful way to be and share the good news of Jesus Christ in our community. Ideally, our “best at” clearly matches the needs of the neighborhood or community in which we are located.

3. **What resources do we have available to us and are they ready to be mobilized?** Many churches see a lack of resources (such as deficit budgets and dwindling savings accounts). In this discussion, you are encouraged to see the abundance that God has provided to your congregation. We stand on the shoulders of generations of people who have given sacrificially for this congregation and its facilities. How are we doing as stewards of those gifts? Maybe offerings are down, but there are still financial resources that God is entrusting to this church. Consider the church facilities. How much of the building do we really use – and how much money do we spend to heat, cool, insure, and maintain this space? Where are the unused or under-used rooms that need to be put to better use for mission? How might our location be a resource, or our church grounds? One church saw their large undeveloped yard with new eyes – and turned it into a dog park for the community!