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Anna Baker:

Welcome to the Vanderbloemen Leadership Podcast. I'm your host, Anna Baker, Marketing Manager here at Vanderbloemen. Before we dive into today's conversation, I wanted to remind you that our founder and CEO, William Vanderbloemen will be speaking at XPastor Seminar, 2021 in Dallas, Texas this coming February.

Anna Baker:

XPastor knows that travel might be a challenge this year, so you'll also have the opportunity to attend online for a discounted price. We love connecting with you at this event, so we also have a discount code for anyone listening today. Head to our show notes, to find the link to register and use code Vanderbloemen at checkout for your discounted price.

Anna Baker:

On today's podcast episode William Vanderbloemen, our founder and CEO talks with Karl Vaters, author, speaker and teaching pastor at Cornerstone Christian Fellowship. And this conversation Karl shares the four main points from his newest book, The Church Recovery Guide: How Your Congregation Can Adapt and Thrive after a Crisis.

Anna Baker:

In this book and podcast, Karl outlines practical steps that you can take to help your church thrive after COVID-19, and be prepared for the next storm that may rise. While COVID is the crisis we're currently facing, his insights are timeless and applicable for navigating any challenge you may be facing today, or in the future.

Anna Baker:

Tweet your takeaways from today's show using the #vandercast, and be sure to check out today's show notes to join our Facebook group where we post behind the scenes content. Here's William's conversation with Karl Vaters.

William Vanderbloemen:

Well, hey, everybody. We're so glad to have you back and to have another fantastic leader on today, Karl Vaters is with us. Karl, thank you for coming back on the show. It's good to see you and to hear your voice.

Karl Vaters:

Oh, you're welcome. Always good to be back.

William Vanderbloemen:

Yeah. And we were just talking before we started recording, I said, "Is that Dutch Vaders?" And I guess it's not, right?

Karl Vaters:

No, it's not with the D, it's both Dutch and Star Wars.

William Vanderbloemen:

That's right. So I'm Dutch, it didn't get any more Dutch than Vanderbloemen. And I don't know how as a kid, I didn't get it during star... I should've known dark father, but who knew? You know.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah, well, I caught it right away. I'm old enough to have watched it the first week it came out back in the '70s and we're sitting there and we don't know any of the characters. It's a brand new movie that just came out. And Darth Vader comes on screen out of the smoke, right? Behind all the stormtroopers for the first time ever you see him.

Karl Vaters:

And I'm a preacher's kid. And my dad is very tall and dark and kind of an, it was at that time a very imposing figure. And I heard as one of the church kids next to me, leaned over to one of the other church kids next to me and said, "He looks like pastor Vaters." And then 30 seconds later when they called him Lord Vader, every one of our jaws hit the ground.

William Vanderbloemen:

Oh, that's awesome.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah.

William Vanderbloemen:

Oh, wow. Well, this is not a Star Wars podcast, but that's to let go. So Karl serves a particular part of the church and we have a differing opinion on what that's called. But Karl, particularly, tell us just a little bit of your story for folks that may not know you and then how you're resourcing your part of the kingdom, particularly through crisis with this website that you and I've discussed before.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah. I've been in pastoral ministry for over 40 years, 27 plus years where I am right now in Orange County, California. Came to this church, actually came into pastoral ministry just at the beginning of The Church Growth Movement. Like I was trained in Bible college from previous generations' way of doing things. And within five years of me being out Church Growth Movement hits, and I look at it and go, this is all new.

Karl Vaters:

I've got to unlearn and relearn everything. And I did on my own I found all the church growth stuff, I pursued it. And when I came to the church I at right now, we're in Orange County, California, 8 miles South of Disneyland on a Main Street. Literally, tens of thousands of cars drive right by our church door every single day. So it's a tiny little building but I thought, we're going to be big soon.

Karl Vaters:

I mean, there was this guy around the corner from us who was growing like crazy and they didn't even have a permanent facility named Rick Warren. So I thought, "If he can do it, I can do it." And he did it,

and I didn't. [crosstalk 00:04:31] I know, right. Now everybody bought Hawaiian shirts there for awhile. Like that was going to get us there and somehow it didn't work.

Karl Vaters:

But I embraced The Church Growth Movement and I'm grateful that I did because I learned a lot of really, really good things. The Church Growth Movement has brought some great things to the body of Christ. The emphasis on being missional, the emphasis on making sure you're accurate about what you're counting. Really, really good things.

Karl Vaters:

But what I discovered after attempting and trying all of the principles and doing the best I could, following these principles did not turn out to me to bring the inevitable numerical growth that I seem to feel like they promised. I'm not going to put that on them, that's how I read it. I don't know that anybody has promised numerical growth, but that's how it felt to me.

Karl Vaters:

And after not getting the numerical growth, but discovering that we had a healthy church anyway, I started thinking what does a healthy, smaller church look like? And how do we get there? And I had a hard time finding good material. Most of the material started with the bigger and faster-growing churches and then reverse-engineered how they got there. And very little that I could find was about a healthy small church, a healthy and missional and outreaching small church.

Karl Vaters:

So I just started scrambling where I could. I wrote down every lesson we learned along the way and then started putting it out there for small churches. So as you and I have talked about before, small church is the S word for you guys. [crosstalk 00:06:02] But I've claimed it.

Karl Vaters:

In fact, when I started doing this ministry, I really debated whether or not to use the term small. And I used everything from normal size to micro to, I tried to come up with some other word. And finally, where I landed on it was this, if I'm trying to say that small isn't bad, then I can't be afraid to use the term.

William Vanderbloemen:

Oh, that's brilliant. That's brilliant.

Karl Vaters:

That's where I landed. Now for folks like you, and for folks who are ministry to all kinds of sizes of churches, I understand why you look at it and you avoid the term because small does carry the weight of inferior for a lot of people. And so in your context not using it makes sense, but in my context, I have to reclaim the term

William Vanderbloemen:

Well, and if we're honest Karl, people who are in a church the size you're talking about, have a self-image that it's a small church. So they identify with the term. You use the term, it's easy. For us, I don't

ever want our team to lose sight of where the bulk of God's church, at least in North America is. And in Protestant, North America, the bulk of the church, the normal church is 130 people that show up on a Sunday.

William Vanderbloemen:

And there are four or five families that have kind of been running it forever and it might be healthy and it might not, but that's normal life. And there are a lot of people that go to bigger church and we serve, over half of the largest 400 churches in the country we serve them and we love them and we're so proud of them, but I never want folks to forget that it's the normal-sized church.

William Vanderbloemen:

And I want to get to, you've got a great book coming out. But Karl, I'm talking to pastors and it's kind of a weird year.

Karl Vaters:

Kind of?

William Vanderbloemen:

I mean, how many different things can come at us? And I get, we're not the church in Northern Sudan. Nobody's crucifying us in public yet. There's real persecution that's going on that's not us, but come on.

William Vanderbloemen:

I mean, coronavirus, racial injustice, and tension that comes from that on both sides of the equation for pastors that are in normal-sized churches. An election that polarizes dogs, so how much can we take? And now you're leaving, you've got a little fire going on out there.

Karl Vaters:

Little bit.

William Vanderbloemen:

And, yeah. I mean, didn't you say... What did you tell me, you hadn't seen the sun in how long?

Karl Vaters:

It's been about three days since we've seen the sun through the smoke and we're not close enough to the fire to see the glow at night, but the smoke is thick I can't see 200 yards.

William Vanderbloemen:

Wow. Well, so here's the reason I'm bringing all this up. I spend a lot of time talking to pastors, we survey a lot. Thousands and thousands of pastors. My gut is telling me 80 or 90% of the pastors I've talked to are about one more crisis away from hanging it up. And there've been some great studies, Stetser has done one. Tom Raynor has done one. They're all saying the same thing.

William Vanderbloemen:

And some of it is fatigued from crisis. But some of it I'm discovering when I dig underneath for some guys, not all, but for some women and men in ministry that are out there right now, they're working their tail off and they're seeing no fruit. And it's almost like we've gotten punched drunk on the idea that if I put the formula together and I do it right, I will see fruit.

William Vanderbloemen:

And now you're just sowing seed and not seeing any fruit. Which frankly, is kind of life in the Old Testament. You know, the entirety of the Old Testament is pretty much that story. But, as a guy who plugged in all the formulas and tried all the things and it didn't work, did you ever run into a wall like a fatigue? And if so, did you learn anything from it that might help some people who are really tired out there right now?

Karl Vaters:

Well, yes, I absolutely ran into a wall. That's where my first book came from. Half of my first book is my story of frustration and almost leaving ministry. And it actually, part of it came, strangely enough here we were in this church. We came to this tiny little church. They'd been through five pastors in the previous 10 years.

Karl Vaters:

They had almost voted to close the doors. I came in and like I say, Church Growth Movement was just beginning so we were going to take the world by storm. We got it healthy, we got the numbers up to above 100 rather than below 30, but it kept stalling out there. He kept holding at that spot. And I'm the guy who wants to see things with clear eyes.

Karl Vaters:

So I brought in friends and strangers and unchurched people and church growth experts. I brought in a bunch of people at various times. Show us what's happening. Tell us what's going wrong. Why aren't we getting the numbers up? And virtually every person who came in said, whether solicited or not said, "Oh, this church won't be small for long." I mean, you have this tweak here, tweak that there, everybody can.

Karl Vaters:

But you guys are so strong, so missional, so friendly, so outward reaching the quality level of what you're doing is so high on every level. You will not be small for long. And the first few times you hear that it sounds awesome. But time 87 after four or five years of staying at that number, you start crying, okay, somebody's missing something here.

Karl Vaters:

And I did. I went through a season of burnout, almost left ministry, found myself in therapy. So yes, I'm a pastor and I've been to therapy and pastoral ministry put me there. And through that season, that was where the... And by therapy I mean it was a pastoral therapy. A guy who had been a pastor himself and now did mostly counseling with pastors.

Karl Vaters:

And at one point after me walking through all that frustration he said, "Karl, you have to figure out how to define success in ministry without numbers attached to it." And he might as well have been speaking a different language. I didn't know what meant and I told him that. I said, "I don't even know what that means." He says, "Quite frankly, I don't either, but we have to figure that out together."

William Vanderbloemen:

What'd you figure out?

Karl Vaters:

Well, yeah. What I did was I looked at the church and I asked myself if I didn't expect the numbers to go up if I remove the numbers from this, can I look at this congregation and would I call it healthy? And immediately, in fact, I believe it was the counselor who asked me that. And my answer was so fast and so adamant that it shocked both of us. I went, "Yeah, of course, think it's great."

Karl Vaters:

And was like, we both looked at it and went, "Oh, okay. Well, how do you know?" Well, we all know what the factors of a healthy church are, of any size. We all know what that list is. Great commandment, great commission, friendly people. We all go through the list. The problem is we usually get to that list by looking at the fastest growing and biggest churches and then say, and here's the things that they're doing.

Karl Vaters:

And we seldom even consider, let's take a look at a smaller church that isn't growing numerically and find out are they doing those same qualities as well? And if you're doing the qualities of a healthy church and you don't happen to be growing numerically, maybe that's not a problem to fix. Maybe it's a part of a strategy that God wants to use because there's a whole lot of small out there.

William Vanderbloemen:

Enough to that, call it normal. But-

Karl Vaters:

Yeah, exactly.

William Vanderbloemen:

... go on forever and ever about it so. But the real reason I wanted to have you on, I think you've set a world record. Well, I don't know you and Raynor might be the Usain Bolt of publishing. But you had an idea in July, you wrote it down and now a book is out. And first of all, just props to you for disrupting the publishing world and having it work that fast. But what a resource to churches right now.

William Vanderbloemen:

The title of the book is The Church Recovery Guide: How Your Congregation Can Adapt and Thrive after a Crisis. And I want to personally thank you for not using the word pivot in your title. I'm so tired of that word. But that's just me. But okay, you've been through some crises. You're working what I would call a very normal-sized church. Walk me through a few of the lessons that made you say this needs to get

written down. This needs to get out. People need to hear what I've stumbled through and can now share

Karl Vaters:

Sure. When this was happening, the book was actually, I wrote it in May and it came out in July. So I actually sent it to the printer the day of or the day after the George Floyd incident. So none of that was even on my radar when I wrote it and sent it in. It was one of those, do I need to update it? And as I looked at it I realized, no, it's about crisis.

Karl Vaters:

It's about during crisis, whatever the crisis may happen to be. So it's universal for that. But what inspired me to do so was I was having a whole lot of conversations with normal-sized church pastors. And I was hearing some fairly common things. I was hearing from pastors who were really thriving and doing well. And by thriving, I don't mean, hey, our church is doing well while the world's falling apart.

Karl Vaters:

What I mean is, our church is blessing our community and bringing relief to this situation. That's thriving. That's what I mean by thriving. And so I was talking to churches that were thriving and busting their community. And I was talking to churches and pastors, as you mentioned already, who not only will be leaving ministry soon but have left ministry or churches that already are closed or on the verge of closing.

Karl Vaters:

And I noticed a handful of primary themes that played out. And I'm in fact, I noticed three key things that were the differences between the churches that were thriving in the churches that were collapsing. So let me walk you through those three. And then I added a fourth one that only come up in the last few weeks that didn't make it into the book. But the three things that I noticed were, first of all, resources.

Karl Vaters:

The churches that had resources put away were able to weather the immediate hit of low offerings, having to buy technical equipment to get online and so on. 10, 12 years ago I made the decision as the pastor of our church that we will not be going month to month anymore. We're going to start putting money away into the bank until we have at least three months' worth of budget, liquid cash in the bank for the next time there's an emergency.

Karl Vaters:

It took us over 10 years to get there, but it happened about three years ago. So when this hit, we were able to go out and buy the equipment we needed. We were able to deal with the initial hit. I know churches that collapsed and were gone within two or three weeks after this started because they couldn't take one week without a full offering because they're that close to the edge.

Karl Vaters:

So you've got to have resources ready. The ones that had resources made it, the ones that don't aren't. Secondly, you've got to have team-based leadership. The churches that are where the pastor is doing everything they are not doing well because the pastor's already been running at a hundred or 110% and

now they're about to burn out. But the churches that have team-based leadership, now what's happening it's just interesting.

Karl Vaters:

I was talking to a lot of pastors who are saying, "I'm getting people volunteering to help who've never volunteered before." Why, because the need is so obvious right now. But their churches that have just a total, everything has to flow through the pastor. The pastors are going, "I don't know where to put my volunteers." Why, because they don't have a team to put them on. But the churches that have team-based leadership, they're sharing the load.

Karl Vaters:

And in fact, our church is stronger by every single measurement today than it was when this began. And a big part of it is because the team is stepping up and doing so well. And then the third one to that is adaptability. Churches that have an idea that church must be this way on this day, in this place, used to singing these songs, the more hardcore you are on church must look like this the harder it is for you now because you're having to make adaptations and they feel like a compromise to your values.

Karl Vaters:

Whereas churches that were used to making adaptations to their methodology already, they were able to pivot. There you go. They were able to make that turn much more easily. And then the fourth one I'll add to that because it happened all since the book is unity. Churches that are operating in a unified way, and by unity I don't mean uniformity.

Karl Vaters:

I mean like our church, every election, half my church has happy and half of my churches upset. We've got people from all different political backgrounds in our church, but we're unified behind the mission. But churches that have to find their unit or that predominantly find their unity outside of the mission of Christ or who were already upset at each other, they are splintering now like nothing we've ever seen before.

William Vanderbloemen:

So as you think through this and churches who are already in this and they're like, don't have the resources. Wow, I'm doing all the other duties as necessary. We kind of do things the same way. They're like, you just named the four horsemen of the apocalypse and I'm dead in the water.

William Vanderbloemen:

What would be your advice to somebody that's seeing warning signs or hearing, oh, my goodness the alarm bell is going off as you list this. Walk me through each of those four things and give me a tangible step that you could take to start to mitigate each of those four circumstances if they're not in a good spot.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah. That's a great question. The first thing we need to understand is, while you may feel that it's too late to catch up now for this particular crisis, this will happen again. I don't mean necessarily a pandemic, hopefully not. But at some point in your area, there's going to be a tornado or a flood or a

hurricane or an earthquake or a fire. Bad stuff happens. We live in a broken world where bad stuff happens.

Karl Vaters:

So it's not a matter of if there's going to be another crisis, but when. So if you make it through this particular one, you have to do these things to prepare for the next time. Plus just to be a healthy church even if there's no crisis. So on the first one, resources. Begin to do what I did, make it a priority to put away at least some money every single month into the bank that will be held until the crisis thing comes.

Karl Vaters:

It's like the first baby step of every single financial planner that tells you get \$1,000 in savings so that the next time you've got a problem with your car you don't have to put it on the credit card, right? So that's step number one, start putting money away. So that's step number one for resources

William Vanderbloemen:

I'm going to interrupt you. Did you guys participate in the PPP loan program from the government?

Karl Vaters:

We did, particularly for our preschool which is a state-

William Vanderbloemen:

Yeah. We did. I mean, and [crosstalk 00:21:02].

Karl Vaters:

Yeah, and our church did, too. Yeah.

William Vanderbloemen:

I think the program is still open. There is still funding that's available. As we're recording now I might be wrong, but I believe that's the case. And folks can go to... We're going to send out all these links because Karl's got a bunch of them. But churchcovid-19.com and find, you know, we've got a loan calculator and an application and all totally free.

William Vanderbloemen:

But if you're stuck and you're like, I need money, right this minute it might be worth looking at because a lot of... I think something North of 25% of all the churches that received aid we actually counseled. It's a weird time when the King is helping Nehemiah rebuild the wall. It's a time when the government that's not part of the church is helping so [crosstalk 00:21:51].

Karl Vaters:

No, we especially needed it for our preschool because we've got a preschool that serves almost 100 kids and we had to close the doors immediately. And it was closed for almost three months here. So it's not like a church where it's a little less tight, it was zero money coming in and we had 13 employees to pay.

Karl Vaters:

So it kept those people paid and we could not have kept them paid no matter what. Because even three months of budget put away for the church was not enough to cover the salaries for 13 teachers.

William Vanderbloemen:

Yeah. I think history will smile on that moment from the government, and it's unprecedented. Nothing-

Karl Vaters:

Oh, and we're sure is unprecedented. Yeah. Nothing like it.

William Vanderbloemen:

Nothing has ever happened like that. Unless you do go to like, how did they rebuild the wall with Nehemiah? Well, a foreign government paid for it.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah. Good stuff. Yeah. So yeah. So-

William Vanderbloemen:

So second thing. If you're living and you're all alone. You're like, oh my gosh, what's a tangible step to get out of this mess and start to have a healthier situation?

Karl Vaters:

Look for people who are passionate and able to give you some time. Don't look for people with titles. I don't even think you need to start with people who are necessarily spiritually mature. Spiritual maturity comes with working for the cause more than it comes through almost anything else. So if you can find someone even as a baby Christian, but they're passionate and they're available. Start working with them, start mentoring them, develop a relationship with them.

Karl Vaters:

That's how it happened here 27 years ago, I came to a church with a bunch of very discouraged seniors and one kid who was 20 years old who was trying to run a youth group. And I invested everything into him and we're still working together today. And in fact, he is now my lead pastor and I miss teaching pastor. So start with willingness and passion and just start with one. And then thirdly, on team-based leadership. I've got quarantine brain. I just know at some point or another the stuff I'm supposed to know is just going to completely leave me.

William Vanderbloemen:

We only do things one way and we don't know how to do anything different.

Karl Vaters:

Oh yeah, adaptability. Yeah, right now, here's a step for adaptability for pastors who have been having a hard time moving their church forward. If not now, when? There will be no greater time where your church will be ready for huge methodological change than right now. If they're not ready now, it will never, ever, ever happen because the need for it right now is more obvious than it ever has been or

probably ever will be in our lifetime. And here's my immediate step for that, for smaller, normal-sized churches.

Karl Vaters:

If most small churches are trying to do too much, maybe because the church used to be bigger. And so they had a ton of programs and the church has gotten smaller, but they kept all the programs. And as a pastor, you've been trying to simplify it, but you can't say goodbye to any of these programs that are so precious to people. Well, you've had to drop them all during quarantine, be slow to pick them back up again.

Karl Vaters:

And some of them, maybe you just never do pick them back up again. This is a time to start simplifying. So that's the first step of adaptability, it's not adding new stuff. It's simplifying and paring it down. This has forced us to pair down to the bare bones. Don't be quick to complicate things again. That's I think step number one for adaptability. And then for unity, please, please, please be more passionate and spend more time talking about Jesus than about politics. Please.

William Vanderbloemen:

Yeah. Well, and as pressing as the politics are. Whatever your politics are they're pressing, right? Is there any season... I mean, there's such a lack of certainty right now. And people need some certainty. And I'm a old Presbyterian, so we did Heidelberg Catechism and it's what is your only comfort in life and death.

William Vanderbloemen:

And my only comfort in life is the sure and certain hope that at the cost of his own blood Jesus, and it goes on and on and on. And people are more ready to hear about Jesus and just Jesus than I think we'll ever see in our lifetime.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah. Absolutely. And if you're worried that talking about Jesus and not talking about politics is somehow ignoring the issues of the day, then I don't think you have a clear understanding of the power of the gospel. And this is not an abandoning of political principles. It is a centering of them where they belong.

Karl Vaters:

Every time, if you go through the conversations Jesus had with his enemies, for instance, they were constantly trying to trip him up by bringing up the big political or moral issues of the day and Jesus had away of saying, it's not about that. It's about this. And short-circuiting their desire to have an argument over politics or philosophy and saying, it's really about the kingdom of God and going one level deeper.

William Vanderbloemen:

That's good.

Karl Vaters:

And we as pastors need to have that wisdom.

William Vanderbloemen:

And I'll just throw in an anecdote. I was a little bit of a Greek geek in the seminary. And every time they tried to trap him, I'm remembering now the wisdom of Jesus and how he answered them. The Greek reads, they asked him a question and he answered the question by asking them a question and he asked them asking.

William Vanderbloemen:

This is like a real ruler. So it's so repetitive, but there's a point. And it's like, you don't have to make a statement, you can ask a question. That's a great way to... It's not a dodge, it's not a punt it's just how about asking a question that points to a bigger thing so.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah. Yeah. And especially right now, people are looking for, they've got enough disruption they need some stability.

William Vanderbloemen:

So in a need for stability back to the book, The Church Recovery Guide, again, this is how your congregation can adapt and thrive after a crisis. You've got these three, now we've got the bonus material now, we should have a bonus study guide with 0.4, but you've got these three things you saw. Any other lessons that you've learned since the writing of the book that you'd say, oh, I wish that had gotten in there?

Karl Vaters:

Oh yes. Well, a lot. But here's the one that occurs to me right off the top. I've got a friend who is a neurobiologist. Her doctorate is in neurobiology, so it's the physical construction of the brain. And so I was talking with her about this and... Well, I'm probably going to be doing video interview with her soon.

Karl Vaters:

But the premise of our conversation was she said, "When people are in crisis, they cannot hear explanations." In fact, the word she used was trauma. And I think she's correct. When people are in trauma, they can't hear explanations. She says, physically in the brain what happens is when you're in trauma, the action and emotion centers light up like crazy and the logic center starts shutting down.

William Vanderbloemen:

It's fight or flight.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah, exactly. This is why we train our military so that when the trauma of warfare hits, they go to muscle memory because their logic center is breaking down. So they go back to muscle memory because they can't rely on their logic then. They rely on their commands and on their training. Right? I mean, any person who's been inactive military and has been in a combat situation there's a phrase, "Just rely on your training, lean on your training over and over again."

Karl Vaters:

Because your logic is gone at that point. The trauma takes it away. And she said, "Everybody is at least at some level of trauma right now. And multiple layers of multiple traumas. And everybody in your life is triggered by something different than what triggered you." So we're all fighting a different battle on a trigger. So the thing that triggers me is not a big deal with someone else, but they're triggered by something and I look at it and go, but that's a big deal to you?

Karl Vaters:

Why isn't this one? Because what triggers you is not necessarily related to what you value. It's simply an emotional trigger. It's the straw that broke the camel's back. So I asked her, "What do we do in that situation?" Because I've been trained to give explanations. That's what us pastors do. And if they can't hear an explanation, now, what do we do?

Karl Vaters:

And she said, "What we need is we need familiar surroundings and familiar rituals. We need to do the things that give us comfort in the places that give us comfort." Now the challenge in a lot of places is that's been removed as well. So what we as pastors need to do is lean less on the explanations and more on presence. On being there for people. That's what's going to bring the healing.

William Vanderbloemen:

If you listen to our podcast at all, I promise you I did not send Karl the script and give him that question ahead of time. Karl, I'm serious when I say this, churches hire us to help them find their pastor. The new gold standard is going to be the priestly gift, the shepherding gifts, the presence, gifts, the gifts of pastoral care, the person on person gifts.

William Vanderbloemen:

Where for a number of reasons. I mean, preaching, hey, guess what? Everybody can YouTube the best preaching in the world now and they've all figured out how to do it. So if you think they're listening to you because you're better than what they can get elsewhere, forget it. It's now about presence. And I couldn't agree with you more. Wow.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah, if when we're allowed to meet again if people will get out of their homes and come to our physical building, we need give them something that they can only get by coming to the physical building. And they can get better singing and better preaching on their phone. What they can't get, is the physical presence of people who know them, who love them and who they can trust.

William Vanderbloemen:

Wow. Wow. Well, so tell us, you've put together a very particular website for small church pastors. They're looking for resources during this, too. Give us those dot dot.

Karl Vaters:

Sure. Yeah. It's my website karlvaters.com. So you just have to probably go to your show notes since you know how to spell it right. Because that's always the first challenge, but it's easier than Carey Nieuwhof. So he and I both have the same challenge, and people seem to be able to find both of us.

Karl Vaters:

So karlvaters.com/spark and SPARK stands for the Small-Church Pastors Adapt and Recover Kit. So anything that we write or find that's related to COVID to recovery, to making a pivot, to figuring out how to do things in a new way, all of that will be at karlvaters.com/spark.

William Vanderbloemen:

That's fantastic. Karl, I could go on for hours and hours, and I don't even know how long to go on anymore. We used to do 20 to 25 minutes because that's how long a commute was. But as I told you before, nobody's commuting now so we don't know how long to go.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah, well, a minute and a half for the commute from the bedroom to the living room is [crosstalk 00:32:47].

William Vanderbloemen:

Yeah, no kidding. No kidding. But I know you're busy. Every pastor that's thriving right now that I hear, even if they're not depressed, they're tired because they're working like crazy.

William Vanderbloemen:

And I want to thank you for taking time when you're right in the middle of the thick of it to come and pour into our audience. I know it's blessed several and I hope people will grab the book and any final word of encouragement to those listening today?

Karl Vaters:

Yeah. Speaking of that exhaustion, twice in the last six months I've had days where I've woken up, had breakfast, taken a nap, had lunch, taken a nap, had dinner, watched YouTube or Netflix and gone to bed. And at the end of that felt guilty because I slept the day away.

Karl Vaters:

And then I had to realize as active as I am, as action-oriented as I am, if my body is capable of sleeping the day away, it's because my body needed to sleep the day away. Trauma demands rest. So find purposeful ways to rest or your body will take it out of you in unhealthy ways. So rest, rest, rest.

William Vanderbloemen:

I couldn't agree more. One of my, if I pull through this with any degree of success, I think it's a long way to the finish line.

Karl Vaters:

Yeah, I believe so.

William Vanderbloemen:

One of the things that I've just fallen into is the 15-minute nap some point in the day. Just 15 minutes, no more no less and it's like magic.

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Karl Vaters:

It is. Yeah. It's not a diversion from performance. It is an enhancement to performance.

William Vanderbloemen:

Well, with limited space, when you're writing a gospel you need to manage your word count. There's a reason there are all these stories about Jesus was sleeping, Jesus was taking a nap.

Karl Vaters:

Yes. Yeah.

William Vanderbloemen:

Well, thanks, Karl. We really appreciate you making the time. The book again is The Church Recovery Guide. How Your Congregation Can Adapt and Thrive after a Crisis, it's Moody Press. And as always, we'll have show notes that have how to spell both of our last names, no links to Star Wars but it would be a great supplement to the conversation.

William Vanderbloemen:

You can go to vendornews.com and just put your email address in and we'll send you the notes and a preview of some of the things that are coming up. Karl, many blessings to you as you're on the front line, and wow, what a year? Hang in there. You're doing good work.

Karl Vaters:

Thanks. Appreciate all the help you're providing to guys like me.

William Vanderbloemen:

Take care.

Anna Baker:

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