
INTRODUCTION TO STRONGER CHURCHES: VISION WORKSHOP

GUIDE FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Description

The Introduction to Stronger Churches workshop enables church leaders to keep a congregation focused on its task as God's agent in a particular place. The workshop presents the importance of a biblically defined vision, introduces leaders to the ten characteristics of a healthy church, and invites leaders to see their church as a system that can have a significant impact on its community.



more churches, stronger churches

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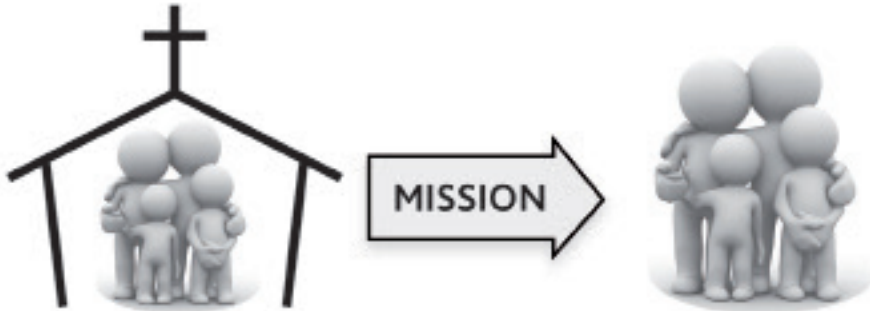
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SUGGESTED SCHEDULE	
Registration and Welcome	
Worship Time	30 minutes
SESSION 1	60 minutes
SESSION 2	60 minutes
Break	
SESSION 3	60 minutes
SESSION 4	60 minutes
Question & Answer Session, Evaluation, Closing	

Multiplication Network Ministries
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SESSION 1

PASSION, VISION, MISSION



WHAT IS "HOLISTIC CHURCH GROWTH"?

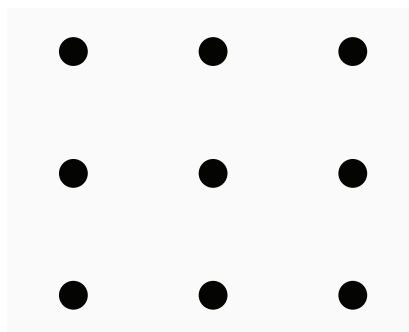
Church growth is healthy when it promotes improvement in all dimensions of a church's life, rather than just an increase in the number of members or attendees. A healthy congregation sees itself in the broad framework of the purposes of God for the world, humanity, and the cosmos—renewal in all dimensions of life. The church takes the reign of God as its starting point and seeks to be the Body of Christ in all areas of life (home, community, work, etc.) through the impact of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

A FRAMEWORK FOR HOLISTIC CHURCH GROWTH

This session helps us remember that a devotional relationship with God is essential in order to carry out the work He is calling us to do. When we are passionate about God's work, we develop a vision of what God wants to do and can do through us. When we respond in obedience to God's call, the church turns outward in mission toward the world. This only happens when we understand what the Bible teaches us about the relationship between God, the church, and our community.

Exercise | Connect-the-Dots

Try to connect all the points by drawing 4 lines, but without lifting your pencil.



VISION

Having vision is looking toward the _____ and seeing what God wants to do through you in order to achieve His redemptive purposes.

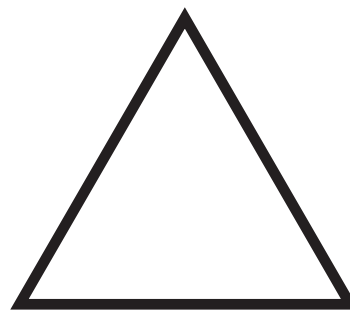
- The role of eyeglasses.
- Biblical examples:
 1. Abraham to have many descendants, a land for them, and be a blessing to the world: Gen. 12:1-3.
 2. Noah to keep his family and the animals safe in the flood: Gen. 6:13-14, 17-20.
 3. Joshua and Caleb to enter the land that God had promised Israel: Num. 14:6-9.
 4. Paul to share the gospel with Gentiles throughout the Roman Empire: Acts 26:13-18.
 5. Jesus to bring healing, hope, and freedom: Luke 4:18-19.
- A healthy church starts with a clear, motivating vision.
- Example of the builders.

*Do you want to be a part of the work of building the Kingdom of God?
When will you lay the first stone?*

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him," Hebrews 11:6.

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

Diagram | Relationship between God—the Church—the Community



This diagram presents three relationships within a single picture:

1. Relationship between the Church and God

PRINCIPLE | For any congregation to make an impact on its community, nothing is as important as an ever-deepening relationship with the Lord.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing," John 15:5.

"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain," Psalm 127:1.

2. Relationship between God and the Community

PRINCIPLE | God is always at work around us. He is in a place long before the first evangelist or missionary arrives.

Jesus' incarnational model - Phil. 2:5-8

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life," John 3:16.

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness," Matthew 9:35.

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them..." Matthew 9:36.

3. Relationship between a Congregation and its Community

PRINCIPLE | God wants to work through us. We are His hands and feet and voice in this world. Before achieving great things, we must be faithful in the small things.

Jesus said to His Father, *"As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world,"* John 17:18.

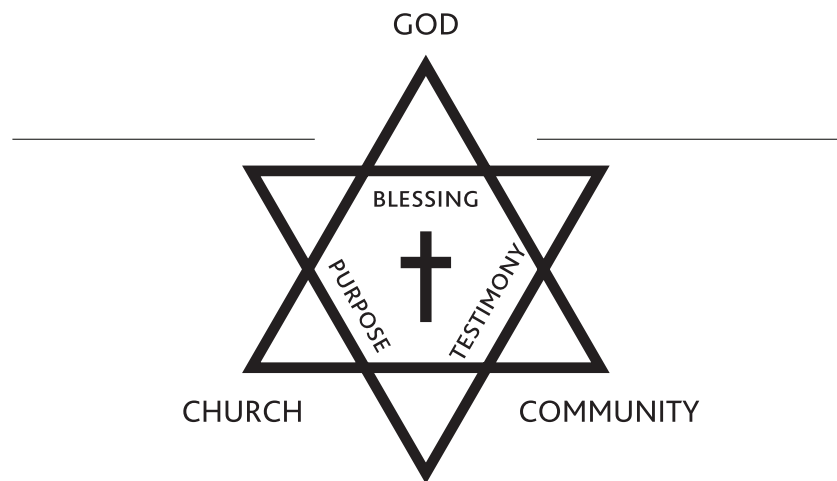
“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,”

Luke 4:18-19.

“His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness,'”

Matthew 25:21.

Diagram | Passion, Vision, Mission



When the church is in right relationship to God, it has passion for God's mission. When the church understands God's plan for the community, the church has vision. Then the congregation is ready to carry out its mission in the community. God's blessing grows the church as it bears testimony in word and in deed in the community.

Conclusion:

Story of Florence Chadwick, July 4, 1952, Catalina Island.

Challenge:

If not today, when? If not I, who?

SESSION 2

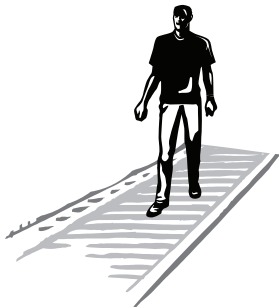
THE FIVE COMMITMENTS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

This session provides a description of five key commitments of a healthy church:

1. Clear and inspiring vision
2. Mobilizing leadership
3. Motivated ministering body
4. Proper stewardship of resources
5. Integration between the text and the context

Understanding these commitments enables leaders to do strategic planning and evaluate their ministries.

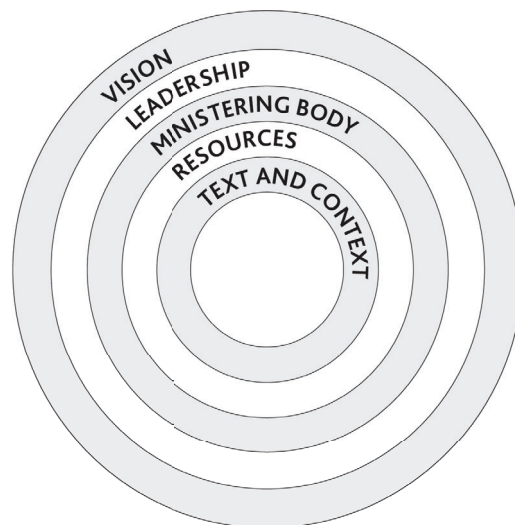


Example | The man on the railroad tracks

In order to have a healthy and growing church, we must pay attention to all the parts of the church's life and ministry (the five commitments and the five functions).

Five Essential Commitments

FIVE
COMMITMENTS



1. CLEAR AND INSPIRING VISION | 1 Peter 2:9, 12

The church sees clearly what God wants it to be and do as the body of Christ in action in a particular place and time. This vision is aligned with the redemptive purposes of God and focuses the church on its mission. In a healthy congregation, decisions about ministry, funds, the building, etc., are made based on the vision.

8 Key Aspects of a Vision Statement:

1. It presents a clear picture of a preferred future.
2. It enables one to think of possibilities with God's "eyeglasses."
3. It's based on the redemptive purposes of God.
4. It's not satisfied with the status quo (the way things are at present).
5. It takes faith.
6. It's communicated in a simple form.
7. It moves one toward prayer and action/it gives a sense of urgency.
8. It's shared among leaders and members.

A Vision Statement to Analyze:

"Our vision is that every person and family in our town has the opportunity to accept Christ as Savior and Lord, to grow in their knowledge of Him, and to use their talents and resources for His glory."

Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

Read each statement and indicate your opinion. ("1" indicates you disagree completely with the statement; "10" indicates you completely agree.)

- Our church has a clear and defined vision for a preferred future.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- I feel inspired by the vision of the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. MOBILIZING LEADERSHIP | Ephesians 4:11-12

The church is served by leaders called by God who understand its vision, communicate the vision clearly to the congregation, and organize the members to make the vision a reality.

Characteristics of leaders in Scripture:

1. The leader is sent by God. (John 17:18)
2. The leader is a servant. (Phil. 2:5-8; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:14-15)
3. The leader seeks God's guidance. (Psalm 25:4-5)
4. The leader motivates and equips God's people. (Eph. 4:11-12; 2 Tm 2:2)

Contrast between Leadership Styles:

THE AUTHORITARIAN LEADER:	THE SERVANT LEADER:
Says: "Follow me!"	Says: "Let's follow Jesus!"
Decides what his vision and goals are for the church.	Works with leaders to discern the vision and goals God has for the church.
Doesn't delegate, just gives orders.	Involves others.
Makes decisions on his own	Invites others to participate in making decisions.
Complains about the weaknesses of the congregation.	Strengthens the congregation in its areas of weakness.
Does everything himself: preaching, visiting, praying, teaching, leading worship, etc.	Trains others to do ministry and affirms them.
Sees other leaders as competitors and threats.	Sees other leaders as partners and blessings.

Thinking that pastors are the only ones who can do things in the church is not only foolish—it's unbiblical. In Exodus 18:13-27, Moses had to learn how to empower others to do ministry so that the people could have the attention they needed and he wouldn't get burned out.

Reflect | Do you put others to work? Who in your church can you involve in different ways?

Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

- There are leaders being trained and prepared for future positions of leadership.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- The leaders help and guide those desiring to become active in the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. MOTIVATED MINISTERING BODY | 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11

The members of the church work together, using their gifts responsibly in the congregation and in the community. An effective pastor knows how to motivate and involve the members of the church. He or she delegates tasks to others so they can use their gifts.

Successful work as a team involves:

1. A clear and inspiring goal
2. Work structured to achieve results
3. Competent members
4. Commitment of all members
5. A collaborative environment
6. A standard of excellence
7. Servant leadership

Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

- The church helps members to discover their gifts for ministry.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- I've been trained to serve or lead in the congregation and community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Exercise | Moving Members into Ministry

INSTRUCTIONS | Think about the existing ministries in your church and list them under the following categories:

ENFOLD PEOPLE	BUILD PEOPLE	EQUIP PEOPLE	MOBILIZE PEOPLE
<p>Ways you get people connected to your congregation, make them feel welcomed, and invite them into relationship with Jesus Christ (examples: special worship services, concerts, community service projects, friendships with non-Christians, door-to-door evangelism, etc.)</p>	<p>Ways you disciple people and help them grow in their faith (Bible study groups, Sunday school, prayer partners, new member classes, women's ministry, men's ministry, mentoring relationships, etc.)</p>	<p>Ways you train people for specific ministries and help them identify and develop their gifts (evangelism workshop, class on spiritual gifts, seminar on finances for families, training people to lead worship or preach, training for small group leaders, etc.)</p>	<p>Ways people use their particular gifts inside and outside your congregation (meal preparation, visits to families, teaching, leading songs in worship, leading a class on a particular activity they are good at, having a soccer camp for neighborhood kids, cleaning the sanctuary, etc.). Anything that people are able to do can be incorporated into the ministry of the church!</p>

Now review your lists to see where your church is most effective and where you should take action.

ENFOLD PEOPLE	BUILD PEOPLE	EQUIP PEOPLE	MOBILIZE PEOPLE
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

With the leaders in your church, repeat the Moving Members into Ministry Exercise:

1. List the activities your church has for each type of ministry.
2. Ask whether the activities you list for each category are effective in that area.
3. Decide where you need to take action and what should be done.

4. PROPER STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES | 1 Corinthians 4:2; Proverbs 3:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Acts 20:35b

The church challenges its members to be good stewards of its possessions and goods as well as their own. All Christians can use these resources (time, talent, and treasure) to carry out their work in the Kingdom of God, both within the church and in the community. The church itself should use resources wisely and with transparency.

The Four "T's" of Stewardship:

1. _____
2. Talent
3. _____
4. Temple of God (our physical bodies)

Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

- Our church practices good stewardship in terms of handling the budget well.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- Our church teaches regularly about stewardship and tithing.

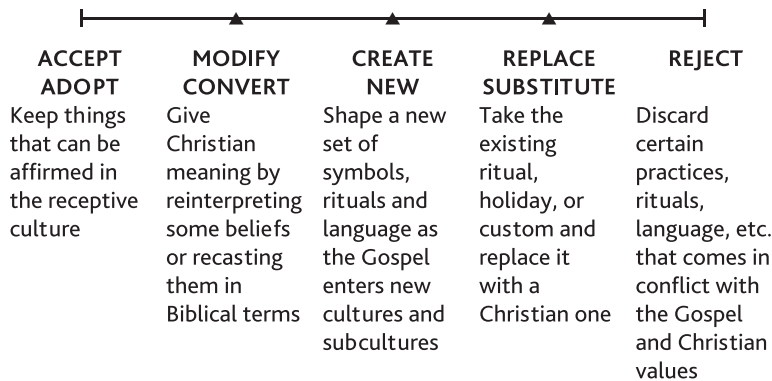
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5. INTEGRATION OF TEXT AND CONTEXT | 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 17:22-23; 1 Corinthians 9:19-22; Matthew 9:35-38

A healthy church takes into account its context (geographic location, social and economic factors, cultures, etc.). While the message of the good news in Jesus Christ does not change, the methods for sharing it do. As the congregation comes to understand people's motivations, problems, dreams, and values, it can meet its neighbors where they are and explain how the gospel addresses their deepest needs.

The graphic below provides some of the options to be considered when contextualizing the gospel into a new setting. This has to do with the communication of the gospel but also with the doing of the gospel.

OPTIONS IN CONTEXTUALIZING CERTAIN CULTURAL BELIEFS AND HABITS



Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

- Our church is aware of the needs in our social context.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Our church tries hard to build relationships in the community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CONCLUSION

Each church has its own distinctive personality and unique abilities. A church that is strong in the five areas we discussed in this session will be moved by the Holy Spirit to make a difference in its community in the name of Jesus. It will call people to find new life in Christ and help them to live in Him, giving glory to God.

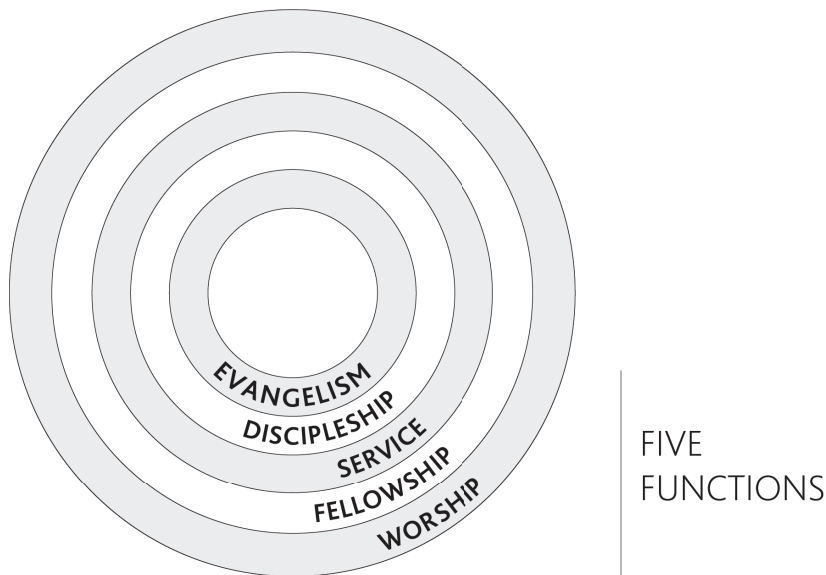
SESSION 3

THE FIVE FUNCTIONS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

Session 3 provides a description of the five functions of a healthy church: evangelism, discipleship, service, fellowship, and worship. Evaluating a congregation in terms of these functions helps leaders in their strategic planning.

Five Essential Functions | Acts 2:42-27



Each function has an impact on the others.

1. **COMPELLING WITNESS** | Acts 2:47; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Acts 5:42; Colossians 1:28-29

The Church announces, in words and deeds that people can understand, that through Jesus Christ the Kingdom of God has come. It calls people to believe this good news, to turn their lives over to Jesus, and to become His disciples. Our lives give evidence of the new creation in Christ—a “living proclamation” of what God has done.

It is God who adds to the Church. The Holy Spirit works in people's hearts, moving them to receive the life offered in Christ.

Reflection Questions:

- To how many people have I presented the gospel in the last two months?
- How many believers has our church trained to share their faith?

Three Kinds of Changes Needed for People to Come to Know Christ:

- 1. A CHANGE OF POWER** | People recognize their own weakness and experience the power of God in their lives through the work of the Holy Spirit, giving them life, breaking the power of sin in their lives, and bringing about the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- 2. A CHANGE OF BELIEF** | People's eyes are opened to accept that Jesus is who the Bible says He is: the resurrected Son of God. People come to see that God speaks through the Scripture and that what He says can be trusted.
- 3. A CHANGE OF WILL** | People turn their lives over to Christ and submit to His will in all areas of their lives.

Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

Read each statement and indicate your opinion. ("1" indicates you disagree completely with the statement; "10" indicates you completely agree.)

- Our church trains and equips its members to give witness in the community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- I feel personally involved in the evangelistic task of our congregation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Follow-up with leaders of your church:

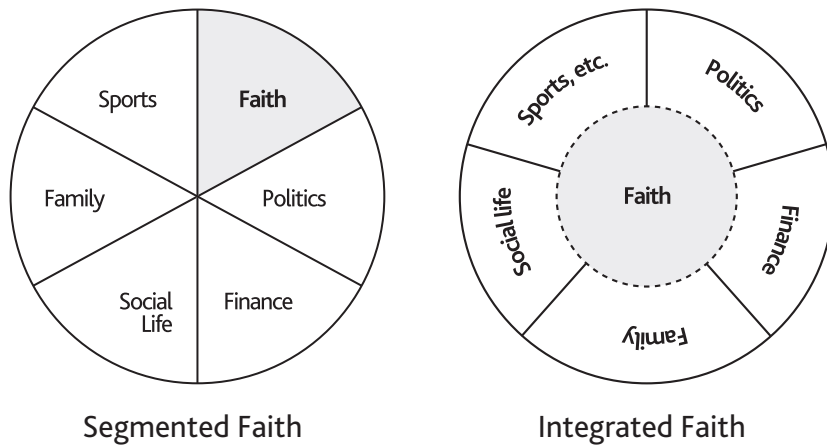
- How does our congregation encourage people to see God's power, hear God's truth, and respond with a whole-hearted commitment to Christ?

2. COMPREHENSIVE DISCIPLESHIP | Acts 2:42; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Peter 3:18

A healthy church helps people of all ages know Christ and His will better so that they follow Him in all areas and aspects of their daily life. As we know Him and His will better and depend on His Spirit, we become more and more like Christ in our:

1. Conduct
2. _____
3. Character
4. _____

Diagram | Segmented Faith vs. Integrated Faith



Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

- When a new person accepts Christ, he or she is immediately disciplined by someone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- The church is helping me grow spiritually.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Follow-up with leaders of your church:

- How does our church help people grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ?
- What opportunities does our church provide for people to study the Scripture and apply it to their lives?

- What opportunities does our church have for people to pray together and for each other?
- How does our church help members learn to follow Jesus in their family life, their decision-making, their daily work, their use of money, and their use of time?

3. COMPASSIONATE SERVICE | Acts 2:45-46; Galatians 6:10; Mark 12:31; James 2:17

The church holistically helps meet the needs of people and the community in the name of Christ and invites them to be His disciples.

The book of James makes clear that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). We serve others not to earn our salvation, but out of gratitude for what God has done for us.

Serving others with our gifts and resources is the visible proof of God's love for them.

Connections between Service and Evangelism:

1. Service is a result of evangelism: God's love makes us want to serve others.
2. Service is a bridge to evangelism: we do concrete acts of service first, and those acts of service open doors to share our faith.
3. Service accompanies evangelism: as we serve others, we speak of God's love for them in Christ.

Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

- Our church helps people with their physical needs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- The people of the community know that we want to demonstrate Christ's love in practical ways.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Follow-up with leaders of your church:

- How do the members of our church serve their community?
- How does our congregation as a whole serve our community?

4. FELLOWSHIP | Acts 2:42, 44, 46; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:25-26 and 5:2

In a healthy church, the members enjoy each other and bear one another's burdens, showing the love and compassion of God. This means we have to get to know each other and share in each others' lives, so we can know the best ways to help. The word in Greek for fellowship, *koinonia*, means "in common." Christian fellowship, then, is first of all to have Christ in common, and because of that to share who we are and what we have with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Small groups are one way that Christians can support each other and grow together in their faith.

Healthy churches understand that conflict is a normal part of life as a congregation. They resolve conflict in a constructive way, with a focus on how to handle the situation so that the church stays faithful to its vision and speaks the truth in love. Leaders need to be loving and respectful but firm. When members or leaders do not act according to biblical guidelines, they need to be corrected in a caring but firm way.

- JOHN 17** | The theological basis for fellowship comes from the Trinity itself—the FIRST community.
- PSALM 133** | Already in the Old Testament we see the value ascribed to the unity among believers.

Exercise: Take Your Church's Pulse

- The ministry of the church helps members grow in friendly relationship with others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- There is a positive fellowship in our church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Follow-up with the leaders of your church:

- How well do the brothers and sisters in Christ in our congregation know each other?
- How have we seen them support and encourage each other?
- Does our church have a plan for addressing conflicts?
- What was the last serious conflict in our congregation, and how was it resolved?

5. DYNAMIC WORSHIP AND PRAYER | Acts 2:42, 47a; Psalm 47:1; Psalm 48:9; Romans 12:1-2

The church gathers together as God's family to listen to God and respond to God in praise, confession, thanksgiving, and intercession. In worship we recognize God's greatness and offer ourselves to Him.

The worship service is a special time when God's people gather to meet with God together. This is a special encounter in which God speaks to His people and His people speak to Him:

- God calls us to worship Him—we respond by praising Him together.
- God calls us to confess our sins—we respond by confessing our sins and asking forgiveness—God forgives through Jesus Christ.
- God speaks to us through His Word—we respond with confessions of faith, offerings, testimonies, and prayers of petition.
- God shows us His love in the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper)—we receive the work of God through His Holy Spirit.
- God blesses us and sends us out into the world—we leave the worship place ready to serve God in our life tasks. The first verses of Romans 12 show that worship in the broad sense involves all areas of our lives. We live all our days in the presence of God, responding to His goodness and greatness.

Worship factors that can help a church to grow:

1. Warm welcome to visitors (making sure they have a place to sit/stand and explanations so they know what's going on).
2. Follow-up of visitors (some personal contact shortly after they've attended worship).

3. Room for new people in the worship area.
4. Solid biblical preaching that is faithful to Scripture and relevant to people's lives.
5. Clear communication about ways people can become involved in the church.

Exercise | Take Your Church's Pulse

- The worship in our church nurtures and strengthens us for the Christian life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- In our worship services the triune God is recognized: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Follow-up with the leaders of your church:

- Is our worship both reverent and joyful?
- Do we use the arts to God's glory?
- Do we put too much emphasis on one aspect (music, specific leaders, etc.)?

CONCLUSION

In addition to the five key commitments, a church that is strong with these five functions will be a healthier church that is poised to be a light to the community.

SESSION 4

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

From the medical and scientific communities we have learned about organisms (living things) as systems—a whole with many parts that interact within the organism and with things outside the organism. This understanding of how systems work can be applied to organizations.

The church is both a living organism—the Body of Christ—and an organization. It's a complex and varied body with many subsystems, and it interacts with a particular environment. There is interdependence and interrelationship among all the subsystems forming one large system. This larger system also acts and reacts with other systems and its environment. Seeing this big picture of mutual relationships and interaction with the context is a perspective called “open systems.” This concept helps us find practical and healthy ways to undertake and continue the work of “making disciples” and make the necessary changes as a mission-focused congregation.



You have to see the tree and also the forest.

PRINCIPLE | The church is a living organism as the Body of Christ, and at the same time it exists in concrete, visible organizations (congregations, denominations) through which God is at work in the world. The more we understand how an organization works, the better we'll be able to help our congregations function well.

Exercise | Scrambled Numbers

You have 30 seconds to find the numbers and circle them in order (starting with 1) to see how far you can get. Look for number 1, circle it, then 2, circle it, and so on.

Write down here the highest number you circled: _____

<p>13 51 15 38 26 18</p> <p>27 65 25 4 54 42</p> <p>39 1 53 28 64 2</p> <p>5 41 63 52 62 14</p> <p>17 61 3 6 30 40</p> <p>49 29 37 16 50 66</p>	<p>13 51 15 38 26 18</p> <p>27 65 25 4 54 42</p> <p>39 1 53 28 64 2</p> <p>5 41 63 52 62 14</p> <p>17 61 3 6 30 40</p> <p>49 29 37 16 50 66</p>
<p>59 47 57 67 24 70 12 36</p> <p>21 71 9 35 34 56 22</p> <p>7 31 10 32 44</p> <p>43 55 23 68</p> <p>11 45 20 58 8</p> <p>33 19 69 60 48 72 46</p>	<p>59 47 57 67 24 70 12 36</p> <p>21 71 9 35 34 56 22</p> <p>7 31 10 32 44</p> <p>43 55 23 68</p> <p>11 45 20 58 8</p> <p>33 19 69 60 48 72 46</p>

This shows the value of:

- Patterns
- Order
- Efficiency
- Design
- Understanding the organizational scheme

COMPONENTS OF AN ORGANIZATION

Diagram 1 | External Factors That Affect a Congregation



- Some external factors are negotiable and flexible.
- Some external factors aren't negotiable—they're fixed.

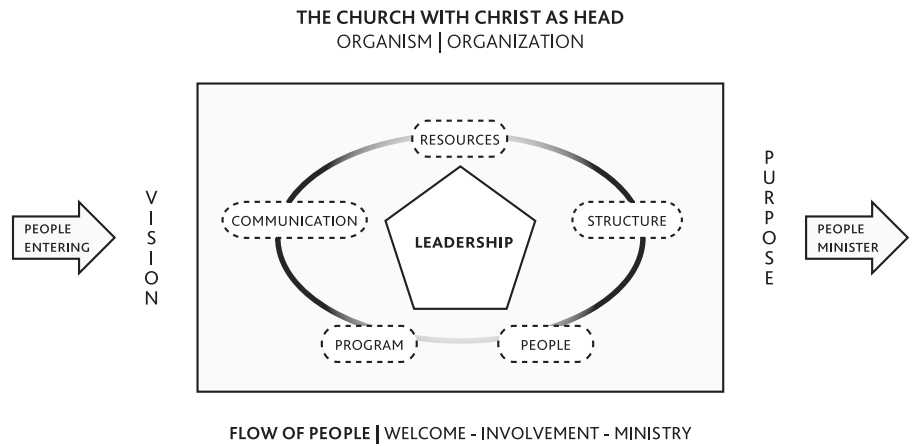
Activity:

Give an example of an external factor that has an impact on your congregation. Is it negotiable or fixed?

Follow-up with the leaders of your church:

- Identify some of the external factors that impact and shape your congregation. Which are more negotiable? Which are not so flexible?

Diagram 2 | Internal Components of a Congregation



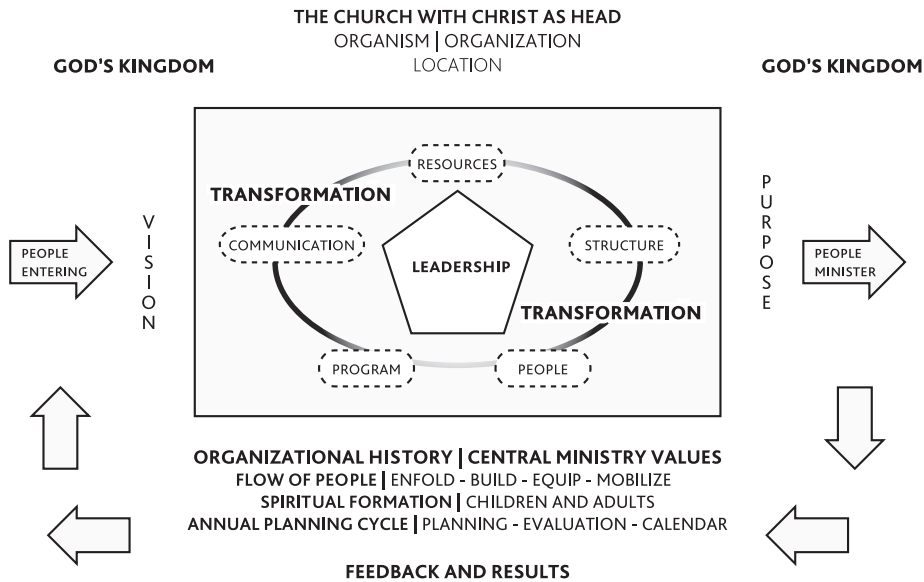
- Within each church there are subsystems that have an impact on how the church functions.

Activity:

Identify some subsystems of your congregation (programs, ministries, committees, etc.). How are they related?

Follow-up with the leaders of your church:

- Identify the different parts of your church and the blessings and challenges of each.

Diagram 3 | External and Internal Components—Transformation

- Positive transformation in a congregation and a community occurs as the internal parts of a congregation serve the church's mission in a way that is appropriate for the context.
- Positive transformation is slowed or stopped when the internal parts of a congregation are not directed toward its vision and mission.

KEY CONCEPTS OF SYSTEMS

- Context
- Integration and interdependence
- Purpose
- Stability and Homeostasis¹
- Equifinality²
- Contingency Plans³
- Frameworks and parameters

¹ The ability of an organism to regulate its internal environment to maintain a certain state.

² The ability to achieve the same results through different means.

³ Plans to put into effect if the original plan fails.

Follow-up with the leaders in your church:

Talk about how the different parts of your church are doing and what areas you want to work on.

- Have the leaders of your church list everything they know about the people in your neighborhood (their interests, needs, etc.).
- Interview neighbors to find out more about them and what their perception is of the church.
- Do you know enough about your context?
- Do your leaders communicate well with the congregation?
- Do your members use their gifts?
- Do ministries focus on the vision and mission of the church or on some other purpose?

Exercise | "The Red Carpet"

Twenty years ago, "Living Water" church dedicated its new church building. One of the deacons, Michael Smith, already 67 years old at the time, donated the money for the carpet provided that it would be red, since red was his favorite color. Everyone appreciated Michael's gesture, including his family, who had a great deal of influence in the church, and the red carpet was installed.

Now, twenty years later, the church building committee is thinking of changing the carpet and putting in a different floor so that the worship space can also be used for activities during the week (such as a kids' club and free meals for people in the community). They're thinking of using the funds that they raised for their building remodeling for the new floor. Recently, the very elderly member Michael made a significant donation toward the remodeling and asked that they buy red carpet again. His family agrees with this request, but the building committee prefers the all-purpose floor.

The pastor is worried. He is well aware of the influence of Michael and his family, but he also authorized the building committee to make changes to the sanctuary that would allow for different uses. Although he can't believe that people are about to argue about the floor so vehemently when there are great needs in the community, there are several people

on each side who have threatened to leave the church if the decision doesn't go their way:

- a. A relative of Michael's who hasn't been to church in a long time said that he won't ever come back to the church if the committee doesn't honor Michael's gift and request.
- b. A long-term member of the women's ministry who has been evangelizing people in the community said that if the committee puts the wishes of one person above the needs of the church's ministries, she will need to find another church.
- c. Several families with young children say that the congregation needs to give more attention to its ministry to children.

A further complication is that Michael Smith has recently become ill and has had open heart surgery.

The committee has invited the pastor to their meeting tonight to discuss the situation.

In groups of 3–5 people, imagine that you are the committee and are meeting with the pastor to discuss the situation. Use these questions to help you think through the matter and come up with a recommendation:

1. Does this situation in the church have an impact on the community? How?
2. Does this situation affect any of the areas of the church listed below? How?

Location	Leadership	Organizational history
Vision/Purpose	Members	Values of the church
Resources	Structure	Other areas
Programs	Environment/Communication	

3. What options does the church have? What are the possible consequences of each option?
4. How can the church make this decision based on its vision and mission while taking into consideration the whole system?

CONCLUDING THE WORKSHOP

A church that makes a difference:

1. Obeys the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37)
 - Love the Lord with all your heart
 - Love your neighbor as yourself
2. Fulfills the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - Go and make disciples
 - Baptizing them
 - Teaching them to keep everything that Jesus taught

Every church is called to grow in its love for God, for others in the family of God, and for those who still need to know God. A church that makes a difference understands that holistic mission is its purpose and provides follow-up for converts.

One of the faster-growing churches in the world has coined this phrase:

***“A GREAT COMMITMENT to the GREAT
COMMANDMENT and the GREAT COMMISSION
makes a GREAT CHURCH.”***

ANNEX | THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Stuart Murray summarizes the theological basis in his book *Laying Foundations*. Both church growth and the planting of new congregations have their basis in at least three principles:

1. THE INCARNATION

In the same way that God became incarnate in Jesus to identify himself with humanity, the church must become incarnate in a specific community with its needs and bring the message of the whole gospel. A congregation is the body of Christ in a particular place, identifying with people to reach them with the Good News of life in Christ.

Key verses | Philippians 2:5-8
John 1:1, 1:14

"Throughout history there have been many men who have wanted to be like gods, but only one God who has become a man."

2. MISSIO DEI: "GOD'S MISSION"

The God of the Bible is a God who constantly goes looking for the lost and the needy in order to bring them salvation and transformation. In the same way, the church must follow God in its commission to make disciples, transform communities and be an agent of change on behalf of God and with God in His already present activity in the world.

Key verses | John 3:16
Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-49

*"The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning."
- Emil Brunner*

3. KINGDOM OF GOD

The church proclaims and points out what Jesus proclaimed and pointed out – the coming of the Kingdom of God! The church points to, signals, incarnates, and teaches God's good, sovereign reign over creation and His creatures.

Key verses | 1 Peter 2:9-12
Colossians 1:13

*"Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things will be added unto you."
-Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:33)*

EVALUATION FORM |

1. How would you evaluate this Introduction to Stronger Churches workshop?

- Excellent
 Very Good
 Good
 Average
 Poor

2. Would you recommend this workshop to someone else?

- Yes
 Probably
 Not likely
 No

3. What would you add to this workshop?

4. What would you eliminate from this workshop?

5. How would you rate the preparation of the workshop leaders?

- Excellent
 Very Good
 Good
 Average
 Poor

6. Were the diagrams/slides helpful for you in understanding the sessions?

- Very Helpful
 Somewhat Helpful
 Not Very Helpful
 Not Helpful

7. Circle the number that indicates your opinion of the sessions:

	HIGH VALUE				LOW VALUE
SESSION 1 Passion Vision Mission	5	4	3	2	1
SESSION 2 The Five Characteristics of a Healthy Church	5	4	3	2	1
SESSION 3 The Five Functions of a Healthy Church	5	4	3	2	1
SESSION 4 The Transformational System	5	4	3	2	1

8. Any other comments or suggestions:

FUTURE WORKSHOPS |

If you are a pastor or Christian leader and would like to hold this conference in your local church or participate as a conference presenter, you may do the following:

1. Organize and lead the Integral Church Growth workshop using the Leader's and Participant Manuals that are available free of charge at www.multiplicationnetwork.org
2. Contact a representative of the Multiplication Network and ask him or her to help you lead the training in your congregation or group.
3. After your workshop, please send us a report and a photo of the group you trained. Please also send us a summary of the evaluations. A reporting form is available for your convenience on our website, or you may simply send us the following information:
 - Sample Report of a Training Event
 - Workshop: Introduction to Stronger Churches
 - Date
 - Name of the church
 - Address of the church
 - Name of the pastor
 - Name(s) of the person/people who led the training
 - Number of participants trained
 - Comments or a brief testimony
 - Summary of the evaluations

We're always looking for new presenters in order to MULTIPLY this ministry!

If you feel that God could use you in this way, please contact us at www.multiplicationnetwork.org



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