



Greater Sydney SDA Conference

The U-Turn Church

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The U-Turn Church – New Direction for Health and Growth

Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2011.

Holy Zeal

- Great programs, a new strategy, and reading this book are not enough to bring an enduring U-Turn experience to your church. The essential piece in any real U-Turn is what we like to call holy zeal.
- A U-Turn is never birthed in the heart of a church leader or a desperate church board; rather, it comes from the loving heart of God.
- A U-Turn is not about saving our church, filling our worship centre with more people, impressing our denominational leaders with our yearly report, or increasing our offering so we can pay bills and keep our church afloat for another year.
- A U-Turn is about the glory of God

Wrong motives:

- Self-preservation
- Increased income
- Larger attendance
- A U-Turn is first and foremost about lifting up God. It is about bringing the refreshing water of Jesus to a parched and thirsty world.
- Seek to grow people to maturity in faith.

Urgency

- When a church feels a sense of urgency they will change
- Need to see why they would change and the price for not changing
- What are you urgent about?

Crystal-Clear Vision

- Zeal and urgency are a gift... only when we are heading in the right direction.
 - We exist to... what does your church exist for?
 - Remain biblical to the core.
 - Vision keeps your leaders and key influences on the same page.
 - Remind and review...often
 - Vision leaks,
 - Guard the front door: Be sure new people know what your church is about.
 - Bless the past as you move into the future
 - Be specific, concise and measurable
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- Take time to evaluate your membership process – how do you connect and educate new attendees. Take steps needed to make sure all the new people coming to your church have a clear picture of the church vision and how they can enter in and support it.

The Power of Prayer

- Prayer is the most powerful tools God uses to change a church.
- Consider creating a prayer room at your church
- Consider establishing a prayer team

Unleashing Leaders

- Some of the best resources for a dynamic U-Turn are free, plentiful and already sitting right in your church!

U-Turn Roadblocks:

Roadblock 1 – An Unhealthy Understanding of Leadership

- See every person as having gifts to offer and more people than the pastor have the leadership gift.

Roadblock 2 – Antiquated Committee Structures

Roadblock 3 – Faithless Finances

- Model generosity

Roadblock 4 – Lack of Appreciation

- There should be a commitment to celebrate, rejoice, bless and affirm those who serve faithfully.

- Make a list of five leaders who are faithfully serving in your church. What will you do to encourage them this week and then make this a discipline?

Roadblock 5 – Slots instead of Significance.

- The issue is not the particular curriculum or tool you use. The key for a healthy U-Turn is that your church commits to helping people find a place of service and leadership that fits their unique gifting.

Roadblock 6 – The Spiritual Maturity of Leaders

- Churches that are hungry to see renewal will begin with their leaders.
- When our key influencers in the church are falling deeper and deeper in love with God and spending time sitting at the feet of the Saviour, they will make a personal U-Turn and the church will follow.
- When our leaders are overflowing with the Holy Spirit, they will be ready to take the steps and make the changes that are needed.
- Small groups before board meeting – accountability.
- Leaders reading guides.
- Often we begin by trying to change the whole congregation. A better strategy is to start with the leaders.
- In a sense, a number of personal and small U-Turns combine to become a tipping point for the congregation.

High Expectations

Everyone wants to be part of something big and world-changing...This rarely happens when we have low expectations.

Expecting Intimacy with God:

- A U-Turn church sets high expectations for personal spiritual engagement and growth. There is no other way. This is the call of Jesus and we can invite people to no less.
- A U-Turn church is not about attracting more people, filling seats, or stemming the tide of decline. At the heart of it all is the desire to see people grow intimate with God.
- Work at finding ways to help people grow deeper in their relationship with the Saviour.
- Work with each ministry in the church to help people develop spiritual maturity and engage in personal spiritual disciplines – this includes all age groups.

Expecting Involvement Through Joyful Service:

- Once people begin to grow in their personal walk with the Saviour, serving is a natural by-product. When we love Jesus, we grow to love His children.
- Too often new churches give the message “If you are tired of churches that ask you for too much and don’t entertain you, come try out church! We will give you what you want and meet your needs.” Do not promise much and ask little.
- Involvement in the life of the church builds relational bridges, grows people and gives purpose and meaning.
- Lead people to serve with the right attitude.

Expecting Organic Outreach:

- Create an environment that trains and resources people for personal ministry in their workplace, school, family, neighbourhood and our community.

Expecting Generous Giving:

- In a U-Turn church there is an awareness that the work being done and the lives being touched are so important that everyone needs to give with sacrificial generosity as a normal part of their spiritual devotion.
- This spirit must begin with the leaders.
- Resources flow to vision and when God’s vision is alive, people want to give.

Expecting Excellence:

- Excellence and perfection are two different things.
- What is excellent will vary from church to church. Excellence is not about a level of performance, but a commitment to give God our best: our best music, teaching, service, children’s ministry and everything else we do.

Expecting Change:

- There will always be change
- If we keep following Jesus, growing His people, and reaching out with His love, we will always be changing.

Tough Skin and Soft Hearts

- To press forward in the U-Turn process will demand a tender heart and skin like a rhinoceros. It is easy to have one of the other. It is quite difficult to have both!

- In the church you will find the healthiest and the sickest of humanity. This is how it has always been, this is how it will always be, this is how it should be... we are the church!
- We cannot become cynical and apathetic. If we do, it will be impossible to press on with the U-Turn vision.

Steps to Keep a Soft Heart but Tough Skin:

- **Keep your eyes on Jesus**
- **Keep inviting people into the adventure** (early adopters to late adopters). Make a point of creating on-ramps for the vision as often as possible,
- **Learn the value of selective and strategic apathy** – There are some things you should not care about.
- **Never encourage snipers**
- **Pray for humility** – you don't have to agree however you can always be humble.
- **Seek wise counsel** – Don't travel alone
- **Remember that you are in good company** – Don't be shocked that there are battles along the way. Don't give up. Don't become heart-hearted. (Jesus, Paul)
- The question is not whether we will face painful moments on the U-Turn road. The real issue is, when we face these times, can we keep a tender heart?

Taking Holy Risks

There are places in this world that are safe, tame and predictable...helping lead a U-Turn church is not one of these places.

Key principle for taking holy risks:

- Prayer
- Biblically in-line
- Logic
- Faith – Is this a God-sized risk?
- Decision Making – at some point we have to pull the trigger
- Communication
- Celebration

Looking Out

The gravitational force of the church naturally pulls us inward. If we are going to move outward those who are lost, it will take more energy than most of us dream.

Helping our church look outward:

- Outreach is for everyone
- Outreach is about the whole church

- Train, train and then train some more – It should be part of the fabric of every ministry of the church
- Tune in to the presence of the spiritually disconnected
- Use the power of stories
- Try stuff and be creative

The 'Wow' Factor

- Wow Children's Ministry
- Wow Greeting
- Wow Aesthetics
- Wow Communication

The Never-Ending Journey of a U-Turn Church

- A U-Turn is really a series of movements that recalibrate the focus and direction of the church toward the heart and the will of God. We need to make these turns over and over and over again.

U-Turn Myths

- The church will be ten miles wide and one inch deep
- It's only about entertainment – It's actually about engagement
- All the people will leave and the church will fall apart
- Make change and the money will stop
- We can't do it
- We will have to compromise on God's Word and our doctrines
- You-Turn

You-Turn

God's desire is that you turn toward Him in all areas of your life and experience the plans He has for you.

God's desire for your church is that it turns toward Him and experiences the plans He has for it.

God desires that the changes in you and your church will reach others, even to the ends of the earth.

All it takes is one person who is willing to be authentic and share what God has done for them to being a movement of You-Turns. An entire church can turn around and it can begin with you.

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