

**ICLD** INSTITUTE OF CHURCH  
LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT  
Greater Sydney SDA Conference



Thinking About Church

Thinking About Church Life-Cycles

Thinking About Evangelism

Thinking About Size-Transitions

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# Thinking About Church

*The church is the object of Christ's supreme regard. E G White*

*"The members of our church should give diligent attention to the word of God, that they may understand their duty and then labor with all their energies of the mind and heart to make their church one of the most prosperous in the land." (R&H 9-6-1881)*

**Three questions are at the core of how your church works:**

## **1 - What The Church Is To Be?**

The biggest challenge we have in transforming a congregation is in how people think about the church.

The first picture that comes into the mind of your church members when they hear the word 'church' will determine how they will go about being and doing church.

The question of what the church is to 'be' needs to be answered first if we are to put our "do" and "how" into the right context. When we fail to pray about, work through and communicate a healthy, Biblical picture of the church we then also easily miss the point in regard to how we will minister and what resources, processes and programmes we will use.

Common Pictures of 'church' include:

- A building
- A service
- An organisation

These picture have more to do with a Constantinian construct of the church then they do a New Testament picture.

### **A Healthy Picture of the 'Church'**

#### **Community**

The primary pictures of 'church' in the New Testament are ones of community. The Greek word which we translate 'church' is ekklesia, the Greek word for community.

Community is at the very essence of God's nature. God, as expressed in the trinity, already existed as community. God created us for community and until we understand how this works we will keep chasing the wrong things. God is expressed as we live out his dream of community where there is a love for God that is reflected in a deep

love for His other children. The church should be the primary place where this community is expressed. "They will know you by your love"

The whole Bible is the story of God's ongoing attempts to create community; how sin destroys it and how God does whatever it takes to make a way for that community to be experienced again. The way community is expressed among believers is vital in showing that there is a group of people who live by God's plan and shine His character to the world.

### **Ideas for Creating a Picture of Community:**

- Think about what's on your Bulletin cover?
- Think about what pictures you paint of 'church'?
- How does what you preach contribute to a picture of community. For Adventists our theological understandings of 'Sabbath' and 'State of the Dead' are wonderful pictures of community.
- Vision cast for community i.e Cast it, Celebrate it, Live it.

### **On a Mission**

This New Community is not just any ordinary gathering of people. It is Christ's body. Christ gives His new community a mission and for Adventists this understanding of mission is intensified in the book of Revelation.

In Revelation, the church is described as Christ's bride. This makes the church worthy of our best time and energy. Revelation 2 describes the church being held in His hand.

Revelation 12 & 14 give a picture of an end-time community on a mission. The description includes:

1 – Obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus 12:17. We must be teaching our churches what it means to be disciples of Christ and how to apply the gospel in their everyday lives. **(Growing Spiritually).**

2 –The rest of her offspring (remnant) Rev 12:17 (God's new Community). The remnant is a community that shows the world what happens when a group of people choose to live life God's way. We need to grow our churches in the sense of community where we are loving one another deeply, encouraging each other and putting others needs ahead of our own. The world needs to see God's word applied in the lives of a group of believers. **(Community)**

3 – Proclaiming the gospel 14:6, including that Babylon (systems of worship that do not put God first) are fallen 14:8. We are to take

seriously our command to be outward focused. We need to let the world, that is 'drunk on self', know that there is a better way of life for now and eternity. **(Sharing)**

4 – Giving Him glory for judgment is come. Worship Him 14:7 We are commanded to take worship seriously. Worshipping God for what he has is and will do. In this context we are to commanded to worship God for his creative power which brings with it a responsibility to steward our environments. **(Worshipping)**

5 – Following the lamb wherever He goes 14:14. This is a fantastic picture of a community of people who have given their own lives away and are prepared to follow God on His mission. **(Serving)**

After establishing our mission we can then evaluate models of 'church', resources, programmes etc on the basis of how they contribute to us achieving our mission.

### **Myth-Debunking Truths About The Church**

- The church is a living organism, not a static institution
- The church is so much more than a building
- The church is not to be bound to a single location
- God is the seeker, we are on His mission to seek
- The church is much more than a one-hour service held on day a week
- The kingdom of God is meant to be decentralized but people tend to centralize
- We are each God's temple and together we are also His temple

I think Starbucks cares more about selling my neighbours coffee than the little church down the street cares about helping its neighbours find forgiveness in Christ. Churches would never admit this, and to say it out loud sounds harsh, but they live it every day. – leoskwo posting on OutofUr.com

The gospel says, "Go," but our church buildings say, "Stay."  
The gospel says, "Seek the lost," but our churches say, "Let the lost seek the church."

*Howard Snyder (The Problem of Wineskins)*

"The answers are not found in our models, methods and manmade systems but in the truth of God's Word and in being filled and led by the spirit of God." *Neil Cole (Organic Church)*

"Men are looking for better methods; God is looking for better men"  
*E.M Bounds, Power Through Prayer*

"A ship in the harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are made for"

## 2 - What Is The Church To Do?

If we are to be this 'community on a mission' we must do those things that ensure this community is lived out. Once again this is not something we need to invent. The Bible makes it very clear what this new community is to do.

(1), **Evangelism** - A continuous effort to find lost people must be made. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:28)

(2), **Community**- genuine fellowship must be facilitated among believers (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25; Philemon 2:1-4; 1 John 1:3.)

(3), **Worship** – The church must facilitate worship (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42)

(4), **Discipleship** – Instruction, reproof and spiritual growth must happen in an intentional way. (Acts 20:28-32; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 4:12-13)

(5), **Service** – Each member is to be glorifying God and edifying one another through ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:6-11)

These to 'do' purposes are summarised well in our Adventist Fundamentals:

### Seventh-day Adventists Believe...

The church is the **community** of believers who confess **Jesus Christ** as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for **worship**, for **fellowship**, for **instruction** in the Word, for the **celebration** of the Lord's Supper, for **service** to all mankind, and for the worldwide **proclamation** of the gospel. The church derives its authority from **Christ**, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures which are the written Word. The church is **God's family**; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the **body of Christ**, a **community** of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the **bride** for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a **glorious church**, the faithful of all the ages, the **purchase** of His **blood**, not having spot or wrinkle, but **holy** and without blemish –

*Fundamental Belief, 12 (was no 11 before introduction of new fundamental at 2005 General Conference Session)*

We are then growing people to become

**Sharing,  
Serving,  
Connecting,  
Growing  
Worshipping believers.**

### **3 - How Is The Church To Do Ministry?**

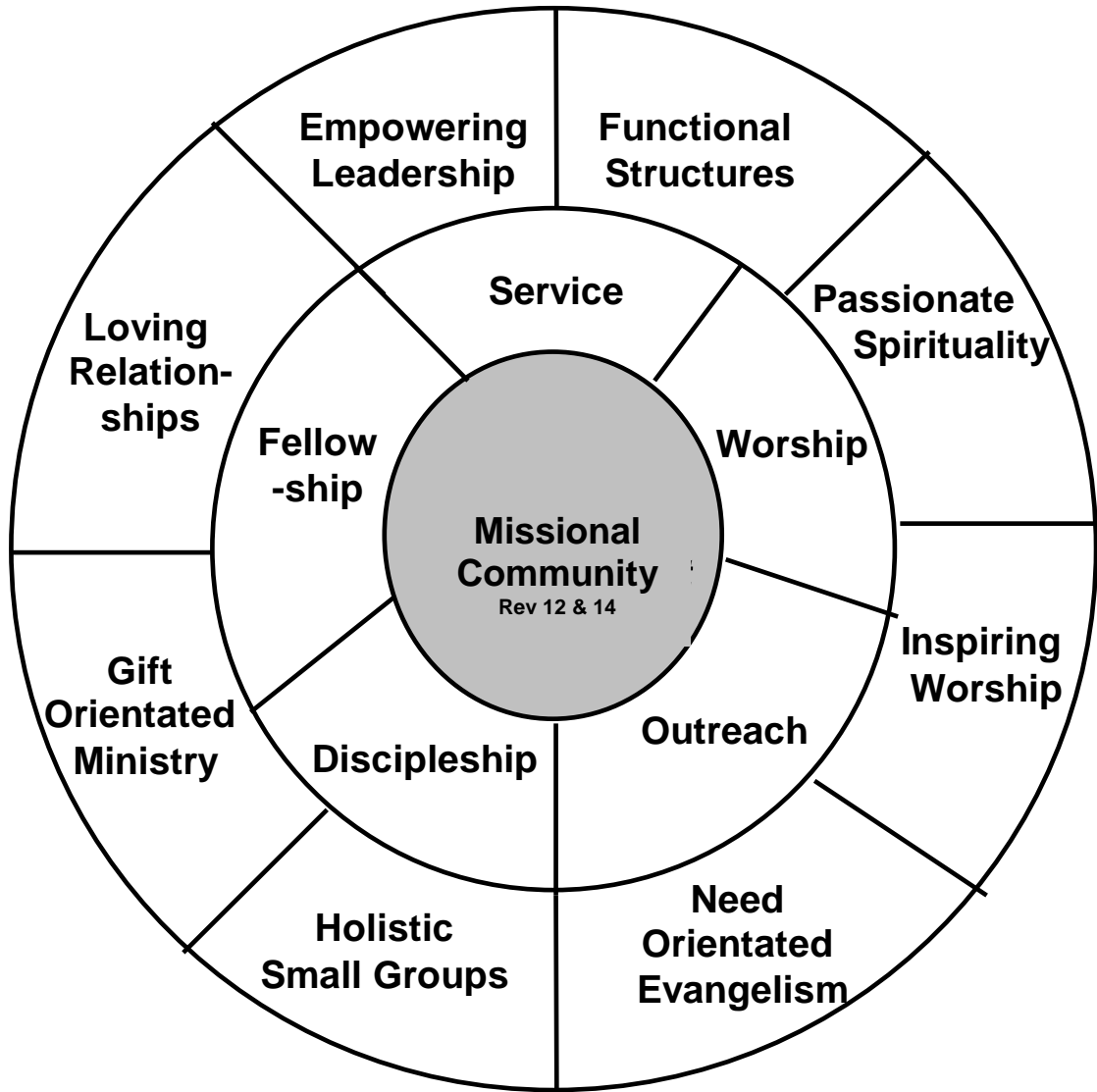
There is no one right way to do church. In fact, there are as many ways to go about how we apply the purposes as there are congregations. The 'how' of church life is where we must, with our leadership teams, pray about and discern what God wants to do in and through the congregations we serve in.

The diagram here uses the eight Natural Church Development factors as a link toward establishing the 'how's'. Research of congregations world-wide in various contexts highlights how in churches that are achieving their mission these eight factors make up the framework of "how" to go about being and doing church. Keep in mind these may not be the only "how" factors and will be lived out in different ways in each congregation.

Too often congregations take on models and programmes that are the "hows" for other environments and wonder why they do not work for them. It is seemingly easier to take on an already established model rather than doing the seeking of God's will and evaluation of our congregational contexts to determine how God wants our congregation to go about ministry.

This does not mean we cannot borrow from other churches. We will find useful resources and processes that work for them and can then be adapted for effectiveness in our context. Answering the 'be', 'do' and 'how' questions allows us to use various resources with a measurement in place that determines what and how we will use these other tools.

Centre circle: what the church is to be.  
 Middle circle: what the church is to do.  
 Outside circle: how this can be done.



There is no one Biblical way to do church

Churches must be free to develop creative forms and structures to apply the New Testament principles.

Explore Dream Discover



## Thinking About Church Life Cycles

All Living Organisms Have a Life Cycle

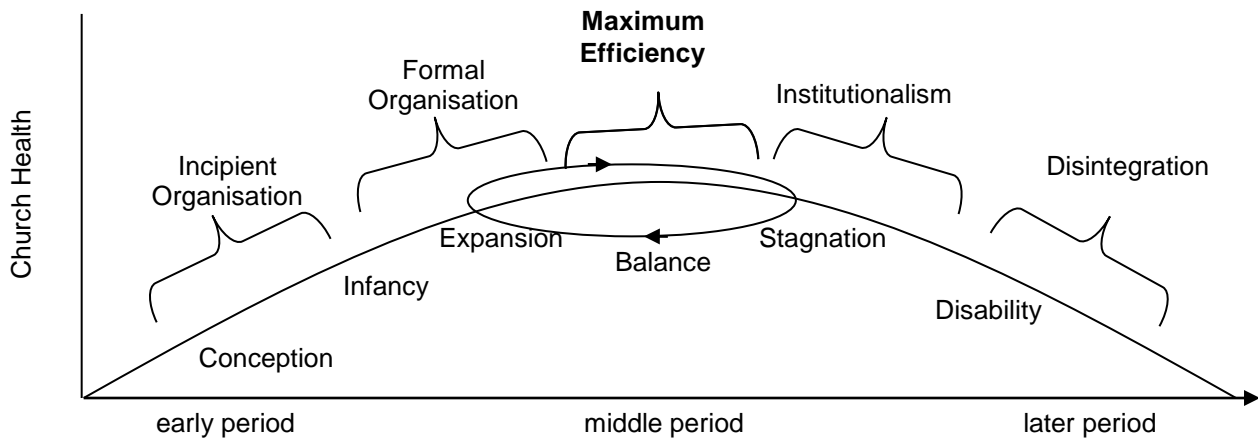
Church Is A Living Organism, Not An Institution

90% of all churches reach a plateau by their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday

90% of churches are on the right hand side of the life-cycle

**Churches Can Be Renewed**

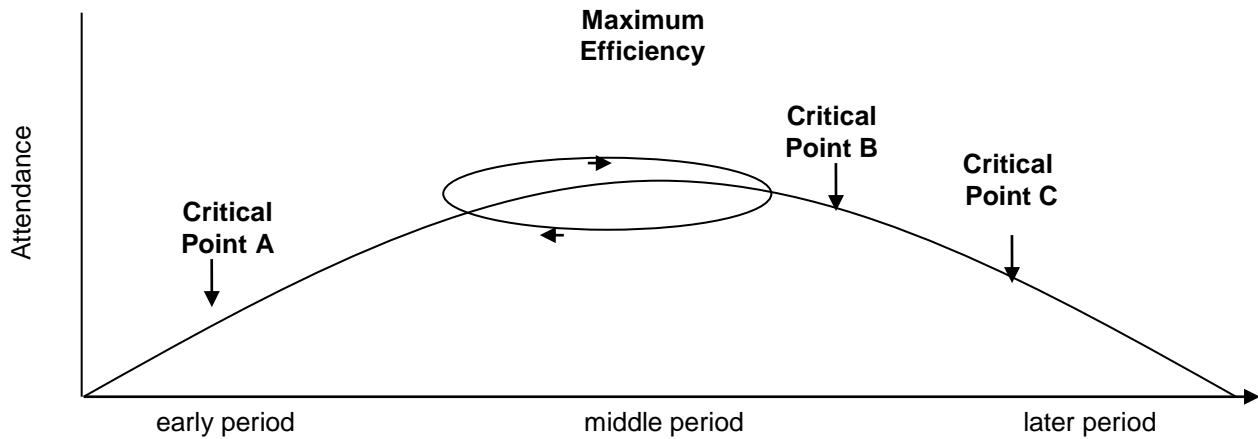
**Churches Can Live At The Maximum Efficiency Point**



### Organizational life stages:

- 1- Conception
- 2- Infancy
- 3- Expansion
- 4- Balance
- 5- Stagnation
- 6- Disability

# Critical Points



## Factors That Make These The Critical Points

### Responding To Critical Points

### Avoiding Stagnation and Disability

1. Make sure a discipleship process is in place that grows people in personal spiritual disciplines.
2. Actively cast an outward focused vision.
3. Increase the pace of leadership development while in stage 3.
4. Ensure that leaders have access to ample and reliable information about the state of the ministry.
5. Leaders must help the ministry refocus and renew before hitting stagnation.

# Revitalizing On The Down Side

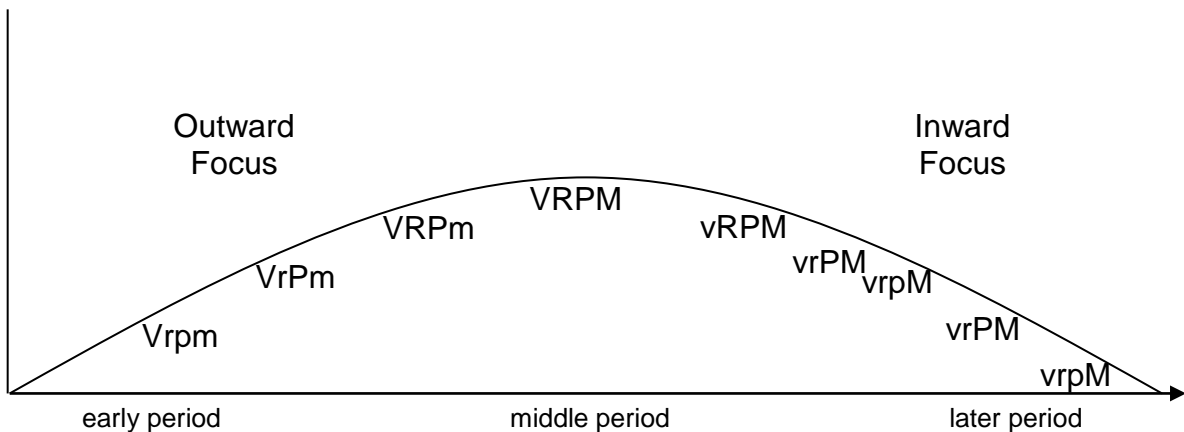
1. **Prayer** is the most important factor in tuning churches around. Create an environment of prayer seeking **God's leading** for the mission of the church and for one another.

2. Focus on what the church is to **Be** and **Do** with a compelling **Outward Vision**

2. Focus on **Steps** over Programmes

3. Develop A Culture of **Evaluation**

4. **Communicate** Often



**V = Vision**

**R = Relationships**

**P = Programs**

**M = Management**

God Honoring, Outward Focused Vision is crucial in turning churches around.

# Background Reading – Life Cycles

While every organisation is unique, there are identifiable patterns that are observed in the nature of organisations. Robbins and Barnwell state: "Organisations are like fingerprints. Each has its own unique structure....Yet again like fingerprints, no structure is truly unique. All fingerprints have common elements that allow them to be classified around common elements."<sup>1</sup> Sociologist David Moberg points out that churches, like other organisations, generally follow a similar pattern in terms of organisational life cycle. Five general phases are identified: (1) incipient organisation, (2) formal organisation, (3) maximum efficiency, (4) institutionalism and (5) disintegration.<sup>2</sup>

The first fifteen to twenty years of a church's life cycle are typically its most dynamic ones. During this time, vision and understanding of the church's purpose are generally very clear. Morale is high and this helps draw people into participation. Changes are easily adopted and integrated into the church structure. Because of minimal organisation, there is spontaneity and flexibility in decision making. Structures are created in response to the needs, with the function of ministry determining the form. This phase of church is very evident in Acts and in early Adventism.

As the initial euphoria of establishing the church wears off, it generally institutes a relatively predictable series of programmes and infrastructure. The zeal that was focused on the "why" of ministry is now concentrated upon "how" ministry is done and structures are formalised.

After some years working through such issues the church reaches its mature, most efficient stage. The people, practices and policies are set in place. Change may be introduced, but the foundation has been solidified. The church now has a discernable tradition and systems that were developed to allow ministry become solidified as part of the tradition regardless of their current value to the mission. Structures that are organized for security, predictability and safety end up taking precedence over purpose. This is the institutional plateau on which many churches rest for many years.

Without realising what is taking place, a church gradually begins to find itself on a ministry decline. Current members have a poor understanding of the purpose of the church. This results in ministry being done "because we've always done it that way". The plateauing

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<sup>1</sup> Robbins and Barnwell, 244.

<sup>2</sup> David O. Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice-Hall, 1962), 120-121.

of a church almost always involves increased bureaucracy, emphasis on maintenance and unwillingness to change. A church with a bureaucratic structure becomes a maze of maintenance. Most of the system's energy is used in just keeping it running. Questions regarding the system's effectiveness are seldom asked.<sup>3</sup>

The structural flexibility of a church in its beginning years provides for a maximising of ministry and a minimising of maintenance. At the end of a church's life cycle, the situation is reversed and a church maximizes maintenance and minimizes ministry. In its first years the biblical functions create the forms of ministry, but in later years the forms strangle the functions.

If nothing is done to change the trend, a church eventually disintegrates into a period of stagnation and decline. Rigid structures prevent new ministries from being started and drive visionary leaders away to other churches where new ideas are accepted and implemented. Many churches enter the final phase of the life cycle unaware that they have begun a slow descent. George Barna points out that because churches are non-profit entities whose existence requires only a name and a person or two to maintain the legacy, a dead church is not necessarily an ex-church. He says that in the USA, "thousands of churches have deteriorated to the point where they are a ministry in theory only, a shell of what they had once been."<sup>4</sup>

William Weitzel and Ellen Jonsson studied the process of organisational decline.<sup>5</sup> The stages identified were:

- (1) Blindness: There is a failure to anticipate or detect internal or external threats. Decline may set in long before it is reflected in performance statistics.
- (2) Inaction: The signs of decline are apparent but little is done about them.
- (3) Faulty Action: Differences of opinion regarding courses of action proliferate leading to an increase in power plays. Decisions often focus on indicators rather than causes of decline.
- (4) Crisis: Major re-orientation and revitalisation is necessary or the organisation will suffer certain failure. People in the organisation suffer from divisiveness and social fabric begins to break up.
- (5) Dissolution: The organisation collapses.

The dysfunctional consequences of organisational decline include centralisation of decision-making with decreased participation and

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<sup>3</sup> Getz, *Sharpening*, 252 identifies the advanced stages of Institutionalism.

<sup>4</sup> George Barna, *Turnaround Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993), 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> William Weitzel and Ellen Jonsson, "Decline in Organisations: A Literature Integration and Extension," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 34 (March 1989): 102.

control emphasised. There is no long-term planning with crisis and short-term needs overshadowing strategic planning. Innovation is discouraged by risk-aversion and scepticism. This environment causes many leaders to leave. These factors combine to result in a resistance to change that continues the slide toward decline.<sup>6</sup>

However, decline is not inevitable. Organisations differ from people and plants in that their cycle isn't predictable. An organisation may go from youth to old age in a matter of years or it may last for centuries. An ongoing culture of renewal can and must become the nature of the church. Church leadership must continually assess where the church is at on the life cycle and be continually re-shaping ministry on the first half of the cycle in a way that guards against institutionalism.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



## **Re-thinking Vision**

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. Proverbs 19:21

Vision is not just a destination; it is a journey

Vision is a picture of what God wants us to do.

Vision is an active process, an ongoing process. It is a continual search for what God is doing and wants to do.

We must keep dreaming and keep visioning to keep our churches, ministries and personal lives from perishing.

### **Preparing The Vision**

1 – Prayer – Vision is usually birthed out of a serious search for God's direction.

2 - Vision is best birthed out of thorough knowledge – collect the right information.

3 – Holy discontent for the status quo. As long as we are content with the status quo, we will not discover God's vision.

4-Timing – Rushed preparation result in sloppy vision. The reason 99 out of 100 churches that try to make major transitions fail is that they go too fast."

### **Defining The Vision**

Discover your purpose

Vision is a lot like a jigsaw puzzle. You work it one piece at a time – and it takes a long time to get all the pieces in place. Discovering your purpose is the border of the puzzle.

Define your strategy

You can not find the right answers without asking the right questions:

What process will accomplish our purpose and reach our target?  
Programs and events will not get the job done. There must be a deliberate process in place.

How do we move from where we are to where we want to go?

What must change?

What must not change?

What is the best order of change?

## **Planting The Vision**

Take time to plant before moving on to implementation

Vision is a seed... it must be planted in the proper soil.

Take time to plant the vision with key leaders before sharing vision with the entire church.

### **Secure the understanding of the power brokers (Nehemiah 2:5)**

When a recognised leader does not know what is going on the result is confusion.

A leader who is uninformed often feels unwanted and unneeded.

When people are not included in the change process, they can feel you are taking their church away from them. This causes them to feel threatened. They often react by digging in and waiting for you to change or leave.

### **Secure the assistance of those whose help you will need.**

#### **Seek the advice of your team**

You need a vision team for feedback, for balance, for accountability and for fellowship.



## **Sharing The Vision**

### **Leaders first, church second**

Nothing devalues and alienates a leader as quickly as not knowing what is coming next before the rank and file know.

It is very difficult for leaders who do not know what is going on to support it.

### **Share With The Church**

The success of any vision comes down to one issue: will the majority of the people of the church get behind it?

Since vision is both caught and taught, it must be shared in multiple ways.

Preaching

Small group vision studies

Purpose Statements

Vision phrases

Vision verses

Faith stories

CD's, books and articles

One on one

Living it out in your own life – You can't expect a church to catch a vision that you are not living out in your own life.

## **Implementing The Vision**

Most churches spend far too little time in preparation and move far too quickly into making changes

Implement your changes one at a time in a strategic order.

The order of change is different in every church

You can teach an old dog new tricks – but you must be really patient with the dog.

Many churches are led by insecure leaders who are more concerned about what people think than they need to be.

## **Dealing With Opposition**

People can only handle so much change

People feel awkward when asked to do something new

People think first about what they must give up

People are at different levels of readiness for change

People tend to revert back to their old behaviour the minute the reason for change is removed.

Anyone who is trying to do something for God will face some opposition.

You will be criticized. It might as well be for doing the right thing

The reality is that criticism and opposition will drive you somewhere. Let it drive you closer to God and you will become better; let it drive you away from God and you will become bitter.

Keep on leading. "You can define the greatness of a man by what it takes to discourage him."

Don't let the whiners set the agenda of your church. Don't let the complainers have the time that you need to be giving to the workers.

The angrier you are about a complaint, the more sensitive you need to be in your response,

You can measure a leader's maturity by how he/she responds to complainers.

## **Evaluation**

One of the dangers in seeing God's vision take root in the church is that we again settle in and get content

## **Vision is a Journey**

People need to hear vision again and again until it becomes a part of their soul.

Summarised from:

Dan Southerland, *Transitioning*.

Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church Without Killing It*.

Randy Frazee, *The Comeback Congregation*.

Andy Stanley, *Visioneering*.



## Greater Sydney Conference

### **Size Transitions**

Congregations of different sizes are entirely different organisms requiring different models of leadership, organizational structure, ministry placement and decision making.

1. Congregations fall into distinctive size categories and congregations of different sizes organise in different ways.
2. Congregations do not grow or decline smoothly, but tend to plateau at certain predictable sizes.
3. In order to successfully grow past a plateau, a congregation must deliberately break with familiar patterns of behaviour and begin to act as the next size congregation acts.

While any classification based on size and related ministry environment is a generalisation the size of a congregation plays a large factor in shaping the dynamics of that church.

Moving from one size to another requires skilled leadership, education and a lot of communication. Many issues of church politics grow out of people relating to the church out of the wrong size mindset.

At each stage developmental lessons need to be learnt for the church to move forward.

“Through hundreds of consultations and thousands of pastoral surveys we have learned something very significant: Churches have more in common by their size than by their denomination, tradition, location, age or any other single, isolatable factor” Carl George, Barriers, 129

#### **Size Categories**

Very Small = less than sixty attenders (40-70 Transition point)

Small Church = 60 to 200 (Transition point 150 -250)

Medium church = 200 to 400 (Transition point 350-450)

Large Church = 400-800 (Transition point 750-850)

## **A church's size category is a matter of attitude as much as numbers.**

To cross over into a new stage, leaders must understand what lies ahead and make the necessary realignments before they expect to move to a new level of growth.

"The most severe and potentially damaging tensions are those caused by pastors and individuals on the leadership team who relate to the church according to the wrong size category." Michael Fletcher

### **You can't skip the stages**

Problems arise when we have a large church mindset in a small church context. Having a vision to be a large church is great however you cannot skip the stages to get there.

Often in the pastors impatience structures are implemented prematurely that tax the leadership team and cause the pastor to feel isolated.

When there is confusion about size roles

- Relationships suffer and unity is broken
- Church politics develop
- Momentum for growth is lost

Regardless of whether the congregation chooses to become larger as one group or grow lots of smaller congregations the ways of thinking and acting at different stages are important.

Questions:

What changes are anticipated if our church grows significantly?

What would our church be like without significant growth?

### **Expected changes:**

- Church structure
- Leadership styles
- Communication
- Facility

### **Factors To Be Worked Through:**

- Congregations self definition
- Pastor's role
- How decisions are made
- Size and function of paid staff
- Facility capacity
- Movement toward multi-cell reality
- Delegation of planning
- Change management

- Infrastructure for member care and involvement
- Conflict prevention and management

### **Small church**

- Patriarchs, matriarchs and heavy donors run the church, whether or not they are on the board. The real votes almost never take place in the board meetings. They are made in living rooms, on the phone or in a café. The real power is based in an informal group, not in the pastor or board.
- At this level the pastor has to work real hard to develop the Elders as leaders
- Pastor needs to be the consultant to the matriarchs/patriarchs
- Growth threatens closeness and informal influence networks. Can the 'in' people handle not being 'in'.
- Change from 'I' to 'we'
- Pastor is the manager of the various parental figures
- Need to develop leadership and small group systems

### **Small: 150-350**

- Good communication with the congregation and the ability of the pastor to delegate authority, assign responsibility and recognise the accomplishments of others are important. "Without such skill the central pastoral function weakens the entire structure. The clergyperson becomes overworked, isolated, exhausted and may be attacked by other leaders." *Size Transitions 35*
- When congregations reaches 130-150 people they begin to get nervous because they are beginning to lose the intimate fellowship the prize so highly.
- "If clergy have the idea firmly fixed in their head that they are ineffective as a pastor unless they can relate in a profound and personal way with every member of the parish then 150 active members (plus an even larger number of inactive members) are about all one person can manage" *Size Transitions 36*
- This transition is considered the most difficult. Many churches make an unconscious decision not to make the transition and keep hovering around 150. They are not willing to lose ready

access to their 'religions leader' and the feeling of oneness where everyone knows everyone else.

- People must accept they will not be able to know everyone in the church
- The people will have to become inclusive of others and unwritten rules will have to be supplanted with clear methods of communication

### **Empowering leaders who function as shepherds**

What members need from the pastor:

- Planning with other leaders to ensure high quality ministries
- Good recruitment, training, supervision and evaluation to grow leaders
- Keep the morale of the leaders high and give high priority to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the leaders.
- The pastor must often step back from direct ministry with people to coordinate and support the people who offer this ministry.

### **Breaking 150**

- Pre-wire the crisis
- Compelling Vision
- Articulate why your church has and should continue to grow
- Increase leadership development
- Work through spans of care issues
- Work through the 'everyone needs to know everyone' challenge. People need to do know 12 people really well and then 40-60 reasonably well.
- Work through facility issues
- Need clear methods of communication (both ways)
- Church will need to become inclusive of others, work on assimilation process
- Pastor in transition from primary care giver to coordinating leader
- The pastor must embrace the idea of sharing leadership with others

### **Medium 200-400:**

- Multiple mini-congregations of various sizes
- There is leadership on many levels
- The worship service is a big deal

## **Pastor:**

- Must coordinate multiple staff in a healthy way
- Must coordinate diverse groups around the mission
- Demonstrate a high level of administrative skills
- Work through the changing role of the governing board, staff and ministry leaders
- Planning and administration must become a 'staff' function
- Shared vision and camaraderie at the board level is critical.
- "When a church reaches an average attendance of four hundred or so, generally the members of the board are the people who can make a difference or the spouses of the people who can make a difference. The formal and informal power structures have come together. These boards are 'dangerous' because they can actually accomplish something" Carl George 146.
- Imperative that the senior pastor is a good leader of the staff team.
- Need to identify which positions need to be staffed and at what point.
- New level of leadership needs to be established to 'detangle' the ministries of the church and have them work synergistically and interdependently.

## **Moving Forward**

"At every level varrier breaking begins in the brain. First, the pastor must look ahead and anticipate that change is required" Michael Fletcher, 68

People who want churches to grow seldom give much thought to the fact that growing churches always change – the greater the growth the more radical the change. "Do you want growth knowing that growth will mean change?"

- Size transition is a lot like standing on a fault line.

- To cross over into a new stage, leaders must understand what lies ahead and make the necessary realignments before they expect to move to a new level of growth.
- Vision casting is especially important in the transition phases. Must be clearly articulated plan in regard to what, when and how.
- Education produces Liberation
- Assess where you are
- Anticipate the tension “prewire the crisis”
- Get the leadership team on the same page and develop a plan
- Communication produces Cooperation

**Summarised From:**

Michael Fletcher, *Overcoming Growth Barriers*, Bethany, 2006.

Beth Ann Gaede, ed. *Size Transitions in Congregations*, Alban, 2001

Carl George, *How To Break Growth Barriers*, Baker, 1993.

Alice Mann, *The In-Between Church, Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*, Alban, 1998.

Gary McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*, Revell, 1999.



## McINTOSH'S TYPOLOGY OF CHURCH SIZE

Factors	Small Churches	Medium Churches	Large Churches
<b>Size</b>	15 – 200 worshipers	201 – 400 worshipers	401+ worshipers
<b>Orientation</b>	Relational	Programmatical	Organisational
<b>Structure</b>	Single cell	Stretched cell	Multiple cell
<b>Leadership</b>	Resides in key families	Resides in committees	Resides in select leaders
<b>Pastor</b>	Lover	Administrator	Leader
<b>Decisions</b>	Made by congregation. Driven by history	Made by committees. Driven by changing needs	Made by staff and leaders. Driven by vision
<b>Staff</b>	Bivocational or single pastor	Pastor and small staff	Multiple staff
<b>Change</b>	Bottom up through key people	Middle out through key committees	Top down through key leaders
<b>Growth Patterns</b>	Attraction model through relationships	Program model through key ministry	Proclamation model through word of mouth
<b>Growth Obstacles</b>	Small-church image Ineffective evangelism Inadequate programming Downward momentum Ingrown fellowship	Inadequate facilities Inadequate staff Inadequate finances Poor administration Increasing complexity	Poor assimilation Increased bureaucracy Poor communication Loss of vision Lack of member care
<b>Growth Strategies</b>	Renew a sense of purpose Begin new ministries Cultivate evangelism Celebrate victories Start new groups/classes Involve new people	Develop distinct identity Add additional staff Use facilities multiple times Offer multiple worship services Write a long-range plan Improve quality of ministry.	Renew the vision Design assimilation plan Streamline procedures Offer need-based events Adjust leadership roles Increase the number of small groups.

Gary McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999)



## Thinking About Functional Structures

There is not a special kind of congregation or model that has the answer. There is not one system that will automatically produce functional structures. However, there are underlying values to be shaped, purposes to be facilitated, goals to be articulated and a mission to be fulfilled. Creating functional structures is not about simply changing to a different structure. Functionality calls for a different way of thinking about structure. This change of thinking may be hard to work through in the short term, but will prove to be more effective in achieving the church's mission.

James Emery White comments:

A church's structure can either serve the church or bring it to a standstill. It can energize a community of faith or lead it toward ever deepening levels of discouragement. It can enable men and women to use their gifts and abilities for the kingdom of God or tie the hands and frustrate the most dedicated efforts of God's people. Why? Because the structure of any organization directly affects morale, effectiveness and unity...few areas of church life are as important to rethink as structure.

-James Emery White. *Rethinking The Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books), 94.

## The practices of Adventist Churches who score high on NCD Functional Structures

They...

### 1 – Focus on Being Christ's Body - Expressing Community with Spiritual Vitality

The church is as an interconnected body that exists to show the world what happens when Jesus is at the head. The church should never be so reliant on its forms and structures that it forgets its spiritual nature. Forms and systems used in the church need to be consistent with Christ's character. Church leaders need to continually remember that the source of vitality in the church is not its structures or processes, but

its connection with the Godhead. Spiritual vitality is central to effective structural renewal.

It is not sufficient for the church to be defined as a building, or merely a place where a worship service happens. It needs to be viewed and explained in relational and experiential terms as God's new community.

### **See The Church As A Unique Living System**

The church needs to be seen as an integrated unique living system. Because each congregation shapes and responds to its own unique environment, each church will have different structures that allow it to be functional. These structures will need to adapt as various changes in the context of ministry call for different responses to ensure continual effectiveness. Seeing the church as a system brings with it a more dynamic, fluid view of the church as it inter-reacts with its environment and mission.

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### **2 - Understand The Difference Between Purposes and Forms**

A concept of church must be established that allows members to identify the difference between what is a core purpose of the organic nature of the church and what are simply forms that allow the organic sphere to be effectively facilitated.

The role of organisational aspects of the church needs to be clearly seen as necessary in achieving the dynamic, spiritual aspects of the church. It is important to remember that designing functional structures is not the endpoint in itself. Structures should not be considered "sacred" in themselves, so that they cannot be changed. The goal of functional structures is to facilitate the mission of the organism.

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### **3 - Approach Ministry Holistically**

Structures must revolve around facilitating five biblical ministry concepts. These concepts are evangelism, worship, service, spiritual growth and community. This means that in designing structures, the church needs to be seen in holistic terms. To fill just one, or some, of the purposes misses the overall biblical design for the church.

Understanding the biblical purposes of church is important in developing a more flexible environment for expressing church structures. People in the church need to be able to differentiate between biblical principles and cultural forms. This education process is important so that they realise what practices can be changed but also identify what about the church is absolute and needs to be protected.

The way the ministry flow plan is designed, reinforces and shapes structural values. While there are countless ways to work through the ministry flow plan, to be functional it needs to have a concept-base rather than be programme driven. The five concepts of church (worship, evangelism, spiritual growth, community and service) are underlying environments for ministry that are applicable at all times and in all situations and which must be facilitated in every ministry plan. Programmes are merely the forms that deliver the concepts. A valuable exercise for a church leadership team is to assess each purpose of the church and determine what the church does currently to facilitate it and what ideas could make it happen more effectively.

By structuring around concepts, the institutionalisation of programmes is less likely. Rather than having a programme represented at leadership level, that programme can be under the overall concept area. The leadership team is then more likely to work through ways of lifting a concept area rather than adjusting a confined programme. Most times this does not involve finding new leaders and alienating current leaders, but rather re-envisioning current leaders to a broader role. For example, the Sabbath School leader may be willing to become the spiritual growth leader for the whole church and someone else in the Sabbath School team takes on his/her role.

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#### **4 - Facilitate Open Communication**

Effective communication allows the church to move away from systems of dependency and engenders a greater degree of belonging and involvement. A continual communication flow between the various areas of church life is essential in creating an environment that allows for structural fluidity while still retaining overall interrelationships and a common focus. Communication pathways must be intentionally outlined to ensure the flow of information from and back to leadership.

This communication system must include a tolerance of healthy conflict, with structures in place that allow for people to disagree and express their opinion so that together the underlying values can be addressed and structures shaped that facilitate effective mission.

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#### **5 – See Church Life As A Process Rather Than An End-Point**

There are no quick solutions. The application process is a continual journey for the church, rather than a task to be completed. Because structural forms provide an organisation with predictability and security, changing them can be threatening. The process needs to be worked through with care and diligence.

Church leaders need to avoid the temptation of attempting to “fix” their structural deficiencies with a model that has worked in other environments. While it might offer immediate results, this kind of prescriptive approach often ignores the underlying issues of the church that created the initial dysfunction. The process of healthy structural renewal grows out of changes in values and mind-sets which takes time.

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## **6 – Resource & Train For Skilled Leadership**

Leadership is crucial in the structural renewal process. Lyle Schaller claims that “the reason more churches are not renewed is that 95% of today’s church leaders do not bring the gifts, skills, passion and persistence required for that most difficult assignment.”<sup>7</sup>

The beginning point for the leader who wants to move the church toward structural renewal is self-assessment. The leader needs to be clear on the reasons and motives for embarking on this process. The leader must also be willing to lead in an environment that may involve risk, disharmony and a large time investment in learning new leadership skills.

Because each church is different, the role and expectations of the leader will also be unique in each environment. However, in most cases of successful structural renewal, the key leaders role was defined in terms of facilitating church health and leadership for change.

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## **7 – Create A Team Environment**

Having a team creates vitality through collaboration and participation. In many cases, this team will already exist as the leadership team. In smaller churches, it may even be the whole congregation. The goal of this team is to help articulate and communicate the vision along with identifying obstacles and assisting in embedding the new values into the church culture. The skill of the leader is in perceiving the rate of change that is possible at any given point without destroying the system. Resistance to a new idea can never be eliminated, but it certainly will be minimised through collaboration and involvement of a wider group.

While there needs to be defined systems of leadership and accountability, the environment for decision making should be a supportive team as opposed to a hierarchy that communicates control. In the case studies of functional Adventist churches, a relationally based teams approach to ministry was found to be more conducive to creating functional structure than the formalised

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<sup>7</sup> Lyle Schaller, in forward to Donald Morgan, *Share The Dream, Build The Team* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2001), 11.

hierarchical structures that generally characterise a committee. Each leader talked in terms of teams and relational styles of meetings rather than more clinical systems of operation.

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## **8 – Have A Clear Church Education Process**

The church has to be clear about the New Testament principles of the church and what its purposes are. The picture of “church” in the minds of each church member needs to be those of community. The need for functionality also needs to be made clear to church members. This will include an explanation of the cost, in terms of mission, of not making changes. The values that underlie structural change, including the value of “lost” people, cultural relevance and a commitment to biblical purposes need to be established before significant changes begin to be made. The congregation should feel a sense of being part of the change process toward something better. This can happen in many ways including newsletters, courses, one-on-one conversations, small group curriculum and sermons.

It is important that the five ministry purposes are taught, modelled and kept before the church. This must be an ongoing process as these concepts require continual reinforcement. It is only when the church understands its biblical mandate that it will begin to see why structural renewal is necessary.

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## **9 – Shape Structures In Relationship To Size**

The “one size fits all” method that has often characterised the Adventist approach to local church structure has made for congregations that are often trying to be something that they are not. When shaping structures, it is important to recognise the church’s internal size environment and what structural type works best as a function of size.

For smaller churches to be functional, it is vital that they make the shift to family size structures (0-60). A small church should not be expected to run the same structures as that of a larger church. The small church’s internal environment is better suited to structures of informality. The small church could take advantage of its size and achieve the five purposes of church through a small group meeting in place of a formal worship service. If the informality works the church will soon have more people. At that point the informality will be strained and the church will need to transition to a structural system that better suits its new size. In a similar way, larger Adventist churches need to restructure in view of the programme (200-350) or corporate (350-400) size dynamics. The structure of each local church should be shaped in response to its own internal environment.

It is important to think through and anticipate the structural transition points and begin preparing the congregation before the size transition is required. The church should be reminded that even though their current structures work well, with growth (or decline), they will necessarily become obsolete.

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### **10 - Facilitate A Gifts Based Ministry Process**

How ministry leaders are selected is also an important process in the establishing of functional structures. Once again, this process will be very different in churches of different natures. The structures need to foster a person's individuality while placing him/her in an environment that encourages interdependence.

Ministry placement structures, while needing clear definition, require flexibility in the way people are shaped in to ministry areas. Opportunities for first time service need to be available along with systems of ongoing training.

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### **11 – Have Systems of Evaluation**

To change structures in an effective, ongoing manner an intentional evaluative environment needs to be developed. Evaluation builds a body of knowledge that can help leaders refine activities, select appropriate resources, describe impact and understand more fully the context that is being addressed. It allows current church needs to be determined against the backdrop of biblical principles, historical lessons and social implications. Forms and structures require continued evaluation to see if they are facilitating biblical principles and reaching New Testament goals and objectives.

Evaluation systems can be as simple as a debrief meeting after a programme or as complex as a system of ministry key performance indicators. The larger the church, the more formal its evaluation system will need to be. In large churches, no one person or team can know the overall situation of the church. It is only through combined evaluation that the larger picture emerges.

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# Re-Thinking Evangelism

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them  
In the name of the father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and  
teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And  
surely I am with you always to the very end of the age – Matthew 28:19-  
20

Jesus mingled among men as one who desired their good.  
He won their confidence, met their needs then He bade  
them Follow Me -*Ellen White*

In large cities there are certain classes that cannot be reached by  
public meetings. These must be searched out as the shepherd  
searches for his lost sheep. Diligent personal effort must be put forth in  
their behalf (Evangelism 433)

**For the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost Luke  
19:10**

Evangelism is a process of sowing, cultivating and harvesting.

Evangelism is not complete until the converted are multiplying

Learn to exegete our culture

'Connecting people to the harvest does more for evangelism than all  
the training events in the world' *Bob Logan*

Small groups provide a place to find encouragement for evangelism  
and a place to bring those you are reaching.

Look at your ministry flowchart and pay special attention to those  
ministries that relate to pre-evangelism, evangelism and assimilation

Evaluate your current effectiveness

- Which activities are working well?
- What functions are missing?
- What needs improvement?



## **Steps Toward Instilling Evangelistic Values**

1. Pray for it
2. Lead it
3. Teach it
4. Illustrate it
5. Study and discuss it
6. Disciple it – Need to be involved in direct discipling of others
7. Inspire it
8. Personalize it – People need to see the issue on a personal level, see how evangelizing will affect the people they care about.
9. Fund it
10. Schedule it – Scheduling rooms and time slots for outreach – oriented prayer times, training, seminars, strategy sessions, team meetings, outreach events, even seeker services. Going on trips to attend effective churches and ministries, or attend vision lifting conferences and workshops.
11. Measure it – If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!
12. Reinforce it – reinforce the good things that are happening
13. Celebrate it

## **Elements for building a contagious church**

1. Leaders fully committed to the church's evangelistic mission
2. Willingness to try fresh approaches
3. Participation of the entire church body
4. Alignment of the ministries to the church's evangelistic mission
5. Strategic co-ordination of all outreach activities
6. Sustained effort
7. Unswerving devotion to Christ and His message
8. Commitment to prayer and the role of the Holy Spirit

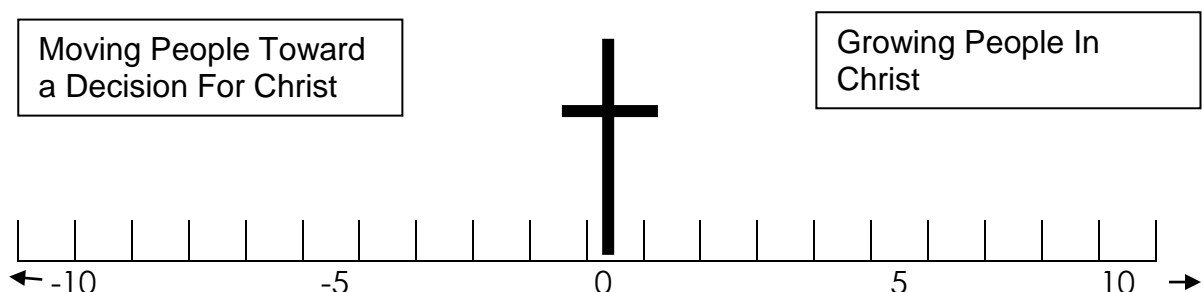
**Satan would rather keep us busy doing anything in the world other than building a contagious church.**

Steve Sjogren gives the following list of words that describe traditional evangelism in relation to an approach that is more needs-oriented. Keep in mind that the traditional approach still has its place in the process.

Monologue... ...Dialogue  
 Compelling Proof... ...Compelling Story  
 Presentations... ...Conversations  
 Words... ...Images  
 Our Language... ...Their Language  
 Us/Them... ... Fellow Travellers  
 Fishing from the bank... ...Swimming with the fish  
 Believe to belong... ...Belong before believing  
 Event driven... ...Context driven  
 Come and see... ...Go and be  
 Scripted... ...Spontaneous  
 Winning... ...Nudging  
 Gospel presentations... ...Gospel experiences  
 (Sjogren, Ping and Pollock - *Irresistible Evangelism*, 55)

## Thinking Through the Evangelism Continuum

Often the concept of evangelism is pictured in very confined terms. Evangelism is seen as the public event, door knocking or follow up of contacts from a media campaign. While these are essential parts of the evangelism process, which we need to resource and promote, to meet the changing challenges of our city we need to think outside the box. Too often church members abdicate their responsibility for living evangelistic lifestyles and see evangelism as something for the 'professionals'. An expanded definition of evangelism would see our current picture as part of an evangelistic continuum.



## Left or Right of the Cross

Every person in Brisbane is either left or right of the cross. Right of the cross people are those who have given their lives to Christ and are growing in discipleship. It is only as people grow right of the cross that they begin to share God's heart for lost people and then make sharing their faith an essential part of their lives. Too often we have moved people along the process for baptism but have neglected to continue growing people on the right hand side so that they in turn reach more people.

On the left of the cross are people who are at various points in their spiritual development. Someone at -1 or -2 has a basic understanding of the Bible, gives God and the Bible authority to some extent and has at least some interest in spiritual things. These are the people, amongst those who have not made a decision for Christ, most likely to respond to our usual attractional approaches to evangelism. Our traditional evangelism grew up in a time when most of our society, who were not attending church, were in -1 or -2. On the right side of the cross our evangelism attracts people who may have made a decision for Christ but who become Adventists as part of their continued spiritual growth.

Much of our evangelism is still targeted at people who are on the right side of -2. The challenge is that most of our population is now left of -2. This does not make our traditional methods wrong; they definitely have a place along the continuum. Our traditional methods will still attract people, however the pool to attract from is getting sociologically smaller.

Our challenge is reaching people left of -2. This will include community based ministries, intentional friendship building, service evangelism along with other creative ways of mingling with people, winning confidence and meeting needs. Too often a dichotomy is made between friendship/service evangelism and public evangelism. In fact, both forms of evangelism are complementary as part of a process. As people move from -5 toward -2 they will reach a place where our traditional approaches will meet what they need to move the new few steps.

The challenge is in creating a process. Often we see churches doing a great job of evangelism in a -7, -6 environment but not having the steps in place to move these people to accept Christ. Or we see congregations doing very well at -2, -1 evangelism but not doing what it takes to keep growing people right of the cross and consequently we lose many people who we should be growing to reach more lost people.

By taking on a process driven approach to evangelism every person and church institution can see where they fit on the scale. Our

challenge comes in facilitating a process as opposed to running an event.

### **The Growth Process**

Every person is different and will grow spiritually at different rates and in different ways. There is not one right track however a process needs to be in place that allows people to plug in at different points and grow in various ways. A generalized process would be as follows and takes an average of three years.

-10, Ambivalent towards Christianity or most likely as been colored by negative pictures.

-9, Thinks positively about Christianity. This is most likely through a service/community project or a positive Christian influence (friendship).

-8, Second positive picture of Christianity

-7, Third positive picture of Christianity

-6, Developing of a significant Christian friendship/influence

-5, Open to attending a church organized programme or project such as parenting seminar, cooking class, playgroup or joining in on a service project.

-4, With growing continued contact open to spiritual conversations and Christian literature/media e.g. Signs or Search

-3, Active wondering re the claims of Christ, the Bible and how the gospel might impact their lives.

-2, Willing to attend a Christian presentation or join an evangelistic small group. Developing network of Christian friendships.

-1, Willing to attend church worship services and join in with activities of the church community

0, Makes a decision to give their lives to Christ (Baptism)

1, Regular attender of church activities

2, Serves in a role in the church that is appropriate for new attenders.

3, Increasing sense of belonging in the church community and is intentional about Christian growth.

4, Is intentional about growing in fellowship, worship, serving and Biblical understanding.

5, Is actively sharing his/her faith with others.

6, Ongoing, growth in understanding and applying God's purposes.

Below -5 the methods of evangelism that work best include friendship and various service initiatives. Around -5 to -3 some of our usual programmes like health outreach, parenting seminars, marriage enrichments etc would be useful along with a developing friendship network. From -3 to 0 our familiar events such as a reaping campaign or prophecy seminar would be useful. Small groups can also play a very important role at this point. On the right side of the cross is an effective discipleship process in the congregation.

## **Finding a person's spiritual address**

The messages that are likely to get through to a person's heart are those that are addressed to that person's individual needs. At different points serving or friendship are the primary points and if met will allow the process to move on toward spiritual needs. Sjogren, Ping and Pollock in their book *Irresistible Evangelism* outline four needs and basic approaches to meet them.

### **1. Physical Needs – Active Kindness**

This involves demonstrating God's love by offering to do humble acts of service, in Christ's name, with no strings attached."

### **2. Emotional/Relational Needs – Active Listening**

This is all about genuine friendship and taking an active interest in someone's life. Taking time to understand people opens doors.

### **3. Directional Needs – Active Wondering**

Taking the time to find out about a person, their hopes, dreams and how they view the world.

### **4. Spiritual Needs – Active Sharing**

This is where you can have spiritual conversations and explain how God has worked in your life.

Think of these skill sets in terms of a written address with 1 being the area, 2 being the street, 3 being the number, and 4 being the name on the envelope. When the process is worked through in

this way the message people get from God, through you, is much more likely to be received and opened.

“The trick of delivering God’s mail to a person’s spiritual address is really no trick at all; it’s mostly a matter of caring enough to treat people with the kindness and respect we desire for ourselves. If you keep in mind the apostle James’ advice to be ‘quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19) you will see doors open.” (Sjogren, Ping and Pollock, *Irresistible Evangelism*, 70)

## **Reflection**

If you had to put all the programmes your church currently is involved in on this continuum where would they mostly be?

What ideas do you have for moving people along the continuum?

What aspects of your ministry could stand in the way of people responding to the Gospel?

Who are the unchurched people you rub shoulders with on a regular basis? How will you cultivate redemptive relationships with them?

How can you help people build relationships with pre-Christians?

In what ways are you helping new converts reach their network of friends, relatives and associates?

What is the place of prayer in your evangelistic efforts?

## **Useful Books for Re-thinking Evangelism**

Dickson, John. *Promoting The Gospel*, Blue Bottle, 2005.

Gladden, Ron. *The 7 Habits of Ineffective Churches*, AdventSource 2004

Haffner, Karl. *Out of the Hot Tub, into the World*, Pacific Press, 2002

Hybels, Bill. *Walk Across The Room?*, Zondervan, 2006

McManus, Erwin. *An Unstoppable Force*, Group, 2001

Mittelberg, Mark, et.al., *Becoming a Contagious Christian (Participant's Guide)*, 1995

Paulien, Jon. *Present Truth in the Real World*, Pacific Press, 1993

Sjogren, Steve. Ping, Dave and Pollock, Doug. - *Irresistible Evangelism* Group 2004

White, Ellen. *Evangelism*, Pacific Press

# How Do We Make The Change?

**“The Only People Who Really Like Change Are Babies With Dirty Nappies – Even Then They Cry About It”**

**People Need To Feel Why They Are Changing?**

**People Need To Feel The Cost of Not Changing**

**How Much Change Do You Have?**

**Are You Willing To Pay The Price?**

## **Structural Equilibrium**

Behavioural scientist, Kurt Lewin, suggests that organisations are rarely, if ever, at a point of total consensus about what they are and how they should operate. Instead, organisations are in a state of organised compromise, where the forces for change and the forces against change are in equilibrium.<sup>8</sup> This equilibrium is dynamic in nature.

Within a certain range, the whole system can adapt to minor shifts and changes but there is a sense of mutual, most time unspoken, agreement that the equilibrium will not be changed in a basic way. That unspoken agreement is a powerful force to keep change within limits. Neither the people who push for change nor those who oppose it get all they want, but they have enough and the system rests. This is what Lewin calls the structural homeostasis. While ever change is made within these boundaries it is accepted, even if reluctantly. However, when the boundaries are pushed beyond what is comfortable, anxiety responses are triggered. Each organisation has its own range of homeostasis to work within. Mann writes;

Paradoxically, when leaders try to fix everything they hear complaints about, they actually stimulate new objections from the opposite direction. This is natural, because living systems have powerful (if subtle) ways of maintaining equilibrium. Change any part and the rest of the system is sure to react.<sup>9</sup>

One of the most important structures in a church to identify is this homeostasis. While it will rarely be mapped out on paper, this cultural

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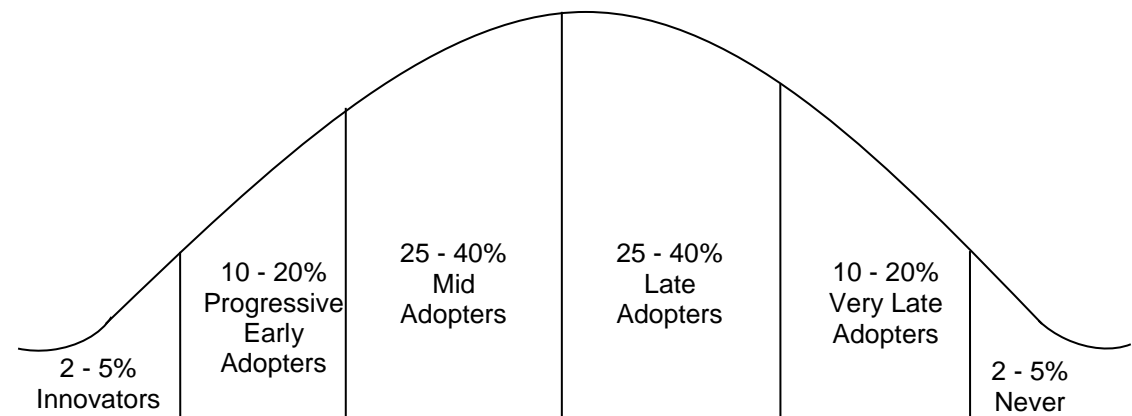
<sup>8</sup> Kurt Lewin, *A Dynamic Theory of Personality* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1935), and *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper, 1948) in Mead, *Transforming Congregations*, 104.

<sup>9</sup> Alice Mann, *The In Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions In Congregations* (New York: Alban Institute, 1998), 32.

understanding is what needs to be worked through in a process of functional renewal. The church leaders must determine the boundaries of the homeostasis and how much room there is to work in before the equilibrium is upset. When the boundaries are understood they can be worked within and through much more constructively.

To bring change, Lewin says, one must unfreeze the equilibrium, install the change and then refreeze the new homeostasis. When change is introduced poorly without unfreezing, trust is disrupted and opposition mobilised. Refreezing a changed system involves training people in the behaviours needed, making periodic evaluations to take into account what has gone wrong, and listening to opposition, ever seeking to improve the quality of the new homeostasis.

### Change Adaptability



**You have the responsibility to maintain an openness to continuous changes in your organizational structures so as to God can work through you increasingly more in saving His children.**

### Knowledge Flow

A high level of communication is essential to renewal because informed people are easier to motivate and will cooperate more readily with each other in achieving church goals.<sup>10</sup> Good communication helps to relieve alienated feelings over cliques or power bases which are perceived as in 'control' of the church. It also allows people the opportunity to make decisions from a more informed point of view.



Communication systems must be put in place that allow for information distribution and feedback. The structure of knowledge flow is crucial. Without structures, knowledge is too disorganized. Without knowledge, structure is not useful. Information distribution lets the church know what decisions are being worked through and why these decisions need to be made. It involves communicating values and how the actions taken will contribute to the church achieving its purposes. Feedback is of special importance in helping decide the rate at which change should be introduced. People are far more willing to cooperate when they feel that they are working in a culture of openness and trust. This culture is often a function of communication.

Most people do not want to be involved in every decision. However, they do want to be assured that decisions are made in an accountable, open environment and that all factors are being considered. Many times structural renewal is hindered by a simple lack of communication. When leaders act as though they have something to hide and do not value congregational opinion, then problems arise. In an environment of participatory decision-making, people trust the leadership.

#### **Trial Periods:**

#### **Negotiation:**

#### **Comfort Environments:**

### **Real Change is About Church Life – Not About What Happens In A Programme On Sabbath. The Real Place For Change Is In The Organisational Culture of the Church**

Ralph Kilmann defines organizational culture as an invisible quality, "a certain style, a character, a way of doing things," that may be more powerful than the dictates of any one person or any formally documented system.

- Ralph Kilmann, *Beyond The Quick Fix* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1984), 92.



## **Discipleship Implications of Reveal**

For as long as anyone can remember, the only questions we knew to ask about the church was, "How many?"

Attendance numbers help you determine if people like what you are doing.

Increased attendance does not necessarily mean people growing.

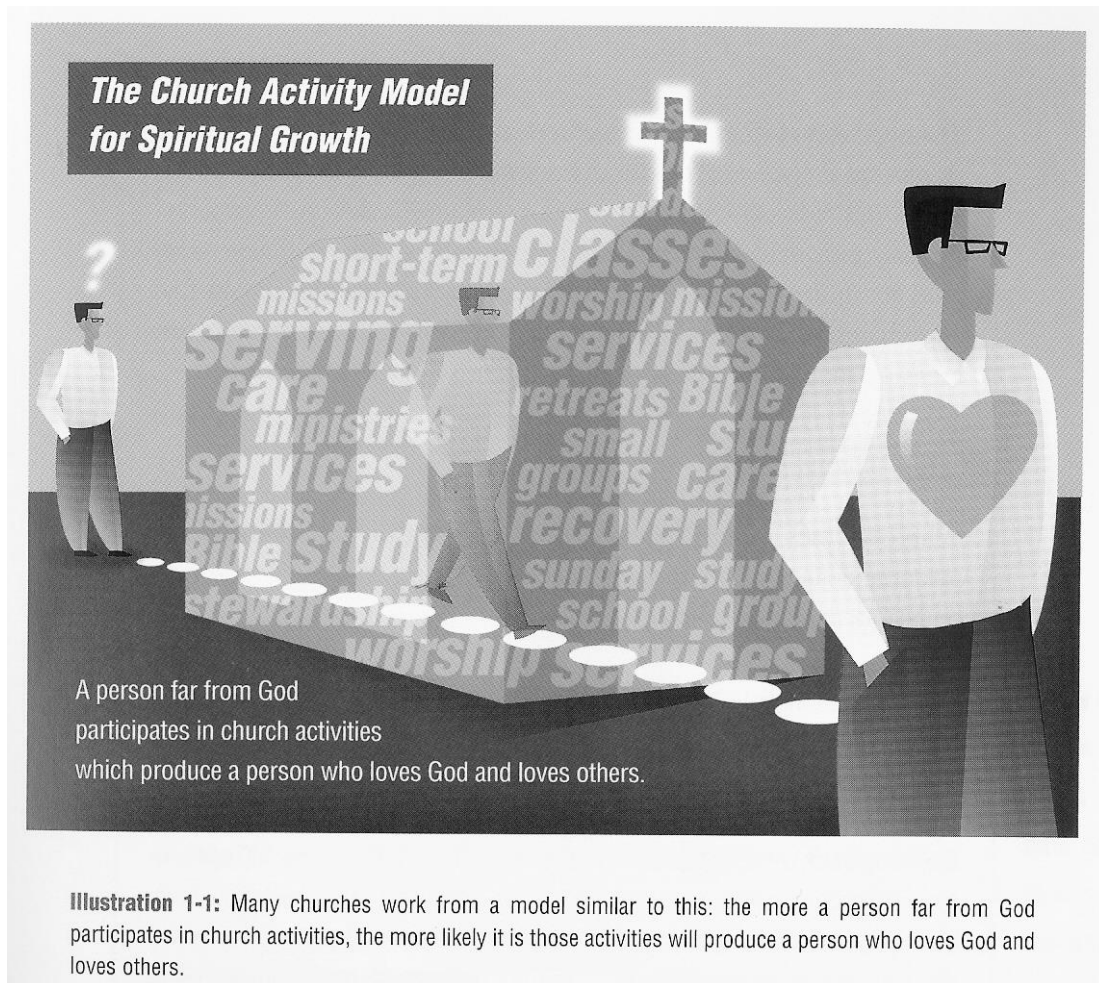
God asks: Where are you?

Are you really making a difference?

Imagine a new member of your church says "My wife and I want to donate one million dollars. The only thing we ask is that you put the money toward what you know will result in the greatest kingdom impact." What would you spend the money on?

Every ministry leader wants to make an impact. But how do we know if the things we are doing as a church actually make a difference? We can measure things like membership and attendance, but do these measures really tell us whether or not someone is becoming more like Christ? How do we measure the human heart?

## The Church Activity Model for Spiritual Growth



What if we could measure the heart and ask Where are we?

“We wanted to find evidence of spiritual growth in people, and then figure out what types of activities or circumstances triggered that spiritual growth.

Spiritual Growth – An increasing love for God and for other people.

Hypothesis:

1. There is a migration path for spiritual growth based on church activities.
2. The most effective evangelism tool is a spiritual conversations
3. Spiritual relationships are a key driver of spiritual growth.

Three Observations:

1. Gender does not impact spiritual growth in any significant way.

2. Age does not appear to have a significant impact on spiritual growth.
3. The pattern of spiritual growth does not differ significantly by church.

#### Six Discoveries:

1. Involvement in church activities does not predict or drive long-term spiritual growth. But there is a 'spiritual continuum' that is very predictive and powerful.

Higher levels of church activity did not predict increasing love for God or increasing love for other people. Church involvement drives Christian behaviour somewhat, which means that the more people participate in church activities, the more likely they are to serve, tithe etc. But higher levels of activity do not seem to drive spiritual growth when defined as increasing love for God and others.

Church activity alone made no direct impact on growing the heart.

#### A Spiritual Continuum Emerged

Exploring Christ

1

Growing in Christ

2

Close to Christ

3

Christ-Centred

2. Spiritual growth is all about increasing relational closeness to Christ.
3. The church is most important in the early stages of spiritual growth. Its role then shifts from being the primary influence to a secondary influence.

The research strongly suggests that the church declines in influence as people grow spiritually.

4. Personal spiritual practices are the building blocks for a Christ-centred life.
5. A church's most active evangelists, volunteers and donors come from the most spiritually advanced segments.
6. More than 25 percent of those surveyed described themselves as spiritually 'stalled' or 'dissatisfied' with the role of the church in their spiritual growth.

The stalled segment reports much lower levels of personal spiritual practices than other believer segments.

The dissatisfied segment reports levels of tithing, serving and evangelism comparable to the most advanced segments.

The higher the level of engagement, the more likely it is that satisfaction with the church will be lukewarm.

“Imagine the kingdom gains if the church figured out the ideal way to coach Christ-followers all along the spiritual continuum.”

So What?

1. Our message to the congregation has to change. We need to transition the role of the church from spiritual parent to spiritual coach.
2. We need to coach next steps.
3. We need to extend the impact of weekend services e.g Journal.

Ask more than “How many?”

Go beyond “How are you?”

How is your relationship with God?

What’s helping you grow spiritually these days?

What ministry is making a difference in your life? How?

What could the church do differently that would help you grow more?

Ask “How does that help someone grow?”

Evaluate your ministries based on the level of impact you think they have on the spiritual growth of people in each segment.

*Reveal Where Are You?*

Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, Willow, 2007



Greater Sydney Conference

## Discipleship Ideas

### Discipleship

Greg Ogden *Transforming Discipleship*

Discipleship happens a few at a time

Factors in effective discipleship

- Multiplication: empowering those who are discipled to disciple others.
- Intimate relationships: developing deep trust as the soil for life change
- Accountability: lovingly speaking truth into another's life
- Incorporation of the biblical message: creating a holistic picture of the Christian life
- Spiritual disciplines: practicing the habits that lead to intimacy with Christ and service to others

Factors that negate discipleship

- Unwillingness to call people to discipleship
- Diversion from primary calling
- Rely too heavily on programs for discipleship
- Reducing the Christian life to eternal benefits rather than life as students of Jesus
- An inadequate view of the church
- No clear pathway
- Lack of personal discipling

Figure 4.1. Jesus' preparatory empowerment process

	PRE-DISCIPLE	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
Jesus' role	The inviter	The living example	The provocative teacher	The supportive coach	The ultimate delegator
The disciples' role	Seekers	Observers and imitators	Students and questioners	Short-term missionaries	Apostles
Readiness level	Hungry to know whether Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah	Ready to observe who Jesus is and the nature of his ministry and mission	Ready to interact with Jesus and publicly identify with him	Ready to test the authority of Jesus to work through them	Ready to assume full responsibility for making reproducing disciples
Key questions	Is Jesus the Messiah?	Who is Jesus, and what is his ministry and mission?	What is the cost of following Jesus?	Will the power of Jesus work through us when we take on his ministry?	Will I give my life entirely to the mission of making reproducing disciples?

LIFE STAGE	LIFE STAGE NEED	DISCIPLE'S ROLE	PAUL'S ROLE
Infancy	Modeling and direction	Imitation	Model
Childhood	Unconditional love and protection	Identification	Hero
Adolescence	Increased freedom and identity formation	Exhortation	Coach
Adulthood	Mutuality and reciprocity	Participation	Peer

Figure 5.1. Paul's parental empowerment model

## The Dynamics of Discipleship Training

Summary of Gary W. Kuhne

### The Vision of Disciple-Making

Jesus commands us to make disciples. We are commanded to make disciples not merely adherents as the products of our ministries. The command is not so much about better techniques or technology but people reaching other people one-by-one.

True discipleship is a life-long process

A person becomes a disciple when he/she:

- Is stabilized in the faith.
- Has an ongoing commitment to the lordship of Christ

- Has developed the basic disciplines of Christian living and service

He/She must:

- Have a basic understanding of his/her faith
- Have a regular devotional time
- Be involved in good fellowship
- Be instructed in the word of God
- Be obeying and applying what God has commanded
- Be training in the practical aspects of ministry so that he/she can be fruitful.

For multiplication to occur, a mature Christian must make a conscious decision to work in discipleship training with new Christians.

- Phase One – Personally share faith
- Phase Two – Stabilising new Christians
- Phase Three – Discipling the new Christian. The goal is to produce spiritual maturity and fruitfulness
- Phase Four – The person you are working with produces other disciples.

The most important requirement is spending time with the person to build them. You are making a conscious choice to restrict your other ministries and stake your productivity on the faithful ministry of those you build.

Start with faithful men/women who exhibit the characteristics below and who you would like to see more of reproduced:

- Have a hunger for God's word
- Thirst for Holy Living
- A desire for Greater Knowledge of God
- A basic commitment to the Lordship of Christ
- A desire to be used by God
- A love for people

Set goals for your discipleship ministry

Life Transference:

Be willing to pour your life into others.

- Issue Confronting: Know enough about his/her life to make specific applications of God's Word to his/her particular situations.
- Example Setting: People will learn from what you model.
- Total Life Change: Be concerned with the entirety of life.
- Counselling: The nature of time together moves increasingly from friendship to counsellor of how we apply God's word.

You must be making personal applications of God's word to your own life in order to be effective in helping someone else do it.





## Greater Sydney Conference

### Discipleship Ideas Part 3

#### Follow Me Book 2 of the 'Reveal' Study

The people in your church really want to grow closer to Christ. They are just unsure what the next step is.

#### Create Steps

- The Creative Tension Gap – For change to occur, we need to come up with a workable plan to close the gap.
- As leaders we must establish the right amount of tension in order to catalyse change.
- Help people realise where they are now spiritually
- Paint a 'vision' of where God wants them to be  
What does a follower of Christ look like?  
How does my spiritual life connect to the rest of my life?
- What's Next for Me
- If the gap seems too insignificant, people won't think the changes are worth the effort. If the gap seems too enormous, people will find the challenge too overwhelming and give up before they try. People need to know next steps that they can take.

#### Personalise The Steps

- Our challenge as spiritual coaches is to personalize these steps for the people in our congregations – designing the first or next steps someone needs to take, keeping in mind that not everyone needs to take the same next steps. It takes a lot of discernment to help figure out where to go next.

- Because this personalizing can be so difficult, our churches often default to creating lots of ministries, and we tell people to do all of them. While most, or all, of these programs and ministries might be sound and biblically based, we really haven't succeeded in helping people determine the gaps they need to close as individuals.

### **Catalysts to Spiritual Growth Along The Continuum.**

Exploring Christ

1

Growing in Christ

2

Close to Christ

3

Christ-Centred

- A desire for 'Jesus to be first in my life' is a significant catalyst across the three movements.
- Belief in salvation by grace is a catalytic factor that influences the movement of people from the first to the second segment. Spiritual growth in Movement 1 is characterised by wrestling with foundational Christian beliefs.
- The catalytic power of the 'church' (as we currently go about being the church) is limited primarily to the first two movements of spiritual growth. Weekend services appear to be catalytic to spiritual growth only in Movement 1.
- Church activities are crucial to providing social structures for early believers. Church activities provide an 'on ramp' to spiritual growth.
- Serving is overall the most catalytic experience offered by the church especially in the later movements.
- 'Reflection on Scripture' is more influential than any other personal spiritual practice.
- The most dominant force driving spiritual engagement is a routine practise of spiritual disciplines.  
"It is hard to over-estimate the importance of establishing a daily rhythm and routine of spiritual practices."
- Spiritual community is a critical catalyst for spiritual growth at all points but especially early on.

- Evangelism is the most catalytic factor for Movements 2 and 3. It is both a cause and effect. It emerges from a believer's heart as an output, so it is an effect; but it is also a cause of spiritual growth as it reenergizes and reinforces a believer's faith.
- People in stage four need the church to engage them as full partners in a divine pact to carry out Christ's Great Commission.
- Spiritual growth is a highly individualised process. There is no clear pattern of stepping stones that guarantees spiritual maturity.
- People grow spiritually through multiple inputs – from teaching and study, to spiritual coaching and everyday experiences.

### **Barriers**

- The core Christian beliefs of those who are stalled are similar to those who are not stalled. The difference is in the application of them.
- The stalled people come primarily from Movement 1
- Emotional problems, addictions and inappropriate relationships are barriers to growth.
- Those who are stalled report much lower levels of personal spiritual practices than those who are not stalled.
- People 'uninstall' by reengaging in spiritual practices.

## Real Change Begins With You