

McIntosh's Church Growth Answer Book

Diagnoses and Prescriptions for Growing A Healthy Church

by

Dr. Gary L. McIntosh

- An at-a-glance practical guidebook for decision-making for church leaders.
- A source of guidance to everyone who serves in a church leadership position.
- Nothing short of having your own personal consultant can offer better prescriptions for your church.
- Step-by-step explanations to enable you to diagnosis your own church's health and prescribe plans for renewed health.
- If you want up-to-date ideas for your church, nothing beats McIntosh's Church Growth Answer Book.

© Copyrighted 1998

Dr. Gary L. McIntosh

INTRODUCTION

Cold linoleum floors, sterile stainless steel pans and strange smells of alcohol, I never liked going to the doctor's office. As a child the doctor's office always seemed to go hand-in-hand with shots. And, I didn't like shots!

In 1956 my view of doctors and shots changed. I became sick at school and, after going home, was even too sick to go to the doctor's office. Fortunately for me, in those days doctor's

still made house calls bringing along their little black bag of medicines. So my mother called the doctor and he came to our house very late at night.

As it turned out I had a severe case of strep throat for which the doctor needed to give me a penicillin shot. I was so sick I never even felt the shot. It was three weeks before I returned to school. Looking back on that experience, I'm thankful for that doctor and his little black bag.

Today's church leaders find that they often need diagnoses and prescriptions, which will assist in building a healthy church. Of course not every church needs emergency care like I did. Yet, every church can benefit from preventative care. Since not every church has the benefit of a church consultant, that is a church doctor, that's where the **McIntosh's Church Growth Answer Book** comes in. The **Answer Book** is a unique collection of descriptive and prescriptive care for a local church.

Now you can have the benefit of your own personal consultant right in your own hands. You can benefit from the expertise and insight, which has helped numerous churches in the United States and Canada.

You'll find innovative approaches used by many top church consultants that you can begin putting to use for your own church immediately. Here are a few of the ideas you'll discover in this book:

- The danger signs of decline.
- How to turn a church around.
- When to close a church.
- Steps for going to multiple services.
- Insights for relocating a church
- Ideas for paying your pastor

You'll want to access **McIntosh's Church Growth Answer Book** near at hand for practical advice at-a-glance as you tackle the challenges in today's church. Consider it your very own "home remedy" book. New articles are added on a regular schedule, so check in often to see what's new.

Whether you're a pastor, church leader or simply one who cares deeply for your church, you'll find these proven techniques an invaluable guide for making decisions without extensive research.

Permission is given for all articles to be used in your local church or personal ministry. Please note the source for all articles used as **the McIntosh Church Growth Network**: www.mcintoshcgn.com. For reprints in magazines, newsletters, or books advance permission must be obtain by contacting the **McIntosh Church Growth Network**.

CONTENTS

Part 1: Mix It Right

1. Negotiables and Non-negotiables
2. A Church Growth Formula
3. Prayer Ministry
4. Prayer Ministry

Part 2: Understanding Our Times

5. 51 Years of Television
6. The Information Age
7. The 1950s vs the 1990s
8. What's Hot—What's Not

Part 3: Reaching Generations

9. Three Generations
10. Boomers
11. Busters
- 12: Blending Generations

Part 4: Attracting Visitors

13. Advertising for the Growing Church
14. Attracting Guests
15. Starting Good Rumors
16. How Do You Say Hello?

Part 5: Assimilating Newcomers

17. Get Ready for Company
18. How To Be A Friendly Church
19. Visitor Follow-up That Works

20. Reach Out and Touch Someone

Part 6: Designing Worship

- 21. Enhancing Your Worship Service
- 22. Little Things That Make A Big Difference
- 23. Multiple Worship Services
- 24. Adding A Second Service

Part 7: Renewing A Church

- 25. The Turnaround Pastor
- 26. Selecting A New Church Name
- 27. Relocating A Church
- 28. Do's and Don'ts for Relocating

Part 8: Paying Your Pastor

- 29. A Word to Pastors
- 30. Developing A Compensation Plan
- 31. Supplements, Benefits and Reimbursements
- 32. A Word to Church Leaders

Part 9: Developing Ministry

- 33. Creating An Attractive Nursery
- 34. Staffing for Growth
- 35. Small Group Ministry
- 36. Starting Small Groups

Part 10: Moving Forward

- 37. A Pastor for the 90s
 - 38. When To Close A church
 - 39. Selecting A Church Consultant
 - 40. Some Final Comments
-

PART 1

**Mix It
Right**

Negotiables and Non-negotiables

A few years ago heavy rains caused rapid flooding in a neighborhood near the church I was pastoring. In a matter of minutes over 80 homes were flooded with mud and water four feet deep.

One lady looked out her back window and, seeing the flood coming, frantically grabbed her purse, the family dog and ran to her car. As she drove away, the flood waters were coming out of her front door.

Such a situation reminds us that everything is not equally important. Faced with the necessity of a quick decision, this lady took her purse, dog and car. What would you have taken? Pictures? Valuable papers? A baseball card collection?

Intuitively we realize that everything we hold dear in church ministry is not equally important. Some things are surely non-negotiable while other things should be negotiable.

I believe there are five non-negotiables and five negotiables for a growing church.

NON-NEGOTIABLES

Non-negotiables are those aspects of a growing church that should not be changed.

1. The Right Premise: The Word of God

In my first year as a church consultant I was speaking at a declining church in New Jersey. As I stepped to the pulpit, I asked the congregation to turn to Acts Chapter Two. However, I soon realized that no one in the congregation had a Bible!

Growing churches have a strong commitment to the authority of the Word of God. Without a solid premise or foundation upon which to build, there will be little growth and what growth there is will often be shallow.

2. The Right Priority: Make Disciples

I was leading a church growth seminar in Baltimore when I asked the audience to complete the following Scripture. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the . . ." I stood there surrounded by an awkward silence. Not one person could complete this verse!

Growing churches place a priority on making disciples. Christ's purpose to "seek and save the lost" must be the ultimate driving force for church growth.

3. The Right Process: Discipleship

A pastor in Portland, Oregon told me that over 350 people had walked forward at the end of his worship services to receive Christ as their Savior. That sounded impressive until I later found out that his average worship attendance was only 85!

Growing churches balance their discipleship process around three elements:

A way to find people,
A way to keep people and
A way to build people.

4. The Right Power: Prayer

I finished an assimilation workshop for a growing Korean church at precisely 10:00 p.m. To my surprise following my concluding remarks, people began to enter the room to begin an all night prayer meeting.

Growing churches focus on prayer as their source of power for effective ministry. The reality of spiritual warfare clearly necessitates the need for prayer as the source of growth.

5. The Right Pastor: A Leader

It was in Seattle, Washington that I met a pastor who had planted a growing church. I congratulated him on his church's growth. He looked at me and said, "Gary, I don't want my church to grow any more." Within months his church was on a decline and never recovered.

Growing churches have pastors who assertively lead their church forward to fulfill Christ's purpose.

NEGOTIABLES

Negotiables are aspects of ministry found in all churches but which are negotiable according to the context of each church.

6. The Right Philosophy: Culturally Relevant

A church in Texas found failure in a door-to-door evangelism ministry. After researching their area, they started a new preschool aimed at unchurched families that accounted for 50% of all people won to Christ in their church for five years straight!

Growing churches relate to their communities in culturally relevant ways. Ministries are started and evaluated on the basis of effectiveness in today's culture not one of years gone by.

7. The Right Plan: Target Driven

Realizing that their community was composed of 68% singles, a church located in a beach community of California determined to design more ministries to that target audience. The result? More than 300 new people joined the church in a little over one year.

Growing churches clearly define their primary target audience and then design their ministry to reach that group of people.

8. The Right Place: Visible and Accessible.

Three freeways crisscrossed around a growing church in the early 1970's. The church found itself confined to an area that was quickly becoming industrialized. Over the years, the church turned down several opportunities to relocate and today has less than 30 people at its worship service.

Growing churches locate in areas where they have good visibility and accessibility to their target audiences.

9. The Right Procedure: Simple Structure

Two churches in Southern California wanted to begin divorce recovery ministries. One church made a decision quickly and started its ministry within four months. The other church took 15 months to research the idea and then decided not to pursue it.

Growing churches simplify their decision-making processes so that they are able to quickly take advantage of growth opportunities.

10. The Right People: Willing Followers

A pastor in the Midwest wanted to quit since it appeared his ministry was ineffective. However, the people determined to help him succeed and, rejecting his suggestions about resignation, worked with him to build a great church.

Growing churches have worshippers who want their church to grow and are willing to get behind their leaders to make it happen.

The Mix Factor

My grandmother was a superb cook. People especially liked her dinner rolls and would often ask for her recipe. However, she never used a recipe. She would tell people the ingredients but they never seemed to be able to make their rolls turn out as good. No one was ever able to get the mix exactly right.

In a similar manner, a growing church is the result of a proper mix of the ten factors noted above. How is your mix? What ingredients are missing? What needs to be added?

2

A Church Growth Formula

Church growth is a complex issue. Nevertheless, it can be stated in the simple formula of $CG = HS (P10)$.

This formula describes the basic elements which contribute to church growth.

Understanding the Formula

On the left side is the dependent variable CG. In this case CG stands for CHURCH GROWTH. A church's growth is dependent on the elements on the right side of the equal [=] sign.

On the right side is all the independent variables. Each of these elements may stand alone, but it is as they function together that they determine the potential for church growth in a local church.

In this formula HS stands for the HOLY SPIRIT, and the ten P's stand for PROCESS, PRIORITY, PREMISE, POWER, PASTOR, PHILOSOPHY, PLAN, PLACE, PROCEDURE and PEOPLE. Let's take them one at a time.

The Holy Spirit

We do not build the church. It is Christ who builds the church. However, Christ works through the Holy Spirit who empowers us to work and, in so doing, to be His agents in building His church.

"You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you," were the words our Lord spoke to His disciples. Power to witness. Power for church growth!

In this formula the Holy Spirit is outside of the parentheses [()]. This indicates that the Holy Spirit is multiplied against all that is within the ().

The Holy Spirit is the only constant in the formula. Never changing, the Holy Spirit stands ready to empower the church for effective ministry and growth. As long as the elements within the () are functioning properly, the Holy Spirit's power is multiplied and growth occurs.

Inside the Parentheses

The factors that create the variations in a church's growth potential are within the parenthesis.

P = Pastor:

Some pastors have greater potential to lead a church toward growth than others. Major variables are:

•**Leadership Skills** - Is the pastor a doer or delegator? Threatened or non-threatened? Visionary or status quo thinker? Flexible or static? Planner or hoper?

•**Background** - Was the pastor raised in the country or the city? Did the pastor come to Christ in a Sunday school or a parachurch organization? Work in business or begin pastoring straight out of school?

•**Models** - Was the pastor raised in a church or no church? Rural church or city church? Large church or small church? Single-pastor church or multiple-staffed church? Blue collar church or white collar church?

P = People:

When asked what makes a good coach, most coaches reply good players. What makes a good pastor is often good church members. Major variables are:

•**Following** - To what degree are people willing to follow growth leadership?

•**Giving** - To what degree are people willing to financially support facilities, parking, and training?

•**Praying** - To what degree are people willing to pray for growth?

•**Welcoming** - To what degree are people open to outsiders?

P = Priority:

A lot of work can be generated toward priorities that really do not produce growth. Major variables are:

•**Era of the congregation** - Pre-boomers or baby boomers? Formed by the depression or affluent times?

•**Scriptural understanding** - Concerned for social causes or for preaching the Word? Reaching the lost or feeding the sheep? Equipping or enabling?

•**History of the church** - Strong ministry or ineffective ministry? High congregational esteem or low congregational esteem? Growth or decline?

•**Life cycle of the church** - Young and growing? Middle aged and slowing? Old and declining?

P = Program:

People are attracted to a church that meets their needs through programming. Major variables are:

•**Orientation** - Targeted to new people or present members? Dealing with relevant issues or surface issues?
Training people or spoon-feeding them?

•**Variety** - Few choices or multiple choices? Spans all age groups or a just a few? Places for new believers or only mature believers?

•**Style** - New programs or older ones? Relational or content-oriented? Talkative or somber?

P = Place:

Most pastors and church leaders underestimate the significant impact place has on the growth potential of their church. Major variables are:

•**Facility** - Large or small? Balanced between classroom needs and worship needs?
Reflect the culture of today's target audience or an audience of by-gone years?

•**Location** - Quiet neighborhood or busy street? Easy or difficult to find? Visible or hidden? Accessible or inaccessible?

•**Parking** - Open spaces or no spaces available Sunday mornings? Reserved spaces for visitors or for staff? Off street parking or on street parking?

The Multiplication Effect

Each addition of a variable within the () adds to the complexity of church growth. However, the ten listed are the major variables that will effect every church.

Some churches just seem to explode in growth with what appears little effort. Other churches seem to have potential but never get moving. Still others just never seemed to have much of a chance. One way to understand these variations of growth potential is by understanding the multiplication effect.

Looking at the formula numerically may help. P^{10} means that P is multiplied against itself 10 times. For example if $P = 2$ then we have $2 \times 2 = 4 \times 2 = 8 \times 2 = 16 \times 2 = 32 \times 2 = 64$

$X^2 = 128$ $X^2 = 256$ $X^2 = 512$ $X^2 = 1,024$ $X^2 = 2,048!$ If one factor is left out the results are reduced by half. If a second factor is left out, the total is reduced by half again.

In this formula we have People X Procedure X Place X Plan X Philosophy X Pastor X Power X Process X Priority X Premise. If each variable is working to full capacity, the growth potential of a church is outstanding.

However, if even one factor is not functional the growth potential is severely reduced. A church may still grow, but only because the rest of the factors are in order. In the case of a severely ill church, where only one factor is working properly, the potential for growth is drastically reduced. Such a church would have limited growth potential.

Five Implications

- #1 - Church growth is complex.
- #2 - Church growth is a mix of factors.
- #3 - Church growth is a balance of factors.
- #4 - Church growth is to some extent controllable.
- #5 - Church growth is rooted in the Holy Spirit.

3

4

5

PART 2
UNDERSTAND
THE TIMES

54 Years of Television

The first flickering images hit the airwaves on April 30, 1939. President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave a short speech declaring open the New York World's Fair. It was the first public broadcast of an electronic medium called television.

Roosevelt's speech was aired by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). Fewer than 100 sets of the new "picture radio," had been sold. The screens ranged from five to 12 inches in size.

The Early Years

The first daily broadcast was from Radio City in Manhattan. The first portable black and white TV was introduced in 1956. The first battery-powered set in 1960. NBC became the first network to televise all programs in color in 1966.

Here are few other interesting "firsts."

- First televised sporting event - a college baseball game between Columbia and Princeton on May 17, 1939.

- First televised major league baseball game - the Cincinnati Reds and Brooklyn Dodgers on August 26, 1939.

- First televised newscast - December 7, 1941 as the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) reported the events of Pearl Harbor.

TV's Boom

Over 700 million people, the largest TV audience ever, watched the first men walk on the moon July 20, 1969.

By the early 1980s, 98% of U.S. households were equipped with at least one TV set, a majority with two or three. In 1989 American households averaged 1.9 sets.

In 1989, the average American family was spending seven hours and five minutes per day watching TV. The average individual watched TV for 30.5 hours per week.

Color TV was found in about half of American homes in 1970. Today over 90% have color TV. Half of all U.S. households were "wired" for cable TV by 1989, giving access to about 120 million viewers. In 1993 enough TVs were manufactured for every baby born in the United States.

The Future

The 1990s promise to bring high-definition television (HDTV). These sets will supposedly offer twice the sharpness of current sets, richer color and compact-disk (CD) sound quality. HDTV sets are expected to represent \$1.5 billion in sales by the year 2000.

Fiber-optic cables may be attached to phone lines resulting in a universal system whereby subscribers may run errands and choose a myriad of programs. It potentially could make network and cable TV obsolete.

Almost science fiction, some predict we will see (1) Imaging - a system whereby viewers could see themselves in clothes without leaving their seats. (2) Holograms - a system whereby small, three-dimensional figures might act out a scene on the living-room floor.

TV's Impact on Ministry

In the 54 years since its formal debut, television has emerged as a primary entertainment medium, chronicler of history, wellspring of popular culture, major force for political and social change, coercive commercial vehicle and powerful spreader of information.

Here is a checklist of ways television has influenced people and ideas on responding in a positive manner.

Immediate Satisfaction: Products are sold, complex issues are solved and victory is won within 30 minutes on TV. People tend to expect that life will give the same immediate results. The ideas of delayed gratification and a process of spiritual growth are not well accepted. People want patience. And . . . they want it now!

A Positive Approach: Preach character sketches of biblical people. Point out the process each took to mature in their faith. Share examples of people who waited for prayers to be answered, personal problems to be solved and personal growth to occur.

Increasing Boredom: TV gives the impression that life moves at a faster pace, which has produced boredom and lack of determination when it comes to staying with tasks and learning mundane lessons. People subconsciously compare the real world with the fast paced action-oriented pulse beat of a TV series.

A Positive Approach: Speed up worship services. Schedule classes, small groups and Bible studies in shorter time blocks. Preach shorter sermon series. A six week series is better than a 13 week series.

Consumer Mentality: Spending on TV advertising soared from \$171 million in 1950 to more than \$1.6 billion in 1960. It increased to \$3.6 billion in 1970, \$11.4 billion in 1980 and \$32 billion in 1989. Americans have been conditioned to buy what they can and charge what they can't.

A Positive Approach: Stress biblical stewardship of time, talent and treasure. Encourage worshippers to give to eternal values. Provide practical workshops on managing money. Preach a minimum of six stewardship messages a year.

Common Knowledge: I Love Lucy, The Honeymooners, The Ed Sullivan Show, Gunsmoke, American Bandstand, The Mickey Mouse Club, Father Knows Best and Leave It to Beaver all provided for a common base of symbols, fads and experiences unknown in time past.

A Positive Approach: Illustrate sermons from TV shows rather than illustration books. Use stories from the Cosby Show, Roseanne and Life Goes On rather than from devotional books.

Short Attention Span: TV commercials have created short attention spans. Chase scenes and rapidly changing action shots have created a climate where people tend to concentrate for only about 30 seconds.

A Positive Approach: Move away from the pulpit. Preach without notes. Vary your volume and pitch. Use visuals. Organize your worship service into blocks of 7 minutes each changing to something entirely different each block.

Personal Touch: Relational aspects of communication are up and transfer of content is down. Letter writing is diminishing with the phone call taking its place. The motto "Reach Out and Touch Someone" reinforces typifies this fundamental change in the area of communication.

A Positive Approach: Deliver your sermon from the floor, close to the people, rather than from the platform, removed from the people. Communicate content in one-to-one fashion through stories that touch the lives of people.

Multiple Story Lines: TV often weaves two or three story lines in a 30 minute episode. Sermons usually follow a sequential 1-2-3 format. We no longer live in a sequential world. People carry on many activities at one time.

A Positive Approach: Weave at least two story lines in your teaching. Use personal stories weaved together with "What would Jesus Say" is the answer.

In-n-Out Mentality: TV has taught us that we can step into an episode and it will stand alone. Even the SOAPS with their continuing story lines from week-to-week, have weekly stories that can stand alone.

A Positive Approach: People hate "To Be Continued" endings. Preach a series but keep it short (6 weeks). Make sure each sermon can stand alone.

Concern for Causes: A new word "dramady" has been coined to name a new form of comedy and drama which addresses topics like AIDS, drugs and sex. TV has started facing tough issues and trying to provide answers. For example, Down's Syndrome - Life Goes On.

A Positive Approach: Face current issues tastefully. Don't make a habit of dealing with heavy issues each week but don't be afraid of facing them either.

6

The Information Age

Social scientists have identified three distinct ages which serve as a brief outline of history.

The Agricultural Age: the time period which spans most of known history to about 1860. Named for the main occupation which involved over 90% of all workers - farming. The main context was the small rural town. The key unit was the extended family.

The Industrial Age: the time period from 1860 to about 1956. Named for the growth of industrial factories. The main context was the city. The key unit was the nuclear family.

The Information Age: the time period from 1956 to the present. Named for the rapid growth of technology. The main context is the world. The key unit is the fractured family.

Information Explosion

Peter Drucker writes that in our "knowledge-based society," information is the key resource and building block for every type of organization. Information is the new "money," currency upon which organizations rise or fall.

John Naisbitt suggests that "we now mass-produce information the way we used to mass-produce cars."

Note these signs of the information explosion:

Computers: Between 1946 and 1960 the number of computers grew from 1 to 10,000. From 1960 to 1980 to 10,000,000! By the year 2000 there will be over 80,000,000 in the United States alone. The number of components that can be programmed into a computer chip is doubling every eighteen months.

Publications: Approximately 9,600 different periodicals are published in the United States each year. About 1,000 books are published internationally every day. Printed information doubles every eight years. Keeping up with our reading takes on new meaning.

Libraries: The world's great libraries are doubling in size every 14 years. In the early 1300s, the Sorbonne Library in Paris contained only 1,338 books and yet was thought to be the

largest library in Europe. Today, there are several libraries in the world with an inventory of well over 8 million books each.

Periodicals: The Magazine Publishers Association notes that 265 more magazines are being published this year than last year, which works out to about one a day if magazine creators take weekends off. Newsstands offer a choice of 2,500 different magazines.

Knowledge: More new information has been produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000. The English language contains roughly 500,000 usable words. That's about five times more than during the time of Shakespeare. Today information doubles every 5 years! By the year 2000 it will be doubling every 4 years!

Yellow Pages: The Pacific Bell Yellow pages is used about 3.5 million times a day. There are 33 million copies of 108 different directories with 41 billion pages of information.

Dictionaries: The new second edition of the Random House Dictionary of the English Language contains more than 315,000 words, has 2,500 pages, weighs 13.5 pounds, and has 50,000 new entries. One writer notes that by the year 2,000 the common dictionary is expected to weigh more than the Earth.

Business: U.S. businesses report that half of their work forces have jobs that are information-related. A new position, the CIO or Chief Information Officer, is responsible for managing information in many businesses.

General: Getting a credit card approval in Paris involves a 46,000 mile journey over phone lines that takes place in 5 seconds. In 1985, 2.8 million tons of computer paper was used in offices in the United States, roughly twice the amount used in 1975. A weekday edition of The New York Times contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime in 17th century England.

Information Overload

All of this information is good. Right? Wrong! Consider a few implications.

1. Travel: In 1914 the typical American averaged 2,640 miles per year in travel. Today the average car owner averages 10,000 miles per year with some traveling 30,000 or more miles per year! Many people will travel over 3,000,000 miles in their lifetimes.

Implication: People are tired, have less free time and are more difficult to recruit.

2. Change: The world today is as different from 50 years ago as 1934 was from the time of Julius Caesar. Within a couple of decades the share of the industrialized nations' work force engaged in manufacturing will be no more than 5% to 10%. "Knowledge workers" will take their place.

Implication: People oppose change, resist making friends and wonder why they are lonely.

3. Saturation: In one year, the average American will read or complete 3,000 notices and forms, read 100 newspapers and 36 magazines, watch 2,463 hours of television, listen to 730 hours of radio, buy 20 records, talk on the telephone almost 61 hours and read 3 books.

Implication: People hear so much noise, so much "informational cacophony" that they are not going to hear you.

4. Specialization: The sheer volume of data makes it inevitable that we must focus on the narrow endeavor. Our information explosion results in a fragmentation of knowledge leading to specialization, overspecialization and subspecialization.

Implication: People cannot see the big picture, tie the ends together, or see how the pieces relate.

5. Memory: People are plagued with "Chinese-dinner" memory dysfunction! They forget what they learn within one hour! Created by placing an emphasis on short-term memory characterized by cramming unnecessary information for unnecessary tests to get unnecessary grades.

Implication: People hear Information, learn it and lose it without much effect on their lives.

6. Inaccuracies: The General Accounting Office of the IRS found that of the letters written to the IRS by people with tax questions, 53% were answered correctly, 31% contained major errors, and 16% were unclear or incomplete. When the IRS received phone calls 36% of the callers were given wrong answers!

Implication: People know information is out there, have difficulty getting it and make mistakes without it.

7. Amnesia: Overload Amnesia results when the brain shuts down to protect itself. You cannot recall even simple information such as a friend's name when trying to introduce them to another person. Often happens in classrooms, conferences, lectures and while attending church.

Implication: People hear more than they understand, forget what they already know and resist learning more.

8. Confusion: Everyone knows the feeling of buying a high-technology product (VCR?), getting it home and not understanding how to program it. Each new form the IRS adds for Income Tax preparation reportedly adds an additional 20 minutes of time for completion.

Implication: People don't know how to use what they learn, make mistakes when they try and feel guilty about it.

Most churches have their roots in the Agricultural and Industrial Age. This often leads to stress as some programs that worked in the past are not as effective today. Consider these two examples.

Example #1: The 11:00 a.m. worship service. Worship at 11 o'clock is a throwback to the Agricultural Age when churches had to give farmers time to complete the morning chores, hitch the horse to the wagon and drive into town. By the time most farmers completed this routine, 11:00 a.m. was the logical time for morning church services to begin. Today, many churches find earlier hours for worship services often attract more people.

Example #2: The evening service. Evening services are a throwback to the Industrial Age when electric lights were first developed. Initially, not every home or business establishment was able to have lights installed. Some enterprising church leaders found that by installing electric lights they could attract crowds to evening evangelistic church services. Today, many churches find that small groups attract more people than evening services.

Insights for Ministry

The models of ministry developed in the Agricultural and Industrial Ages are colliding head on with the Information Age. Pastors and church leaders are under pressure to develop new models of effective ministry.

In general, churches must begin to turn their attention toward making information understandable, rather than simply dumping more data on their people.

Here are a few insights local churches should consider as they seek to minister effectively in the Information Age.

Insight #1: Develop high touch ministries.

"High Tech-High Touch" is the new buzz word of the Information Age. A university study found that students were able to retain information longer in a library when librarians made contact with them lightly touching their arms while answering questions. Churches should . . .

- Place an emphasis on relationships.
- Expand small groups.
- Use counseling centers.
- Train members in the Stephen Ministries.

Insight #2: Offer a variety of ministries.

M.O.P.S. (Mother's of Preschoolers), divorce recovery and never-married singles groups are a few of the new ministries being developed in many churches. New ones are continually needed. Churches should . . .

- Employ workers who are specialists in their fields.
- Present Bible studies which speak to felt needs.
- Target new ministries to new groups.
- Deploy ministries away from the church facilities.

Insight #3: Remain flexible.

People are busy. Yesterday a husband would come home from work to a prepared meal. Today he finds a note on the kitchen counter that reads, "Honey. If you get home before I do, please start dinner." Churches should . . .

- Conduct alternate services.
- Expand opportunities throughout the week.
- Hold a Friday or Saturday evening service.
- Shorten services.

Insight #4: Establish a clear purpose.

The demands of keeping a church going often takes precedence over its basic purpose. However, ideas do not come from maintenance but from conviction of purpose that burns in the heart and spreads to others. Churches should . . .

- Clarify their purpose.
- Present things in concrete terms rather than philosophical ones.
- Increase ownership through regular communication.
- Explain their purpose in real life stories.

Insight #5: Keep it simple.

Pastors labor under the misconception that it is better to have too much information than too little. Psychologist George Miller found years ago that only 7 pieces of information, such as digits of a telephone number, can be held easily in a person's mind for short term memory. Churches should . . .

- Simplify everything.
- Make sermons clearer and shorter.
- Make traffic patterns, instructions and signs obvious.
- Announce only what is of interest to everyone.

Insight #6: Practice good communication.

A survey done by the Opinion Research Corporation found that fewer than half of employees rated their companies with favor when it came to letting them know what was going on in the company. Executives rate communication problems as their chief difficulty. Churches should . . .

- Tie communication to images.
- Use stories. Half of our learning is fact; the other side is stories and ideas.
- Use humor. Research suggests that putting people in a good mood by telling them jokes helps them think through their problems with creativity.
- Communicate everything 5 different ways.

Insight #7: Be patient in decision making.

Churches are taking more time to make decisions. They are being careful and taking the time to search for additional information. Pastoral search used to take 3 to 6 months. Today it is taking 9 to 12 months. Churches should . . .

- Ask good questions.
- Determine criteria for making a decision before beginning research.
- Use decision-making grids.
- Look for consensus rather than unanimous decisions.

Insight #8: Trust others for advice.

Thomas Nelson publishes around 60 books a year, but receives around 50 manuscripts per week! There is an inability to keep up with produced information. Leaders must accept the fact that they cannot know it all. Churches should . . .

- Use consultants - they have a broader base of experience and understanding to interpret information.
- Ask questions.
- Don't wait forever to make a decision. You will never have all the information you would like.

Insight #9: Focus on application.

People only remember 15% of what they hear. George Simmel, a sociologist, was the first to recognize that in urban life people protect themselves from information overload " . . . which results in an incapacity . . . to react to new situations with the appropriate energy." Churches should . . .

- Focus on known information rather than dumping new information.
- Show people how.
- Concentrate on the basics.
- Preach and teach topically.

Insight #10: Emphasize long term growth.

People are being forced to adapt to a new life-pace. They must confront novel situations and master new ways of doing things in ever shorter intervals. Churches should . . .

- Develop home Bible studies which teach people to find information for themselves.
- Narrow information to what people really need to know.
- Use a variety of teaching techniques; not every one learns the same way.

Conclusion

Getting through the noise level is going to get harder as the amount of available information expands. Growing churches will be those who make information understandable and practical.

1950's vs 1990's

I've got some good news and some bad news for you.

The good news is it's the 1990's and there's great opportunity for ministry.

The bad news is some of your people still think it's the 1950's and aren't taking advantage of the opportunities for ministry available.

Times Change

A recent article, written by Dr. Richard Caldwell, contrasts some of the values of the 1950's and those of the 1990's. He observed:

	<u>1950's</u>	<u>1990's</u>
	Saving	Spending
Delayed gratification	Instant gratification	
Ozzie and Harriet	Latchkey kids	
Certainty	Ambivalence	
Orthodoxy	Skepticism	
Investing	Leveraging	
Neighborhood	Lifestyle	
Middle class	Underclass	
Export	Import	
Public virtue	Personal well-being	
Mom and dad	Nanny and day care	
Press conference	Photo opportunity	
Achievement	Fame	
Knowledge	Credential	
Manufacturing	Service	
Duty	Divorce	
"We"	"Me"	

While we must not fail to focus on the supracultural work and influence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people, a keen awareness of the cultural attitudes and values which have changed our world can prove helpful in developing effective strategies for church growth in the 1990's.

The Opportunity

Our Lord encourages us to "Walk in wisdom toward them that are outside, redeeming (taking advantage of) the time." (Colossians 4:5)

"Time" is a limited season when people are open to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our job is to quickly take advantage of the opportunities that are ours to win people to Christ since the season (time) is changing and will not always be available.

The Findings

Music in the 1950's was built on the foundation of hymns with accompaniment provided primarily by piano and organ. Music was soft, and choruses were mixed with hymns in the evening service but were a no-no in the morning worship service. Services were conducted in unvarying style, with restricted forms of music, songs and instruments. A guitar was okay for camp but not church. The choir was always robed and the song director was mainly a cheer leader who waived his arms in an attempt to excite the people's singing. Amplification was still in its basic stages. Large youth choirs were popular. Music rarely accompanied the prayers of the pastor.

Music in the 1990's is often built on the foundation of praise songs accompanied by guitars and a growing variety of other instruments. Music is loud with praise music mixed with hymns or, in many cases, replacing hymns totally. The new direction is toward worship leaders who help the congregation to worship God and not simply to get excited about singing. Amplification has increasingly improved but many churches still subsist with old outdated systems. Youth choirs are not as popular as small singing groups. Music now accompanies Scripture reading, prayers and even the close of a message.

Facilities in the 1950's were limited to meeting halls and classrooms and designed for a single use. Pews were the normal seating provided. Church architecture stressed the place of the sermon with the pulpit up front and elevated. Colors were darker, ceilings were higher and isles and pews were longer. Furnishings kept the pastor away from the people. Buildings were smaller, looked churchy and were sacred ("Don't run in the Lord's house!").

Facilities in the 1990's are more versatile and include things seldom considered in the 1950's such as gymnasiums, racketball courts, etc. Movable seating allows for multiple use of auditoriums. Church architecture stresses relationships by using lighter colors, pews or chairs in a semi circle and less furniture effectively bringing the pastor closer to the people. Facilities are more functional. Buildings are larger and less churchy (no steeples, etc.)

Worship in the 1950's was tied to a standard format. It was something like song, song, Scripture reading, prayer, announcements, song, special music, message, song, altar call and home. Worship was formal with emphasis placed on listening to the choir, special music and the sermon. The sermon was topical and viewed as the center of worship. Worship involved coming to church on Sunday and the 11:00 a.m. hour for worship was almost sacred. Sincerity was the focus.

Worship in the 1990's is more free flowing with changing formats depending on the theme of the message. Worship now includes drama, interviews and visual aids. Emphasis is being given to praise and informality is on the rise. The sermon is viewed as only a part of worship and has given way to singing and audience participation. Expository preaching is stressed but not

necessarily verse-by-verse. Variable times for worship (multiple services with some offered in the evening during the week) have increased the opportunity of reaching more people. Excellence is the focus.

Staffing in the 1950's was limited due in part to the large number of volunteers available. If a church had a staff in 1950 it typically was the senior pastor, youth pastor and music man, while on occasion one might find a children's worker. Senior pastors were often Jack-of-all-trades leaders who closely controlled their staffs. Associates were often given responsibility without authority. The number of pastors averaged about one full-time pastor for every 300 people. Staffing was designed around generalists. Pastors went into ministry as the result of a clear, Divine call.

Staffing in the 1990's is tied to professionals due in part to the lower number of volunteers. The 1990's staff will include singles pastors, women's directors, drug ministry directors, dysfunctional family leaders, day school principals, recreational leaders, senior citizen pastors and preschool directors, to name a few. Staff are more free to do ministry but often continue to be given responsibility without authority. Staffs average about one full time pastor for every 150-200 people. Staffing is now based on specialized functions with some pastors serving out of a vocational choice rather than a sense of call.

Children's ministry in the 1950's was tied primarily to Sunday school, Vacation Bible School and children's choirs. Children met in a large group for opening exercises (singing and worship) then divided up into small groups for teaching. There were more children due to the high birth rate of the 50's, but there was also more volunteer help since most mothers were home. A very strict curriculum was used with few visual aids. Children were more literate, disciplined and had lots of contact with adults.

Children's ministry in the 1990's is much more diverse. The children's choir has been replaced by the children's musical, and VBS is losing ground in our urban society. Other additions are programs to help working parents such as year-round child care, preschool ministry, summer and winter camps, as well as day camps. Children meet in a large group for teaching from a master teacher and then divide up into small groups for interaction. Many children have difficulty reading, are less disciplined with more separation from parents and adult contact.

Special programs in the 1950's were often one or two weeks long and were predominantly missions/Bible conferences, evangelistic meetings and youth crusades. Programs were targeted primarily to church members. Additional programs tended to be focused around the women's missionary society, the men's work and youth group. Churches were limited in programming because some issues were not even discussed let alone ministered to (i.e., abortion, homosexual problems, etc.). Programs were geared to inform.

Special programs in the 1990's are much shorter often only one or two days long. Special interest groups such as the underprivileged, unemployed and other needy categories of people are the focus of much church programming while traditional men's and women's programs are declining. Churches are more willing to face difficult social and personal problems and therefore

more open to developing new ministries for these controversial areas (i.e., dealing with AIDS, divorce recovery, etc.). Programs are geared to entertain.

Sunday school in the 1950's was the primary ministry of many churches and was highly departmentalized. A Sunday school superintendent led in opening exercises and then classes were dismissed for study. Sunday school was viewed as an evangelistic arm of the church since there was less competition for children's time and many children came to Sunday school from unchurched homes. Adults came to Sunday school out of a desire to understand the Bible. [Editor's note: In the 50's adult classes were typically divided along the lines of gender, age, marital status, topic or teacher.]

Sunday school in the 1990's is only one of many ministries. Home groups and week-day/night small groups are on the rise reducing interest in Sunday morning schedules. There is less departmentalization and classes go directly to their meeting place often with worship being an integral part of their teaching time. Sunday school is viewed as an educational arm of the church since there is a lot of competition for children's time and children seem to come primarily from Christian homes. People want the Sunday school to relate to where they are during the week. They want to learn how the Bible can help them in their personal lives. [Editor's note: In the 90's adult classes are being divided along the lines of life-stage, i.e. parents with school age children, parents with no children, parents with adult children, etc.]

Foreign missions in the 1950's was the heartbeat of many churches. People not only gave their money but invested their time in prayer and writing letters to missionaries. Mission policies and goals were not often well thought out. The church's missionary program was primarily determined by the women in the church and few pastors would argue with their desires. Missions was primarily an adult issue. Missions was a life long career being viewed as "over there." Target groups were large major nations.

Foreign missions in the 1990's is often of low interest. People find it more difficult to communicate to missionaries, and prayer for missions is often lacking. Mission policies and goals are being examined and well-honed by many mission committees. The church's missionary program is most often determined by a missions board, and youth are a primary part especially in short term mission trips. Missions is being viewed as "right here." Target groups are now smaller unreached, hidden people groups.

Administration in the 1950's saw the pastor as preacher and general administrator. The pastor did it all and church administration was generally weak. Pastors were only asked to be godly, dedicated people. People asked, "What's a computer?"

Administration in the 1990's sees the pastor more in the role of leader and visionary with others being responsible for administration. Administration is more efficient. Pastors are asked to be up-to-date on the latest ministry tools and formal continuing education is expected. People ask, "Where's my computer?"

Outreach in the 1950's was easier for a number of reasons. First, people lived closer to their churches and were more willing to bring their neighbors to church. Second, unchurched people

seemed to have a basic understanding of spiritual things such as who Jesus Christ was, their own sin and need for redemption. Third, there wasn't the vast diversity of belief systems to contend with. Fourth, people were sociable and willing to be friends. Evangelism was a high priority for many churches but their follow-up was often very weak. Churches had few organized outreach programs and the ones they had were event-oriented. Evangelism was something to be done by crusades, etc.

Outreach in the 1990's is more difficult for a number of reasons. First, people tend to live farther from their church and find it difficult to bring neighbors to church. Second, unchurched people often don't have even a basic understanding of the Christian faith. Third, we have a pluralistic belief system. Fourth, people prefer to be alone and resist socializing. More emphasis is being placed on follow-up of people, but less evangelism is taking place. Outreach is being viewed as more of a lifestyle than simply a church program. Outreach is more relationally-oriented but still remains in the hands of a few faithful.

Welcoming visitors in the 1950's was easier since people were more sociable. People were welcomed by formal greeters and the general friendliness of the members but little was done to unite them to the church. Most people had to wait months, and even years, before being able to serve. [Editor's note: In the 50's seven out of eight adult visitors were people who had grown up in that church's denomination. Thus, they understood the church they were visiting and there was less need to introduce them to the church's ministry.]

Welcoming visitors in the 1990's is more difficult since people prefer to remain anonymous and may actually resist being greeted. More effort is exerted to assimilate new people into churches, and people are allowed to serve sooner than in the past. [Editor's note: In the 1990's only about eight in 20 people who visit a church come from that same denomination or church background. Thus, there is a greater need for a well-thought-out visitor welcome that helps new people understand a church's ministry.]

Ministry in the 1950's was tied to formal meetings often requiring attendance out of a sense of duty or loyalty. Ministry was often done by a few people in the church and was always well planned and coordinated. Evening services were quite common and the truly dedicated always attended them. Church sports programs were very few and those that existed were for fellowship. Ministry to the elderly had a significant place in a church's overall strategy.

Ministry in the 1990's is more tied to needs, and people are less likely to attend meetings out of duty or loyalty. More talk has been given to involving people in ministry, but ministry continues to be done by a few people. Overall ministries are better planned and there are fewer evening services. Church sports programs are a good way of reaching new people and are more geared to reaching the unchurched. The spiritual needs of the elderly are often overlooked today. Church programming doesn't take seriously the spiritual and physical needs of the elderly.

Prayer in the 1950's was primarily tied to a mid-week meeting. It was viewed as coming to the Throne of Grace. There was little or no education on how to pray, but prayer was the back bone of the church. Prayer time was often devoted to Bible study and the sharing of prayer needs.

Prayer in the 1990's has been accelerating since the late 1980's and is focused more in small groups, partner and triplet prayer teams. Prayer is being viewed as spiritual warfare or power encounter. However, prayer is often a weakness in most churches even though there is more education on how to pray.

Conclusion

The work of the church is the work of God and the organizational system can never compensate for the saving and life-giving work of the Holy Spirit.

Our single power source for ministry remains, but as church leaders we need to distinguish our methods from the surrounding culture and restructure our ministry for effectiveness in the 1990's.

8

What's Hot—What's Not

Grassroots Research, a San Francisco-based firm, went to 140 national retailers to find out what was in and out for 1989.

Among other things, what they found was Garfield dolls, pastel colors, canned foods and short shorts are out. Blue topaz, Batman, baseball cards and health foods are in.

In a similar way, I've gone to the grass roots to find out what's hot and what's not in church ministry. Now this isn't a scientific survey. It's a mix of what I've overheard pastors saying at seminars. What several of my consultant friends have told me. Ideas some of you have suggested and some of my own thoughts (some might say hallucinations).

The findings are as follows:

MUSIC

What's Hot -- Electronic bands, live accompaniment, 2-3 vocalists, small ensembles, electronic keyboards, soloists, musical packages, praise songs, songs written with personal statements and congregational participation.

What's Not -- Organs, canned music tracks, large choirs, piano and organ accompaniment, hymns that don't fit into the total worship picture and isolated hymns used simply to take up time or space.

FACILITIES

What's Hot -- The word "Lobby," silk plants, desert pastel colors, clear glass windows and doors, semi-circular seating, short rows of seating, well lit auditoriums and rooms, larger nurseries and movable seating.

What's Not -- The words "narthex" and "foyer," unmovable pews, stained glass, solid wood doors, small dark nurseries, dim lighting and dark wood.

WORSHIP

What's Hot -- "How to sermons," well planned services, Scripture readings from popular translations (NIV/NASB), Friday or Saturday evening services, early services, people dressed down (casual dress), multiple services, conversation before and after worship services, faster singing, phone calls or postal card reminders and announcements which effect everyone in the service.

What's Not -- "Ought to" sermons, people dressed up (ties, high heels, etc.), a single 11 a.m. service, KJV of the Bible, VBS, music selected at the last moment, slow singing and announcements which effect only select groups in the service.

STAFF

What's Hot -- Multiple staffs, staffing by function, children's pastors, ministers of prayer or intercession, ministers of assimilation, directors of women's ministries, directors of information management, team ministry and the use of first names.

What's Not -- Lone ranger pastors, the terms "assistant/associate," C.E. directors and any title (Dr. Rev., etc.).

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

What's Hot -- Learning centers, men in nurseries and children's Sunday school, well-baby nurseries, paid nursery workers, separated age groups, bright, happy colors and clean/sanitized toys.

What's Not -- Bus ministries, young mothers in children's Sunday school, volunteer nursery workers, all age groups in one room, dark, dingy colors and broken/dirty toys.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

What's Hot -- Singles and college in adult departments, need-oriented classes, family classes (intergenerational learning), video classes and large group Sunday schools.

What's Not -- Small group Sunday schools, super woman/man teachers, singles and college in youth department, age graded Sunday school, adult Sunday school and content-oriented classes.

MINISTRY

What's Hot -- Planting daughter churches, the term "students," target group activities, catered buffets, small groups, early morning prayer groups, wilderness-type experiences, lay counseling and life-situation ministry (i.e. divorce recovery, substance abuse, homeless/hungry, crisis pregnancy centers, etc.).

What's Not -- The term "youth," church activities for everyone, pot-lucks, Sunday evening services, Wednesday evening services, radio ministry, yearly prophecy conferences, women as nursery workers and almost anything on Sunday nights.

MISSIONS

What's Hot -- Projects for individual missionaries, a few churches supporting one missionary, short-term mission trips, mission fairs and mission support groups.

What's Not -- Women's missionary circles, yearly missions conference and 80 people/churches supporting one missionary.

ADMINISTRATION

What's Hot -- A vision, single board, zero based budgeting, ministry based budgeting, equipping, directive leadership, clean and clear typeface, the term "task force," and women as leaders.

What's Not -- Multiple boards, history based budgeting, extension based budgeting, enabling, laissez-faire leadership, confusing Old English or script typeface, standing committees and boards.

OUTREACH

What's Hot -- Advertising in living or entertainment sections, direct mail, warm calls, visits by appointment, ministry to internationals, home Bible studies, sports teams, preschools, mothers' day out, telemarketing and community churches.

What's Not -- Advertising on the church page, door-to-door canvassing, cold calling, unannounced visits, flyers distributed by hand, revivals and denominational churches.

WELCOME

What's Hot -- The term "guest," name tags on members and regular attenders, welcome centers, reserved visitor parking spaces, guest receptions in homes and refreshment centers before and after services.

What's Not -- The term "visitor," buttons or ribbons on visitors, having visitors stand during worship services, staff parking spaces and obviously formal greeters.

SERVICE

What's Hot -- Gift based ministry, specialists, intercessors, relational recruitment, one-on-one recruitment, varieties of ministry, entry level ministry and leadership development.

What's Not -- Guilt based ministry, generalists, Sunday school teachers, institutional recruitment, recruitment by announcement, the term "layman," and few options.

Looking Ahead

•**Look for an increase in ministry to seniors.** As the "age wave" continues to build, there will be an equal interest in starting new seniors ministries. Already the largest category of members in most churches is 36-54 years old. These people will fast be moving into the 55+ category and churches must respond.

•**Look for an increase in ministries for men.** Men still hold the majority of leadership roles in churches. However, the majority of ministries in many churches are targeted to women. The pendulum may swing toward ministries targeted to men in the next 10 years.

•**Look for an increase in ministries of prayer.** Some leaders feel we are on the brink of a national prayer awakening that will continue to increase into the 21st Century. Already there are signs of renewed emphasis on prayer as churches begin early morning prayer and identify intercessors.

PART 3

REACH NEW GENERATIONS

9

Three Generations

10

Baby Boomers

Look out! The largest group in the American population is now between the ages of 26 and 44. Since birth, this generation has affected -- and will continue to affect -- all aspects of our American way of life just by their sheer numbers.

We have followed the adventures of the baby boomers since their birth. In the '50s it was "Leave It To Beaver." In the '60s they were protesting. In the '70s they were getting jobs. In the '80s it was "Yuppies." Now in the '90s they are going into middle age.

Boomer Trends

- Retirement:** Today the average retirement age is 61. With life expectancy at 72 for men and 79 for women, people can look forward to a lot of years of doing whatever they please. However, boomers will likely work until they're 70 or older for fun and money.

- Savings:** Boomers are not saving the way their parents did. The average personal savings of baby boomers is \$1,200.

- Family:** Boomers are expanding our definition of "family" to include friends. Family is being defined as a group whose members love and care for each other. With families separated by distance, nurturing is being played by friends, church and civic associates.

- Nannies:** Trained nannies are an increasingly popular alternative to traditional child care centers. In-home child care is not the cheapest way to go, but for boomers who consider their children to be the most important factor in their lives, then they don't have a Volvo, buy a Chevrolet and hire a nanny.

- Nostalgia:** Every generation feels an affection for its childhood, but what makes the current nostalgia boom different is that it has become an industry. Nickelodeon's NICK at NITE programmers have brought back "The Donna Reed Show," "Bewitched," and "My Three Sons." Network TV is featuring "The Wonder Years," "Thirtysomething" and "China Beach." Sugar Bear is once again crooning about Sugar Crisp cereal.

- Lobbying:** A Texas-based group -- The American Association of Boomers (AAB) -- was organized in June 1989 to channel the clout of 78 million boomers. Modeled after the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), AAB's goal is to advance the social, professional and economic status of boomers. They expect to have 900,000 members by 1992. For more information contact: AAB, 2621 W. Airport Freeway, No. 105, Irving, Texas 75062 U.S.A.

- We First:** Out with the "me" generation. In with the "we" generation. Boomers are moving into middle age. They're growing up. Having found that the materialistic "me" approach is not satisfying, they are beginning to work together. Top concerns for the '90s will be ethics, environmentalism and meaningful experiences. All of which can best be accomplished together.

•**Muscle Flexing:** In past years, senior citizens have had a disproportionate influence in off-year local elections. Boomers were preoccupied with their professions and personal lives. Add to that their cynical feelings about politics and it is no wonder they usually didn't vote. At least not as much as their faithful, duty-bound parents. However, 1989 saw the first cases of boomer voters controlling the outcomes of many local elections across the U.S.

•**Music:** Elevator music? Canned music? No, its Muzak. Whatever the label, most Americans are familiar with the lilting, orchestral renditions of songs played in office and stores everywhere. Muzak, Inc. began in 1936 and during the 1930s and '40s played instrumental versions of hits by Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey. In the 1950s and '60s they took hold of artists like Mitch Miller and the 101 Strings. Today, in response to the boomer generation, they are switching from background music to foreground music. A newer, zippy style of contemporary music performed by original artists.

•**Music Continued:** Baby boomers want to feel good about themselves. They expect any public entity to work toward that end as well. Service and ambience have become as important as products. The "music generation" wants contemporary music in their cars, in their homes, in their businesses and in their churches.

•**Aging:** Baby boomers are growing up. In 1980 the average American age was 30; by 1988 it was 33. By the year 2010 it is projected to be 39. Four million baby boomers turn 40 each year.

Slowing For God

Church attendance among baby boomers, particularly older ones, is on the rise. At 42 percent of persons born between 1946 and 1958, the rate is close to the percentage of their counterparts during the Depression-era. As older boomers have children it causes a renewed sense of traditional values.

Many baby boomers who filled church pews as children in the 1950s are returning to the fold with their own kids. A study conducted by the American Academy of Religion reports that young Americans are attending church in greater numbers than 20 years ago. But . . .

1. They are "visitors" rather than "joiners" who aren't blindly returning to the churches of their childhood.
2. Boomers freely move in and out of several churches being the most fluid religious generation in American history.
3. Older boomers (40%) attend church more regularly than younger boomers (33%).

Renewed Search for Faith

Here are twelve reasons baby boomers are returning to church. (Not listed in any particular order.)

Reason #1: Boomers are concerned about the moral and religious training of their children.

Reason #2: Boomers are questioning the meaning of their own lives.

Reason #3: Boomers are nostalgic and wish to relive earlier times.

Reason #4: Boomers are seeking security from the rapid pace of social and technological change.

Reason #5: Boomers are frustrated at making more money than they expected, but living less well than they had planned do to the shrinking American dollar.

Reason #6: Boomers are anxious about society, the environment and materialism.

Reason #7: Boomers are realizing that the answer is not in things but in a personal faith.

Reason #8: Boomers are looking for a lifestyle that is more than just constant striving to get higher to make more money.

Reason #9: Boomers are pursuing a new balance by looking deeper into their lives.

Reason #10: Boomers are hunting new and meaningful experiences.

Reason #11. Boomers are coping with aging parents and still-young children.

Reason #12: Boomers are turning 40 and reaching a mid-life malaise.

Reaching Boomers

Churches have a chance for growth and resurgence during the 1990s by reaching these returning boomers.

But only if . . .

- They become less stodgy and bend to meet the real personal needs of boomers who come to them.
- They become sensitive to the needs of boomers in areas outside of traditional spiritual concerns.
- They become adaptable to giving boomers a wide variety of choices.
- They become responsive to the musical styles and tastes of boomers.
- They become aggressive in challenging boomers to a great vision.

Baby Busters

America is going through a baby boomlet. In 1989 births hit 4 million, the largest number of births since the post World War II baby boom ended in 1964.

Labeled **Baby Busters** due to the fact that they are a "bust" generation in comparison to that of their parents, this new generation is now between the ages of 8 and 25 years old.

Busters may be divided into three broad groups. There are the older busters between 20-25 years old, teenage busters 13-19 years old and younger busters from 8 to 12 years old. This issue of the Church Growth Network focuses on the middle group -- teenagers.

Today there are 24 million teens which make up about 7% of the entire population in the United States.

What Are Teen Busters Like?

Here are a few general characteristics of teen busters. At least 30% of teens will not fit portions of this profile.

- 1. High suicide rate:** The record rate of nearly 18 suicides per 100,000 in 1987 is double that of 1970. Suicide among white males has tripled since 1960.
- 2. Drug usage:** General use of drugs appears to be going down but lethal drug use in low-income areas is still high. Drinking and smoking continues to be a major problem.
- 3. Increased isolation:** Walkmans, VCRs and TVs are all helping teens spend more time alone in their rooms. These marvels of communication help isolate teens more than in times past.
- 4. On their own:** 40-50% of all teen busters live in single-parent homes headed mainly by working mothers. With divorce rates at close to 50%, many teenagers are left alone with little or no parental authority.
- 5. Generally Satisfied:** 80% of middle-class teens profess satisfaction with their own lives which is the same percentage as in 1970.
- 6. Fascinated with 60s culture:** Teens flock to see Paul McCartney, the Who and the Beach Boys. They like 60s artifacts and wear peace-sign earrings.

7. Hanging out at the work place: Between 1981 and 1989 the percentage of 16-17 year olds working grew from 35.5% to 37.6%. 7.7 million, or about one third of 14-19 year olds worked in 1988. 75% of the markets part-timers are under 20.

8. Big spenders: 13-19 year olds spent 56 billion on themselves in 1989. Clothes and food topped the list. Girls 13-15 years old have around \$34 each week to spend while boys of the same age have around \$31.

9. Hooked on TV: Teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 watch TV an average of 22 hours a week or about 3 hours per day. MTV is estimated to reach 20 million 11-24 year olds.

10. Sexually active: The percentage of 17 year old boys having sex has risen from 56% in 1979 to 66% in 1989. Girls aren't far behind with 17 year old girls showing an increase from 47% in 1979 to 52% in 1989.

Understanding Baby Busters

1. Personal goals are ahead of national goals. Based on a 1989 study in 40 Wisconsin communities, global concerns such as hunger, poverty and pollution were rated last by high school seniors. Getting good grades and finding a good job rated first.

2. Commodities have more power than culture. While baby boomers were united by causes, busters seem to be united more by commodities like Nintendo and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. The factors uniting teenagers today are the things they buy or plug into -- Walkmans, VCRs and TVs.

3. Stresses are more intense than on former teens. Baby busters face more adult-strength stresses than their baby boom parents did. They have access to a bewildering array of options.

4. Concerns are similar to other generations. Top ten concerns listed by Newsweek are having a good marriage and family, choosing a career, doing well in school, being successful in work, having strong friendships, paying for college, the country going downhill, making a lot of money, finding purpose and meaning in life and contracting AIDS.

5. Work is becoming more important than school. Teens may be trading long-term economic benefits of education for a smaller, short-term payoff. Those who work long hours spend less time with parents, have more behavior problems and are more likely to drink and smoke.

6. Socialization is happening outside of adult control. Busters are learning about life through their peer groups and in the work place. Often supervision in the work place is by people not much older than themselves. They are making many decisions without adult supervision.

7. Sequential work is difficult to perform. Teens find it difficult to complete mundane, regular assignments. Acceptance of responsibility for their own actions is low. A laid back, casual approach is the norm.

8. Writing skills are declining. Studies have found that the more teens watch TV the lower their writing ability. 17 year olds who watched more than 6 hours of TV per week scored about 10% less on a writing test than did teens who watched only 2 hours per week.

9. Immediate satisfaction is preferred to waiting. Baby boomer parents have already purchased their big-ticket items and are now lavishing items on their children. Teens are not used to waiting for what they want.

10. Parental influence remains strong. Teens in all areas reflect the ethnic and social-class lifestyles of their parents much more than that of a universal teen culture. There is far more congruence than conflict between the views of parents and their teenage children.

Insights for Ministry

•**Insight** -Teen busters will not marshal the demographic might that their parents did. In 1990, teenagers constitute only 7% of the total population compared to 10% in 1970. There is a danger that some churches will ignore teens preferring to focus on their boomer parents. Neglecting this new generation may result in a loss of Christian leaders in the future.

•**Insight** -Teen busters are shaped more by their parents than their peers. They adopt their parents values and opinions more than once believed. Church ministry will need to focus on the teen as part of the family unit. Reaching teens will mean reaching parents.

•**Insight** -Teen busters from troubled homes have the best chance to make good when they have a caring adult figure as a constant in their life. Ministry to teens without parents will take place most effectively as adults are involved with teens one-one-one.

•**Insight** - 800,000 children of teen mothers need child care each year. Child care will continue to remain a key way to minister to teens, particularly in low income communities. With so many single-parent homes and less parental influence, churches and childcare centers often become the backups.

•**Insight** -Teen busters are without their own culture to the point that they are emulating their parent's. The most frequently mentioned role model of all busters is Michael Jordan. After him come a mishmash of John F. Kennedy, Elvis Presley, James Dean and Martin Luther King all past figures of their parent's culture. This lostness and searching creates an openness to the Gospel.

•**Insight** -Busters appear to be able to understand visual images better than their boomer parents. Teen ministries must use modern day technology such as videos, TV, music systems, etc. to minister to teens.

Things to do today

•**Focus** on families with children who will be teenagers in 10+ years. Begin developing programs to educate parents.

•**Focus** on families that have teenagers in them. It is difficult to reach teenagers in isolation.

•**Focus** on visual communication. TV and MTV are far more important than newspapers or magazines in teenagers growth today.

12

Blending Generations

Two years ago I was being shown around a large Presbyterian church in Southern California. As the associate minister of music led me through the 800-seat sanctuary he proudly pointed out the massive pipe organ and then, unwittingly, made a side comment saying, "We can't seem to keep our younger families."

That comment didn't surprise me. It's one I've heard expressed by the pastor of a Christian church in downtown Wichita, Kansas. It was voiced by leaders of an older, suburban Baptist church in Portland, Oregon. Lutheran laymen in a new area of Houston, Texas, told me the same story.

My guess is that 85% of all Protestant churches in the U.S. either are or will experience a significant challenge over the next 20 years to reach, win and incorporate younger individuals into their churches.

Simply stated, the challenge is related to the fact that a majority of Protestant churches have patterned their ministries after models which may be dated pre-World War II. And, there were 76 million people born between 1946 and 1964 who find it difficult to relate to these pre-WWII models of ministry.

A Possible Strategy

One possible strategy for reaching baby boomers is the planting of new churches directly targeted to their needs and interests. Another strategy is to "blend" pre-boomers and baby boomer together in existing churches. It may be easier to start new churches. As one person said, "It is easier to give birth than to raise the dead." However, while it is often difficult, churches are capable of flexing and changing to meet the ever increasing opportunities presented by the growing baby boom influence. Indeed, some local bodies are already providing models of "blended" ministries.

One Example

Faith Community Church was born out of the church planting boom of the early 1950's. Initially there was rapid growth, but following the resignation of the founding pastor the church plateaued and by its 22nd anniversary the average member's age of this predominantly pre-boomer church was over 50 years old. During this same period of time the local neighborhood gradually changed and attracted many baby boomers due to the affordable housing. Faith found they were a pre-boomer church unable to reach their baby boomer community. With the calling of a young 29 year old pastor, the church began to make some strategic changes to "blend" the baby boomers with the pre-boomers. Over a period of 10 years several changes took place resulting in a blended church with an average age under 35 years old.

In the initial stage of change the large pulpit was replaced with a smaller one. The hard wooden pews were sold and replaced by moveable padded chairs. A new contemporary hymnal was purchased which included some newer praise songs. The sanctuary gradually began to be used as a multi-purpose room. Creative use of the multi-purpose sanctuary allowed for gradual experimentation with different worship styles. Beginning with the evening service, the chairs were positioned at a different angle than used in the morning service. Various teaching techniques were used in the evening such as interviews, question and answer times and panel discussion. Small groups were established and new ministries directed to the needs of younger families were started. Today Faith is a totally blended congregation using a contemporary style of worship and music.

Blending Principles

The following are some vital principles that must be taken into account by church leaders who desire to "blend" pre-boomers and baby boomers into one church.

- 1. THE SENIOR PASTOR MUST ENDORSE THE PLAN.** It is often said that what is endorsed from the pulpit will succeed and what is not will fail. The pastor must play the key role in planning, educating and leading the church toward a blended ministry. For such a new emphasis to take place, the senior pastor must be committed to it and work to make it happen.
- 2. LAY LEADERS MUST ALLOW IT TO HAPPEN.** Lay leaders in the congregation must be willing to follow the pastor's lead. Their personal and group commitment to disciple-making must cause them to see the needs and opportunities available in a "blended" church. They must team with the pastor in a strategic, long-term plan to bring the two groups together.
- 3. THE CONGREGATION MUST SEE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS.** Existing congregations must develop a consciousness for reaching the baby boom generation. Church leaders should plan to spend 6-12 months creating such a consciousness before many direct changes or new strategies are implemented.
- 4. BIBLICAL CONCEPTS OF LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE SHOULD BE STRESSED.** Diversity and variety are two words that are descriptive of the baby boom generation. The divergent views, desires and expectations of pre-boomers and baby boomers will require actions of acceptance and love. Sermons, classes and small groups should focus on these areas during the "blending" period.

5. AN ALTERNATE STRUCTURE SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. In the early stages of a "blending" strategy, an alternate service, class or small group should be developed which allows for a contemporary expression of worship. Normally this takes place through a contemporary worship service, but can also take place through a Sunday school class, small group or other group structures.

6. PRE-BOOMERS AND BABY BOOMERS SHOULD BE EDUCATED TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. Teaching from the pulpit must be geared to help each group see the value of the other. Key areas of concern are music, expression of worship, relational values, institutional values and commitment levels.

7. A MODEL SERVICE SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WHICH BLENDS BOTH GROUPS TOGETHER. For churches with an evening service, that provides a good place to begin.

Churches lacking

evening services may develop a model during the education time. The blended service ought to reflect a balance of traditional and contemporary styles in music, participation, relationships and dialogue.

8. COMMON GROUND EXPERIENCES SHOULD BE FOSTERED. A new members' class could introduce new people to the values, goals and history of the pre-boomers. A new parents' class might be attended by a mix of baby boomers and pre-boomers. A small group could be started with new baby boomers led by a pre-boomer.

9. A NEW MEMBERS' TASK FORCE SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. Baby boomers who have been in the church less than two years could be used to staff a new members' task force. Their responsibility would be to help new people develop several friends in the church, find a place to serve and find a class or group where they would feel comfortable. They can help new boomers understand and fit into the existing church structure with a minimum of frustration.

10. BABY BOOMERS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE KEY LEADERSHIP ROLES OR POSITIONS. Gradually, qualified baby boomers must be allowed to assume key positions of leadership throughout the church structure. Strategic are the New Members' Committee, the Worship Committee, the Music Committee, the Small Group Committee and the Activities (social/sports) Committee. Baby boomers are concerned more about relational aspects of church life than institutional aspects and should be encouraged to serve in appropriate areas.

Conclusion

Vital, growing churches in the 1990's will be those which can successfully reach, win and hold the baby boom generation. For this to happen in existing churches, leaders will need to make bold, long-term plans toward the goal of "blending" both pre-boomers and baby boomers into a unified church. Of course, there are risks involved in attempting a "blend" of the two, but the call of Christ to "make disciples" includes even the baby boomers and makes the risks worthwhile.

Advertising for the Growth Church

Good doctrine, good fellowship, good prayer and good ministry. Do they guarantee the growth of a church? Not necessarily. Sometimes churches do not do well, even though they have the basic ingredients.

Many churches do not communicate well to their target audience. They lack image. All the visual images (logos, signs, letterheads, advertisements and facilities) come together to form one unified image. A sloppy image gives the impression of shoddy service and repels people. A sharp image gives the impression of an excellent ministry and attracts people.

Image is an intangible but important part of a church's growth strategy. Webster's New World Dictionary offers as one definition: ". . . impression by the general public, often one deliberately created or modified by publicity, advertising . . ."

Is Advertising Biblical?

New Testament churches never had a brochure or direct mail campaign. However they did create an atmosphere where growth occurred. Often the means they used were what we today would call advertising. Note the following examples:

•The **PERSONAL LETTERS** of the New Testament are an obvious advertising medium — direct mail — in our terms. Luke, John, James, Peter and Paul all used this advertising tool to communicate their love, care, teachings and exhortation to people who could not be reached in any other way.

•**WORD OF MOUTH** advertising was instrumental in reaching unchurched people around Thessalonica. ". . . The word of the Lord has sounded (echoed) forth from you," states Paul, "not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything" (1 Thess. 1:8).

•Consider the familiar **JOHN 3:16**, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Note that all the elements of advertising are found in this verse. The Product—Jesus Christ. The Offer—He's Free. The Promise—Eternal Life! God was the very first advertiser. The principles of advertising were created by God Himself!

What Advertising Cannot Do.

While advertising is one method that can be used to communicate the Good News, it is not a get-rich-quick gimmick.

Advertising will not change reality. If a church does not model what is advertised it will not grow. Once the public visits they will find out if the experience lives up to the story. Such false advertising may get people to attend a church service, but only one time.

Advertising will not convert people. Conversion is a personal commitment that will not come from a simple advertising ad or brochure. Even though the Gospel is a simple story, advertising is too simplistic to give people a full understanding which will lead to conversion.

Advertising will not cause personal growth. Personal growth is a process not an event! Growth occurs over time as people learn, apply truth and experience life. At the most advertising can help inform a person of an opportunity that will help them grow.

Advertising will not replace personal relationships. Secular advertisers know that the best advertising is satisfied customers who tell others in their social networks about a product. It is the same in the church. Andrew told Peter. Philip found Nathaniel. Cornelius gathered his relatives and close friends. Word of mouth is always the key.

What Advertising Can Do

Advertising is not a panacea for all church ills, but it can be a major part of a sound church growth mix.

Advertising will build morale. Church Growth consultants know that low morale is one of the plagues of many churches. A positive advertising strategy can raise people's morale and give them a point of reference for inviting people to church.

Advertising will create a climate for growth. Through advertising, potential visitors can learn of the opportunity for a personal and rewarding relationship with the living God. They can learn of your church's desire to meet their needs. They can learn of your acceptance of new people.

Advertising will attract visitors. Though most people cannot verbalize what attracts them to one church over another, one of the magnets is the "look" or "image" which is projected by the church. Advertising can create an inviting image and communicate specific opportunities, times, dates and places for involvement.

Advertising will shape communities attitudes. Advertising offers a church the opportunity to tell the community what it wants them to know; ideals such as your desire to be helpful, your assurance of acceptance, the enthusiasm of present members and the sense of fulfillment Christ brings to life.

How To Begin

- Build your church's commitment to find and fold the lost.
- Develop a communications team of an editor, writer, artist and photographer.

Research the needs, attitudes and interests of the target audiences.

Focus advertising within your ministry area.

Direct different strategies to current members, church shoppers and the unchurched population you are trying to attract.

Invest 5% of your total budget in your plan.

Balanced Strategy

An effective church advertising strategy should be balanced between the following five areas.

1. Word of Mouth: Stress the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Build congregational morale. Help members identify reachable friends and family. Provide various events for members to bring their friends and family.

2. In-house Communications Piece: Publish a church newsletter on a monthly or bimonthly basis. List opportunities for service. Note answers to prayer. Communicate victories and positive themes.

3. First Impression Piece: Design a brochure with the unchurched person in mind. Use pictures of people participating in your ministries. Give an invitation to attend your church. Print stories of how your church helps people.

4. Newspaper Advertising: Use the paper that reaches your ministry area. Stick to one theme in each ad. Make it humorous. Ask for a response. Develop 4 ads and repeat them 4 weeks at a time.

5. Direct Mail: Highlight one idea. Personalize it. Send highest postage class possible. Utilize multiple mailings to the same address. Expect 15 responses for 1,000 pieces of mail.

Conclusion

A basic question all churches should be asking is, "What do people outside of our church think about us?"

In all cases there are only three potential answers.

1. They think of our church positively.
2. They think of our church negatively.
3. They don't think of it at all!

Answer number one creates an environment for growth. Answer number two is a tragedy. Answer number three is anathema!

Growing churches must create an environment where people **think** of their church and **think of it positively**.

14

Attracting Guests

15

Starting Good Rumors About Your Church

Looking for a doctor? Need a home loan? Buying a new car? Selecting a college?

Where do you go for advice? Do you look in the paper? Watch T.V? Or, "Let your fingers do the walking?"

If you are like most people, you ask a family member, associate or friend.

Advertisers call this "Word of Mouth." It is the most effective way of advertising any product - even a church!

Biblical Examples

Word of mouth advertising is referred to in Scripture as a story, a report, a tidings, a reputation and a rumor. Rumors are characterized as either good-speaking or evil-speaking (2 Cor. 6:8). Believers are encouraged to think and spread good rumors (Phil. 4:8).

The ministry of Jesus was predominantly communicated by word of mouth. After raising a dead man, Luke records that "...this report (rumor, story) concerning Him went out all over Judea, and in all the surrounding district." (Luke 7:17)

A classic example of word of mouth advertising is found in 1 Thessalonians 1:8. Writing about the church in Thessalonica, Paul says, "For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth ..."

People were telling how the Thessalonians had turned from idols to serve a living and true God. They were spreading the story by word of mouth. It was so effective that Paul confesses "...we have no need to say anything."

How Rumors Spread

Studies in the field of "Diffusion of Innovation" (how new products spread) have found that people do not choose a product purely on factual information. The overwhelming majority of people depend on subjective evaluations conveyed to them from other individuals like themselves who have previously adopted a product.

It appears that potential adopters rely on the modeling of near-peers who have already adopted a product. New products literally take off after interpersonal networks are activated to spread subjective, positive evaluations.

In the same way, churches grow as previous adopters (members and attenders) model their happiness by spreading good rumors (positive evaluations) to their near-peers who are potential adopters (friends, family and associates.)

Determining Word of Mouth Effectiveness

Some churches have natural word of mouth exposure due to their size. In general, a church with a worship attendance above that of the average church in its ministry area will have strong word of mouth visibility. Note the following graph as an example.

There are 10 churches in the ministry area depicted above. The average worship attendance of all churches is 150. In order for a church to have natural word of mouth exposure it will need to have a worship attendance above 150.

It is easy to see that church "B," "C," "E," and "F" are above this 150 line and have a natural visibility via word of mouth. The remaining churches will need to work at developing word of mouth advertising since they have too few people for such visibility to develop naturally.

Energizing Good Rumors

How may a church tie into the network of previous adopters (church members and attenders) to reach potential adopters? As a church leader, you do not need to passively sit by. You can be thoughtful, organized and systematic about word of mouth advertising.

Good rumors will develop as present members and attenders sense personal satisfaction with the ministry of your church.

The following are some ways your church may begin to develop word of mouth advertising.

1. Upgrade Facilities: If facilities, grounds and equipment are below what people would have in their homes, they may come themselves, but will not feel good enough about their church to spread good rumors and bring new people. Facilities must be slightly better than people expect.

2. Enhance Services: Services need to be a notch above expectations and consistently good. For example, if the worship service is excellent about one Sunday per month and mediocre the remaining Sundays, it will be difficult to develop good rumors. Members will only spread good rumors when they believe that the worship service will be consistently good each Sunday.

3. Utilize Newsletters: A newsletter is a solid way to build a cadre of loyal followers. It is time consuming and expensive, but is certainly worth the effort. One key is regularity. Many churches put out a newsletter sporadically. If anything, this works against the development of good rumors. Make good use of pictures. Keep it crisp, clean, clear and upbeat.

4. Host Open Houses: Make it a practice to host regular open house meetings where members may share their desires, hopes and concerns. At the same meetings church leaders may communicate their church's vision and direction.

5. Interview People: Interview people from the platform on Sunday mornings. Select new people, those with a fresh testimony and those who have been served effectively by your church. Host an end of the year event where many people who have been touched by your church may share their stories.

6. Court Opinion Leaders: One pastor visited the mayor of his city. After the proper introductions were made the mayor asked how he could help the pastor. The pastor confided that he simply wanted to know how the mayor was doing. Before leaving, he prayed for the mayor! The mayor was shocked and pleased. Needless to say, this opinion leader has good things to say about this pastor and his church.

7. Build Good Experiences: Complete projects that are started. Work on small goals that are sure to succeed and publicize it when they are met. Take slides and pictures of church events. Show them at meetings throughout the year. Develop a video about your church.

8. Communicate Victories: Print answers to prayer. Share how your church is progressing toward its yearly goals. Tell how ministries are reaching people. Publicly read thank you cards and letters from people who have been helped by your church. Communicate everything 5 different ways.

9. Develop a Sense of Expectancy: Preach messages that point to hope in the Lord. Describe how God has met church needs over the years and project His certain help into the future. Tell how God has answered your prayers.

10. Give Out Business Cards: Provide business cards for every member of the church as a tool for developing good rumors. Give each person in your church 52 cards. Encourage them to hand out one each week with an invitation to attend your worship services.

Does your church have natural word of mouth visibility in its ministry area? If not, then you will need to develop a strategy to help increase your word of mouth image.

16

How Do You Say Hell-o?

There is an old saying that you never have a second chance to make a first impression. How do you say hell-o to your first-timers? One effective way is to provide a well done **First Impression Piece**.

A First Impression Piece is a brochure that is given to new people as a way to briefly inform them about your church.

Before Your Write A Word

Before you contact a graphic artist or even write a word of copy for your brochure, write out answers to the following questions.

1. What is the purpose of your church?
2. What makes your church unique in contrast to other churches in your area?
3. What are some benefits that people could expect to receive from attending your church?
4. What are newer members saying about your church? (A way to find out is to interview people in your church for testimonials.)
5. Who will be the primary audience you hope to reach with this advertising piece? (Families, youth, elderly, singles, particular ethnic group, etc.)
6. What do you want the reader to know, think, feel and do after reading your first impression piece?

7. What resources do you have available for producing this piece? (Budget, time, people who can help, equipment, final authority for approvals, etc.)

Cover

Four out of five readers will only look at the first page. The cover of your first impression piece must be designed to catch the attention of as many readers as possible to draw them into the rest of the piece.

A cover should include . . .

- A photo or drawing that illustrates your purpose or mission. Use pictures of people not buildings.
- A title that implies a benefit. For example, "New Hope: The Friendly Church That Cares" implies that there is hope, friendship and concern at that church. Or "Catch The Spirit of New Life at Community Presbyterian Church" implies an exciting new approach to life.
- A church logo that is up-to-date in design. Ask an art or print professional to review your logo and to make suggestions on modernizing it. Consider the design, color, understandability, etc.
- A statement that notes some benefits of your church. Why would anyone want to come? What benefits will they receive by attending your church?

Body

The main part of your first impression piece should give people an overview of your church. Resist the desire to say everything. Remember that this is just a "first" impression piece. If it does its job there will be further opportunities to tell more of your story to the people who begin attending your church.

The body might include . . .

- Copy that is readable with loose, not "packed" text written in the everyday language of the readers.
- Pictures and titles that are understandable to the primary audience you are targeting.
- Benefit statements throughout.
- Special features of your church.
- A short biography or sketch of your senior pastor or pastors. Staff photos and descriptions of their responsibilities.

- Testimonials from various people in your church. Use their pictures if possible.
- A statement of your church's purpose or mission written in common language. Resist the desire to say or define your purpose in too much detail. Twenty-five words or less is best.
- A simple map showing your church's location.
- An overview sketch of your church facilities. (This is essential for larger churches with complex facilities.)
- Brief description of programs and activities for every age group.
- Photos of your congregation participating in worship and other activities.
- First impression stories of how people in your church are being served.
- Photos and descriptions of your church's service to the community at large.
- An article on how to get involved.
- A brief schedule of activities.
- An invitation to visit.
- Offers of professional help or service.

Backside or Mailing Panel

Design your first impression piece so that it may be used in a variety of ways. It should be sized so that it fits into a standard business envelope and includes a mailing panel so that it may be mailed individually.

Be sure to include . . .

- Your church's name, complete address and phone number. Include postal codes and area codes.
- The times of your program and location.
- An indication of mailing class (Important if mailing is to be bulk rate. Please contact your post office's bulk mail room for information.)
- An indicia on the mailing panel and a return address. Remember to get your local postmaster's approval of the mailing panel and format if using a self-mailer.

Design and Printing

Since you want this piece to make a positive first impression on the people who read it, it is best to . . .

- Get outside help from freelance art, copy, marketing and printing professionals.
- Solicit bids from several printers and select those you wish to work with.
- Establish a rapport with your designer and printer.
- Select quality paper, popular colors and up-to-date typefaces.

General Information

Your First Impression Piece should be . . .

- Designed with unchurched people in mind.
- Written in the language of the people to receive it.
- Attractive.
- Usable in a variety of situations.

A well designed First Impression Piece is the cornerstone of a church advertising plan. Develop or revise your piece using the ideas suggested above.

PART 5

ASSIMILATING NEWCOMERS

17

Get Ready for Company

Whenever company is coming over to our house we go through a regular ritual called "Getting Ready for Company."

For us this involves such things as cleaning the bathrooms, emptying the trash, vacuuming the floor, dusting the counters and, most important, changing the cat litter boxes.

All our effort is expended in preparation for our guests. We want our house to look the best it can and we spare no amount of effort to see that it is ready. No doubt you can identify with this experience.

In a similar way, growing churches spend a significant amount of time getting ready for their company — guests. They know that . . .

•**It takes guests to grow.** No church grows unless guests visit. As a general rule of thumb a church needs to average between 4-5% of its worship attendance as first time guests before significant growth occurs.

•**Some guests must return.** Growing churches create an atmosphere where guests want to return for another visit. As a general rule of thumb at least two out of every ten first time guests must return a second time for a church to experience numerical growth.

•**Guests make quick decisions.** Most guests form an early opinion of a church as they drive into the parking lot and within 30 seconds of entering the front door. If their first opinion is negative, it will be difficult to change their minds later on.

Preparing for Company

The following are seven key areas a church should address as it prepares for company.

1. Beautify your property

Guests begin forming an opinion about a church as they drive toward it. They notice the landscaping, the parking lot, the color of the buildings and the general appearance of the entire church property.

To get ready for company . . .

- repaint the exterior every three to five years;
- redecorate the interior every five years to keep the colors, styles and overall look up-to-date;
- maintain landscaping via a weekly lawn care service;
- hire a professional landscaping firm to review the exterior look every three years;
- clean the entire church weekly;
- replace carpet and drapes every five to ten years.

2. Upgrade your child care.

There is a new wave of children coming to our churches and their parents are astute child care shoppers. Parents expect a church's nursery to be comparable to their baby's room at home. They look for a church nursery to provide the same quality care they would find at the best week day care centers.

To get ready for company . . .

- redecorate the nursery every other year;
- sanitize the nursery each week;
- keep the ratio of workers to children at 1:3;
- provide a hazard free environment;
- train all nursery workers;
- maintain the same workers for familiarity.

3. Give people directions.

The number one question asked at places like Disneyland is "Where are the restrooms?" Your guests also need directions to key areas such as the auditorium and child care.

To get ready for company . . .

- prepare a one page map showing all important locations for newcomers;
- provide leaflets describing each major area of ministry, their locations and who to contact for further information;
- install clear directional signs at eye level pointing the way to key areas of the church;
- train hosts to greet and direct newcomers to important areas.

4. Welcome guests graciously.

Enter the door of a Wal Mart store and you'll be greeted by a friendly person who offers you a shopping cart. Wal Mart understands the need to greet guests graciously and their success has prompted competitors such as Target and K-Mart to follow suit.

To get ready for company . . .

- give a positive welcome to people driving into the parking lot through the use of parking attendants;

- extend a warm greeting to new guests as they approach the church building through trained greeters;

- provide relevant information about the church with an attractive and accessible information table or welcome center;

- establish meaningful connections between new guests and the people of the church by introducing members to guests;

- provide refreshments for guests before and after the worship service through a hospitality table;

- insure the seating and comfort of guests during the service with friendly ushers.

5. Enhance your worship service.

People in our society are attuned to well planned and executed programs. While a worship service is certainly more than a mere performance, worship needs to be done well to get most guests to return a second and third time.

To get ready for company . . .

- build a worship service around one theme;

- allow for participation by worshippers;

- create a sense of flow in the service;

- speed up the pace;

- eliminate dead time;

- use variety.

6. Preach relational messages.

Blended families, single parent families, co-dependency situations, physical, mental, sexual and substance abuse have created a people who are hurting. Guests visit a church not to be scolded or spanked but to be uplifted.

To get ready for company . . .

- understand the felt needs of people;

- provide biblical answers to their needs;
- illustrate messages from today's life and times;
- tell stories of real people who have experienced similar needs and found answers in Christ;
- remove physical obstacles such as modesty rails, large pulpits and furniture;
- preach without notes;
- share your own story.

7. Follow-up appropriately.

Traditionally churches followed-up on guests with a letter from the pastor and an immediate visit to the home of the guest by a visitation team. With the rise of crime and the cocooning of people, today it's a whole new ball game.

To get ready for company . . .

- express your friendship through a personal phone call within two days of a guest's visit;
- thank each guest for coming with a personal letter or card during the week;
- inform guests of upcoming events and items of interest through a regular newsletter;
- give a gift of cookies or candy to those who visit a second time;
- ask all third time guests to a by-invitation-only dessert hosted by the senior pastor.

How To Be A Friendly Church

If you were to survey churches and ask them what their strengths are, almost every one would include "We're a friendly church." However, if you were to survey the visitors who attend those same churches, you might find a totally opposite perception.

People who are regular attenders of a church look at the issue of friendliness from the inside out. From their perspective, they are experiencing a friendly atmosphere. They know other

people and other people know them. When they have a personal need, other people take notice and respond with appropriate action.

Guests to a church view the issue of friendliness from the outside in. From their perspective, they are experiencing a totally new atmosphere. They may not know other people and other people may not know them. If they have needs, they are rarely noticed, let alone responded to with appropriate action.

Instinctively we expect churches to be friendly places. Some church growth studies have even found a direct correlation between friendliness and potential growth. The friendlier a church is the greater its potential for growth. The less friendly it is, the lower its potential for growth.

How then do we build a church that is friendly to newcomers? Here are several practical guidelines that you may begin using right away.

1. Give guests the best attitude.

Once while walking through a local shopping center I noticed a sign in a store window that said "Hiring. Only friendly people need apply." The owners of that store obviously knew that customers appreciate a friendly attitude and were determined to hire only friendly people.

In a similar way, visitors to your church notice immediately the prevailing attitude. In fact, most visitors will make a judgment about your church within 30 seconds of entering the front door.

If you want to be a friendly church, I suggest you recruit friendly ushers, greeters and parking attendants who will project enthusiasm, courtesy and pride to your guests.

2. Give guests the best communication.

As a church consultant, I visit several new churches every year. One of my favorite techniques is to station myself in a busy part of the auditorium or foyer to see how many people will speak to me. In many cases, people will walk toward me, our eyes meet and then they will look toward the ground and walk on by.

If this is happening in your church, it has the effect of making your guests feel like non-persons. They will not perceive you as a friendly church.

If you want to be a friendly church, I suggest that you follow the "10 Foot Rule" and the "Just Say Hi Policy." Teach your people that whenever they come within 10 feet of a person they don't know to just say hi.

3. Give guests the best service.

Recently I visited a rather large church in Southern California. As my wife and I stepped up on the curb to enter the front door, a lady greeted us by asking "Hi! Is this your first time with us?"

After we replied in a positive manner, she introduced herself, asked our names and walked with us into the building to a welcome center.

At the welcome center she introduced us by name to the person at the desk who immediately offered help and gave us directions to important areas of the church such as the rest rooms, the auditorium, etc.

As we were about to finish our conversation at the welcome center, an usher walked up and the person behind the desk introduced us by name to him. He then led us to our seats in the auditorium.

In just a few short minutes we had been introduced to several very friendly people, had our names mentioned three times and been given all the initial information we needed.

While you may not follow this church's exact procedure, if you want to be a friendly church I suggest you follow the three principles they used:

- Approach new people promptly.
- Offer help and information.
- Introduce them by name to others.

4. Give guests the best welcome.

I was very tired. As I sat down in the auditorium my only desire was to be left alone to worship. To my horror the pastor asked all visitors to stand. Then one by one he went around the room asking each of us to introduce ourselves and to give a short word of greeting to the congregation. Even though I'm a seasoned church goer, it was more than embarrassing. I wondered how others felt.

In today's society it is good to welcome guests from the pulpit but not to have them stand to be recognized. Give guests freedom to relax and enjoy the worship service. Whatever you do, take great pains not to embarrass the newcomer.

If you want to be a friendly church, I suggest you welcome guests but don't embarrass them by having them stand or speak in front of others.

5. Give guests the best parking.

In our age of the automobile, three things continue to be true about most people. First, people don't like to walk more than one block to church. Second, people will drive around for several minutes to find a parking place closer to the entrance. Third, if they don't find a parking space where they want it, they will drive on by without stopping.

If you want to be a friendly church, I suggest you reserve approximately 5% of your parking places for guests as close to your main entrance as possible. And . . . clearly mark them for first or second time guests.

6. Give guests the best seats.

The most popular seats on an airplane are the isle seats. The reason? People like to have a sense of openness rather than one of being trapped. Likewise guests prefer the isle seats and the seats in the rear of the auditorium. However, that's the exact place most regular attenders like to sit!

If you want to be a friendly church, I suggest you reserve the isle seats and the rear seats for guests. Encourage your regular attenders to sit in the middle of longer rows and leave the best seats for guests.

7. Give guests the best time.

At the end of one church service, the pastor gave the closing benediction and then said to the audience "Remember the five minute rule." This intrigued me since I had never heard of a five minute rule.

I later found out that the people of that church had been instructed to speak to guests during the first five minutes following each worship service. They were not to do any church business or talk to their friends until five minutes had elapsed.

If you want to be a friendly church, I suggest you reserve the first five minutes following every worship service for your guests.

Albert Einstein was once asked what he considered to be the most important question in the world. He replied "Is the universe a friendly place?" Guests who visit a church are asking a similar question - "Is this **church** a friendly place?" What answer do they receive when they visit your church?

Visitor Follow-up That Works!

Church leaders understand that effective follow-up of visitors is an important ingredient to their church's growth mix.

Traditionally, churches have accomplished visitor follow-up through a personal visit in the new person's home by a pastor or calling team. Today many churches are finding that this method is no longer as effective as it used to be.

General Principles

Visitor follow-up is most effective when visitors receive . . .

1. A friendly contact - Offer your friendship. Care should be taken not to offend new people needlessly.

2. A personal contact - Focus on the visitor's interests and needs. Nothing takes the place of personal touch in our high tech/high touch age.

3. A prompt contact - Contact visitors within 24 hours. The longer the time between their visit and a contact, the less effective the results.

4. A non-threatening contact - Put the visitor at ease. Visitors have a natural uneasiness about new places and people.

5. A continual contact - See follow-up as a process, not an event. A one-time contact is not enough to be effective in our present environment.

Some Insights

#1: The most effective retention of visitors occurs when follow-up is focused on second-time visitors.

Recent Church Growth studies have found that the average church in the United States keeps 16% of all first-time visitors. In contrast, the average church keeps 85% of its second-time visitors!

#2: The most effective retention of visitors occurs when follow-up is focused on prospects.

Visitors come in two types – suspects and prospects. Suspects are visitors who appear to be interested in Christ and the church, but are actually just looking. Prospects are people who are sincerely interested in Christ and the church.

In general, first-time visitors are suspects. They may be interested in the Lord. They may be interested in the church. But, then again, maybe not.

Visitors who return for additional visits are the prospects. By attending your church again, they are in effect saying that they liked what they found the first time. They are back for a closer look.

#3: The most effective retention of visitors occurs when follow-up is focused on building relationships.

Many churches use an institutional approach to follow-up. They focus on what the church needs rather than on caring for the visitor. It is important for the visitor to perceive that the church is interested in them and their needs.

#4: The most effective retention of visitors occurs when follow-up is focused on the expectations of visitors.

Today's visitors want their visit acknowledged, but are not expecting a visit from the pastor. Churches located in cities, high tech and crime ridden areas will find that people do not want someone showing up on their doorstep without an appointment. Non-Christians and those who find the church threatening wish to remain somewhat anonymous, but not ignored.

A Four-Step Plan

This process assumes that your church has a way to 1) attract visitors, 2) get their names and addresses, and 3) know when they have returned for second, third and fourth visits.

Step One: Acknowledgement - The week following the visitor's first visit to your church:

Call the Visitor - Use a person with a friendly phone voice. Shut-ins or elderly may find this a place for ministry. Call Sunday afternoon if possible, but no later than Monday evening. Thank the visitor for attending. Interview the visitor to get their perception of your church. (Note: A sample phone interview is available. Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope.)

Send a Letter - Thank the visitor for attending. Outline the times of your services. Offer general help. Have the Senior Pastor sign the letter.

Place on church mailing list - Employ a general mailing list for all potential contacts and a prime list for people who are regular attenders. Mail brochures, church newsletter and general information to people on the general mailing list.

Step Two: Appointment - The week following the visitor's second visit to your church:

Call for an appointment - Call the visitor and ask for an appointment (9 of 10 will typically say no). If they say yes, schedule the appointment. If they say no, ask if you could mail them further information concerning your church.

Make a personal visit - You may find it difficult to get an appointment in the home. Make a luncheon appointment in place of a home visit. Invite them to your home after church. Take them to breakfast before church. In most cases it is unwise to show up at the door unexpectedly.

Mail further information - Develop a detailed information piece on your church. This should be different than that mailed after the first visit and provide additional information concerning your church.

Step Three: Enhancement - The week following the visitor's third visit to your church:

Mail a post card - Alert the visitor that you know they were visiting again. A greeting card works well.

Arrange a personal contact - Arrange a follow-up phone call or visit from someone in the church who has similar interests or may be able to meet their needs. For example: If they are interested in crafts, sports or a hobby have someone who has like interests give them a call.

Step Four: Commitment - The week immediately following the visitor's fourth visit to your church:

Ask for modest commitment - Say, "We've noticed you have been attending on a regular basis. Would you like your name placed in our directory?" (This assumes you have a directory that can be changed once every three months. Pictorial directories are not good for this.)

Invite to new orientation class - If they are a non-Christian or new believer, invite them to a new believer's class for orientation to the Christian Faith. If they are a Christian, invite them to a new member's class for orientation to your church.

Irregular Visits

Many visitors will have irregular patterns of attendance. Follow the process outlined above whenever the visitor returns within a six month period of time. If it is longer than six months, begin again from the beginning and follow through to the end.

Conclusion

By following the above plan you will contact the visitor up to 8 times in a four-week process. These recurring contacts will build a relationship that will lead to many more than 16% of your first-time visitors remaining as active worshippers. Churches who have used a similar plan are often able to retain nearly 25% of their first-time visitors.

Enhancing Your Worship Service

Quick! Name the most important ministry a church needs in order to grow.

If you're like most people, you've mentioned a celebrative worship service.

But, what exactly is a celebrative worship service? What are insights we need to know to create one? What does it take to make a worship service effective?

General Definition

Clearly defining a celebrative worship service is difficult. Yet we all seem to know when we are in one.

From a practical point of view, worship is celebrative when . . .

1. People attend. Celebrative services attract people who come because they want to rather than because they have to.

2. People bring friends. Celebrative services not only attract people but they also cause worshippers to bring their friends.

3. People participate. Celebrative services create an environment where singing, giving, praying and other areas of worship are entered into with enthusiasm.

4. People listen. Celebrative services hold the attention of worshippers throughout the entire time of worship.

5. People grow. Celebrative services challenge individuals to make biblical decisions that affect their daily living.

Three Insights

Insight #1: Celebrative worship services hold people's attention.

Church leaders often say, "We don't want to entertain people." In reality what they mean is "We don't want to amuse people."

Amusement means to "idle away time; to divert attention." In contrast, entertainment means to "hold the attention of; to hold in mind."

While worship services should not amuse, they obviously should hold the attention of people who participate.

Insight #2: Celebrative worship services communicate to the whole person.

Effective worship services take seriously the mental, spiritual, relational and emotional nature of the worshippers.

Unfortunately many worship services tend to focus primarily on the mental aspect without seriously speaking to the whole person.

While worship services should challenge people mentally, they must also speak to the emotions, spirits and hearts of the worshippers to be truly celebrative.

Insight #3: Celebrative worship services excite those who attend.

Walk into some worship services and you can feel the enthusiasm in the air. It is hard to define this feeling, yet we instinctively know celebrative services have it and others do not.

While we certainly don't want to create a false enthusiasm, if worshippers experience high energy they will likely view the service as celebrative. If the energy level is low, they may never return.

Enhancing Worship

Look at any recent study on why people don't attend church and you'll find that people think church worship services are boring.

Today's information rich society bombards people with constant images, sales pitches and other stimulus to keep their attention.

In contrast when people come to church they often find a slowly paced service with little visual appeal. Faced with a lack of stimulus, their minds begin to wander leading to boredom.

The following are six ideas you can use to create a more exciting and celebrative worship service that will hold your people's attention.

1. Build around one theme.

Celebrative worship services have a sense of unity that is best achieved by building the entire service around one basic theme.

To enhance your worship services identify the broad theme you wish to communicate to your audience. Select and use music that fits your theme. Be sure to relate your introductions, transitional comments and even your announcements to the theme.

2. Plan for participation.

Celebrative worship services keep people alert by involving them in meaningful ways throughout the service.

To enhance your worship services build in ways for people to participate. Allow for singing, clapping, standing, shaking hands, filling-in blanks in a study guide, praying, hugging, talking, laughing, crying and other ways of audience participation.

3. Develop a sense of flow.

Celebrative worship services lead people along so that they sense a clear flow or progression in the service.

To enhance your worship services think through how each part of the service relates to the whole. Sporadic or disconnected components will cause people to become distracted and disinterested.

4. Speed up the pace.

Celebrative worship services move along quickly enough to keep people's attention focused on the service.

To enhance your worship services speed up the pace by singing and playing music faster. Vary the pace throughout by using upbeat celebrative tempos and slower reflective tempos to focus people's attention on the worship service.

5. Eliminate dead time.

Celebrative worship services move quickly between various parts of the service allowing for little dead time where people may lose their attentiveness.

To enhance your worship services develop good transitions between the various elements of the worship service. All movement between people and elements of worship should take place quickly and smoothly.

6. Use variety.

Celebrative worship services use a variety of worship elements to maintain everyone's interest and enjoyment.

To enhance your worship services include a variety of elements such as drama, interviews, video, a message, the greeting of one another, scripture reading, an offering and music.

Conclusion

Celebrative worship services start with advanced planning. So . . .

- Recruit a worship team to help develop creative services.
- Plan your worship services four to six weeks ahead of time.
- Use the six ideas above to enhance your worship services.

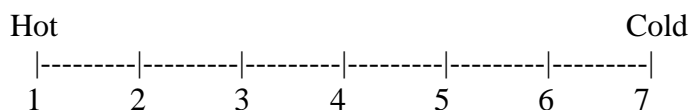
Little Things That Make A Difference

It doesn't always take major changes to have a growing church. A few changes in some little things will make a big difference. Consider the following and evaluate your worship service by circling one number on each scale provided.

1. Temperature: better a little too cold than a little too hot.

Spurgeon walked around his building one snowy night in disguise throwing rocks through the windows of his church to allow cool air inside. Johnny Carson supposedly keeps his studio at 66 degrees so his audience won't fall asleep. People who don't like it that way bring an extra sweater.

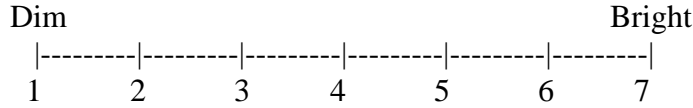
Evaluate your temperature:



2. Lighting: better a little too bright than a little too dim.

A bright room sets a cheerful atmosphere. Preaching would be twice as effective if churches painted their ceilings brighter colors and added more lighting. Always make it brighter where you want the people's attention — the platform.

Evaluate your lighting:



3. Sound: better a little too loud than a little too soft.

Learn from public theaters. They keep it loud enough for even the elderly to hear. Watch out for "dead spots" where it is difficult for people to hear. Install a sound system that is comparable to what people have in their homes and cars.

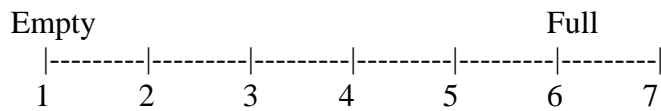
Evaluate your sound:



4. Seating: better a little too full than a little too empty.

Fit the room to the size of the crowd. Set up the room with fewer seats so it looks full, but with the option to add chairs. Full means allowing for some space between those who don't know each other. 85% full is "comfortably full." 95% full is "uncomfortably full."

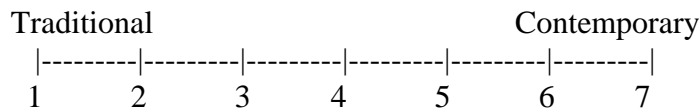
Evaluate your seating:



5. Style: better a little too contemporary than a little too traditional.

Teach the people to "gather to celebrate; be alone to meditate." Do what the Bible says and "sing a new song" to the Lord. Relate to today's generation, not to those of the past. Consider what the unchurched must wonder when we sing of raising our Ebonezers!

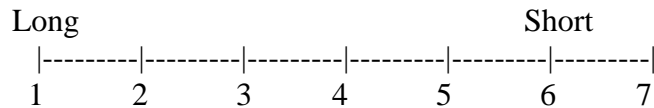
Evaluate your style:



6. Length: better a little too short than a little too long.

It is best having people leave your worship service wishing there was more than wishing there was less. Use more illustrations, stories and applications to make the sermon seem shorter.

Evaluate your length:



7. Voice: better a little too low than a little too high.

Speak a little slower and a little lower. Listen to the best radio announcers -- low and slow. This will relax your congregations. And you too! None of us need any more anxiety! As we learned in Communications 101, nervous speakers tend to talk too fast and raise their pitch.

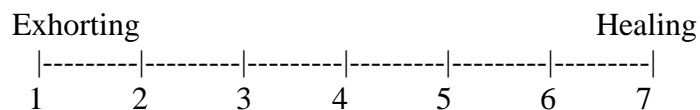
Evaluate your voice:



8. Goal: better a little too healing than a little too exhorting.

The auditorium is full of mostly broken hearts, not hard hearts. Your ministry will begin growing faster the day you stop preaching "Get On The Ball For Jesus" sermons and started preaching "Jesus Can Put Your Life Back Together Again" sermons.

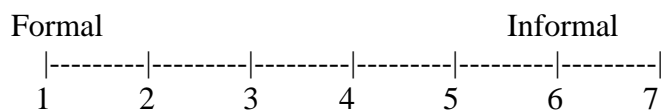
Evaluate your goal:



9. Feel: better a little too informal than a little too formal.

Informal means warm and relaxed, not sloppy and poorly planned. Casual contemporary dress should prevail. Aim for excellence, without being stuffy. Do things differently. Don't print the order of service in the worship folder. Remove the pulpit completely from the platform.

Evaluate your feel:



10. Welcome: better a little too non-threatening than a little too threatening.

Make the welcome time fun and non-threatening. Welcome guests but allow them to remain anonymous. Encourage guests to relax and enjoy the service. Ask them not to give to the offering.

1. Provide options.

The one-size-fits-all worship service is quickly becoming a thing of the past. From gas stations to hamburger stands to varieties of cereal in a super market, people are offered choices in our society. Adding a new worship service is one way to provide choices in church ministry.

2. Expand space.

In today's environment land purchases and facility development are often not affordable options for many congregations. Multiple services allow a church to use its present space two or more times without having to engage in an expensive building program.

3. Allow for growth.

Numerical growth is actually discouraged in an overcrowded auditorium. Studies among churches that have gone from one worship service to two have found that most (80%) experience between 15% and 20% growth in overall worship attendance.

4. Increase faith.

Churches with a single service essentially place their emphasis on present members. Churches that offer more than one worship service tend to place an emphasis on reaching newer members which takes vision and faith.

5. Enlarge ministry.

There is a limit to how many people can minister in a single worship service. By adding additional services, a church nearly doubles the ministry roles and tasks where people may become involved. And, as a rule of thumb, for every person who has a ministry another three will attend the service with them.

6. Reach new people.

The singular character of one worship service as to style and time generally attracts only one kind of person. By adding an additional service with a differing time and style, new people are attracted who might not normally attend.

7. Keep people happy.

The changing preferences of people regarding music, dress, time, etc. are too complex to address in one worship service. Multiple services allow for a church to zero in on varied preferences.

When should a new service be added?

To be most successful, it is best to add an additional service when . . .

1. The momentum is rising.

One of the mistakes churches often make is adding a new service after it is too late. The key is to add an additional service as the growth momentum is heading upward not after it has peaked and is going downward.

By charting an accurate record of worship attendance on a graph, a church will be able to tell when the growth momentum is rising. As worship attendance nears 80% capacity plans should be made for another service. Then, add the new service as attendance moves into and through 90% capacity.

2. The morale is high.

Adding an additional service is a step of faith. If a church is going through a period of discouragement or is experiencing conflict, it should resolve the issues before moving to multiple services.

While going to an additional worship service is an exciting option, doing so will not revive a dying or demoralized situation. Ideally, adding an additional service should be the natural result of growth—both spiritual and numerical.

3. The moment is right.

Many attempts to add additional services fail simply due to wrong timing. Adding a new service stands the best chance of succeeding when it is done during the normal growth periods of the church year.

The best time to add an additional service is in the early Fall (September-October) or the early Winter (January-March) to take advantage of the regular growth peaks of church attendance.

Note: In only rare cases should an additional service be added after Easter and on through the summer months.

What are the major issues?

Any church wishing to begin a new worship service would do well to think through the following issues.

Issue #1: Style of services

The major issue facing many churches is whether the new worship service will be identical to the previous one(s) or a different style. **Key factor:** diversity of the congregation.

Issue #2: Balancing attendance

An issue often overlooked is whether attendance at all services will be balanced. **Key factors:** the seating capacity of the auditorium, the makeup of the congregation (singles, couples with children, elderly) and general lifestyle characteristics.

Issue #3: Scheduling

The actual time schedule to be used is an issue that can make or break the new service. **Key factors:** the traffic flow (people and automobiles), fellowship needs and people's lifestyles.

Issue #4: Child care

One of the most difficult issues to address is when and how to provide necessary child care. **Key factors:** the ages of children in your congregation, the expectation of members and the number of potential child care workers.

Issue #5: Music

Multiple services increase the need for more music personnel. **Key factor:** the availability of current and potential music personnel.

Issue #6: Support ministries

Adding a new worship service requires additional support personnel. **Key factor:** the availability of additional support people in areas such as ushers and greeters.

Adding A Second Service

Growing churches find that multiple worship services are a good way to meet the needs of people in our fast paced society.

1. What are the options for scheduling?

There are three basic approaches to scheduling multiple worship services on Sunday mornings. Most churches find it best to move progressively from one approach to another as they experience growth.

The Sandwich Approach

Sunday School

Worship

For churches with a traditional schedule of Sunday school followed by morning worship, the easiest transition to multiple services is to use the sandwich approach.

The sandwich approach simply adds a second worship service before Sunday school thus sandwiching Sunday school between two worship services.

This approach is the easiest way to begin since it creates the least disruption to the schedule already in place.

The Flip-flop Approach

Worship Sunday school

Worship Sunday school

Churches using the flip-flop approach offer two worship services and two Sunday schools together. Ministry personnel may then flip-flop back and forth between services working in one and attending another.

Likewise, this model gives people who attend the first worship service opportunity to crossover and attend the second Sunday school. Those who attend Sunday school during the first service may then crossover and attend the second worship service.

The Consecutive Approach

Worship Child Care

Worship Sunday school

Worship Sunday school

Churches that experience continual growth often add three consecutive worship services on Sunday mornings. Most will offer only two complete Sunday schools with limited child care during the earliest service.

2. Which service will be most popular?

In general, the service that starts between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. will be the largest. In the initial stages one service will have about two-thirds of the total attendance and the other one-third.

The key is not to have an empty feeling in any worship service. A service with less than 35% of the seating filled is uncomfortable.

An empty or full service is based more on the seats available than the actual size of the room. If possible, remove chairs or pews and widen isles to make the worship service seem fuller.

3. Should services be identical?

If the goals for adding an additional worship service are to 1) attract new people, 2) take advantage of people's different gifts, 3) expand opportunities for service or 4) give people greater options, then it is wise to offer a choice of worship styles rather than identical services.

4. Are Saturday services a good idea?

Some churches find that Thursday, Friday or Saturday evenings are good times for adding a new worship service. Churches interested in pursuing an evening worship service should be aware that . . .

- Evening worship services are normally a spill over of an already strong Sunday morning ministry. Do not attempt to start an evening worship service unless attendance at Sunday morning worship services are strong.

- Evening worship services tend to have a more casual and laid back atmosphere than on Sunday morning.

- Evening worship services often lack the same intensity of Sunday morning services as worshippers come directly from work or other activities and may be tired.

- Evening worship services are a good option for people who work on weekends and/or prefer to use the weekend for travel or recreational activities.

5. How should a church proceed?

Consider the following ideas as you develop plans for an additional worship service.

û Begin keeping accurate records.

Keep track of worship attendance, the number of cars in the parking lot and the ratio of children to adults in the worship service. Especially note when worship attendance reaches 80% of the seating capacity.

û Prepare your leadership.

Train church leaders to understand the relationship of seating, parking and child care to overall growth in worship attendance. Share with them the positive reasons for multiple services. Suggest a strategy for adding additional services as they are needed.

û **Educate the congregation.**

Direct the congregation's attention to the Great Commission. Alert them to the possibility of adding multiple worship services. Solicit comments through surveys and personal contacts. Research people's preference in worship style and times for multiple services.

û **Set a target date.**

Develop a strategic plan and communicate to worshippers a possible target date to begin multiple services.

û **Train additional staff.**

Consider the number of ministry personnel needed to support the new service. Start recruiting and training additional ushers, musicians, child care workers, Sunday school staff and worship teams. Look for people who are not serving and seek to involved them in support roles.

û **Communicate the change.**

Advertise the new service to the lapsed members, the present congregation and other potential worshippers. Use the newspaper, direct mail and small weekly papers.

û **Experiment for one year.**

Promote the new service as an experiment. If possible, conduct the additional worship service for 9-12 months before conducting a full review.

PART 9

**REDESIGN
MINISTRY**

How do you bring your church back from disaster? How do you help your people pick themselves up off the floor, put the past behind them and confidently face the future?

Disaster may threaten your church following accidental parenthood (a church split), after a physical disaster (sanctuary burns down), a moral dilemma (pastoral impropriety) or a number of other events.

Turning a church around from one or these or other potential disasters takes patience, creativity and a sound strategy.

Enemies All Around

Churches which face disaster have at least four common enemies that must be faced and conquered. These enemies are:

Enemy #1: Low Morale. People who have spent years or even months in a pressure cooker atmosphere will be discouraged. They may even be angry that God has let this happen to them. Lost dreams, threatened security and being all beat-up will result in low morale.

Enemy #2: Survival Mode. People will take a defensive position to protect themselves from further hurt and danger. New ways of doing things and creative solutions will often be resisted. Thoughts will turn to protecting what is left resulting in a survival mode.

Enemy #3: Passive Attitudes. People will grasp a wait-and-see attitude. Attempts to recruit new people into all church ministry areas will meet with a so-so response. Hedging of bets will often be the norm. Many will view ministry as a trap and refuse to get involved as a result of passive attitudes.

Enemy #4: Consolidated Power. Leaders will grab the power and keep decision-making close to home. Any one seeking to challenge their new found control will be met with strong resistance. What is perceived to threaten the calm will be fiercely challenged. Church leaders will consolidate their power and control over all church functions.

Enemy #5: Loss of Respect. People will often lose respect for the pastoral office. If the pastor is perceived to have part of the crises, directly or indirectly, the office will be seen with skepticism. A new pastor will face resistance due to this loss of respect for months or years.

A Principle

Turnaround must come from the bottom-up, not top-down.

The Turn around pastor

10 steps to turning a church around.

1. Get close to the people. Get to know people. Listen to them. Hear what are their concerns. People need reassurance that others are available.

2. Take control of the cash. Immediately determine the fixed amount of cash you need each month. Fixed expenses include items like, utilities, rent, or mortgage, salaries, essentially what you must have to keep running. While you may not want direct control of the cash, you should be one of the ones who decides when money is spent. To stay solvent, spend only what you brought in last month. In that way you will always be solvent for 30 days.

3. Find the Positives. Even though it may be difficult to spot, every situation has its positives. For example, once people got over the shock of their church building burning down they began to see the positive side of rebuilding a newer structure that would be better suited for ministry today.

4. Create a new vision for the future. Only a new vision will enable people to pick themselves up off the floor, put the past behind them and face the future. Put together a vision sermon that you can believe yourself. Share it as often as you can wherever you can.

5. Stress your mission/purpose. Print your mission statement on a little plastic card that each person can carry with them in their pocket, billfold or purse.

6. Give people a way to feel good about themselves. Pat them on the back for the way they've handled the pressure.

7. Design situations where your people can succeed. Look for short-term projects or goals that you know your people can reach. Lead them to work toward those goals. When they have reached them hold up the victory for all to see. Gradually people will be prepared to strive for larger goals or projects.

8. Use the best you have. Schedule the best teachers, musicians and leaders that you have available. Keep the quality of ministries as high as possible. Pray specifically that God would bring to you needed personnel. Direct people to pray that God would send forth workers into your church. Use the best gifted and talented people God has given you at this time.

9. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate. Give people specifics. Explain exactly how each person, class or group can contribute to the turnaround. Keep people informed by writing letters to their home.

10. Devise a plan. As you talk to people, survey the situation, articulate the positives, a plan will begin to form. List your options under the heading of A) what must be done immediately? B) What can be done in six months or next year? C) What can wait over a year?

Selecting A New Church Name

Many churches are named to signify a place, like Main Street Church. Others are named to designate a denominational affiliation, like Faith Baptist Church.

Other names, such as Community Bible Church, open broad doors while some names hold out spiritual ideals, like Church of the Open Door.

Many church names present biblical pictures, like The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Some contain nearly an entire system of theology, like Pillar of Fire Mount Zion Holiness Church of the Straight Gate.

Whatever name a church has, a good name is better than a bad one. And a great name can be one less barrier that a church must overcome to reach out to its unreached community.

Today many churches are changing their names. To some this is a new concept. But changing a church name is not as new as many people might think.

For instance . . .

The vast majority of early Americans were Anglicans. In fact, two-thirds of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Anglicans, as were George Washington, John Madison, Patrick Henry, Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall.

After the American Revolution, the Anglicans lost their dominate position. Since the Anglican Church was identified with England, thousands of Americans left to become part of the free churches with reflected America's zeal for freedom. Not until the Anglicans renamed themselves the Protestant Episcopal Church were they able to enjoy growth again.

Why Change Your Name?

Why would anyone want to change their church's name? Here are four reasons some are choosing to do so.

1. A New Location

When Park Street Church moves to Fifth Avenue it will need to change its name or suffer a loss of identity. If the name is not changed, there will be increased confusion as new people move into the community and are unaware that Park Street Church is now located on Fifth Avenue.

2. A New Target.

The First German Baptist Church initially ministered to a primarily German audience. However, over the years the community has changed and a new target audience must be reached.

Without a name change, it is unlikely that people of other ethnic descents will even attempt a visit.

3. A New Identity.

Twenty years ago Broadway Presbyterian Church struggled through difficult times. Many people left and joined other churches in the local area. Broadway is now experiencing love and peace within her membership. Yet, her previous reputation lives on. A name change is one way she may clear away the old memories and create a new identity.

4. A New Direction.

Faith Community Church organized a VISION 2000 team to redefine its mission and has decided to set a new direction for the 90s. Noting that their community has many hurting people, they elected to communicate their new desire to help with a new name - New Hope Community Church.

Seven Guidelines

If you have given some thought to a new church name, here are seven guidelines to think about as you work through the choice.

1. Choose a name that attracts the unchurched.

One key to reaching the unchurched is to use a church name that is understandable and attractive to them.

- Consider what unchurched people think about names like "Faith," "Grace," and other names with religious sounding connotations.
- Narrow your choice down to five names and then survey people in movie lines, ball parks, shopping malls and by phone to see what they think of your choices.

2. Choose a name that sets you apart.

Churches tend to choose similar names. One church realized that its name was like nine others in the same area.

- Ask yourself what causes your name to stand out.
- What makes your church unique?
- How is your church different from other churches with similar names?

3. Choose a name that is simple to remember.

An unwieldy name must be classified along with a poor location or a run-down facility -- each can be eclipsed but it often takes extraordinary effort to do so.

- Keep your name short.
- Don't try to say too much in your name.
- One word is best but two or three words is okay.

4. Chose a name that will helps people find your church.

One pastor jokingly said, "It takes Daniel Boone to find our church." His church, like many, was established in a small, quiet neighborhood which today are off the beaten path.

- Help people locate your church by naming it after a street, a local attraction, a physical landmark or other unique feature.

5. Choose a name that removes barriers.

Some people remember churches as places with long lists of "don'ts." People shouldn't trip over your theology because of what your name suggests.

- Look at a potential name through unchurched eyes.
- Ask unchurched people to give you their first response upon hearing your new name.
- Hire a consulting firm to investigate possible new names for you and make a recommendation on which one to select.

6. Choose a name that expands your potential.

Don't limit your drawing power to one city or geographical area unless there is tremendous potential for growth in that area.

- Select a name broad enough to include an entire city rather than simply a neighborhood.
- A name with regional identity rather than a city.
- A name with wide appeal rather than a limited appeal.
- A name that communicates to a larger audience rather than a smaller one.

7. Choose a name that communicates vibrancy.

Church names that communicate excitement and celebration are attractive to people who are hurting and in need of support.

- Use a name that includes words like "hope" or "life."
- Try using the word "new" since people like to be part of a pioneering venture.
- Ask if your name communicates excitement.

Some Considerations

You may be very happy with your church's name and have no desire to change it. However, if you do decide to change your name, consider the following.

- List your church in the Yellow Pages or the local newspaper under your denomination. Research has found that most new residents who are church attenders look for a church either through one of these means.

- Check with your denominational leaders to see what, if any, regulations they have concerning your name.
- Take the proper legal steps to file a name change with your state government. In some cases you will simply need to file a DBA
- Change all the items containing your old name, such as church stationery, bulletins, programs, business cards, brochures and church signs. Don't wait until you use up all the old stationery, etc. If a name change is important to make, it is important to change it throughout.

Relocating A Church

It used to be common practice to plant churches in quiet neighborhoods well away from the major flow of traffic. Today's approach seeks to place churches as close to the flow of traffic as possible. Busy streets are better than quiet lanes for attracting guests.

This change in philosophy is causing some older churches to consider relocating for the purpose of renewed ministry and growth.

1. Why Do Churches Move?

The primary reason churches give for relocating is a need for expansion of facilities and acreage. However, the following are other reasons which are commonly mentioned.

- Deterioration of the immediate community.
- Commercialization of the community.
- Industrialization of the community.
- Attendance decline.
- A desire to reach a new target audience.
- A desire to create a new vision.

2. How Far Do Churches Move?

The average church relocates 5.5 miles from its former location. Most (40%) locate less than one mile away, 30% relocate two to nine miles away and 30% relocate ten or more miles away.

3. What Are The Benefits Of Moving?

Churches normally experience some measure of renewed growth, spiritually and numerically, soon after moving. Over 90% of churches which have relocated look back on the move as a good choice. The following percentages are general rules of thumb.

- 70% of churches which relocate experience some measure of numerical growth.
- 20% of churches remain the same size.
- 10% of churches experience some decline.

Other benefits noted by churches include

- The challenge of reaching new people.
- Newer facilities.
- An increased capacity for growth.
- A new vision among the people.
- A renewed hope for the future.
- Greater opportunities for evangelism.

4. What Effect Does The Distance Of A Move Have On A Church?

A move of less than one mile actually results in the lowest amount of numerical growth. Since a church stays in the same community or neighborhood, few people are lost and few new people come.

Moving farther away results in more potential growth since new ministries must often be identified and developed to reach a new target audience.

As a rule of thumb, if you want your relocation to help produce renewed growth, then you should move a minimum of three miles up to a maximum of ten miles from your old location.

5. Will Members Be Lost In A Move?

Research has found that a church going through a relocation process should expect to lose 20% or less of its current people. Generally speaking . . .

-moves of less than one mile result in the loss of few people. However, they also result in the least potential for renewed growth. The basic benefit in the move being updated facilities.

-the farther the move the greater the potential loss of people. Any loss of 10% or less would be considered excellent.

-the key to cutting losses is to do a very good job of planning the move. This includes creating the vision, helping people understand the need to move and moving within a reasonable amount of time.

6. Do Churches Move Directly To A Permanent Location?

About 80% of churches move before they purchase new property. Two thirds relocate to a temporary rented facility. Only one-third move immediately to what becomes their permanent facility. Most churches hold services in an interim location for a period of one to five years.

7. Is A New Ministry Style Necessary?

There is a 50/50 chance that a church will need to develop a new ministry style. In general the farther a move the greater the need for developing a new ministry style due to the need to reach a different target group.

The closer the move the less ministry style changes are needed since you will be reaching the same people as before.

Ten Steps for Relocating

Churches which have relocated suggest the following general steps for thinking through the relocation process.

Step #1: Seek the Lord in prayer.

It is best not to relocate just to relocate. God must be directing your move based on His eternal purposes.

Step #2: Involve key leaders.

Include all formal leaders as well as informal leaders in the relocation process.

Step #3: Interview other church leaders.

Contact other churches which have relocated to get their recommendations. What would they do differently? The same?

Step #4: Conduct a feasibility study.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a move? Do the study yourself or, better yet, hire a consulting firm to do it for you.

Step #5: Conduct a demographic study.

Where is the best new location for your church? In what location would your church most likely be able to prosper and grow?

Step #6: Develop a relocation plan.

Establish short and long range goals as a time table for relocating. Communicate these goals being certain to update everyone on a regular basis.

Step #7: Be available to your people.

Be very sensitive to all your people. Make personal appointments with those who need you. Love and nurture them throughout the time. Listen to their hurts and concerns.

Step #8: Locate a temporary place to hold services while in the transition.

You most likely will need a temporary location for one to five years. Seek to find an interim meeting place as close as possible to your eventual permanent location.

Step #9: Plan and organize well.

Most disappointments in the relocation process come through poor planning. Take nothing for granted. Plan your every move.

Step #10: Make your move.

If at all possible, move within one year or less. The longer the wait, the greater the chance for discouragement.

**Do's and Don'ts
for
Relocating Your Church**

Churches which have successfully gone through the relocation process suggest the following **DO'S** and **DON'TS** as key to a successful move.

DO develop a renewed vision to reach people for Christ.

The main purpose for relocating a church must be directly tied to Christ's command to "make disciples of all the nations." Relocate because you have a vision to reach people.

DON'T relocate simply due to problems or difficulties.

Problems and difficulties will come even in a new location. Seek to resolve any internal problems before you move. If you don't, many of them will simply move with you.

DO package the vision for relocation in terms of carrying on the past vision of the church.

Focus on how the new location will help continue the vision of the founders of your church. Express the new vision in terms of the old vision to win people to Christ.

DON'T move until church leaders are convinced it is essential to move.

Pastors and leaders must be solidly for relocation. A minimum of 80% of the church must be for the relocation and hopefully 90%. People must believe it is God's will.

DO organize a relocation task force to coordinate the move.

It will take a team effort to relocate a church successfully. If the leadership for such a move rests only on the pastor's shoulders, or a few board members, the potential for success is severely reduced. The regular boards and committees will be too busy holding things together during the move.

DON'T begin many new programs during the relocation process.

Even in the best of situations beginning new programs or ministries takes a huge amount of energy. During a relocation process, too much energy will be expended to begin very many new programs.

DO develop a support system to relieve tension on the senior pastor.

As with new building programs, it is not unusual to find the senior pastor leaving shortly after a church relocates. The stress and potential for burn-out is high. Prayer and time off to relax is important if you hope to keep the pastor following a major move.

DON'T be afraid to incur reasonable debt.

Once a decision is made to move, the longer the church waits before moving the more energy will be lost. While going into unnecessary debt is unwise, delaying a move too long for lack of funding is also unwise.

DO relocate as quickly as possible.

The average church going through a relocation process moves within 12 months of the final decision to relocate.

- 40% move in less than six months.
- 30% take over one year.

- 30% between six and 12 months.

DON'T be afraid to get outside help.

A consultant can help a church establish new vision and set clear plans for relocating to a more effective area. While church leaders may be able to do the planning, an outside consultant is a source of unbiased information which will help a church avoid potential difficulties.

DO establish a presence in the new community before you get there.

Use small groups, advertising, seminars and workshops. Saturate the new area with direct mail alerting the people to your coming.

DON'T take lightly the psychological concern and fears of your people.

In most cases 10% of the people in a church will be unable to relocate to the new church site. Develop a plan to help them find a new church. Visit people in their homes to hear and answer questions they may have concerning the move to a new location.

DO get people to the new site for a visit.

Not every church will relocate immediately to a new site. However, if your church is able to buy new property, get church members to the new location to see the progress which is being made.

DON'T relocate without a thorough demographic study.

Complete a demographic study of several potential new areas to determine the best place to move. Find out what groups of people reside in the potential areas and determine who you will be able to reach with the Gospel.

DO develop a strategy on how to reach people in the new ministry area.

Write out a characterization of the unchurched people in your new ministry area and then detail several strategic plans to reach them with the Good News of Christ. Think through how to attract them to your church and how to assimilate them once they come.

DON'T neglect to read and study church planting strategies.

Do your homework by reading books and attending seminars on church planting. Church growth research on church planting strategies will relate directly to what you are doing.

Does Your Church Need To Move?

While no final decision should be made solely on the statements below, if your church closely reflects several of them, you might give serious thought to relocating.

Churches may need to relocate if . . .

- they are located in a community which is undergoing major changes ethnically, commercially or industrially.
- they find that over 50% of their worship attenders live outside of their immediate community.
- they have church facilities that are in major need of repair.
- they have been in the same location for over 50 years.
- they have seen a decline in worship attendance for the past three years or more.
- they are finding it difficult to attract visitors to worship services.
- they are experiencing rapid growth which has saturated the present buildings, parking and property.

Conclusion

Experienced real estate salespeople know the top three concerns for a good home are location, location and location. Perhaps the same could be said about a good church home.

What do you think? Would a move be beneficial to your church's future?

PART 8

PASTORAL COMPENSATION

29

A Word to Pastors on Negotiating Salary

When I first began pastoring, my mind was on things like preaching, visitation and counseling. Little did I realize that I needed to understand how to negotiate my salary.

Like most pastors, if there was one thing I didn't want to talk about it was money, especially when it related directly to my salary. I wanted to avoid the appearance of greed.

In First Peter 5 pastors are told to "shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntary, according to the will of God, and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness . . ." Another translation of this passage calls money "filthy lucre" and I wanted to stay away from "filthy lucre."

I found that if I talked about money too much it drove a wedge between others and me in the church. It was obvious, that if I was to be able to minister effectively to people I couldn't talk about my salary.

I guess I just expected God's people to take care of me in a fair and equitable manner. However, I began to learn that while God's people often have good intentions when it comes to providing for their pastors, they often don't follow through very well.

Now I don't think pastors should begin to organize a pastor's union to present their case to the Christian community. But I do believe pastor's need to take more of a pro-active position in negotiating their salary.

Practical Guidelines

These guidelines certainly aren't the final word on how to handle salary negotiations. But perhaps they'll give you some ideas you can begin to use right where you are serving.

Guideline #1: Obtain as high a salary as possible when accepting a new position.

It's easier to negotiate an entry level salary than a salary increase once inside an organization. This is true for a number of reasons.

For one, when churches are looking to fill a vacant position they usually have done their homework to find out what others are being paid in similar staff positions.

Tied directly to this, of course, is the natural desire of the church to win the person they really want. When churches are interested in a person they often will pay a higher salary with additional benefits to get them to accept the position.

Since most churches give more thought to the importance of compensation when looking for a pastor than they do in keeping them, it's wise to negotiate as high a compensation package as possible when first taking a position.

Guideline #2: Use your network.

I've occasionally found a high level of frustration, anger and even bitterness among pastors and their spouses over the issue of compensation.

One pastor I know handled his anger by writing the names of frustrating board members on his golf balls. Later, while at the driving range, he released his emotions by soundly striking each ball.

Obviously, that's not a good way to handle anger. The physical exercise may have relieved some stress but it didn't get him the desired raise.

Some Ideas:

- Tell your frustrations to the Lord in prayer.
- Share your feelings with some of your loyal supporters.
- Talk to those who have the power to make the final decision on the compensation package.
- Arrange a meeting over breakfast or lunch where you can honestly share your frustrations.
- Write a short letter to the appropriate board noting some needs and frustrations you have in the area of compensation.

Guideline #3: Devise a review system.

Most churches promise a salary review but few do it. If you hope to create an atmosphere where you may negotiate your compensation package freely, you'll need to develop a workable review system.

Some Ideas:

- Place a salary review early in the budgeting process.
- Schedule an interview with you and your spouse regarding your needs.
- Determine an initial proposal.
- Take a week to pray and think over the proposal before it is finalized.
- Give leaders honest comments.
- Accept their decision.

Guideline #4: Compare apples with apples.

Church leaders will look at a pastor's total compensation package and compare it to their cash salaries. They then figure that the pastor is making much more than he may make since, compared to their take home pay, the pastor's pay seems high.

The difficulty lies in comparing apples with oranges, rather than apples with apples. For example, when you ask the average lay person how much they make, they will usually give you their take-home pay. They will almost never include the hidden costs of employer contributions to social security, retirement or medical insurance. These hidden costs will often add as much as 40% more to an individual's cash salary.

Yet when the same lay person looks at their pastor's salary they include all of these benefits in the "salary package" rather than just the cash salary.

Some Ideas:

•Separate cash salary from benefits and reimbursements in the church budget. •Approach reimbursements as a cost of doing business.

Guideline #5: Set salary standards.

It is good to have some objective standards by which salaries will be set. This is especially critical since church board members change from year to year. While you may arrive at a workable formula with one board, you may find next year's board taking a different viewpoint. Salary standards will help stabilize changes do to fluctuations in board personnel from year to year.

Some Ideas:

•Establish what percentage of the total church budget will go for salaries. •Develop a procedure for determining a base cash salary. •Set a yearly supplement for experience. •Determine what major benefits to offer and how they will be increased. •Figure the normal costs of doing business and a procedure for reimbursement.

Final Comments

It still holds true that we are to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these other things will be added to us." (Matthew 6:33) This holds true for very practical matters like increases in our compensation.

But, I believe it's appropriate for pastors to speak honestly to their church leaders about their physical needs.

So . . . take the initiative and use some of these ideas to negotiate your compensation package this coming year.

I think you'll be glad you did.

Developing A Compensation Plan

Most boards I've dealt with honestly want to be fair with their pastors. They wish to pay them well. However . . . this old joke often contains more truth than error. The clergy continue to be one of the most underpaid professions. According to a national study reported in June, 1988 the 10 worst paying jobs requiring degrees were:

1. Dietitian

2. Social worker
3. Commercial artist
4. **Minister**
5. Audiologist
6. Mayor
7. Set designer
8. Librarian
9. Fashion designer
10. Print editor

REASONS FOR LOW SALARIES

Three major reasons churches often pay lower salaries are:

#1. Unbiblical Priorities: Money goes into buildings and programs, while neglecting the person who ministers day-to-day.

#2. Unbalanced Expectations: Church members expect their pastor to live on less as an example to the flock who, of course, live on more.

#3. Inexperienced Leaders: Many leaders simply do not know how to develop a pastoral compensation plan.

GENERAL RULES OF THUMB

As you seek to develop a pastoral compensation plan keep in mind these guidelines.

- The priority for expenditure of money should be in the order of staff, ministry and buildings.
- The pastor's salary package will normally be 50 to 60% of the total church budget in smaller churches.
- The total staff salary and benefit package will normally be 40 to 50% of the total budget in larger churches .

EXAMPLES OF SALARY SCHEDULES

There are three main ways that churches develop pastoral salaries.

The Flat Rate Method: Using this method a church board assigns an arbitrary salary to a pastor with little regard to experience, training and other critical factors. It is a simple method to use, but usually results in irregular evaluation often allowing a pastor to go years without much of an increase.

The Experience and Role Method: This method is built on the assumption that those with the most years of experience and the greater responsibility deserve the highest compensation. It is better than the flat rate method but may lead to inequity between staff doing similar work.

The Comparable-Worth Method: This method is developed by comparing pastoral staff positions with secular jobs requiring similar training, experience, and responsibility. The salary guidelines for public school teachers and administrators are used by many churches.

The Base Salary Method: Using this method a base salary is established for the senior staff position and then other staff positions are calculated as an index of that standard. Supplements are added for experience, education, and other factors.

A SUGGESTED COMPENSATION MODEL

A base salary model is suggested as an equitable way to develop a compensation plan. It has several advantages over the other models.

It provides guidelines for advancement. A new staff person may be brought in at one level and then, after gaining experience, advanced to the next level.

It provides incentive for effective ministry. The clear steps of promotion will give pastoral staff an added incentive for fulfilling their role. As their ministry grows so will their position and salary.

It provides objectivity for salary negotiation. Real or imagined inequities between people doing similar work is eliminated.

As an example let's assume a senior pastor's annual base salary of \$30,000. Using this base an equitable salary index for all other paid staff in a local church might be as follows:

	<u>Index</u>	
Senior Pastor	\$30,000	1.00
Associate Pastor	\$25,500	.85
Assistant Pastor	\$22,500	.75
Youth Pastor	\$19,500	.65
Director	\$16,500	.55
Secretary	\$13,500	.45
Custodian	\$10,500	.35
Clerical	\$ 7,500	.25

Note: Base salaries are figured on a 12 month year. Those who work part time receive a percentage of the applicable base according to the actual time worked. Supplements for experience, education and other benefits are additional.

ESTABLISHING AN EQUITABLE BASE

The foundation of this model is the establishment of an equitable base salary. One way which is transferable in the United States is to key the base salary to the cost of purchasing a home in a given geographical area.

The 13th annual survey by the Chicago Title and Trust Co. (April 1989), indicates that the average mortgage in the U.S.A. is 34.8% of household income. Financial consultants suggest that a mortgage payment be no more than 28% of total gross income. Using these as a guide, an average base salary should be approximately 3.2 times the monthly mortgage. For example, if it costs \$1,000 per month to own an average home then the base salary would be \$3,200 per month or \$38,400 per year (3.2 X 1,000 X 12).

Establishing an equitable base may not be as easy as it appears in the paragraph above. Other considerations:

- Churches which are unable to provide a base salary that allows a pastor to purchase an average home might consider providing interest free or shared equity loans that will reduce the pastor's monthly payment for the home to one-third or less of his cash salary.
- Smaller churches which find it beyond their ability to provide a base salary keyed to housing costs may be able to key the base salary to housing rental costs.
- Pastoral staff who have come to a church at various times may have differing housing costs. Newer staff may actually have greater needs than senior staff who were able to purchase a home at a earlier time.
- Pastoral staff who are at various stages of life may have needs that are greater than others.

In general a base salary must be equitable when compared to:

1. Laymen of equal education and experience in the same church. Pastors realize they likely never will receive salaries equal to those working in secular jobs. However, laymen must not expect their pastors to live in homes and on salaries that are considerably below what they would accept.

2. Other staff in the same church. In multiple staff situations, salaries must be balanced between positions. Gaps greater than 15% between neighboring positions on the staff chain may result in hurt feelings that will undermine staff relationships and effective ministry.

Although it is difficult to prove a direct cause and effect relationship, most Church Growth consultants are in agreement that the length of a pastor's tenure has a direct influence on the growth potential of a church. Providing an equitable cash salary is one positive way to increase pastoral longevity and increase your growth potential.

**SUPPLEMENTS, BENEFITS
AND REINBURSEMENTS**

Important additions to the model in chapter two are salary supplements, benefits and reimbursements.

- **Supplements** directly effect the cash salary received by pastoral staff. They include items like experience, education and ordination.

- **Benefits** are additions above the cash salary. They include items like paid vacation, health insurance and retirement.

- **Reimbursements** are direct payments for expenses incurred in conducting normal work. They include items like travel, meals and lodging.

SALARY SUPPLEMENTS

Salary supplements are added to the base salary of each individual according to a fixed guideline. The following is a suggested format.

Experience:	<u>Years</u>	<u>Supplement</u>
1	1%	
2	2%	
3	3%	
4	4%	
5	5%	
6	7%	
7	9%	
8	11%	
9	13%	
10	15%	

Example: A senior pastor with 6 years experience with a base of \$30,000 would receive a supplement of 7% or \$2,100 for tenure. Note: This system rewards the staff person who establishes a longer tenure.

Education:	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Supplement</u>
Master's		3%
Special (counseling, etc.)		6%

Doctorate 9%

Example: a senior pastor with 6 years experience and a Master's degree with a license in marital counseling would receive \$33,900. This is a base of \$30,000 plus \$2,100 for tenure and \$1,800 (6%) for his master's degree and advanced degree in marital counseling. Note: Only the highest percentage for education is used. They are not added together.

Ordination: The base salary is built on the assumption that the pastoral positions are staffed with ordained individuals. If this is not the case, it is recommended that \$1,000 be deducted from the base salary for a person not licensed or ordained. Then add \$500 when they are licensed and another \$500 with they are ordained. Positions not normally calling for ordained individuals, such as a custodian, are not affected.

Continuing Education: As in other professions, continuing education is a must for today's pastors. It is recommended that 1% of a person's base salary be given for books, subscriptions, newsletters, etc. And . . . an additional 2% of the base salary be given for taking seminars and continuing educational courses at various schools. Note: this could be handled as a reimbursement.

Example: A pastor with a base salary of \$30,000 would receive an additional \$300 for books and \$600 for seminars, etc.

Social Security: Self-employed pastors pay a higher individual rate for social security than they would if considered employed by the church. It is recommended that the church either supplement their base salary to make up the difference or begin paying employee withholding for the pastor. The church should consult with a tax expert for advice.

Benefits

Churches often would like to offer a complete benefit package to their staffs, but just meeting the budget may leave the cupboards bare. While it is no good to give extra perks if it jeopardizes financial stability, such extras will attract and keep quality people.

Fringe benefits are of benefit to the staff person and church alike. Many fringe benefits are not subject to tax and thus they provide compensation that exceeds the dollar amount spent by the church. The most obvious example for pastors is the use of a housing allowance which is not subject to income tax (although it is subject to social security tax).

Note: Church leaders often compare their own salaries to those received by their pastors. In many cases leaders forget that they receive upwards of 28% more in hidden benefit costs.

Fringe benefits that should be addressed by a church board for all its staff are:

- Paid sick leave
- Paid holidays

- Paid vacation
- Paid sabbatical leave every 5-7 years
- Paid personal days
- Paid professional days
- Paid time-off for military training
- Paid time-off for jury duty
- Paid tuition for advanced education
- Paid insurance (life, health, cancer, disability, professional liability, workmen compensation, dental, vision)
- Paid trips to professional meetings (wife once a year)
- Retirement (minimum \$2,000 per year)
- Loan for home purchase (shared equity? Other)
- Tuition assistance for children

New development: A new approach to benefits which allows for flexibility and potential tax benefits is the "cafeteria" plan. This plan allows for the individual to select different types of benefits that fit unique needs.

Example: A church may offer benefit packages of \$1,500 to singles and \$3,000 to heads of households. Each person then elects to spend their benefit dollars for whatever benefits they choose. One may elect to use most of the dollars for health insurance. Another may choose to spend less for health insurance and more for retirement. Consult with a benefits expert for advice.

Reimbursements

Recent changes in tax law have made it advantageous for churches to simply reimburse pastors for expenses rather than including estimated amounts as a portion of cash salaries. Church leaders should establish a budget line amount which would be reimbursed to pastors with supporting receipts. For example:

- Travel
- Meals
- Lodging
- Gifts
- Benevolent gifts
- Books
- Subscriptions
- Continuing education
- Church meetings
- Church conventions

Additional Recommendations

- It is recommended that full-time pastoral staff receive a minimum of 4 weeks paid vacation. Church boards should take into consideration that pastors are on call at all hours of the day-or-night. Stress and burnout are a major reason pastors leave a church. Pastoral tenure could be increased with more understanding given to this area.

- It is recommended that full-time pastoral staff receive two weeks paid study leave (continuing education) per year. Church boards should take the initiative to make certain their pastoral staff keep up-to-date in their field of expertise. This is especially important for pastors who are constantly giving out through teaching/preaching.

- It is recommended that pastoral staff receive retirement benefits. Although it is not as frequent, many pastors still reach retirement with little or nothing to live on. Church boards should take responsibility to see that their pastor is prepared for retirement.

Conclusion

Developing a pastoral compensation plan is difficult at the least. However, churches which take the time to develop an equitable compensation plan will increase morale among church staff, prolong pastoral longevity and promote healthier ministry. And . . . not least . . . God will be pleased that they have taken care of His appointed servants (Eph. 4:11-12).

A Word to Church Leaders

Most church leaders I know take seriously their God given responsibility to provide for their pastors. And . . . I am certain that you want to do the same.

Here are seven important considerations to take note of as you develop your pastoral compensation package.

First, consider the Bible's teaching on compensation.

Start your annual planning of the church budget with a Bible study on the subject of pastoral compensation. For example, note Paul's statement to Timothy in First Timothy 5:17-18.

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'" (NASB)

Even a casual reading of these verses make it obvious that the better the pastor is at teaching the Word of God the larger should be his salary. The Williams translation reads, "deserving twice the salary they get."

Another important verse to consider is, Galatians 6:6-7 which says . . . "let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows this he will also reap."

Second, consider the hidden message being delivered.

Whatever the cash salary or total compensation package being offered to a pastor it contains a hidden message. Your hidden message says that you appreciate the work of your pastor, that you want your pastor to stay with you for a long time, or that you are ready for a new pastor.

Reducing a person's salary has always been widely used as a method of communicating dissatisfaction with his performance. The same is true when a pastor is allowed to go a number of years without an adequate review and increase. The result is unexpected resignations. What is your hidden message? What messages are being sent? What messages are being received?

Third, consider the reality of salary compression.

Entry level salaries often increase at a faster pace than the salaries of experienced pastors. In practice this means that once pastors take a position they predictably will find it difficult to receive adequate raises.

The impact of salary compression often is a cause of rapid pastoral turnover. Pastors leave a church every 3-4 years since they instinctively know that they can get a better raise by taking a new entry position than by staying on in their present ministry.

When the senior pastor's salary is used as a ceiling for other staff members, the results of compression on his salary affects what can be paid to other staff members. It often is a cause of low pay for associate pastors.

One way to solve this difficulty is to give adequate compensation raises for years of experience. While years of experience is a debatable value for future compensation, most churches increase their pastor's salary by \$250, \$500, \$750 or \$1,000 per year.

Fourth, consider the cost of replacing a pastor.

It is conservatively estimated that the cost of pastoral turnover is equal to one and a half times the salary of the present pastor. For example, if your present pastor is receiving \$35,000 it will cost you roughly \$52,000 to replace him if he leaves. This happens for a number of reasons.

While looking for a new pastor church leaders become more aware of the current salaries and benefits others are receiving. They often find they must pay a higher salary to get a person with equal experience and skills.

In many cases the present pastor will have purchased or rented a home when the rates for doing so were much lower. When a new pastor comes he most likely will need more money to cover housing costs.

Still another reason for this high cost of pastoral turnover is the fact that it takes a new pastor at least two years to get his feet on the ground and become effective in ministry. Studies have found that a pastor's most effective years don't even come until the 6-7th year! Pastoral turnover in the first five years represents a real loss of value that is difficult to measure.

In short it is economically wiser to keep your existing pastor than to bring in a new one.

Fifth, consider paying a competitive salary.

In long pastorates, the salary paid the pastor has usually not kept up with general increases. When the pastor retires or resigns, the church often finds that the salary they were paying is substantially below the "market." The issue is not one of paying an adequate salary but one of paying a competitive salary.

You may be paying a fair salary in terms of congregational size, the resources of the congregation, the education, experience, work load and responsibilities of the pastor. However, it may not be competitive in the pastoral marketplace with what some other churches are paying.

The real question is not what do you pay your pastor but how do you keep your pastor. Have you kept your pastoral salaries up with the cost of living? What would you have to pay to replace your present pastor? Have you kept compensation competitive with what other pastors are receiving?

Sixth, consider the importance of fringe benefits.

Recently a revealing ad has been run on T.V. Two young fathers are shown talking about several job opportunities. One father indicates he prefers one job over another. The reason? One has a better dental plan than the other.

Benefits are important since they often add more value to a compensation package than the actual dollar cost. As a rule of thumb, you should give a minimum of an additional 20% of the total cash salary in benefits to your pastoral staff. Of course, some churches give more than 20%.

Fringe benefits should not be perceived as an increase in the pastor's salary. While they do represent an increase in the total compensation package, they are realistically a cost of employing a pastor or, as it's known in business, as the cost of doing business.

Seventh, consider the need for continuing education.

Continuing education is a fact of life in our information age society. In many denominations, continuing education is a requirement. Pastors are expected to take a minimum of 10 continuing education hours at a Bible school, seminary or through various seminars each year.

Growing congregations tend to take a pro-active position in this area and make certain that their pastors receive encouragement to continue their education.

For example, consider giving two weeks paid study leave each year in addition to vacation time. Allow couples to share in the same continuing education event. Give a three to six month sabbatical every 5-7 years.

Continuing education is beneficial in that it allows the pastor to experience a time of rest and a recharging of the proverbial batteries. It provides a time to plan and develop new vision for the future of your church. And, it helps guarantee that your pastor will have fresh ideas, more creative ministry and energy to continue ministry in your church.

Conclusion

I've found that growing churches are the ones who take the long-term perspective that the best years of a pastorate seldom begin before the 5-6th year of ministry.

And . . . one of the ingredients that makes for long tenure is paying a competitive salary.

PART 9

CONTEMPORARY MINISTRY

33

Creating An Attractive Nursery

If you want to lead a growing church in today's environment, you can do it by building your church around the following three strengths.

Strength #1: Celebrative worship

Strength #2: Caring small groups

Strength #3: Excellent child care

Today's Parents

Child care has always been a contributing factor in growing churches. Parents are naturally concerned for their children and want to place their children into capable hands while they participate in church activities.

However, our changing lifestyle has meant that child care has taken on a major emphasis in our society. As an example, in the past couple of years, major league baseball clubs have begun to offer child care.

What's more, most baseball parks have upgraded their rest rooms into scrupulously maintained, modern facilities. "We have diaper-changing tables in both the ladies' and men's rest rooms," says Pat Gallagher, business manager of the San Francisco Giants.

While parents throughout history have loved and cared for their children, today's new parents approach child care differently than those of only 20 years ago.

1. Today's parents are starting a new baby boom.

More than 3.8 million babies were born in 1987 in the United States, the largest number since the end of the baby boom in 1964. There will be over four million births in the United States in 1991. This new trend for high births shows no sign of abating.

Insight: Parents will be bringing a new wave of younger children into your church nursery.

2. Today's parents are older than those of past years.

Approximately one sixth of all parents are over the age of thirty. "They get out of school with master's degrees at 25 to 30, and that's when they are having children. That puts a tremendous strain on family life," says Professor Harry Specht, dean of the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley.

Insight: Older parents expect more of your nursery than younger parents.

3. Today's parents are spending more money on their children.

Since 1980, Americans have increased their spending for infant and toddler clothing by 120 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. It is not unusual for today's parents to spend \$1,000 decorating a baby's room and more than \$300 to furnish it with toys.

Insight: Parents expect your church's nursery to be comparable to their baby's room at home.

4. Today's parents want the best for their children.

Older parents, who are having less children, want the best for their children and they are willing to spend the big bucks to get it. Nike, Chanel, Ralph Lauren, Guess?, and Christian Dior are among the many big-name designers who have introduced infant-or toddler clothes.

Insight: Parents expect your church to provide the best for their children.

5. Today's parents have less time for their children.

Parents are having kids when their careers are taking off, leaving less time at home. They have more money, so they shower them with material things as a way to show their love, but it comes out of a desire to express great love and caring.

Insight: Parents expect your church to express the same love and care that they themselves show their children.

6. Today's parents are experienced child care shoppers.

Many parents hire other people to take care of their children during the workday. Whether they choose to place their child in day care centers or with in-home care providers, they are experienced at shopping for quality care.

Insight: Parents expect your nursery to provide the same quality care they would find at the best week day care centers.

Checklist

Use the following checklist as an idea starter to create an attractive nursery.

•Redecorate your nursery every other year to keep it up-to-date.

Things change and so must the carpet, designs, colors, furniture and accessories. Cute animals are always in style. One year it might be dinosaurs. Another year ducks. Today you see cows all over the place.

•Sanitize your nursery weekly.

Parents notice whether your nursery is clean or dirty. Regularly sanitize all surfaces, toys, tables, trays, bedding, bibs, etc. Place used toys in a bin marked for washing and clean them each week. Clean carpets every other month. Clean walls every month.

•Evaluate the ratio of children to nursery workers.

With trained child care professionals, there should be no more than four infants per worker and no more than five toddlers per worker. If you use volunteer workers, it is best if there are no more than two infants or four toddlers per worker.

•Provide a hazard free nursery.

Replace broken toys, books, furniture, etc. Fix peeling paint, protruding nails, leaking plumbing and lighting problems. Separate toddlers from babies. Use fire alarms and check them on a regular basis. Maintain good ventilation, heating and air-conditioning.

•Develop a nursery policy.

Your nursery policy should contain information on how discipline is handled, procedures in case of sickness or accident, age guidelines, hours of operation, wellness policies, use of volunteers, registration procedures and fire escape plan. Provide a copy for all parents and post one near the nursery entrance.

•Use the same nursery care workers.

As in most other roles, parents like to see the same people in the nursery to gain a sense of trust. A high turnover rate of nursery workers keeps children and parents from building relationships. Rotate workers as little as possible.

•Train all nursery workers.

Tell them what you want and how they fit into the overall philosophy of your church. Require workers to take first aid training and CPR for infants and children. Hire nursery workers who interact well with children.

Staff Your Church For Growth

Throughout most of church history few churches were large enough to have multiple church staffs. It has only been since the Industrial Age of the mid 1800's that enough people were clustered in cities to produce churches large enough to need multiple staffs.

Even then multiple staffing did not become a well known phenomenon until the 1950's when the growing complexity of the Information Age made it nearly impossible for a single pastor to deal with all the issues and needs of people. As the secular world moved toward specialization and subspecialization, so the church responded with specialization to effectively minister to people's complex needs.

However, a simple observation of the majority of churches with multiple staffs reveals that many are staffed for a decline or numerical plateau rather than for growth. Is there a model of

staffing a church which will aid in the growth of churches rather than contributing to their stagnation?

New Church Development

Observers of growing churches find that the best years of a church's numerical growth are often the first 15 to 20 years of its existence. Stated another way, the fastest growing churches are new churches. To understand this suggested model of staffing, let's walk through the early years of a new church.

When a church planting pastor goes into a new area the first responsibility on his desk is to find some new people. This finding of new people is evangelism. Since the new pastor has no people to care for, no program to administer and no worship service to lead, all his energy, prayer and effort is directed toward finding new people. Thus the first priority of the new church is evangelism and is illustrated below.

Find
New
People

Once the new pastor begins to reach people a second responsibility is placed on his desk. He must now try to keep as many of the new people as possible. Church growth writers refer to this keeping of new people as assimilation. Now the new pastor has two priorities to occupy his time, energy and thought. He must continue to reach out and find new people while trying to keep as many as possible. Thus the priorities on his desk now look like this:

Find Keep
New New
People People

At this point a third priority is placed on the pastor's desk. The pastor must now begin to coordinate a worship service, prepare and deliver a message. The priorities on his desk begin to look like the following.

Find Keep Celebrate
New New With
People People People

What began as a simple task – to find new people – now has grown to include a fourth priority. The pastor must begin to train these new people. In most churches this new priority is referred to as Christian education. This priority includes the establishment of age graded ministries, teacher training and committees. His responsibilities begin to look like this:

Find Keep Celebrate Educate
New New With The
People People People People

As you can see, the number of responsibilities on the pastor's desk has increased significantly. Hopefully some of the people have been trained to take over a few of these responsibilities. But another responsibility is now added to these first four. By this point in the life-cycle of a new church several ministries have been started. These all cry out for oversight and the pastor finds that he is being stretched by the demands of all the responsibilities he finds on his desk each morning. His desk now looks like this:

Find Keep Celebrate Educate Oversee
 New New With The The
 People People People People People

The pastor of our fictitious new church has much to keep him busy but there's still one more responsibility that is placed on his desk. He now must care for the people that are part of the new church. When he first began planting this church there were no people so there were no hospital calls to be made, no counseling to be done and no weddings or funerals to conduct. But now there are many needs and the people push their concerns, calls and visits upon him in greater numbers each week. At last the pastors desk looks like the following.

Find Keep Celebrate Educate Oversee Care
 New New With The The For
 People People People People People People

It is certain that a new church plant doesn't take place in quite this linear of a line. Even so, this model is instructive as it provides an understanding of why churches begin to plateau and decline in later years as well as insight into how a church might be staffed to keep it growing.

Why does a new church grow in its early years but begin to plateau and decline in its later years? While there are several intersecting factors that we could point to, a major reason is the shift in priorities over the years. For example, in the early years of a new church the priority is on the left side of the continuum. While in the later year the priority shifts to the right side.

Priority in early years
 Find Keep Celebrate Educate Oversee Care
 New New With The The For
 People People People People People People
 Priority in later years

As the years go by the church moves into a maintenance mode of taking care of what they have (people, programs, facilities) and abandoning the priorities that got them there (finding, keeping and worshiping).

Insights for Staffing

This church planting model gives us several insights into staffing a church for growth.

Insight #1: It teaches us that as a church grows the responsibilities on the solo pastor's desk become complex and numerous. A church with a solo pastor will stop growing when it reaches the limit of the pastor's ability to give adequate emphasis and time to all these priorities.

Insight #2: In the life-cycle of most churches the growing numbers of people already in the church will demand programs and care that will meet their personal needs. Pressure to provide for the people already in the church will cause a distribution of money, time, energy and leadership to the right side of the continuum to the neglect of the left.

Insight #3: The tendency of most churches will be to hire staff who serve functions on the right side of the continuum. Ultimately staffing the right side of the continuum leads to an ingrown church taking care of its own but neglecting the finding and keeping of newer people.

Insight #4: A church that wants to grow will have a priority to staff positions on the left side of the continuum. Staff who help find new people (evangelism), keep new people (assimilation) and worship (celebration) will focus on the priorities that result in continued growth.

Insight #5: A senior pastor must understand his own strengths. If he is strong in areas on the right side of the continuum he should seek to hire an associate who has strengths on the left side. If the senior pastor has strengths on the left, he might hire an associate who has strengths on the right so that he is freed to give his time to the priorities on the left.

Insight #6: All of the six priorities are necessary to provide a supportive environment for church growth. A church that seeks continued growth will not neglect any of these priorities.

Insight #7: A growing church will place a higher emphasis on the priorities on the left rather than those on the right. People in the church will adopt a servant attitude which sees and responds to the needs of those outside the church over those already inside.

Summary

What is the best way to staff a church so that it grows? The answer is to staff a church from the left to the right side of the continuum.

While there are numerous questions which remain to be discussed, it is hoped that this church planting model for staffing will provide a new paradigm by which to view this important area of church growth.

The Christian life is not a solo journey. In order for Joshua to be victorious, he needed the support of Moses, Aaron, and Hur (Exodus 17:8-15). In order for us to be victorious in our Christian lives, we need the support of brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

In our fast paced society, people are finding their support through a variety of small group experiences.

Why Small Groups?

The following are ten reasons why you should consider a small group ministry in your church.

1. Small groups restore relationships.

If people are to function as God intended, there must be an intentional effort to improve interpersonal relationships. This is best accomplished as people gather together in small groups for personal care and support.

2. Working together is better than working alone.

The combined strength of two is greater than two times the strength of one. Two working together can accomplish more than two working alone. "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour (Eccl. 4:9-12).

3. Jesus modeled the use of small groups.

Jesus modeled the necessity for close personal relationships in his discipling ministry. He needed a small support group around Him as He faced the cross. Just before He went to pray, He revealed His deep inner feelings to Peter, James and John (Matt. 26-38).

4. God works through groups of people.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego banded together to maintain their relationship with the Lord and to support one another through prayer (Dan. 2:17-18). The early church met from house to house for their spiritual growth and to reach new people for Christ (Acts 2:46).

5. The "Body" concept of the church.

Just as there is an interdependency among the physical body, so there is an interdependency among the members of the body of Christ. Small groups allow the church to illustrate the body working together.

6. The "One Another" commands of Christ.

The Bible contains numerous "one another" commands. God's intent in these verses is to set forth a way of life. The best place to give practical expression to these "one another" commands is in small groups.

7. Our changing family structures.

The natural intergenerational community that existed when all of the family generations lived together is gone. Small groups provide a parafamily structure where people can receive the love and care they no longer receive from families.

8. The disappearance of neighborhoods.

In new housing tracts the first things to go up are the privacy fences. People resist becoming involved with neighbors but miss the feeling of community. Small groups bring people into touch with each other and provide a sense of accountability.

9. Our fragmented lives.

It used to be that people knew each other at church, in the neighborhood, and at work. Today we live such fragmented lives that few people know us completely. Small groups allow us to be known as complete persons.

10. Our mobile lifestyle.

People have fewer and fewer long-term relationships. Children of mobility can make friends fast but find it difficult to make lasting friendships. Small groups will help us build lasting friendships that enhance Christian growth.

Definition of a Small Group

A small group is a face-to-face gathering of 3 to 12 people on a regular time schedule where a sense of accountability to each other and Jesus Christ is present. The key elements are:

- Face-to-face:** people interface with each other directly and personally.
- 3-12 people:** the group is small enough for face-to-face relationships to take place.
- Regular time schedule:** the group meets a minimum of two times per month.
- Sense of accountability:** the group has a feeling of concern and responsibility to each other.

Rules of Thumb for Small Groups

Whenever a congregation reaches a worship attendance of 120, it becomes increasingly impossible for individuals to relate as a family.

Therefore, as a church gets larger, the congregation must get smaller. To determine how many small groups your church needs give some thought to the following rules of thumb.

Rule of Thumb #1: Total Groups Needed.

As a rule of thumb, a church needs seven small groups for every 100 adults present at its Sunday morning worship services

Rule of Thumb #2: New Small Groups.

In general, 40% of a church's existing groups should be less than two years old. Since groups tend to close up to the addition of newcomers within 12 to 18 months, this will be crucial to the assimilation of new people.

Rule of Thumb #3: Total Participants.

Even with the best small group ministry available, not all of your adults will choose to participate. Generally, a healthy church will have 50% of its adult worshippers participating in its small groups.

Tips for A Good Beginning

1. Educate leaders.

Take time to educate leaders to the need for a small group ministry in your church. If your church has never used small groups before, or perhaps has had a bad experience with them, plan on taking 3-5 years to build a solid base of commitment before beginning your small groups.

2. Evaluate your present ministry.

Using the rules of thumb listed above, evaluate your church's current small group ministry. How many small groups are already functioning? How many years have they been in existence? How many adults are participating?

3. Set some goals.

Based on the findings of your evaluation, set some goals. For example, how many new small groups do you need? How many of your worshippers would you like to see involved? How many small group leaders do you need to train?

4. Do some research.

Read some books, attend seminars and visit other churches which are successfully using small groups. Familiarize yourself with what is and isn't working in small group ministry today.

5. Develop your vision.

Write out a vision for a small group ministry in your church. What is the biblical reason for small groups? Why are small groups important to your church's future? How many small groups do you hope to start in the next five years? How will small groups fit with your other church ministries such as Sunday school?

6. Pray for leaders.

Take time to pray for potential small group leaders in your church. Remember: before Jesus selected the twelve disciples, he spent the entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12-13).

7. Select potential leaders.

Refuse to select people who are already involved in leadership. Look for people who are "potential" leaders and use small groups as an entry point to raise up new leaders.

36

Starting Small Groups

There are many ways to begin a small group ministry in a local church. However, most can be categorized under one of two models: the Slow Track Model or the Fast Track Model.

The Slow Track Model

The **SLOW TRACK** model is a careful and cautious approach to starting a small group ministry. This model is best for churches that

- have attempted small groups unsuccessfully;
- have a fear of small group ministry;
- have few leaders with small group experience.

The Process

1. Start the process with education.

As a rule of thumb, take at least one year to prepare people for your future small group ministry. If your church has an aversion to small groups, plan on taking three to five years.

2. Enlist a core of potential leaders.

Make a list of all the people (couples and singles) who show promise of "potential" leadership. Your list should include twice as many names as you hope to actually recruit for your first training group.

3. Share your vision for small groups.

Schedule a meeting with each couple or single person on your potential list. Share with them your vision for a small group ministry. Express your interest in training them to begin their own small group.

4. Train your potential leaders.

Train your potential leaders in 16 weekly sessions. At each session, spend the first 45 minutes leading your training group in an actual small group. After a fifteen minute break, spend the final 45 minutes training them in small group leadership skills.

5. Develop individual prospect lists.

During the twelfth week of training, ask each potential leader to make a prospect list of people they will invite to be in their own small group. Over the last four weeks, assist them in recruiting people for their own small group.

6. Begin new small groups.

It is crucial that the new small groups begin the week immediately after your last training session. The more time which goes by, the less likely a new group will get started successfully.

7. Offer continuing encouragement.

Call each of your new small group leaders weekly to offer encouragement and answer questions. Host a monthly meeting for all the new small group leaders for mutual support and sharing of ideas.

8. Repeat the process.

Once your new small group leaders are functioning well, repeat the process. Select another group of 10-12 potential leaders and train them in the same manner.

Advantages of the SLOW TRACK model.

- Two training groups can be successfully completed in a normal year.
- 10-12 new groups can be started on a yearly basis with about an 80% success rate.
- The small group ministry is developed slowly and carefully.

The Fast Track Model

The **FAST TRACK** model is a way to begin a small group ministry quickly. This model is best for churches that

- have experienced small group leaders;
- have established a vision for small groups;
- have a strong desire for small groups.

The Process

1. Start the process with education.

Spend a minimum of one year preparing your congregation for small groups. Relate the need for small groups to your church's vision and purpose. Share the benefits of participation in small groups.

2. Enlist and train a core of leaders.

Encourage anyone who is interested in leading a small group to sign up for a one day training session. Prepare and conduct a one day training session for all interest leaders. Share your vision for small groups, guidelines for leading one and give instruction on basic small group leadership skills.

3. Design a variety of small groups.

Allow each small group leader to design their own small group as long as they agree to the following guidelines.

- The group must be doctrinally sound;
- The group must be biblical;
- The group must be legal;
- The group must be ethical; and
- The group leaders must attend a monthly leaders training session.

4. Advertise in advance.

Select a specific Sunday for sign-ups. About six weeks prior to beginning your small groups, let people know when sign-ups will be and when the groups will begin. List all the available small groups noting the meeting times, locations, leaders and other important information.

5. Have a sign-up Sunday.

If possible, have all small group leaders seated at tables in a fellowship hall, gymnasium or on the church lawn so that interested people may talk to the leaders and sign-up. Limit each group to only 10-12 participants.

6. Begin your new groups.

Begin all new groups the very next week following the sign-ups. The longer the wait before the groups begin, the less successful they will be. Call each small group leader the day after their group meets to give encouragement and support.

7. Require a regular report.

Each small group leader must turn in a regular report to a selected church leader. For example, groups meeting weekly report weekly but groups meeting monthly report monthly. Keep the report short. Ask only for attendance, praises and concerns. The attendance figures let your church know the participation level. The praises give you information for advertising. The concerns let you know what future training sessions must address.

8. Offer continuing education.

Require all small group leaders to recruit an assistant leader. These assistant leaders should attend the monthly small group leaders' training event. As these assistants gain experience, use them to begin new groups.

Advantages of the FAST TRACK model.

- Numerous groups can be successfully started in a short span of time;
- A large number of people can participate in a variety of different groups;
- The small group ministry is controlled by a system of training and reporting.

PART 10

**MOVE
FORWARD**

Is effective leadership your goal? Then you must begin to think like a pastor for the 90s.

The massive shift from an industrial to an information society has changed the face of ministry. The leadership skills that served pastors well in the past are not enough in today's rapidly changing environment. But new skills can begin to be developed now.

Leaders in the 90s will . . .

1. Formulate a Global Orientation.

A word that characterizes the 1990s is "globalization." The pastor of the 90s gazes beyond America's shores to see how a church fits into the big picture. Priorities are sharpened with a larger world in view.

•**Get started by . . .** reading books such as Megatrends 2000, Dying for Change, It's A Different World and The Frog In The Kettle. Seriously consider how your church reflects some of the trends mentioned in these books.

2. Create a Corporate Vision.

In our complex, pluralistic, global 1990s, a pastor who lacks a clear picture of a church's mission will be buried in the confusion of religious options. The pastor of the 90s creates the vision that instructs people in where a church is going and how it will get there.

•**Get started by . . .** writing a new vision statement for your church. Carefully describe how your vision is to be played out in worship, education, outreach, assimilation, missions and facilities.

3. Communicate Effectively.

Pierre S. du Pont IV, former governor of Delaware from 1977-1985, wrote in FORBES, June 11, 1990 that "leadership requires that communication skills be harnessed to inner vision."

•**Get started by . . .** surveying your regular attenders to see how many actually know and understand your vision. Meet individually with all your leaders in the next year to communicate how your vision bears on their particular area of ministry.

4. Practice Supportive Leadership.

The pastor of the 90s must win commitment to church objectives by helping people achieve their own goals. When people invest their personal resources in a church, they expect a return: personal and spiritual growth. The pastor who delivers that dividend will attract good people.

•**Get started by . . .** making a list of the top five concerns and goals of your people? Outline a plan to address these needs in your sermons, worship service and church programming over the next two years.

5. Protect the Environment.

Environmental concerns will reverberate throughout the 1990s. Baby Busters will be distinguished from their parents –Baby Boomers– in a greater commitment to environmental issues/careers. Effective pastors in the 90s will zero in on environmental issues in their churches.

•**Get started by . . .** noting the major environmental concern in your ministry area. Enlist a group of people from your church who are concerned about this issue and ask them to develop ways for your church to speak to it.

6. Plug into Technology

Pastors of the 90s will be technologically literate. Illustrations, stories and images from the world of high technology must be used to communicate well. FAX machines, computers, beepers and mobile phones head the list of newer ministry tools.

•**Get started by . . .** using sermon illustrations from today's world. Evaluate your church office and bring it up-to-date in terms of equipment, style, furnishings and location.

7. Manage Diversity.

Asians, Hispanics and Blacks together make up 20 percent of the U.S. population. High birth rates and immigration will increase their combined ranks to 30 percent by 2000. The richness of America's cultural diversity is one of our greatest assets. Tomorrow's pastor must possess cross-cultural management skills to lead a diversified church.

•**Get started by . . .** organizing a task force to study how cultural diversity is or will affect your church over the next five to ten years. Ask them to list the strengths and weaknesses of your church in dealing with such diversity and to suggest a plan of action for the future.

8. Understand the Unchurched.

Target groups, demographics and direct mail are topics familiar to pastors of the 90s. In a changing world, learning and using new ways of marketing the church to unreached people is crucial. Pastors of the 90s will focus their churches externally rather than internally.

•**Get started by . . .** analyzing all current church ministries as to their focus –inward or outward. Set and practice a policy of having every other new ministry being focused outward to the unchurched.

9. Focus on Service.

Pastors of the 90s take seriously the role of service and emphasize quality, cleanliness and service. Subtleties that used to be overlooked –such as whether the usher smiles when he hands you your bulletin – now assumes paramount importance.

•**Get started by . . .** doing a total review of your ministry. Hire an outside consultant to visit your church and give you recommendations on how to raise the quality of your facilities, worship service, child care, etc.

10. Decide Quickly.

As we move toward the 21st Century, new ministry opportunities will present themselves and then quickly disappear. Leaders who take too long to begin new ministries will find that they miss great potential for outreach. Those leaders who are able to decide quickly will see positive results.

•**Get started by . . .** streamlining your decision-making process. Survey your community within two months to determine needs and then start a brand new ministry which speaks to one of those needs within the next six months.

11. Plan with Flexibility.

Effective leadership in the 90s will see flexibility as a skill to be cultivated. Ministries which have worked in the past will likely need adaptation in the future. Leadership that uses that's-the-way-we've-always-done-it planning will suffer failure. Pastors who are able to flex with changing needs will find success.

•**Get started by . . .** listing all current church ministries which have been in existence over three years. After completing the list, think through how each ministry could be updated to reflect today's culture in a better way.

12. Pray Regularly.

Stability in times of change is found, as it always has been, in our unchanging God. Maintaining our focus in the midst of a changing world will come only through constant communication with our Father. Effective pastors in the 90s will be prayerful pastors.

•**Get started by . . .** noting how much time you actually prayed in the past seven days? Then increase that time by 10% during the next 30 days.

Conclusion

Are you ready to plot leadership strategies and skills for effective leadership in the new decade? You can bet the pastors of tomorrow have already started. The technology of pastoring is changing but the role of leadership remains as important as ever in contemporary ministry.

When To Close A Church

One of the most difficult decisions for any church leader to make is when to close a church. Yet, it is estimated that a minimum of 1% of all protestant churches close each year in the United States. This means between 3,000 and 4,000 churches are closed annually.

What Churches Close?

In general terms the following four types of churches are ones that close.

1. New church plants that fail.

New churches are often at great risk. The first few years are the most crucial. As a rule of thumb if a new church makes it past the third year of existence it is likely to last at least 60+ years.

2. Churches that lose their vision.

The energy that drives a church into the future is a vision of what God has called the church to be and do. Churches that lose their sense of mission and purpose will struggle to justify their existence.

3. Churches with serious attendance loss.

A major loss of three-fourths or more of worship attendance is critical. When this factor is accompanied by other losses of vision, finances and effectiveness, a church has a very dim future.

4. Churches that become ineffective.

A basic generalization suggested by Lyle Schaller is that "the leading cause of death among churches is a deterioration of the capability to reach and to assimilate new members."

Key Indicators for Church Closure

A decision to close a church should never be made on the basis of any single indicator below, but taken as a whole they can provide church leaders with helpful insights as to the future potential of a church.

Indicator #1: Public Worship Attendance

A church needs at least 50 adults to have a public worship service that is celebrative and attractive to new people. 20 to 40 adults at worship puts a church in an unhealthy situation. Less than 20 adults is a strong indication the church should be closed.

Indicator #2: Total Giving Units

It usually takes a minimum of 10-12 faithful giving units to provide for a full time pastor. It takes another 10-12 units to provide for the ministry of a church in terms of supplies, advertising, etc. Thus, a church reaches a danger point when it has 25 or less giving units.

Indicator #3: Lay Leadership Pool

As a rule of thumb, a church needs one leader for every 10 adult members (junior high and up), 1 leader for every 6 elementary children and 1 leader for every 2 children below school age. Less leadership than this will make it difficult to provide for the needs of a growing ministry.

Indicator #4: An Effective Ministry

A church needs at least one ministry for which it is known in the community. For example, some churches may be known as the church with the great Sunday school, others for their children's program. Still others may be known for their ministry to senior citizens.

Indicator #5: Past Growth Rate

A growth rate that has been declining for 5 to 10 years should serve as a warning signal. If a church is only about one-fourth or less of its original size it is likely to be facing hard times which may result in eventual closure.

Indicator #6: Congregation's Spiritual Health

A church's spiritual climate is another factor to be considered. Is a church characterized as one of peace, happiness and love? Or, is it found to be one of anger, bitterness and discouragement?

Indicator #7: Average Membership Tenure

How long have people been attending church? If the average tenure is longer than 20 years, it is a sign that a church is having difficulty reaching and assimilating new people.

Indicator #8: Focus of Church Goals

Is the focus of a church on itself or outward to new people? Do leaders talk about ministry, mission and purpose? Or, do they talk about paying the bills, hanging on, real estate, the past and membership care?

Indicator #9: Budget Expenditures

Where is the money spent? Is it spent on outreach, advertising and ministry? Or, are these areas the first to be cut when the budget gets tight?

Indicator #10: Church Rumors

Is there positive talk about God and His work in the church? Are there people who believe God can renew the church in the days ahead? Or, do people talk about the past, respond pessimistically to visionary statements and fail to recognize that God is at work in their church?

Evaluation

If you are faced with a church you think should possibly be closed, the following questionnaire may prove helpful in giving you an objective evaluation.

Circle **YES** or **NO** for each question.

1. Does this church have an average public worship attendance of over 50 adults? YES NO
2. Does this church have 25 faithful giving units? YES NO
3. Does this church have at least one competent lay leader for every 10 adults? YES NO
4. Does this church have at least one ministry for which it is known in the community? YES NO
5. Does this church have a positive growth rate over the past 10 years? YES NO
6. Does this church demonstrate a healthy spiritual life? YES NO
7. Does this church have an average membership tenure of less than 20 years? YES NO
8. Does this church talk mostly about its future goals of ministry? YES NO
9. Does this church actively spend 5% of its budget on outreach to the local community? YES NO
10. Does this church have hope that

God can renew its growth and vitality? YES NO

Tally the YES answers

7-10 YES answers is excellent! This is a church with great potential.

4-6 YES answers is fair. This is a church with unclear direction. It may grow or may decline.

1-3 YES answers is poor. This is a church with a limited future.

A Caution

Examples can be found of strong churches that once were small and were almost closed. Two examples of such churches are Bear Valley Baptist Church in Denver, CO where Frank Tillapaugh is senior pastor and The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, CA where Jack Hayford is senior pastor.

Both of these churches were very small and had given consideration to closing before these men became pastor. The churches chose not to close, developed a new vision for ministry and, as they say, the rest is history.

The decision to close a church should be approached cautiously realizing that God is capable of renewing any church that is willing to change.

39

Selecting A Church Consultant

Americans have embraced consultants, employing them to put art on the walls, chose a tie, buy the family car, spiff up their manners, determine the right colors to wear, etc. Close to a quarter million Americans now make their living as "specialty" advisors. Whatever the dilemma, the trendy solution is to hire a consultant.

The information age has spawned a new role in the church - the church consultant. A 1986 study reported in **Church Growth Today** listed 89 groups and individuals as church growth consultants. Unpredictable, complex changes are taking place in our society. Today's church leaders are unable to understand all of the possible problems they may face, let alone the solutions.

Types of Consultants

Consultants may be divided into two basic types - external and internal.

An **internal consultant** is a person who is employed by, and works within, an organization. In a local church, the professional staff are a type of internal consultant, as are church members who have expertise in a given field.

An **external consultant** is a person who is hired on a temporary basis and works from outside an organization. Types of external consultants often used by local churches are fund-raising specialists, financial auditors and long-range planning strategists.

In general, many internal consultants suffer from the "prophet without honor in his own country" syndrome, often working from a fairly weak position of authority. External consultants frequently have up to 10 times the change agent authority of an internal consultant.

Some Guiding Principles

#1: A balanced approach is most effective.

Consultants use two basic approaches of seminars and one-on-one contact. Seminars provide learning curve enhancement by increasing personal knowledge, building skill techniques, generating enthusiasm and promoting fast growth. One-on-one consulting provides accountability, follow through and problem-solving expertise. A combination of the two approaches is best.

#2: A series of consulting relationships or seminars is essential.

Studies have found that the growth success of churches following a single consulting contact is 1 in 10. The growth success of churches involved in a long-term consulting relationship rises to 8 in 10! Frequency equals effectiveness!

#3: Trust is a critical ingredient.

Trust is based on your instincts that the consultant understands your situation, can work effectively with you and your people and help you discover and implement solutions which are appropriate for your church.

#4: Many more people call themselves church consultants than are qualified as consultants.

Beware of the 3P's of consulting. Pampering: telling them what they want to hear. Pap: telling them the current fad. Poop: telling them nonsense. One distinctive characteristic of a quality consultant agency is the ability to give to its clients global models for solutions to problems.

#5. It pays to do your homework before you invest.

A consultant can spare you hours of frustration trying to work out the sundry problems that crop up. But consultants may be expensive, and sometimes they can be ineffective.

Phases of Consulting

All consultants will follow basic phases as noted below. Some may specialize in only one area.

Phase #1 - Relating: The consultant will earn your trust and establish credibility.

Phase #2 - Assessing: The consultant will observe and ask questions to discover your needs.

Phase #3 - Advocating: The consultant will present solutions to your needs.

Phase #4 - Supporting: The consultant will help you implement the solutions.

Tips for Choosing A Consultant

A few rules of thumb apply to almost all cases when choosing a consultant.

Tip #1. Conduct an internal assessment.

In what part of your church do you need help -- outreach, assimilation, attracting visitors, financial?

Tip #2. Interview several consultants.

What is the firm's specialty? What have they done in the past? Ask for references. Get a list of previous clients and interview them. If it is a large firm, do the people in the firm share the same vision for the church? Or is the firm's approach more like putting the company through a processing machine?

Tip #3. Ask Questions.

Here are some critical ones.

- Is the consultant geographically near the church?
- Will the consultant customize materials, operating procedures and plans to your church?
- Will the consultant be on-site for a portion of the contract?
- How do the consultant's skills relate to the church's specific needs?
- How much time will the consultant be able to devote to the church?
- Does the consultant understand not only consulting but also the church?
- Is the consultant appropriate to your situation?

- Is the consultant knowledgeable about church issues and problems?
- Is the consultant sincerely interested in your needs and willing to work with you in a win-win way?
- Is the consultant in basic agreement with your values and beliefs?

Tip #4. Determine the fees.

How much does the consultant charge, and what is the payment schedule? Determine exactly what the objectives and compensation will be before your consultant begins. Expect to . . .

- pay a basic fee based on time or a flat rate.
- pay all travel costs. including air and land travel. Land travel may include a mileage charge for use of the consultants personal car, rental charges for a rented car and/or bus, cab fares.
- pay for meals directly related to the consultation.
- pay for housing. Consulting is a face-to-face business. It is extremely tiring and most consultants will prefer to stay in a hotel arrangement rather than a person's home.
- receive a written agreement outlining benefits, expectations, requirements, obligations and exact fees.

Tip #5. Select a consultant who is a good teacher.

Never pay for the same advice twice. Good consultants are willing to help you learn the processes that result in renewed health. A consultant should be able to teach skills in a reasonable amount of time so that you can operate on your own without constant attention.

Tip #6. Look for a consultant who is willing to let you make the final decision on every suggestion.

Even though your consultant may have a great reputation and solid background, it's still your church.

Tip #7. Hire a consultant before your house is burning down. Consultants are not miracle workers! It is best to hire a consultant before it's too late.

Securing Success

The complexity of each situation makes it impossible to predict success. However, the following generalizations can be made.

- Success is dependent on your church having people with enough skill to be able to follow through on the recommendations and plans which arise from the consultation..

- Success is dependent on your church having people who are willing to do whatever it takes to see renewal take place.

- Success is dependent on your church winning the victory in prayer before it is won on the growth charts.

FINAL COMMENTS

Pianist Arthur Rubenstein was fond of telling this story about himself. Never at a loss for words (he could speak eight languages), Rubenstein was stricken with a stubborn case of hoarseness:

The newspapers were full of reports about smoking and cancer, so he decided to see a throat specialist. After being examined, he searched the doctor's face for a clue, but he only told Rubenstein to come back the next day. The pianist went home filled with fear. He couldn't sleep all night.

The next day there was another long examination and then an ominous silence. "Tell me, doctor!" Rubenstein cried out. "I can stand the truth. I've lived a rich, full life. What's wrong with me?" The doctor looked him straight in the eye and said, "Mr. Rubenstein, you talk too much."

A wise physician once said, "I have been practicing Medicine for thirty years, and I have prescribed many things. But in the long run, I have learned that for most of what ails the human creature, the best medicine is patient understanding of another's problems." "And, if that doesn't work double the dose."