

Teach a Church to Fish

HIGH M-PACT REVITALIZATION (HMR)

Spiritual Renewal with Strategic Initiative

HIGHMIMPACT

Including

COACHWORKS!

Implementation Guide

The HMR Training Manual

50 Days to HIGH M-PACT

&

Bonus Manuscript: *The Silent Church:
39 Reasons We Keep the Good News to Ourselves*

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Foreword

The adage informs, “Give a man a fish, feed him for a meal. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.” In terms of church revitalization, this adage might be amended to state, “Give a church a revitalization program and spark its attendance for a moment. Teach a church to revitalize and spark its M-PACT for the kingdom of God until Jesus returns.”

What you are about to discover in this publication is not a revitalization program or a methodology du jour. It is a way of thinking about and approaching ministry that has God’s kingdom in view, not simply the extension of the life of a particular church. God’s kingdom grows when men, women and children are regenerated and added to the family of God through conversion to saving faith in Jesus Christ. This is not a function of better programming, different music, newer facilities, more engaging preaching, or relocating a church to the latest high growth corridor. Conversion growth is the biblical, spiritual consequence that results when pastor, staff, leaders and congregation, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, turn from inwardly focused ministry to outwardly focused ministry, concentrating ministry efforts on outreach and evangelism.

For clarity, let me define a few of my terms. *Outreach* occurs when people in the church connect with people outside through community needs and interests. *Evangelism* occurs when people outside of the church are connected to the message, love, person and work of Jesus Christ; the Gospel. *Revitalization* is the missional regeneration of a church’s ministry through sacrificial commitment to outreach and evangelism.

If your church is struggling with plateau or decline, there is but one way out, an uncompromising commitment to outreach and evangelism. Anything else is more or less like the rearranging of deck chairs on the Titanic. The answer is not more Bible study; not more discipleship classes. We are already educated beyond our obedience and beyond our influence on the lost around us. It is time to put what we know on the field of ministry, taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who inhabit the communities that are home to our churches.

Outreach: Connecting with People through Community Needs & Interests

Evangelism: Connecting People with the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Revitalization: Missional Regeneration through Outreach & Evangelism

Mixing Metaphors

This book is titled, *Teach a Church to Fish*, leveraging an old adage about the *skill* of fishing that sustains life indefinitely as having a greater value than a *handout* of fish that gives only momentary satisfaction. But why would a church want to fish? Well, Jesus uses a different *fish* metaphor as he calls his disciples, who happen to be fishermen, saying, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” (Matthew 4:19 ESV). The church, composed of the disciples of Jesus Christ, is to cast a wide net throughout its community, fishing for men, women and children who are to be *caught* by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Sadly, this skill of Gospel net casting has largely disappeared in the American church as thousands of churches go year after year without making a *catch*. This lack of evangelistic effectiveness is not due to too few fish in the sea. Rather, there are too few churches sending committed fishermen and fisherwomen out to cast the net. Jesus uses another metaphor to make the point, saying, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38 ESV). There is plenty of harvest but few churches that send out laborers, and there are plenty of fish, but few churches that send out fisher-people. It’s time for your church and mine to go fishing! For heaven’s sake, cast the net!

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The **M** in HIGH **M-PACT** Revitalization
Represents . . .

Mobilized
Missional
Ministry
Multiplication
for
Maximum
M-PACT

INTRODUCTION

CATCHING A VISION OF GOD

Seeing God – Seeing What God Sees

The Place to Begin: A Sovereign God with an Eternal Kingdom Vision

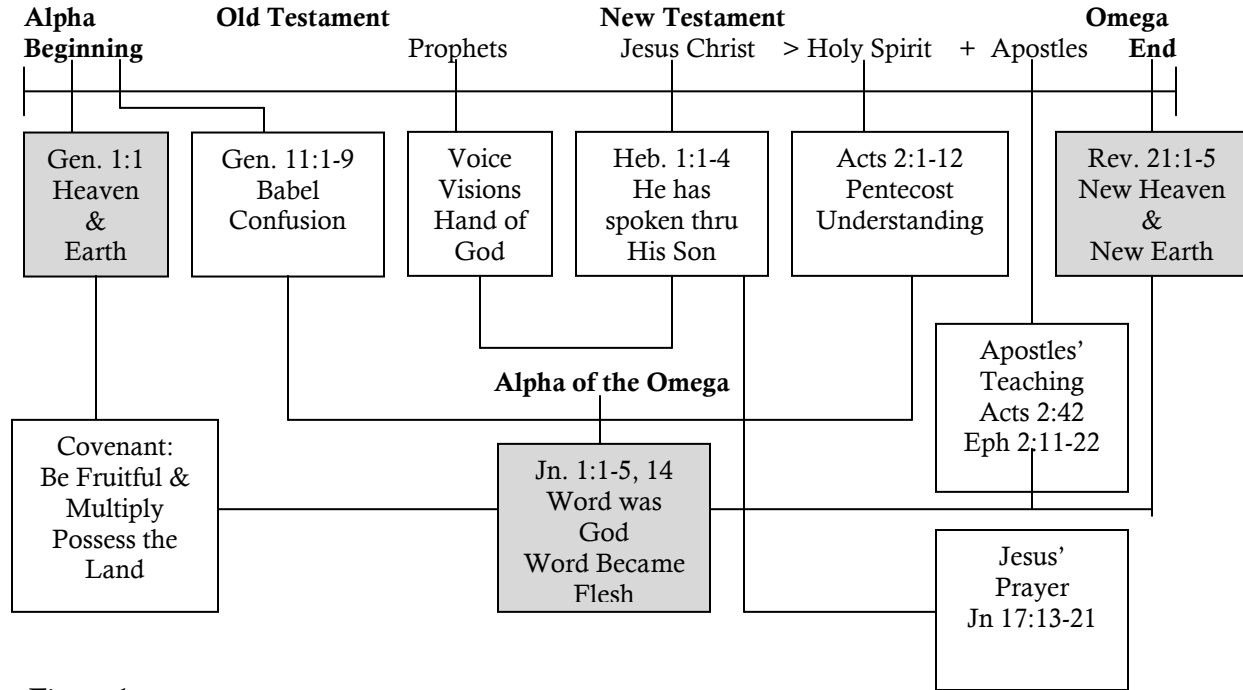


Figure 1

Vision in the church is about discernment, not creativity. Church leaders are not to approach vision for their churches as if drawing on a blank canvas. The canvas is quite full with the brush strokes of God. That canvas is His Holy Word, the Bible. God's vision for the church is clear, and the role of church leaders is not to create or invent new vision for their churches, but to discern God's vision for the church at large, and then to discern how that vision is to be applied in the contexts of their churches in their communities at the present time. To see God's vision is to first see God, and the place to begin is the understanding that God is a sovereign God with an eternal kingdom vision.

To see His eternal kingdom vision, we must pull the lens back to an extremely wide angle, viewing all of time from beginning to end. God is eternal and He has placed a timeline in the midst of eternity as part of His plan. By definition, eternity knows no bounds, but time is bounded by a beginning, an Alpha, and an end, an Omega.

Consider *Figure 1*. In Genesis 1:1 we see the beginning of time as God creates the heavens and the earth. Move to the end of time in Revelation 21:1-5 and we see the following:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

In the beginning, God creates the heavens and the earth, and in the end, He creates a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem, and He takes up permanent residence with His ultimate creation, mankind. The question we must ask in the Christian church is this, “What happens in between the beginning of time and the end of time?”

Follow the lines displayed in *Figure 1*. The line that leads from Genesis to Revelation passes through the Covenant that God made with man. This covenant moves from generation to generation as God’s plan and purpose are played out in the history of redemption. The central theme of this covenant is that the people of God are to **Be Fruitful and Multiply** and **Possess the Land**. Tracing that theme through Scripture takes us through the progression of the covenant:

Covenant with Adam and Eve:	Genesis 1:26-28
Covenant with Noah:	Genesis 9:1-17, 10:31-32
Covenant with Abraham:	Genesis 15:1-6; 17:1-9
Covenant with Isaac:	Genesis 22:1-19; 1-5
Covenant with Jacob (Israel):	Genesis 35:9-12
Twelve Sons of Jacob	Genesis 37:1ff
Twelve Tribes of Israel	Genesis 49:1ff (Jacob’s Blessing)
Covenant through Joseph to Brothers/Tribes	Genesis 50:22-26
Covenant with Moses	Genesis 34:10-11
Ark of the Covenant	Genesis 25:10ff
Covenant with Joshua	Joshua 1:1ff

As time moves on through the Old Testament, the covenant continues to move with the people of God according to His plan and purpose until the coming of Jesus Christ as the Word became flesh and dwelled among us (John 1:1-5, 14). With the entrance of God the Son into space and time, the pivot point of history is established, ushering in the beginning of the end, the first of the Last Days. Jesus lives, teaches, ministers, is crucified, resurrected, and then ascends into heaven. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, the Helper, the *Paraclete*, is poured out. God the Son, having established the new covenant (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), is followed by God the Spirit. The mandate that compels us to be fruitful and multiply and to possess the land shifts from a biological and geographical point of reference to a spiritual point of reference. John 15 teaches that we are to bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit, fruit that will sustain. Further, John 15 teaches that those who do not bear

fruit, who are unproductive, will be taken away, and that those who do bear fruit, who are productive, will be pruned in order to bear more fruit. This fruit is both qualitative and quantitative. Galatians 5:22-23 identifies the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are qualitative traits of Christian character, of being. Bearing more fruit quantitatively presses us to multiply in number, sharing our faith with those outside the faith and gathering them into the body, noting that limited quantitative reproduction is not for lack of harvest, but for lack of harvesters (Matthew 9:35-38).

Ultimately, God's covenant with mankind reaches its fulfillment at the close of time. First expressed in Genesis 1, the covenant of fruitfulness, multiplication and possession delivers history to the pinnacle described in Revelation 7:9-10:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Figure 1 has revealed links from Genesis 1 to Revelation 21 passing through the coming of Jesus Christ, and links from the Old Testament covenant as expressed in Genesis, Exodus and other Old Testament books to Revelation 7, again passing through Jesus Christ and the ushering in of the new covenant as expressed in 1 Corinthians 11. There are other links to note. Genesis 11 reveals the events surrounding the Tower of Babel when God confused the language and dispersed people throughout the world. Acts 2 recounts the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was sent, enabling the disciples to speak in other languages so that the message of the Gospel could be understood. This begins the re-gathering of the people of God as about three thousand were added to the body of Christ that day (Acts 2:41).

In the Old Testament, God spoke through His prophets, but Hebrews 1:1-4 tells us that in these last days, God is speaking through His Son. With Jesus having ascended into heaven, it's the Holy Spirit that guides us into all truth as the church is being established on the foundation of the prophets (Old Testament) and the apostles (New Testament). We find this truth in Acts 2:42 and in Ephesians 2:11-22. In John 17:13-21 we are strengthened in our faith knowing that Jesus has prayed for His disciples then and now, and that he intercedes for us constantly.

God is a sovereign God with an eternal kingdom vision that stretches from before the beginning and beyond the end. Our role, as church leaders, is to discover God's big picture and to find our place as His plan of redemptive history passes through our space and time. How will His plan of redemption play out in our churches? How will God's big picture vision find application in the contexts of our churches in our communities at the present time? What should fruitfulness and multiplication look like in our ministries? Who will we be in the fruitfulness of character? Who will we reach in the fruitfulness of multiplication? What will it take for our churches to have HIGH M-PACT?

An Overview of Church Revitalization

Church revitalization is the marriage of spiritual renewal to strategic initiative. My observation over the years is that most churches tend to approach revitalization through one or the other, but not both, rendering the attempt at revitalization incomplete. The spiritual without the strategic typically manifests as a spiritual pep rally, full of inspiration, passion and emotion, but void of cohesive action steps. The mountaintop experience wanes when back in the valley and true revitalization never transpires. On the other hand, the strategic without the spiritual typically grabs onto the methodology du jour, sometimes creating momentary statistical spiking, but failing to establish health and growth that will sustain.

Revitalization: Spiritual Renewal with Strategic Initiative

A Biblical Model - A Second Exodus

There is much to be learned about revitalization from a study of the Old Testament books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The serious student and practitioner of church revitalization is well advised to study these books in their entirety, but for this discussion, I will narrow the focus to Ezra 7:1-10, Nehemiah 1:1-11, and Esther 4:1-17. Note that each of these leaders served in exile, and each would play a vital role in the return of their people to the land that had been promised to Abraham. Esther, at the risk of her own life, intervened with King Ahasuerus on behalf of her people, the Jews, who were about to be exterminated at the hand of Haman. Her sacrificial action preserved a nation, prompted by the often quoted words of her uncle, Mordecai, “Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

Nehemiah served as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes in Susa, the capital city of Babylon. Upon receiving a distressing report concerning the state of the Jews remaining in Jerusalem and of the city itself, Nehemiah wept, mourned, fasted and prayed for days. In his prayers he acknowledged the faithfulness of God while interceding for his own sins and the sins of his family and his people. This is a picture of how revitalization begins through spiritual renewal.

Near the end of Nehemiah, chapter 1, Nehemiah prays, “give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man” (Nehemiah 1:11b). Who was this man? This man was the king. And why did Nehemiah need the granting of success and the mercy of the king? Apparently in the course of Nehemiah’s weeping, mourning, fasting and prayer, a conviction had been born in his heart and mind that someone had to return to Jerusalem to revive the people and restore the city, and that he was that someone. Knowing that this was beyond his capability, he prayed for God to give him success. Knowing that he would need much favor from the king, he prayed for God to grant him mercy in the sight of Artaxerxes. Nehemiah 1 is a picture of the synergistic relationship between spiritual

renewal and strategic initiative, and the rest of the Book of Nehemiah unfolds the story of how the people and their city were restored.

In Ezra 7, we learn that Ezra was a descendent of Aaron, the chief priest, and a that he was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses. Ezra would return to Jerusalem to re-establish the Law of the Lord as the law of the land. We are told that the hand of the Lord his God was upon him. Why did God choose Ezra and why was God's hand upon him? Ezra 7:10 tells us, stating, "For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." Ezra studied the law, he lived the law and he taught the law.

Could it be that what we find in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther is a second exodus? Consider this. Moses and Aaron led the people of God out of slavery in a foreign land and into the Promised Land, the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a land from which the best and brightest of Israel had been exiled. The prophet Micah foretold that the Messiah would come out of Bethlehem to rule in Israel (Micah 5:2). The problem, though, was that Israel was not at home. Israel was in exile. How could a Messiah come out of Bethlehem to rule when Israel was in exile? Ezra, a descendent of Aaron and an expert in the law of Moses, working in tandem with the ministry of Nehemiah and serving a population preserved through the ministry of Esther, would lead the people of God out of slavery in a foreign land to return to the Promised Land, the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; a second exodus.

What is there to learn from the model given us by Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther? What do we see in them and the accounts of the restoration God brought to His people through them? We see sacrifice, we see heartfelt concern, and we see weeping, mourning, fasting and prayer. We see commitment, we see planning, and we see the taking of risks. We see that Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther were people of action, people who took responsibility, people who stepped out in faith, people who were used by God in ways far above the ordinary. What about us? How far will we go spiritually and strategically to be used by God in bringing about the revitalization of our churches?

Laying the Groundwork for HIGH M-PACT Revitalization

Step 1: Establishing the Vision Team

Responsibilities of the Vision Team: The revitalization process begins with the establishing of a Vision Team that provides catalytic leadership. Though all leaders in a church should be actively engaged in the revitalization process, it is the Vision Team that bears the primary responsibilities. These responsibilities include four key considerations that guide the process from beginning to end. A Vision Team of six is recommended, pastor plus five, though larger or smaller teams work as well.

Discerning God's Vision for the Church: Vision is a function of discernment, not creativity. Using HIGH M-PACT tools, principles and concepts, the Vision Team seeks God's leading in discerning His vision for the individual church. This involves prayer, Bible study,

personal and team reflection and discussion, and investigative research into the demography of both congregation and community. Under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit, the members of the Vision Team seek to know God, to know the congregation and to know the community as they discern how God desires to express Himself through their church in their community at the present time.

Developing Vision & Strategy: Having discerned God’s vision, the Vision Team uses the content of HIGH M-PACT to develop that vision into a three-tiered Vision Statement that includes a Story, a Synopsis, and a Slogan. The Story is a multi-page narrative that articulates the vision in its fullest form. The Synopsis is a summary of the Story articulated in a paragraph. The Slogan is an eight to fifteen word catch phrase that captures the essence of the vision in a popularized short form.

Vision answers the frontline questions “What” and “Why.” What are we trying to accomplish and why is that our objective? Strategy answers the question “How.” How are we going to fulfill the vision? The Vision Team paints the broad strokes of strategy and then equips and empowers leaders of particular ministry areas to develop and deploy the tactical details.

Directing the Church through the Process: The Vision Team directs all others through the process. This includes staff and leaders not serving on the team, church members, regular attendees and even newcomers that might come into the church during the revitalization effort. The Vision Team is more fully engaged in the process than all others, and therefore must determine the course and set the pace. The work of the team is a holistic undertaking, not a priming of the pump or simply a launch. The team stays the course until revitalization has firmly taken hold.

Determining Evaluation & Accountability: One of the underlying causes of plateau and decline in the church is the failure of church leaders to hold themselves and the ministries of the church accountable to ministry effectiveness. So often, the hosting of events and activities is seen as the objective, and as long as these events and activities take place, leaders view themselves as having met the objective. But hosting is not the issue. The issue is ministry effectiveness, ministry results. The Vision Team holds every element of revitalization accountable for being effective in the producing of intentional ministry results and determines the means by which effectiveness and results are evaluated.

Characteristics of the Vision Team: The Vision Team must collectively reflect four distinct characteristics. These characteristics need not be strongly evident in each Vision Team member, but must be strongly evident in the team as a whole.

The Vision Team Must Be Discerning: It stands to reason that if vision is a function of discernment, the Vision Team must be discerning. The Vision Team must have the giftedness and patience to seek God and to hear from God as He reveals His vision. Evidence of discernment in the lives of Vision Team members should be plainly visible prior to their selection to serve on the team. Potential is not enough, there must be a history of discernment that bears witness to this characteristic.

The Vision Team Must Be Visionary: Though the starting point of discovering God's vision is discernment, the Vision Team needs to be visionary in the sense that the team is able to look into the future and clearly see God's vision as it is applied in the life of the church. Vision should be tied to future points in time such as three, five or ten years from the present. A concrete vision is a snapshot taken at those points in time with the substance of vision clearly visible in those snapshots. It's up to the Vision Team to determine in advance what should be included in those snapshots. The Vision Team must have a clear understanding of what the ministry future should look like and the capacity to cast that vision so that others can see the future that God desires as well.

The Vision Team Must Be Spiritually Mature: Discernment of God's vision and the leading of a congregation to pursue that vision must be guided by a team that is spiritually mature. These are high stakes. God's vision for the church is at stake, the future of the congregation's ministry is at stake, and the reaching of men, women and children with the person, love and ministry of Jesus Christ is at stake. Therefore, the Vision Team must be spiritually mature. The temptation is to load the Vision Team with people who have proven to be entrepreneurial in their professional lives, but the Vision Team is to be measured by spiritual and not secular standards.

The Vision Team Must Be Well-Respected: The Vision Team is very likely to bring issues to the congregation that are challenging and that require change. Congregations are typically negative in their attitudes towards change, so it is important that those bringing the visionary message be endowed with great credibility. This respect must already be in place at the start of the revitalization process. The process does not lend itself to the development of respect, rather, respect as a prerequisite to Vision Team selection is the appropriate course of action.

Step 2: Establishing Prayer Teams

Responsibilities of Prayer Teams: Prayer Teams are the heart of HIGH M-PACT Revitalization, providing support for both the spiritual and the strategic. Each member of the Vision Team forms a Prayer Team of four to eight people. Prayer Teams meet regularly and Prayer Team members are in contact with each other between meetings. The primary responsibility of the Prayer Team is to, well, pray! Pray for the work of the Vision Team. Pray for God to make His vision clear. Pray for the well-being of Vision Team members and their families. Pray. Pray. Pray. The Prayer Teams provide a layer of prayer support that guides and protects the ministry of the Vision Team.

Prayer Teams also have a communications responsibility. When Vision Team members meet with their Prayer Teams, the primary activity is prayer, but the Prayer Team also serves as a vehicle for two-way communication. The Vision Team member is able to share what's going on inside Vision Team meetings with the Prayer Team; e.g. what issues are being discussed, what questions are being answered, what actions are being taken, what challenges are being faced. The Prayer Team becomes informed and prays. Also, Prayer Team members share insights and perspectives with the Vision Team member, and that

input makes it back to the Vision Team for consideration. In this way, the Vision Team has the benefit of much prayer support, and the community of people in the church who are informed about Vision Team developments is widened. Also, the work of the Vision Team is witnessed by all those who serve on Prayer Teams, bringing the work of the Vision Team out from behind closed doors.

The Prayer Team Network

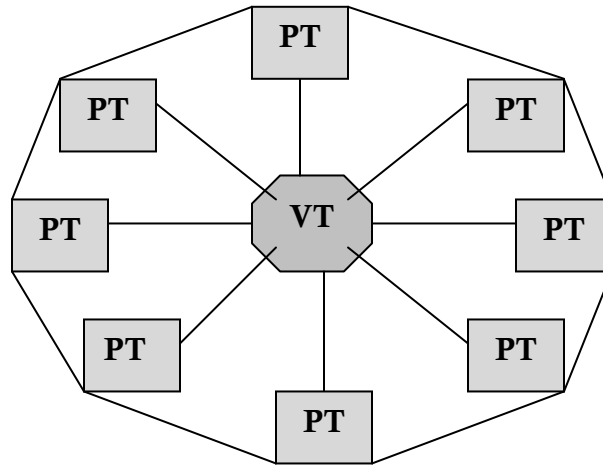


Figure 2

Figure 2 graphically portrays the network that develops when Prayer Teams are formed. In looking at this example, a Vision Team of eight forms eight Prayer Teams. If the Prayer Teams average five members not including the Vision Team member, then there are forty-eight people intimately involved with HIGH M-PACT, eight Vision Team members plus forty (eight times five) additional Prayer Team members. Most churches embracing HIGH M-PACT are small, and forty-eight people represent a fairly large percentage of the congregation.

Step 3: Establishing Authority for Vision

One of the most difficult issues in church revitalization is giving vision the authority it must have in order to move forward. The vision must be authorized. In other words, vision must be empowered to move forward and not be left vulnerable to having its support lifted, reducing vision to wishful thinking on the part of a few leaders. Four factors come into play regarding establishing authority for vision.

The Discernment Factor: In selecting the Vision Team, was proper care taken to ensure that the Vision Team would truly be a team with strong discernment gifts? Are the people serving on the Vision Team truly discerning, or were they selected simply because of the positions that they hold in the church? It is absolutely critical that the vision being presented by the Vision Team be God’s vision and not their own. The key to knowing

God's vision is discernment and the key to discernment is making sure that the Vision Team is discerning. Without this confidence, granting authority for vision is denied.

The Trust Factor: Do staff, leaders and members of the congregation trust the Vision Team to capture God's vision, or is second guessing going to be the order of the day? Are others in the church going to support the vision presented by the Vision Team, or is this vision going to have to go through endless layers of scrutiny and evaluation because the Vision Team is not truly trusted? Only a trusted Vision Team can present a vision that is trusted, and only a trusted vision gains authority.

The "Take-It-Back" Factor: Often, authority granted to a Vision Team is granted with strings attached. These "strings" carry contingencies that reveal that the authority that has been granted is a provisional authority. In other words, the Vision Team has authority *provided* the team brings forth a vision that is pleasing to those who granted this authority in the first place. This is unproductive at best and downright dangerous at worst. Here's the problem: Church leaders of churches in plateau and decline, though they want better results, really don't want to change. To move a church from plateau and decline into health and growth demands discerning God's vision for the church's next season, and that vision will undoubtedly demand change. So leaders resist change and vision demands change. When authority grantors become adversarial to that which has been granted authority, their tendency is to take that authority back, making it difficult for a Vision Team to do its work.

The Unity Factor: For vision to hold sway and have a reasonable opportunity to thrive, unity must prevail, unity within the Vision Team, unity among staff and leaders, and unity within the congregation. Where there is conflict, adversarial relationships, faction forming and self-interests, authority for a godly vision is undermined. An Ephesians 4 kind of unity is among the nutrients of fertile soil that gives authority to vision.

Step 4: Establishing the Pastor as Leader

Revitalization will not take hold in the church unless the key pastor/leader is totally committed, making revitalization the priority in the church. There are initiatives the ideal pastor/leader should provide, roles the ideal pastor/leader should play, and attributes the ideal pastor/leader should possess. Of course, no one is the ideal, but a measuring of strengths and weaknesses and a plan to strengthen obvious weaknesses is in order.

The Ideal Pastor/Leader Provides . . .

Attitude: The pastor/leader must consistently present a positive attitude toward HIGH M-PACT. There will be challenges, resistance and naysayers. The pastor/leader must always point forward and must always foster confidence.

Assurance: Related to the pastor/leader's attitude is a posture of assurance that the process of revitalization will be effective if applied faithfully. Joining in negativity or criticism, or adopting a "wait and see how this turns out" perspective, will sabotage the process.

Accountability: The pastor/leader needs to provide accountability for all who participate in the leadership of HIGH M-PACT. Work must be completed thoroughly and on time or momentum will fail. Though the workforce is typically volunteer, mediocrity or lack of follow through is not acceptable. Do all things as unto the Lord.

The Ideal Pastor/Leader Serves As . . .

Catalyst: Someone must provide the spark to get things started. That someone is the pastor/leader. Initiative must come and continue to come from the top.

Captain: The Vision Team is in fact a team and all members must actively participate, but the pastor/leader is the captain that must keep the team unified and on task.

Champion: Throughout the course of revitalization, momentum will wane from time to time, focus will be lost, and the effort will seem too great. The pastor/leader must champion the cause of revitalization repeatedly to achieve sustainable results.

The Ideal Pastor/Leader Possesses . . .

Vision: The ability to translate the Vision Team's discerned vision into reality.

Drive: The focus and discipline to move the church forward at an aggressive pace.

Energy: The stamina to fulfill what ministry as usual requires plus lead revitalization.

Experience: The ministry seasoning to work smart, weather storms and lead people.

Training: The equipping to lead revitalization (good news = HIGH M-PACT).

Support: Strong devotional and family life to strengthen leading without affirmation, a reality faced by most revitalization pastors/leaders.

Capacity: The ability to be effective while leading multiple initiatives simultaneously.

Health: Given the enormous challenge of leading revitalization, health in other areas of life is essential, e.g. physical, psychological, financial, spiritual, family. Revitalization should be the only major challenge of the season.

People Skills: Effective revitalization demands working with people in challenging scenarios. The pastor/leader will need to say things people don't want to hear, will need to challenge people to give up what they don't want to give up, to do what they don't want to do. This will require high level people skills.

Five Phases of Church Revitalization

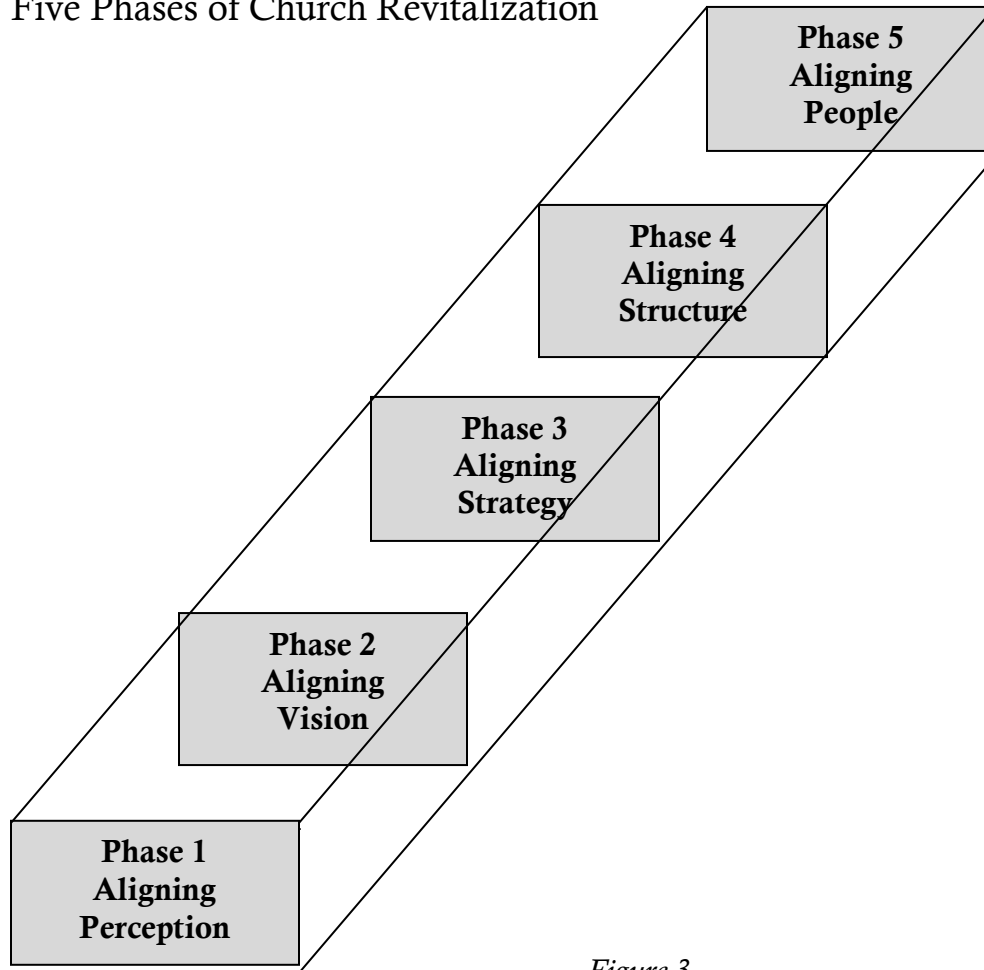


Figure 3

HIGH M-PACT Revitalization is organized around five distinct phases that emphasize alignment and that build upon one another. *Figure 3* positions these five phases along a cross-section of Incline, a stage of lifecycle that will be discussed in detail later in this overview.

Phase 1: Aligning Perception: The process begins with assessment that enables church leaders to align their perception of the church with reality. Leaders tend to perceive their churches to be somewhat healthier than they actually are and are often in denial regarding their churches, denying that there is a problem, or denying that the problem is the church's fault, blaming outside circumstances for the church's plateau or decline. Phase 1 puts reality in view, identifying where the church is on the church lifecycle and why it is where it is.

Phase 2: Aligning Vision: The vision of church leaders for their churches must be in alignment with God's vision for the church. This is a matter of knowing the biblical purpose of the church and discerning how that vision is to be applied in the context of a particular church in a particular community at the present time. Phase 2 provides guiding questions, concepts and tools to bring about this alignment.

Phase 3: Aligning Strategy: Strategy provides the “how” of revitalization as in “How will this vision be accomplished?” As such, strategies must be in alignment with vision for vision to be fulfilled. All actions that are taken strategically must flow out of the vision with no wasted effort or resources being given to actions that are not in alignment with vision.

Phase 4: Aligning Structure: Structure concerns the supporting mechanisms of a church including such elements as staff, payroll, budgets, finances, buildings, property, policies, procedures, boards, committees, and teams. These supporting mechanisms must be in alignment with vision and strategy, providing support for vision and strategy and ensuring that decision-making and resource allocation are targeted on the strategies that have been developed to fulfill the vision.

Phase 5: Aligning People: King James tells us that without a vision the people will perish. The reverse is also true; without the people a vision will perish. Phase 5 aligns people with the vision, strategy and structure, people inside the church as well as newcomers that will come to the church as the fruit of the revitalized vision.

Four Habits of HIGH M-PACT Churches

Four habitual behaviors are at the heart of HIGH M-PACT churches. Begin today to either strengthen or establish these habits in your church.

Habit 1: HIGH M-PACT Churches pray with power: The effective church is a praying church with prayer at the foundation of all ministry. Praying with power is praying with fervor and expectation that God knows, hears and responds when His people pray. Prayer is the oxygen of the church, filling the atmosphere with its presence.

Habit 2: HIGH M-PACT Churches build on Bible basics: We live in a day when even regular church-going Christians are not truly Bible literate. Getting people into God’s Word is essential to a church’s effectiveness.

Habit 3: HIGH M-PACT Churches raise the bar (of commitment): Church leaders must call themselves and others to high levels of commitment. In our busy culture, it has become common practice for churches to expect or demand little of their people. But serving Jesus Christ with all that we have is a privilege and the command is to give all to be His disciple.

Habit 4: HIGH M-PACT Churches reach the lost: It is surprising to find that many churches perceive themselves to be spiritually healthy while reaching almost no one through conversion. Something is wrong with this picture. Reaching the lost is a leading indicator of church health and is clearly mandated in Scripture.

Habit Forming Formula:
Prayer + Bible + Commitment + Evangelism = HIGH M-PACT Ministry
P + B + C + E = HMM

Figure 4

The Church Revitalization Lifecycle: Three Primary Stages

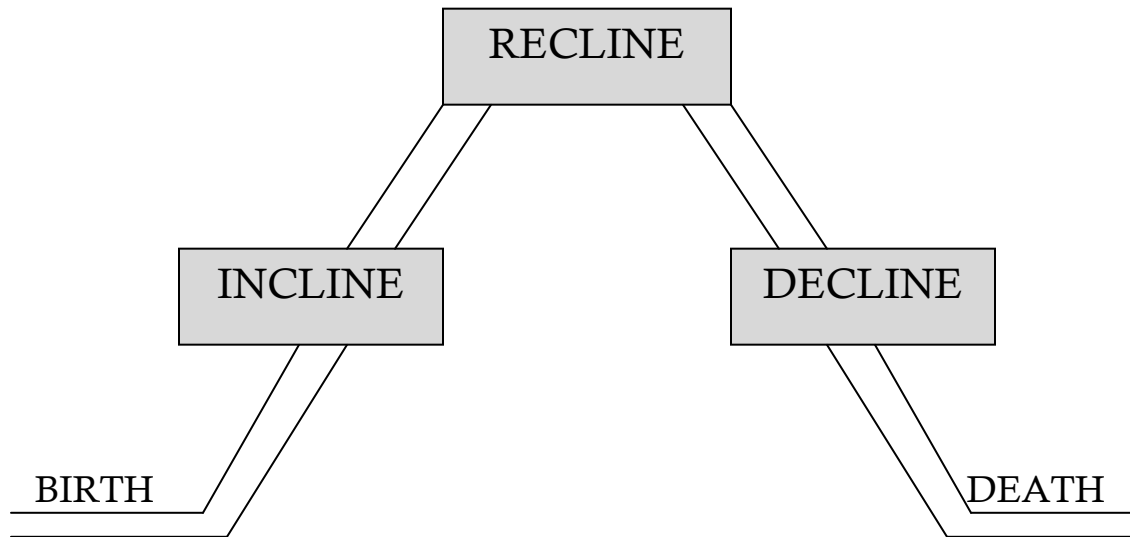


Figure 5

The Church Revitalization Lifecycle (*Figure 5*) can be considered in three primary stages. Incline is the stage of church lifecycle when the ministry capacity of the church is increasing. Over time, the church is doing more and more ministry and the quality of that ministry is better and better. Incline is a strong stage featuring health, growth and multiplication.

Recline is the stage of church lifecycle when the ministry capacity of the church levels off into plateau. Over time, the church is doing the same ministry over and over at more or less the same level of quality. Recline is a tepid, tread water stage featuring ministry management by routine, filling in the blanks.

Decline is the stage of church lifecycle when the ministry capacity of the church is decreasing. Over time, the church is doing less and less ministry and the quality of that ministry is more and more compromised. Decline is a weak stage featuring decreases in membership, attendance, giving and overall impact in the community.

The Lifecycle Story:
Vitality LOST Over Time
Arnold C. Cook
Historical Drift: Must My Church Die?

Figure 6

Revitalization Principle:
Church revitalization ranges from
MODERATE to SEVERE
depending on the lifecycle stage.

Figure 7

The typical lifecycle story is one of vitality lost over time (*Figure 6*). The objective of revitalization is to intervene in the lifecycle and reverse the trend such that vitality is gained

over time. A key revitalization principle is that church revitalization ranges from moderate to severe depending on the lifecycle stage (*Figure 7*). Churches on the upside of the lifecycle, Incline and early Recline, are facing moderate revitalization, while churches on the downside of the lifecycle, fully developed Recline and Decline, are facing a much more severe revitalization treatment.

The Catch-22, then, is that churches that are facing the most severe treatment concerning revitalization are at their weakest in terms of vitality, as illustrated by *Figure 8*. Therefore, it is much better for churches to embrace revitalization early in the lifecycle rather than late, as revitalization is much more accessible from a position of strength than a position of weakness, especially when a moderate revitalization treatment is appropriate. So why don't churches turn to revitalization sooner rather than later? It's because church leaders are reluctant to tamper with ministry that's working, choosing to rest on their laurels rather than fix what's not broken. However, preemptive revitalization makes the most sense and creates the greatest ministry impact.

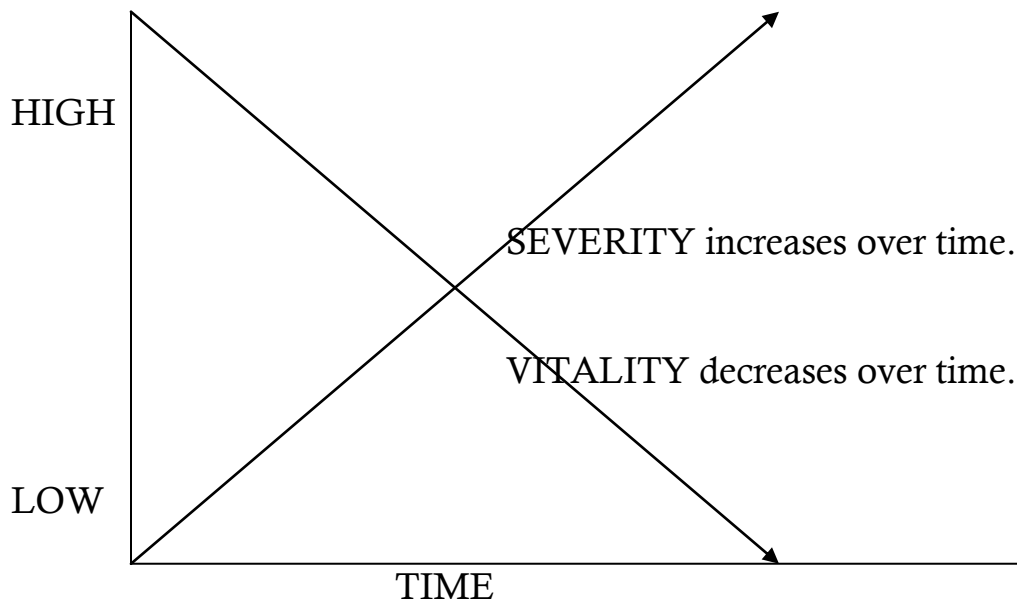


Figure 8

Distinctive Characteristics of Incline, Recline & Decline

In considering Incline, Recline and Decline, it's helpful to note certain distinctive characteristics that separate them.

Orientation

Inclining churches are **Future-Oriented**. Inclining leaders are always looking ahead, making decisions today based on their implications for tomorrow. Leaders of Inclining churches would never trade what is best for the future for what seems best for the present. There is a sense of destination and all energy, resources and focus are fixed on reaching that destination.

Reclining churches are **Present-Oriented**. Reclining leaders are quite satisfied with how things are and if they could they would freeze time, preferring an eternal present where all Sundays would be just like *this* Sunday, characterized by a solid congregation with solid finances, good staff, good programs, and nice facilities.

Declining churches are **Past-Oriented**. Declining leaders desire to go back to some former time in the church, perhaps when Rev. So-and-So was here. Decline has a point of reference, a point from which things declined. So the natural tendency is to want to return to the way it used to be, a time that is perceived as better and a time that is sugar coated with nostalgia.

Drive

Inclining churches are **Vision-Driven**. Inclining leaders have discerned God's vision for their churches and are fully committed to that vision. All decisions are made in light of and for the benefit of that vision. The rightly discerned godly vision is the point of reference from which all else flows.

Reclining churches are **Program-Driven**. Reclining leaders are convinced that the success of their churches lies in the strength of the programming. All decisions are made in light of and for the benefit of the programming. The programming is the point of reference from which all else flows.

Declining churches are **Structure-Driven**. Declining churches are living in a church world that is devoid of vision and devoid of effective programming. In light of this void, these leaders cling to the structure of the church as evidence that the church is still alive. They are preoccupied with elements such as organizational charts, boards and committees, finances, payroll, and building maintenance.

Focus

Inclining churches are **Community-Focused**. Inclining leaders give priority to the group of people that is living in the community, as yet unreached by the church. These

community residents are the objects to key Scripture passages such as the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Who are the neighbors in the Great Commandment to love your neighbor as yourself? They are the people of the community. When the Great Commission commands us to go and make disciples, to whom are we to take the gospel? We are to take the gospel to the people of the community.

Reclining churches are **Congregation-Focused**. Reclining leaders give priority to the group of people that is inside the church, those already reached. Surely, a healthy church will focus on both community and congregation, but the natural inclination for leaders is to focus on the congregation at the expense of the community. Inreach has its own voice, but outreach needs an advocate. Otherwise the focus will be so heavily weighted toward the congregation that the community will be ignored. The church that fails to reach its community ultimately finds itself on the backside of the lifecycle.

Declining churches are **Core-Focused**. Declining leaders focus on a remnant of the declining church whose influence becomes stronger as the church grows smaller. Key influencers in this core often prove to be barriers to growth as they remain entrenched in their authority and hold the congregation hostage by means of that authority and influence. One key element that is leveraged in this way is money. Often the influencers in the core give significant percentages of the church's budget. Others in the core believe that the church couldn't sustain without that income, so they acquiesce to the influencer's demands.

Attitude

Inclining churches are **Innovative** in their approach to ministry. They keep abreast of new ideas and developments and thrive on making good ministry better through creativity and experimentation. Inclining leaders will adjust, modify and even replace ministries, programs or systems that are working well if they determine that something new would bring greater benefit. Constantly being in research and development mode and putting new prototypes on the field is labor intensive, but Inclining leaders are willing to pay that price.

Reclining churches are **Routine** in their approach to ministry. If the machinery of ministry is working, don't mess with it. This approach might best be described as fill-in-the-blanks ministry. Make sure people, curriculum, programming and the like are in place and let the system run. Templates are developed as much as possible for standardization, such as a Sunday morning template that gets filled in by ministry leaders with song titles, sermon title and text, announcements, etc. Often in this environment, leaders of different ministries or departments rarely communicate but simply make sure the blanks for which they are responsible are filled.

Declining churches are **Complacent** in their approach to ministry. It's not that Declining leaders don't care, it's that they are resigned to the belief that they cannot make the future happen, but can only wait and let it happen. In a sense, they see themselves as victims of circumstances and consequently hope that these external circumstances will change so that they will be less victimized. This is a passive posture that incubates in the

wishful thinking that somehow God will do something to better their plight. They believe that God does great things through His church, but struggle to believe that He would do something great in theirs.

Faith

Inclining churches exercise **High-Risk Faith**. Inclining leaders are committed to following God wherever He leads without contingency. As such, no risk is too high when God's leading is ascertained. Given this proclivity, much time and energy is invested in pursuit of God's leading with an expectation that God will in fact guide these leaders on their journey of faithfulness, a faith journey that is willing to risk all but that faith.

Reclining churches exercise **Low-Risk Faith**. Reclining leaders are surely committed to following God, but are also committed to guarding resources and all that has been accomplished carefully. These leaders are willing to try new ideas, but in a controlled environment where not much is at stake if the new endeavor fails.

Declining churches exercise **No-Risk Faith**. Declining leaders are committed to protecting whatever limited resources remain and therefore will not put those resources at risk. They see this as prudent, as stretching resources out as long as possible in the hope that God will make some unanticipated move at some point and make ministry better, as if the state of their ministry is God's fault.

Decisions

Given its High-Risk Faith, Inclining churches make **Faith Decisions**. Inclining leaders will move forward in faith despite the fact that things might not add up on paper, despite the fact that not all of the needed resources might currently be available, and despite the fact that the outcome is uncertain and there might be much at risk. This is predicated, of course, on the belief that a godly vision has been rightly discerned and that God's leading is clear, compelling leaders to act decisively though there might be holes in the initiative.

Given its Low-Risk Faith, Reclining churches make **Resource Decisions**. Reclining leaders will move forward only when all of the necessary resources are on hand or anticipated, and when those resources need not be diverted from current programming. They see this as wise and prudent and in keeping with counting the cost before undertaking a new initiative.

Given its No-Risk Faith, Declining churches are paralyzed by **Indecision**. Declining leaders are fearful of making mistakes and falling further into Decline, so they hesitate in making decisions or fail to make decisions altogether. Ironically the decision not to make a decision is a decision, usually a wrong decision.

Servanthood

Inclining churches place people in serving positions by identifying their **Gifts**. Inclining leaders understand that people are most productive and most fulfilled when they are serving in their areas of giftedness, talent, passion, experience and calling. Care is taken to deploy people in ministry accordingly in order that they are utilized to their full potential in a manner that is sustainable over long periods of time. When people are integrated into service through this approach, they understand that they are serving as a privilege, not as an obligation or as a means of simply helping out.

Reclining churches place people in serving positions through **Slot-Filling**. An inventory is taken to determine how many slots need to be filled to man each program. The congregation is then grabbed by the collar and dragged through the grid of these slots in the hope that a live body will land in each slot. Once this is done, the nominating committee reasons that its work is done since each program has proper coverage. Though all slots might be filled, this approach is not fulfilling for those involved and leads to burnout and ineffective ministry as people are not matched properly to service.

Declining churches place people in serving positions by **Default**. There are typically more slots to be filled than there are people, so those remaining in the church are likely to fill a slot because “somebody has to do it.” Usually those willing to serve commit to serving in multiple slots, wearing so many hats that they are spread too thin to be effective.

Finances

Inclining churches approach money like an **Investor**. Inclining leaders regard the funding that God has provided as money intended to produce the fruit of ministry, so they invest that money in ministry with the expectation that ministry fruit will result, thirty fold, sixty fold, a hundred fold.

Reclining churches approach money as a **Provider**. Reclining leaders are driven by the church’s programming and see money as the financial provision to keep those programs running. The focus is on hosting program activities rather than on the fruit of ministry that might be produced.

Declining churches approach money as a **Preserver**. Declining leaders see the church’s money as the financial means of the church’s survival. The focus is on stretching the church’s ability to stay alive as long as possible in the hope that God might unexpectedly move at some point to create more viable ministry that recaptures the past.

Leadership

Inclining churches are always seeking the development of **New Leadership**. Inclining leaders understand that for the church to continue to grow there is always the need for new leaders to move into existing and newly created ministries. This commitment to new leadership is reflected in aggressive discipling toward leadership and the sending out of existing leaders to create new ministry and open doors for new leadership.

Reclining churches are led by **Established Leadership**. With programming reaching capacity and leveling off, the leadership positions have been identified and filled, leaving little room for the emergence of new leadership. Those who come into such a ministry with leadership giftedness and potential are unable to realize that giftedness and potential, so their growth is stunted or they migrate elsewhere to apply their leadership calling.

Declining churches are led by **Incumbent Leadership**. Declining leaders have often been in place for long stretches of time, perhaps even serving for decades in the same leadership position. Routine prevails as the same kinds of decisions are made the same way based on the same criteria with little change or progress being seen. The prevailing attitude is to do things the way we always have in the hope of a better result. At its best, this is wishful thinking.

Growth

Inclining churches grow by **Conversion**. A significant percentage of growth can be attributed to people's coming to Christ and making professions of faith. Inclining leaders commit to the regular presentation of the good news of the gospel and strategically provide opportunities for people to voice those professions.

Reclining churches grow by **Transfer**. The programming emphasis of the Reclining church draws already Christian people, providing programming for all in the family that is appealing to the Christian who might attend a church with less attractive programming. Since transfer growth is adding to the church's growth statistics, Reclining leaders sense that they are fostering church growth and miss the fact that significant conversion is not taking place. The church grows by transfer, but the kingdom of God does not grow when already Christian people church hop.

Declining churches by definition experience **No Growth**, or perhaps negative growth would be more accurate. With programming failing through lack of resources, the church offers less and less, losing more and more people in the process.

INCLINE	RECLINE	DECLINE
Future-Oriented	Present-Oriented	Past-Oriented
Vision-Driven	Program-Driven	Structure-Driven
Community-Focused	Congregation-Focused	Core-Focused
Innovative	Routine	Complacent
High-Risk Faith	Low-Risk Faith	No Risk Faith
Faith Decisions	Resource Decisions	Indecision
Serve by Gifts	Serve by Slot	Serve by Default
\$ = Investor	\$ = Provider	\$ = Preserver
New Leadership	Established Leadership	Incumbent Leadership
Conversion Growth	Transfer Growth	No Growth

Figure 9

The Importance of Ministry Capacity

You will recall that the first comments made regarding Lifecycle concerned the ministry capacity of Incline, Recline and Decline. During Incline, ministry capacity increases; during Recline, ministry capacity levels off or plateaus; during Decline, ministry capacity decreases. Ministry capacity refers to both the quality and quantity of ministry conducted over time.

As a church moves through Incline, its ministry capacity increases, conducting more and more ministry better and better over time. But ministry capacity ceases to increase when a significant resource is maxed out. Unless more of that resource is acquired, the church will lapse into Recline.

As a church moves through Recline, quality and quantity level off. Quantity levels off at a given point when a resource is fully maxed. For example, when all the seats are taken attendance levels off, when all the funds are allocated, nothing more can be spent, or when staff time and energy are fully engaged, nothing more can be drawn from staff. Quality levels off at a level that is less than full capacity. Conducting ministry at its highest quality levels requires tremendous time and effort. Those who are serving and leading tend

to tire of giving the time and energy necessary for full quality capacity and begin to compromise as an inreach mentality reaches full bloom.

This full blooming of inreach causes church insiders to think only of themselves and not newcomers. Rather than prepare for the possibility of “company” coming to the church, they prepare only for the church “family,” reasoning that all the time and trouble to be the best that they can be is really not needed for family. If this mentality is allowed to prevail over time, their prediction will manifest and no company will be coming. Once that happens, the natural attrition of insiders moving away, passing away or simply going away goes unchecked as no newcomers are coming into the church to replace those who are leaving, not to mention the failure to reach the lost through outreach and evangelism.

By the time the church moves into Decline, drop in quality and quantity is at full steam and continues until only the core and its limited resources remain. Occasionally a core is actually well off financially due to endowments and the like, but those resources are held for self-preservation and therefore provide no impetus for increased ministry capacity.

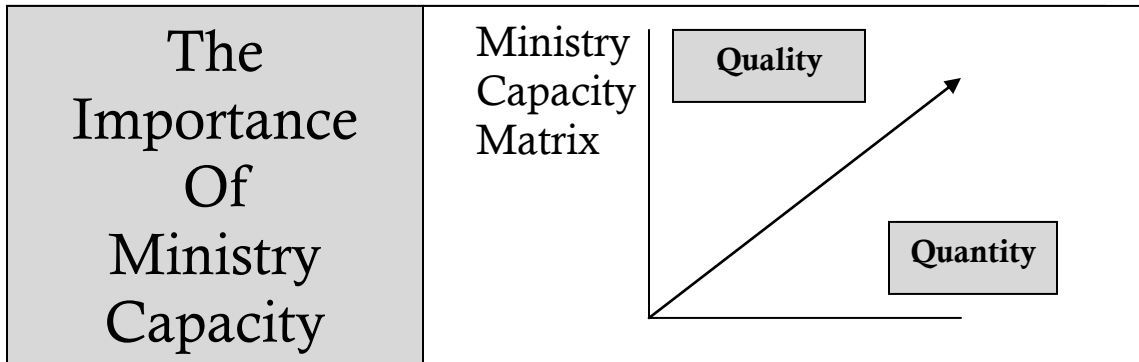


Figure 10

Dynamics of a Stalled Church

Identity Crisis: The “Who” Problem

Churches tend to suffer from an identity crisis, not knowing exactly who they are or who they want to be. It’s important for churches to resolve the identity question as this identity will guide ministry. The church that fails to determine an identity for itself will take on an identity by default.

The identity of a church in Incline is found in its vision. This is the identity that is most desired and the identity that will enable a church to have the most impact. When asking people to describe their churches, people in an Inclining church will speak of their church’s vision. They understand that there is a prescribed vision and that all ministry operations of the church are geared toward the fulfillment of that vision.

The identity of a church in Recline is found in its programs. First and foremost in the minds of people in a Reclining church is the menu of programs that is offered. There is more of a consumer mindset in the Reclining church, unlike the visionary, pioneering mindset prevalent in Incline. When asking people to describe their churches, people in a Reclining church will speak of the vast array of programs that are available at their church. Typically these programs are inreach in orientation, geared toward the church insider. To them, to criticize the programming is to criticize the church itself.

The identity of a church in Decline is found in its structure. In the absence of vision and strategy or a menu of programs, the Declining church is left with little but the structure in which it is organized, its boards, committees, policies, procedures, budgets, payroll, finances, staff, property, buildings, etc. The maintenance of the structure becomes the central occupation of the church. It's in this structure that identity is centered, reasoning that as long as structure is maintained the church will continue to exist.

In considering this identity crisis in conjunction with the distinctive characteristics of Incline, Recline and Decline, it's easy to see why it's so difficult for a church to revitalize from Decline to Incline. Everything about Incline is threatening to Decline. Incline is oriented toward the future while Decline is oriented toward the past. Incline focuses on the outside community while Decline focuses on the inside core, the remnant. Incline takes high risks while Decline takes no risks. Incline wants to invest the funds while Decline wants to hold on to the funds. Incline opens the door for new leadership while Decline is dominated by incumbent leadership.

Blurred Vision: The “What & Why” Problem

Credible vision addresses the questions, “What are we trying to accomplish?” and “Why?” These questions are centered on a church's spiritual and strategic goals and objectives, and on its basis or rationale for those goals and objectives. The healthy, growing, multiplying church has a clear and distinct vision that is directly and intentionally linked to biblical foundations. Often this is not the case and an insufficient vision prevails.

Accidental Vision is vision that results from the collision of the history of a church with its current status quo. The relationship between leadership choices and the path of history takes an ironic turn as past choices that determined the history of a church evolve into being a history that determines the present choices of church leadership, guiding that church to a current status quo that is more historic than visionary.

Vanilla Vision is vision with no distinct flavor. The vision of the church is largely a default vision with no reached community as its focus. This bland vision is the homogenization of typical visions of typical churches led by typical pastors and typical leaders in typical ministry settings. It's a one-size-fits-all treatment of vision that reflects no unique calling or identity.

Madison Avenue Vision reduces vision to the marketing, or branding, of a church over the setting of direction for the church. The focus is on the language of vision that will be used to present the church publicly. This takes the form of cleverly articulated vision statements or pithy slogans that might be printed across the bottom of the Sunday bulletin, on banners, or on the home page of a website. These catchy phrases sound interesting and make for an inspirational backdrop to a Friday Night Vision Banquet, but they are largely just lip service. There is little or no connection between these vision *jingles* and actual ministry.

Grand Theft Vision makes felons of church leaders as they *steal* vision from other churches. Unable or unwilling to discern God's vision for their church, or perhaps unaware of this responsibility or possibility, they latch onto the exciting vision that God has birthed in some other church, using it as if it were their own. These pilfered visions are found in Christian magazines or best-selling books, through colleagues, or at seminars and conferences. This is grand theft, not petty theft, because the only visions that are talked and written about prove to be, well, grand!

Ego Vision is a type of vision that is more about empire building than kingdom building. Creative and visionary pastors and leaders launch new vision thinking that their church might soon become the new Church-du-Jour, featured in Christian magazines, talked about at seminars and conferences, and copied by churches across the nation. Theirs will not simply be a church with vision, but with a model, a template of the latest and greatest that Christianity has to offer. To them, the kingdom of God resides at their address and they expect pilgrims to come from miles and miles to find the true meaning of ministry life.

Starting Line Misfires: The “How & When” Problem

When launching a church plant or a church revitalization effort, several common mistakes are made:

The False Start - Too Much Daydreaming and Too Little Vision: The word “vision” is tossed about in an all too cavalier fashion, finding its way into the dialogue, but not going further. For a vision to be legitimate, it must be accompanied by a biblical, contextual, and intentional strategy. Otherwise nothing more than daydreaming or wishful thinking is really taking place, leading to a false start.

The Slow Start - Too Much Inreach and Too Little Outreach: There is a tendency among pastors and church leaders to adopt a position that makes outreach contingent upon the completion of an inreach checklist. This might be called the “As Soon As” syndrome. As soon as our people are ready, we'll begin to reach out. As soon as we have completed comprehensive discipleship, we'll begin to reach out. As soon as all of our people are completely on board with our outreach vision, we'll begin to reach out. In a case such as this, there is always one more item on the checklist, the contingency is never fully met, and outreach is delayed again and again.

The Fast Start - Too Much Outreach and Too Little Inreach: In their zeal sparked by new or renewed commitment to outreach, there are times when planters, pastors and church leaders tip the balance toward outreach too far. Though their drive and excitement regarding outreach is much welcomed by me, there is a tendency to over shoot, diving headlong into outreach without preparing for its consequences. A new commitment to outreach will likely result in a growing influx of new people who will need to be developed in their faith and moved toward maturity in their spiritual lives. The fast start is ill prepared in terms of discipling infrastructure, so the widening front door in the church is matched by a widening back door as people simply pass through.

The Long Start - Too Much Planning and Too Little Implementation: Similar to the slow start, the long start takes too long to get out of the planning and preparation for launch and onto the actual field of ministry. Momentum is lost, opportunity is missed, and initial support wanes as talk of launching new vision becomes repetitive and less believable when no action is seen and no results are evident. When the vision is rolled out one more time, the congregation collectively rolls its eyes, becoming passive aggressive or even adversarial.

The Short Start - Too Much Launch and Too Little Development: On many occasions I have consulted with members of a vision team at their church or at a training conference to find a date prominently displayed in their thinking. Though that date has been given many names by various teams, I'll use the name Launch Sunday, the date that the church plant or the revitalization effort will go public with a Grand Opening. The focus is on Launch Sunday, all the energy is being poured into Launch Sunday, and all the resources of time and money are being invested to create a spectacular Launch Sunday. The problem, of course, is that Launch Sunday is not the finish line, it's the starting line, and once the starting line is crossed there will be another Sunday coming every seven days, ready or not. And in between each of these Sundays will be Mondays through Saturdays that will need ministry attention as well. Launch Sunday is not the goal; it is not the destination. On a timeline between the present of the church and the future of the church, Launch Sunday is arguably the least important date on the timeline. Everything that happens leading up to Launch Sunday and everything that happens after Launch Sunday will prove to be far more important than Launch Sunday itself. The HIGH M-PACT Church will be prepared for all that must be developed following Launch Sunday and will not find that it's running on empty the morning after.

Dynamics of a Church in Decline

Community Transition: The “Them” Problem

In Declining churches, the people of the church often struggle with *them*, the people of the community. This struggle is revealed in several ways.

Changing Community - Changeless Congregation: Over time, communities change at a rate that is much faster than congregational change. Assuming there was a solid cultural match between the congregation and the community at some point in the church's history, the

population of the community will transition at a pace that is significantly quicker than the transition pace of the congregation, a population that typically stays static for many years and even decades. Communities will change in multiple demographic categories, separating themselves more and more from the church.

Increasing Cultural Mismatch: The increased pace of change in the community creates a widening cultural gap between the population of the church and the population of the community, making it increasingly difficult for the congregation to connect with the community. Since members that might have lived in the community at one time have likely moved out, becoming commuters to the church, there is the mistaken notion that the church is a regional rather than a neighborhood church. This is a misperception on the part of church leaders, and leads to an erroneous acceptance of ineffectiveness in the immediate community as a reasonable norm.

Decreasing Outreach & Evangelism: With unmatched changes in the community and a widening cultural gap between church and community, interest and efforts in outreach and evangelism decrease. The community fails to respond to anemic attempts by the congregation at outreach and evangelism, often causing the congregation to blame the community for not responding. Eventually there is no passion or vision for outreach and evangelism in the community, reasoning that previous efforts have failed and the front door is always open for anyone that truly desires to come to the church.

Rising Fear & Prejudice: As the disconnection between congregation and community expands over time, the congregation often develops a prejudice toward the community population, seeing that population as something to be avoided or even feared. The truth is there is growing doubt on the part of the congregation that bringing these people into the church is even desirable, since they are not like us and might be more of a drain than a benefit to the resources of the church.

Congregational Psyche: The “Us” Problem

In Declining churches the struggle is not only with *them*. The greater struggle is a struggle with *us*, the people inside the church. This struggle goes largely unrecognized, but is a great deterrent to moving forward toward revitalization.

Denial: There are two primary forms of denial in the Declining church. First, there is the denial that there is a problem. Despite decline in obvious categories such as attendance and giving, and even more subtle categories such as vision, energy and hope, leaders and members tend to think of these conditions as seasonal or circumstantial, not signs of a deeper problem. The second form of denial takes the view that there are indeed problems, but that these manifestations of trouble are not the fault of the church. Rather, these conditions are seen as reflecting external causes that have created the problems, and since these are not of our own doing, we can't be expected to solve them.

Victimization: The sense that the church's problems are created by external causes leads church leaders and members to see themselves as victims of circumstance. Decline is something that has happened to us, not something that we have caused. Victimization sets in as the congregation waits for external circumstances to change or for God to intervene to override those circumstances, placing the blame for the current state of the church squarely on the community and its circumstances or even on the shoulders of God Himself. The truth is the congregation is more perpetrator than victim.

Resource Preservation: With resources shrinking, Declining church leaders tend to hoard resources for self-preservation. With overhead surpassing giving, ministry is reduced to a bare minimum, costs are cut, and resources are guarded, protected so as to extend the existence of the church. Fear of losing resources causes leaders to avoid any speculative investment of resources into potential ministry. In what amounts to a spiritual smoke screen, leaders take a position that if they can keep the church alive long enough, God might invoke something positive to turn things around, but this is not a strategic decision, it's a shifting of responsibility for the condition of their ministry from themselves to God. It's burying the talents.

Contingency Thinking: A second mention of the "As Soon As" syndrome is in order here. The thinking is that all of the internal needs, perspectives and issues must be addressed and resolved to everyone's satisfaction before the church can begin to think about ministering outside of the church. The truth is that internal preoccupation has been the leading cause of the church's decline. Further internal preoccupation is not the solution.

Leadership Paralysis: The "Authority" Problem

When it comes to the effective launch and development of new vision, no challenge looms larger than the "Authority" problem. Does the vision have authority to move forward? Where does that authority come from? Can the vision's authority be revoked? Who approved what and to whom is vision accountable? In numerous scenarios I have seen leadership teams, task forces, committees, or vision teams spend months in developing new vision for a church only to see that vision put on a shelf when the church board, session, consistory, administrative council, etc., decides that it doesn't care for how implementation of the vision is unfolding, and chooses to revoke authority originally granted to that vision.

In truth the vision never had authority in these cases but was granted permission, a permission that could be rescinded at any time. This is why it's so important for the vision to be rooted in discernment and fully supported by biblical foundations. It has to be God's vision and the authority for that vision must come vertically from Him, not horizontally from a permission giving board.

"Righteous" Indecision: Often leadership gets stuck in indecision because leaders are fearful of making a wrong decision, so to avoid the wrong decision, leaders make no decision. Ironically, as mentioned previously, no decision is usually a wrong decision.

Spiritual Disconnection: The routine of leadership meetings that are usually driven by an agenda that is dominated by administrative items drains leaders of the spiritual connection needed to discern, develop and support a godly vision. Polity and protocols render the leadership team spiritually anemic, with positional authority taking precedent over spiritual authority.

Strategic Hesitation: Strategically gun shy leaders hesitate to make the quick strategic call, the seize-the-moment call, missing opportunities and impeding momentum. Doubt and second-guessing handcuff leaders and often create self-fulfilling prophecies of ineffective decision-making, making the next decision that much harder to make.

Sin in the Camp - The Achan Syndrome: When God's presence and blessing cannot be keenly felt and identified in a church, the church leader must ask, "Why?" Could it be that God has lifted His blessing because of sin in the camp? In my work with dozens of churches over the years, I have become aware of a direct link between decline in the church and sin in the camp. Note the impact of Achan's sin recorded in Joshua 7 and make note of the extreme measures taken to purge the camp of sin and restore God's blessing to His people. We live in an age when the holiness of God and the gravity of sin are both underestimated, but make no mistake, there is no place within the holiness of God for sin in the camp to be ignored or placated by a misguided sense of tolerance.

Introducing COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

COACHWORKS! is a comprehensive Implementation Guide that directs the Vision Team in fulfilling its responsibilities. By following COACHWORKS! line by line, step by step, worksheet by worksheet, the Vision Team will accomplish all that is required in planning and launching HIGH M-PACT Revitalization. It is recommended that Vision Teams meet twice a month on average.

COACHWORKS! is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Introduction , Overview, Aligning Perception, Aligning Vision, Aligning Strategy, Aligning Structure and Aligning People

Section 2: The M-PACT Action Plan – The M.A.P.

Section 3: Sustaining Health, Growth & Multiplication

COACHWORKS! is found on pages 91-160.

Phase 1 – Aligning Perception Looking Into a Giant Mirror

Two Key Perception Questions

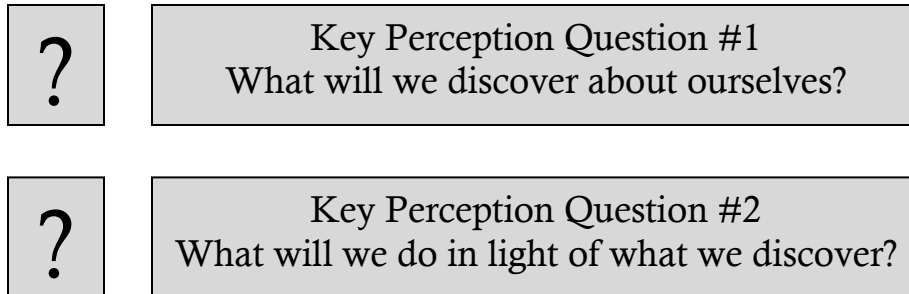


Figure 11

Key Perception Question #1 is, “What will we discover about ourselves?” The goal of assessment is self-discovery, aligning perception with reality in a manner that allows church leaders to see and understand what is truly going on in the ministry of the church. The analysis and evaluation of an “expert” is of little value as most reports of this nature simply gather dust on someone’s shelf. The findings of an outsider have far less impact than what we discover for ourselves. Taking a hard look in the mirror is the nature of this assessment process. The tools are provided, but the gathering of responses and the analysis of those responses are up to church leaders themselves. Self-discovery is the key to effecting change. Ultimately, assessment will encourage and assist church leaders in identifying *where* their churches are on the church lifecycle and *why* they are where they are.

Key Perception Question #2 is, “What will we do in light of what we discover?” Self-discovery must lead to action or status quo will continue to prevail. Information and knowledge about the reality of ministry must be analyzed in terms of actions to be taken. It is only through the implementation of strategic action that true change will occur, provoking new and better results.

Four Assessment Tools

Tool 1: Getting the Facts – A Statistical Analysis: Getting the Facts collects a body of statistical information that provides for an analysis of trends in the church’s ministry. In addition, church organization and polity are identified, staff positions are identified, and the numbers and titles of those serving and leading are identified.

Tool 2: Getting the Story – A Historical Analysis: Getting the Story unpacks the history of the church beginning with the creation of a timeline of that history, noting significant milestones along the way. The perceived “prime time” of a church’s history is identified and described, and then compared to the church’s current ministry. The church’s position on the church lifecycle is pinpointed and reasons for that positioning are examined. Finally,

an analysis of why people are staying with the church and why others are leaving the church is articulated.

Tool 3: Getting the Pulse – A Spiritual Condition Analysis: A church’s viability for a revitalization effort often hinges on two critical factors, 1. financial viability and 2. spiritual viability. Getting the Pulse examines the spiritual condition of the church to determine the spiritual strength of the congregation, both in terms of leaders and followers. Issues for consideration include divine activity in the church, unresolved sin in the church, or sin in the camp, and general strengths and weaknesses of the church’s ministry.

Tool 4: Getting the Picture –An Objective Survey: Getting the Facts, Getting the Story and Getting the Pulse are instruments of my own design. As a fourth tool I suggest the use of an objective congregational questionnaire such as the Natural Church Development Survey or the Congregational Health Survey from Church Central. Use of an instrument such as this adds depth to the assessment process and lends further insight into a church’s understanding of itself.

A Closer Look at the Revitalization Lifecycle: Six Sub-Stages

When church leaders first encounter the Distinctive Characteristics of Incline, Recline and Decline, they tend to see their churches as clearly in one or the other of these three stages. However, on second thought, many begin to wonder if their church is perhaps somewhere in between Incline and Recline or Recline and Decline. It very well may be that their instincts are correct and that their church’s ministry is a blend of two lifecycle stages.

Incline, Recline and Decline can each be divided into two sub-stages that delineate a stage that is *emerging* from a stage that is *developed*. This delineation sub-divides the lifecycle into six sub-stages: Emerging Incline and Developed Incline, Emerging Recline and Developed Recline, Emerging Decline and Developed Decline (see *Figure 12*).

As the church moves left to right along the lifecycle, Emerging Incline will become Developed Incline as Reclining characteristics begin to manifest. Emerging Recline is entered when Reclining characteristics begin to hold more force than fading Inclining characteristics. Developed Recline, the first sub-stage on the downside of the lifecycle, takes over as Inclining characteristics disappear altogether and the first hint of Declining characteristics begins to surface behind dominant Reclining characteristics. Emerging Decline is seen when these Declining characteristics gain dominance over Reclining characteristics, and Developed Decline, near the end of the lifecycle, holds sway as all traces of Reclining characteristics fade, leaving a pure form of Decline in place.

Though all Distinctive Characteristics could be utilized in describing the movement of a church through the six sub-stages of the lifecycle, I am choosing to concentrate on four of the ten characteristics presented earlier for the sake of clarity and emphasis: 1. Orientation, 2. Drive, 3. Focus, and 4. Growth.

Emerging Incline: As a church plant or church revitalization effort launches, the appropriate launch point is Emerging Incline. This is Incline in its purest form and positions the church as Future-Oriented, Vision-Driven, and Community-Focused resulting in Conversion Growth.

Developed Incline: Emerging Incline gives way to Developed Incline as Reclining characteristics begin to appear. Though the ministry remains primarily Future-Oriented, it becomes secondarily Present-Oriented. Though the ministry remains primarily Vision-Driven, it becomes secondarily Program-Driven. Though the ministry remains Community-Focused, it becomes secondarily Congregation-Focused. During this stage there is still significant Conversion Growth, but Transfer Growth is beginning to increase.

Emerging Recline: Developed Incline gives way to Emerging Recline as the primary and secondary characteristics of Developed Incline switch positions. The ministry becomes primarily Present-Oriented and secondarily Future-Oriented, it becomes primarily Program-Driven and secondarily Vision-Driven, and it becomes primarily Congregation-Focused and secondarily Community-Focused. The church continues to grow, but there is an increase in Transfer-Growth and a decrease in Conversion-Growth. A serious line is crossed when entering Emerging Recline that places congregation over community, setting the church on an inevitable course for Decline unless there is intentional intervention.

Developed Recline: Emerging Recline gives way to Developed Recline as two distinct shifts take place. First, the characteristics of Incline disappear, and second, the characteristics of Decline begin to surface. The ministry remains primarily Present-Oriented but is secondarily Past-Oriented, it remains primarily Program-Driven but is secondarily Structure-Driven, and it remains primarily Congregation-Focused but is secondarily Core-Focused. As stated earlier, churches in Recline, whether Emerging or Developed, are quite attractive to already Christian people, so the church continues to experience growth through Transfer-Growth, but Conversion-Growth disappears.

Emerging Decline: Developed Recline gives way to Emerging Decline as the primary and secondary characteristics of Developed Recline switch positions. The ministry becomes primarily Past-Oriented and secondarily Present-Oriented, it becomes primarily Structure-Driven and secondarily Program-Driven, and it becomes primarily Core-Focused and secondarily Congregation-Focused. Transfer-Growth might still be present, but it is decreasing and is not keeping pace with the number of people leaving the church. Conversion-Growth remains a distant memory.

Developed Decline: As the church slides further down the backside of the lifecycle, Emerging Decline gives way to Developed Decline as all traces of Recline disappear. This is Decline in its purest form and positions the church as Past-Oriented, Structure-Driven and Core-Focused. There is No Growth as Conversion-Growth and Transfer-Growth have both disappeared. Without severe intervention, this church is going to die.

Revitalization Principle: The church lifecycle is a one-way street.

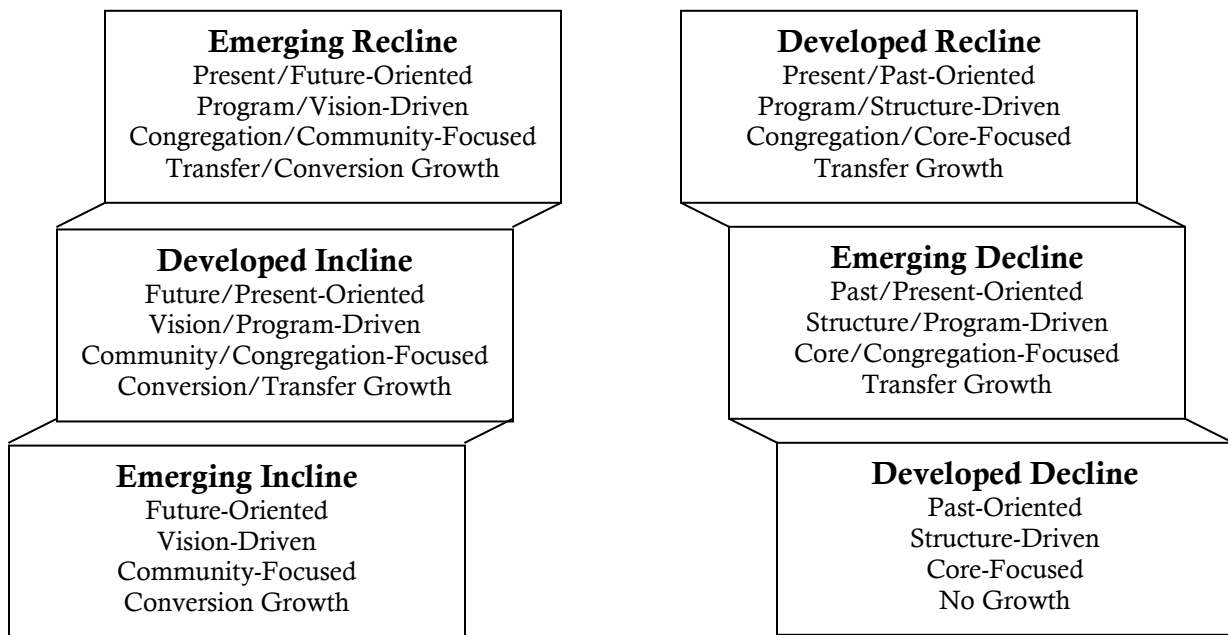
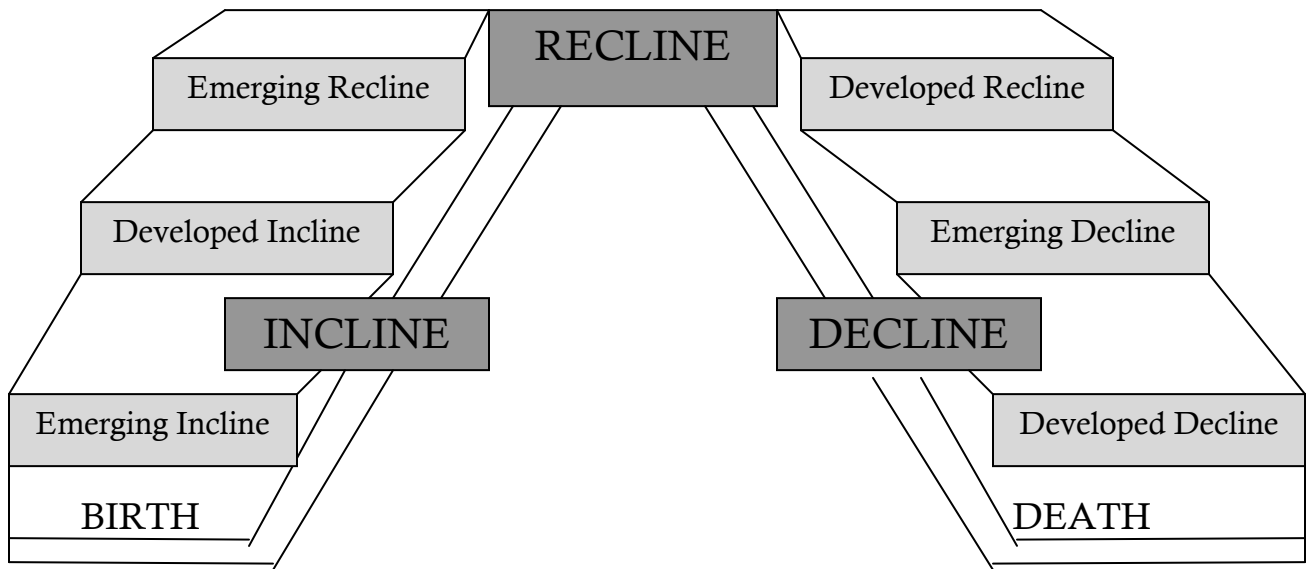
The church in Decline looks back to a previous time in the history of the church and longs to return to that time. By its very nature, Decline has a point of reference, a point from which it declined. That point in the past is always more appealing than the declined point in the present. Church leaders instinctively want to move right to left on the lifecycle, returning to that perceived prime time. However, if the objective of new vision is conversion growth brought about by outreach and evangelism, this backing up on the lifecycle will prove faulty and will not bear the desired conversion fruit.

The problem with this right to left movement begins with the perception that Recline, whether emerging or developed, was the prime time. Recline has its appeal with its present orientation, its emphasis on programs, its focus on the congregation and its transfer growth. Churches in the heart of Recline typically feature solid staff, stable finances, consistent congregation, a broad range of programs and nice facilities. What's not to like? What's wrong with this picture is that it describes features of a church that draw the reached, not the unreached, and it tends to draw those among the reached who have little concern for the unreached.

Still, the perception among leaders is that it was the programming of Recline that drew a crowd. So attempts are made to recreate the programming, believing that the programming will serve as a magnet to draw people in. The only people that would be drawn in this manner would be already Christian people, not the objective of outreach and evangelism, but even they would be reluctant to come to a church caught in the characteristics and environment of decline. This is the classic cart before the horse scenario.

So, if programming is the cart, what is the horse? The horse is the outreach and evangelism that result from the Community-Focus of Incline. A people flow must be created before programming has any relevance, and programming will not create that people flow.

The principle, then, is: *The lifecycle is a one-way street.* A church can only move from left to right. The idea is not to back up on the lifecycle, but to use the present lifecycle point of the church as the point of departure to launch a new lifecycle. Repeating this process every few years allows the church to stack one season of Incline after another, never lapsing again into Recline and Decline.



Revitalization Principle
The lifecycle is a one-way street.

Figure 12

Phase 2 – Aligning Vision

Two Key Vision Questions

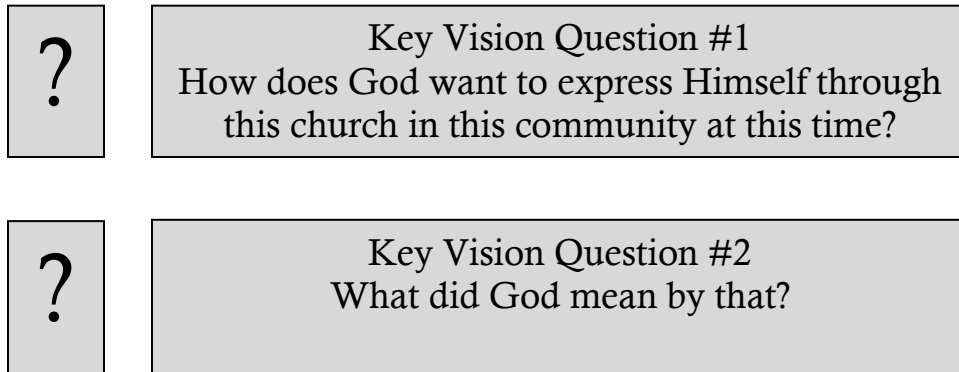


Figure 14

Key Vision Question #1 is, “How does God want to express Himself through this church in this community at this time?” Phrased as a prayer, this question would read, “God, how do You want to express Yourself through this church in this community at this time?” Vision in the church is a matter of discernment, not creativity. Church leaders do not have to create or invent a vision. Rather, they are to discern God’s vision, focusing their attention on what He desires for their churches.

Leaders are not coming to this exercise with a blank slate. The slate is quite full, in fact, and is commonly known as the Bible, the Scriptures; the Holy Word of God. God makes His vision for the church quite clear in black and white, and sometimes red, on the pages of the Bible. These biblical directives concern the church universal, but have application for the church local. The job of leaders is to discern God’s vision for *the* church and apply their findings in the context of *their* churches in *their* communities at the present time. Creativity is reserved for the application, not the discernment.

There are four essential components to this question. First, it’s God vision, not our own that we seek. He is the center and the vision must be His. Second, this vision is to be applied through our individual churches. We are not to mimic or copy what God is doing through some other church. Sure, we can learn from other churches and find inspiration in their testimonies, but God has enough vision to go around. There is no need to be a monkey-see-monkey-do church. Third, we must focus on what will serve and reach those who live in our individual communities. What works elsewhere might not work in our context and vice-versa. We must harvest our own fields, not the fields of another. Finally, we must minister in the present, not in the past. What worked then doesn’t work now. It’s a new day that calls for new wineskins. Leith Anderson remarks in his book, *Dying for Change*, “Yesterday’s church keeps hoping that tomorrow will be 1954.” Tomorrow won’t!

Establishing the Foundations – Who are we going to be?

The place to begin is with Biblical Foundations. These basic foundations are drawn from Scripture to provide a sure platform upon which to discern and build God's vision. Arguably every page if not every verse of the Bible could be included in such an exercise, but that would be a bit overwhelming, so I have searched for seminal references and applications that form a direct line to God's vision for the church. Leaders should feel free to add others, but start here and build on what is found.

The Mandate that Compels Us – Biblical Foundations

First in line are five Scripture passages that constitute a biblical mandate of five *Greats*.

The Great Promise - Matthew 16:13-18: This passage opens with Jesus' conducting a survey, a man-on-the-street inquiry or poll. "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" He asks His disciples. They respond with a smattering of varied opinions; John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Jesus cuts to the chase, asking the question upon which all of eternal life hangs. "But who do you say that I am?" He queries. Simon replies, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus acknowledges that Simon has answered correctly, and refers to him as blessed. Why is he blessed? Is it because he delivered the right answer and is therefore receiving a blessing as a reward? No, that's not the case at all. He is blessed because the Father revealed the true identity of Jesus to him so that he could respond correctly.

At this point Jesus shifts from referring to Simon as Simon and addresses him as Peter, or *Petros* in the Greek, from the same root word as the word "rock," *petra* in the Greek. Jesus goes on to say that upon this rock He will build His church. Now, are we to believe that Peter is actually the rock upon which the church of Jesus Christ will be built. Well, yes and no. The text does suggest that very thing, and Peter is pivotal in the founding of the church, from the first sermon at Pentecost, to his vision of opening the Gospel to the Gentiles, to his letters to the church that are included in the New Testament. It's interesting to note that Peter's language in his letters is filled with rock and stone imagery.

We must note, however, that this is not the first mention of Simon as the rock. In John 1, Andrew brings his brother, Simon, to meet Jesus, and upon that first meeting, Jesus says, "So you are Simon Son of John? Your name shall be called Cephas," a name derived from the root word for "rock" in Aramaic. Could it be that at this moment we have come to know as Peter's Confession that Simon has grown into his new name, *Petros*, *Cephas*, the rock?

There is more to the church's rock foundation than Simon Peter. There is the rock of revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. God the Father reveals through God the Spirit that God the Son is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the

Savior and the Lord. It's upon this revelation that the church is being built, as every second of every day men, women and children around the globe come to faith through the Spirit of God's moving in their hearts and minds, through regeneration. This is the Great Promise of Jesus; His church will be built.

The Spirit and the Spirit alone regenerates, reveals, and draws people to a saving relationship with Jesus, but we have a part to play. We are to live lives that are worthy of the calling we have received, we are to reveal Christ in the way we speak, the way we act, even the way we think. We are to share our faith in word and deed. God has a vision of a church that cooperates with the Holy Spirit through all of life, preaching, teaching and prayer to proclaim that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The question for church leaders is how to apply this biblical mandate through their churches in their communities at this time. What will effective proclamation require in the context of our churches in our communities at this time?

The Great Commandment – Matthew 22:34-40: Jesus is asked, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” Jesus harkens back to the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18, and summarizes all the Law and the Prophets with, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” In this we find both a vertical and a horizontal dimension of love.

In my experience, churches tend to emphasize one of these dimensions over the other. In broad strokes, conservative churches tend to go more vertical while liberal churches tend to go more horizontal. Both miss the mark. The Great Commandment calls for the vertical and the horizontal. God has a vision of a church that loves Him and loves neighbor and proves both dimensions of this love in its actions, not just its words. I've never come across a church leader who dismisses the Great Commandment as unimportant, but I have come across dozens of churches and hundreds of leaders who produce little to no tangible evidence of horizontal love, a love that puts neighbor as self.

The Great Commission – Matthew 28:16-20: The Great Commission is often read or quoted as if the first word is “Go.” As important as that word is, I think we need to back up a bit to get a running start at Go. The first of Jesus' words recorded in this text is the word, “All.” Since that's where Jesus began, I think we should do the same.

Jesus declares that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him, and it's in this authority that the Great Commission finds its power. The authority that has come to God the Son has come from God the Father, and Jesus commissions the disciples, then and now, in that same authority, an authority that will operate in us through God the Spirit. Since we are authorized in and through that authority, we are to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This finds its full fruition in Revelation 7:9ff as the Apostle John, in his Day of the Lord vision, sees a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. Hallelujah!

To make a disciple is to become engaged in a person's life transformation from unbelieving to believing, from spiritually dead to spiritually alive, born again. That's called evangelism! Once regenerated, the new believer is to be baptized and taught to live a life of obedience to all that Jesus has commanded. Obedience is far different than knowledge, yet we tend to emphasize Christian education over Christian living in our churches.

Finally, Jesus guarantees in His Great Commission that He will be with His disciples until the end of the age. Now that's a lifetime guarantee. So, the Great Commission begins in the authority of Christ and ends in the presence of Christ, charging disciples to go in that authority and presence to make disciples, baptize, and teach obedience. My observation tells me that the typical church has watered down the power and depth of the Great Commission to teaching Bible classes, Christianity 101.

God has a vision of a church that goes in the authority of Christ, keenly aware of the presence of Christ, to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them how to live in obedience to Christ. The job of leaders is to apply that commission to their churches in their communities at this time.

The Great Witness – Acts 1:8: Picking up on the importance of authority, Jesus states in Acts 1:8 that the disciples will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and that so empowered, they will prove to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth. One wonders what the relationship of the end of the age in the Great Commission is to the end of the earth in Acts 1:8. Will these be simultaneous occurrences?

If we as disciples are empowered to be witnesses, why don't we see more witnessing in the American church? A witness is someone who is called to give testimony because he or she actually saw and experienced the matter or event under scrutiny. My theory, after observing the church for years, is that we fail to give good testimony because we haven't witnessed anything first hand. Most of our testimony is hearsay, third, fourth, or fifth party testimony that is inadmissible in a court of law.

God has a vision of a church that is filled with people who are filled and empowered by His Spirit, witnessing His presence and work in their lives on a daily basis, therefore having a valid testimony to give. The job of leaders is to apply this power and experience in their churches in their communities at this time.

The Great Mission – Luke 19:10: In the first nine verses of Luke 19, we see Jesus in His encounter with Zacchaeus, the man of small stature who climbed the sycamore tree to get a glimpse of Jesus. He was determined to see Jesus that day, and to his great surprise, Jesus was determined to see him. In the first verse, we learn that Jesus was passing through Jericho, stated so matter-of-factly that one could easily miss the context. Sure, Jesus was passing through, but that's because He was on His way to Jerusalem to die as payment for the penalty of sin. Passing through, indeed!

Though cataclysmic events that will affect all of mankind for all eternity are about to take place, Jesus says to this inconsequential man, “I must stay at your house today,” Later in the exchange Jesus announces, “Salvation has come to his house.”

Why did Jesus stop for Zacchaeus? Why bother? Why not focus on the overwhelming task at hand, being the Savior of the world? Why tarry for this despised tax collector? Jesus tells us in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Zacchaeus was lost, so Jesus sought him out and saved him. It’s as simple as that. God has a vision of church that seeks and saves the lost, taking on the mission of Jesus as its own.

God’s vision is found in the application of the Great Promise, the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, the Great Witness and the Great Mission. The job of leaders is to determine what these five *Greats* will look like in their churches in their communities at this time.

The Mold that Shapes Us – Behavioral Foundations

Laying the foundations of vision continues with a look at Behavioral Foundations that create a mold that shapes who we are going to be as a church. These behaviors are found in the Four Habits of HIGH M-PACT Churches and the Characteristics of Incline. Since these habits and characteristics have been examined earlier they will simply be listed here by way of reminder.

Four Habits of HIGH M-PACT Churches

Habit 1: HIGH M-PACT Churches pray with power.

Habit 2: HIGH M-PACT Churches build on Bible basics.

Habit 3: HIGH M-PACT Churches raise the bar (of commitment).

Habit 4: HIGH M-PACT Churches reach the lost.

The Characteristics of Incline

1. Churches on the Incline are Future-Oriented.
2. Churches on the Incline are Vision-Driven.
3. Churches on the Incline are Community-Focused.
4. Churches on the Incline are Innovative.

5. Churches on the Incline exercise High-Risk Faith.
6. Churches on the Incline make Faith-Decisions.
7. Churches on the Incline place people in ministry according to their Gifts.
8. Churches on the Incline treat finances as does an Investor.
9. Churches on the Incline develop New Leadership.
10. Churches on the Incline grow by Conversion.

The Model that Shows Us – Historical Foundations

Church “Models” is a much discussed topic throughout the American church today. Many church leaders are looking for the model or template of ministry that can be effectively applied by simple fill-in-the-blank methodologies learned in a book or, better yet, at a training conference. In truth there is no such thing. Fill-in-the-blank ministry derived from formulaic methodologies is never the place to go for the answer to effective ministry. If there is a model, or example for us to follow, that model is found in Scripture and provides Historical Foundations for the church that is as vital today as it was then.

There might be several ways to approach a biblical model of church. The Antioch church seems a viable model, and the letters to the churches in Revelation surely give insight, but I would call your attention to a model presented in the first COACHWORKS! section. Separately, the two texts in view are *Acts 2:42-47* and *Ephesians 4:1-16*. Combined they become *The Acts 2 – Ephesians 4 Church*, in my view a strong candidate for the prescribed model of a healthy church.

Biblical Foundations provide a mandate that compels us, Behavioral Foundations provide a mold that shapes us, and Historical Foundations provide a model that shows us. Together, they create a solid platform for God’s vision to be discerned, developed and deployed as we join Jesus in His mission to seek and save the lost.

Identifying the M-PACT Group(s) – Whom are we going to reach?

The HIGH M-PACT church must identify its M-PACT Group, that is, whom are we going to reach? Of all the different groupings of people who live in the community surrounding the church, which group will gain our focused attention? Which group will we identify as our M-PACT Group?

Definition: The **M-PACT** Group is the group or groups of people who are to be reached by the developing church. These groups are found within the geographic and demographic targets. **M-PACT** Group identification is not a function of exclusivity, but is a function of focus, the application of resources to strategic ministry priorities.

Whenever I enter the discussion of **M-PACT** Groups in training, someone always voices the objection that singling out a particular group smacks of exclusivity and that the Gospel is meant for everyone. And, of course, it's pointed out that the Apostle Paul claimed to become all things to all men that he might save some. True, the Gospel message is meant to be heard by everyone, and Paul did make that claim. However, it's important to note that Paul was only one thing at a time, depending on his audience, and though the Gospel is for all, no one person, or one church, is called to deliver that message to everyone.

Peter was the Apostle to the Jews while Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles. Even Jesus came to His own, the Jews, first. So let's make sure we're clear on this. The identification of an **M-PACT** Group is not about the exclusivity of the Gospel, it's about the focusing of resources in order to achieve maximum effectiveness in sharing that Gospel. Consider this example. If I had \$1000 to contribute to ministry, would it make more sense to give \$1.00 to a thousand ministries or \$1000 to one ministry?

One other thing: if your church is effectively reaching all of the lost in your community, close this book at once and don't read another word. You don't need what I'm offering here. But the truth is reaching *everybody* is not the point of reference for most churches. Rather, reaching *nobody* is closer to reality. I'm asking that you reach *somebody*, hardly exclusive but actually an expansion on the reaching of *nobody* that is the case for most American churches. Your church is not called or equipped to reach everyone, but you are called and equipped to reach someone. Let's identify who that someone is, the **M-PACT** Group, and begin to serve and reach that someone with the love, person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Geographic Target: **M-PACT** Group identification begins by defining the geographic area to be considered as the geographic target. This needs to be much more than a simple radius of a certain number of miles from the church and needs to include street names, townships, subdivisions, zip codes, created barriers such as interstates or governmental jurisdictions, natural barriers such as waterways or mountains, or psychological barriers that an **M-PACT** Group would not cross regardless of geography. Draw a map and paint a word picture that vividly and colorfully describes the geographic target that is in view.

Many church leaders resist this idea of a geographic target, thinking of their churches as more regional than local. This perception is usually based on two factors: 1. the church has been ineffective at reaching people in its own community for an extended period of time, and 2. few if any current members live in the immediate community. Neither of these

two factors is sufficient for assigning a church regional status. Ineffectiveness at the local level does not qualify a church to go regional.

HIGH M-PACT Revitalization must focus its initial ministry efforts towards reaching the immediate community. Should the church become effective at this, expanding to more of a regional ministry can follow, but only after proving successful locally. If there is a cultural gap between the population inside the church and the population just outside, the burden of incarnational adjustment is on the congregation.

To spread the Gospel, consider the *logic of contagion*. If you wanted to infect a hundred people with a contagious disease, what would make more sense, cloistering them together in a small space, or spreading them out over a wide expanse? The answer is obvious; the closer we can get them together the better. Add to the logic of contagion the *logic of proximity*. If someone decides to attend a church, is he or she more likely to attend a church that is five minutes away from home or twenty-five minutes away from home? Again, the answer is obvious. The church that desires to create an outbreak of effective evangelism should target its immediate community.

Another thought: add to the *logic of contagion* and the *logic of proximity* the *logic of momentum*. If our members all live outside of the church's immediate community, a likely circumstance, even if they are successful at sharing their faith to the point that a next door neighbor considers attending their church, it's unlikely he or she will when its discovered that the church is a significant distance away. Momentum dies. If, however, members incarnate and impact the immediate community, impacted "locals" are likely to attend the nearby church, and as they impact their next door neighbors, they too are likely to attend the nearby church. Momentum builds.

Finally, members might argue that since they are willing to travel the extra distance to attend the church, their neighbors might attend as well. However, this is rarely the case. Members that commute to church usually have a tie to that church that supersedes geography. They used to live in the community and moved out, they have family ties to the church, or they have denominational links to the church. It's very unlikely that their neighbors are affected by any of these mitigating circumstances, so they will likely not make the same commute. One more thing, if reaching commuter neighbors is an effective strategy, where is the track record to prove it?

Note that the geographic target will grow wider the further the church is located from a city center. Urban churches will have a small geographic target, a mid-town church will have a larger geographic target, a suburban church larger still, with the rural church having the largest. The question to ask is, "How far or how long is the average person living in the area willing to drive to attend our church regularly?" That could be five minutes in an urban center and forty-five in a rural setting. The key is to know the people of your community.

The Demographic Target: Knowing the people of the community is the key to identifying the demographic target. Demographics examine the types of people who live in the community and consider many categories such as age, ethnicity, nationality, marital status, economic status, and educational level. The questions are, “Who are these people? How do they think? How do they live? What do they need? What do they want?” The more we know about them, the better we are able to connect with them through outreach, and once connected, the opportunity to share our faith is strategically linked.

Two types of demographic study are recommended. First, conduct a formal, professional demographic study through a professional demographics firm. One such firm is Percept found at www.perceptgroup.com. Another is www.zipskinny.com. Invest a few hundred dollars to have professionals conduct a thorough study. In every case I have worked on, church leaders gained insight and discovered new information about the people in their communities when they secured a professional demographic study.

Second, conduct an informal study driven by observation and prayer. Have leaders go to places in the community where people flow and congregate; malls, coffee shops, restaurants and cafes, parks, recreational areas, the list goes on and on. While there, simply set up an “observation post” and people watch. See who is out there. Take a pen and paper and make notes about whom you see. Pray for people as they pass and pray that God will give you insight into who they are and what He feels for them. After staff and leaders have done this individually for a season, get together and prayerfully compare notes. Compare these findings with the formal demographic information and an **M-PACT** Group will emerge.

Finally, it must be understood that **M-PACT** Group identification is not a quest to find a homogeneous target group. The **M-PACT** Group should be a reflection of the community, and if the community is diverse, diversity should be one of the demographic characteristics of the **M-PACT** Group. Diversity in our day is usually associated with ethnicity and/or nationality, and if your church’s community is ethnically or nationally diverse, the **M-PACT** Group should be ethnically or nationally diverse. But even within this kind of diversity, commonalities can be identified in other demographic categories that will enable the church to create effective outreach strategies.

The “Minister With” M-PACT Group: In determining the church’s **M-PACT** Group, a distinction needs to be made between “Minister With” **M-PACT** Groups and “Minister To” **M-PACT** Groups. A “Minister With” **M-PACT** Group is a group of people who have the potential to receive ministry from the church, connect with the church, become part of the church and one day participate “With” the church in terms of serving in ministry and providing support for ministry. Your primary **M-PACT** Group must be a “Minister With” **M-PACT** Group.

The “Minister To” M-PACT Group: A “Minister To” M-PACT Group is a group of people who don’t have “Minister With” potential. Rather, they will receive ministry from the church, but will likely not connect with the church in a sustainable way, become part of the church, or ever participate with the church in terms of serving in ministry or providing support for ministry. “Minister To” M-PACT Groups might include people who are in jail or prison, homeless people, students at nearby colleges or universities; in short, people who have needs that the church might be called to meet, but people who are outside of the primary M-PACT Group and who have little capacity to plug in, get involved, or serve and support.

I have seen many churches, particularly in urban settings, devote virtually their entire ministries to “Minister To” groups, only to have their resources depleted rendering them unable to provide ministry to anyone. This perspective is not in any way intended to discourage church leaders from serving those that might fall into a “Minister To” category. The point is to be wise regarding the church’s ability to sustain such ministry over time. It’s not enough to start ministry, but ministry must be sustained over the long haul for outreach to develop relationship that offers evangelistic opportunity. In other words, don’t get your tower half-built and then have to abandon the effort due to depleted resources.

Ultimately, a solid vision will clearly identify an M-PACT Group as the combination of a Geographic Target and a Demographic Target, and will take into account commitments to “Minister With” and “Minister To” groups.

Designing the Ministry Setting: What environment will we create?

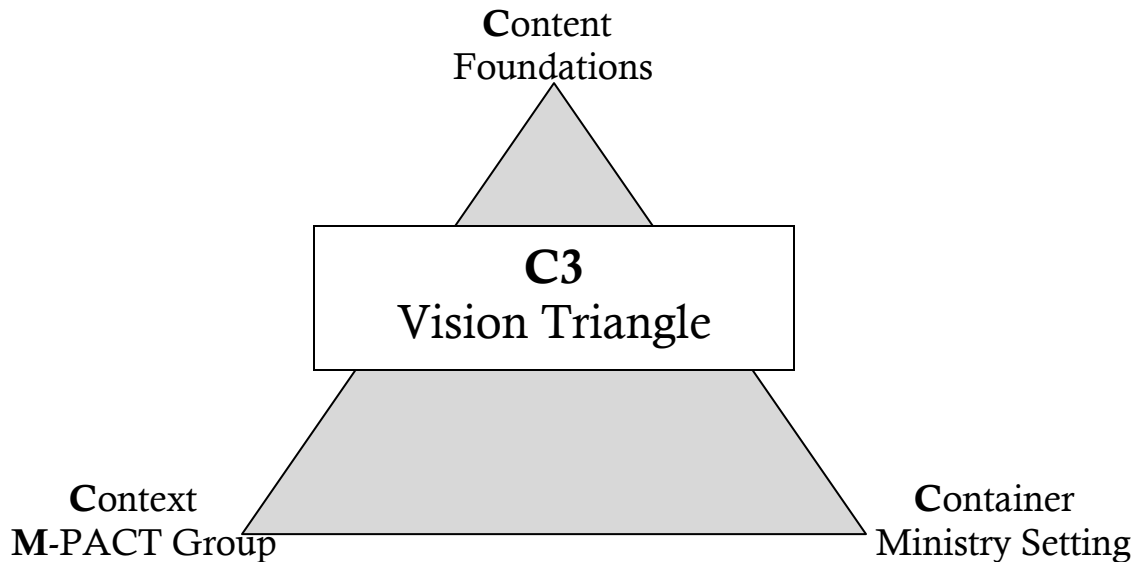


Figure 15

The third and final component of vision is the Ministry Setting, the physical and philosophical environment of ministry that is created by the church to connect its congregation with its M-PACT Group(s). The Ministry Setting, for example, includes tastes, styles, preferences, perceived needs, personal priorities, location, facilities, formats, presentations, décor, scheduling, seasonal nuances, etc.

Figure 15 graphically portrays the three components of vision as Content, Context, and Container. The most significant aspect of Context is the M-PACT Group. All strategic design and decision will be driven by whom the church has determined to reach as leaders have discerned God's vision.

The Content of ministry is the product of our Biblical, Behavioral, and Historical Foundations. These are non-negotiable as they are the values that will guide the church in all that it does. The Container is the environment in which the Content and the Context meet. It is the presentation or housing of ministry and is utterly negotiable. Elements of Ministry Setting include choices of music style, whether the worship service will be formal or casual, high-church, low-church or in-between church, and whether there will be a choir or a worship band. It includes location, building layout, furnishings, and type of seating.

There are Given Elements and there are Chosen Elements, and each should be considered in terms of physical elements and philosophical elements. The Given Elements of the Ministry Setting are elements that are fixed and cannot be changed; for example, a given physical element might be a particular building at a particular address. A given philosophical element might be a denominational requirement. The Chosen Elements of the Ministry Setting are elements that are selected by choice from various options. For

example, a chosen physical element might be a color scheme or a type of seating. A chosen philosophical element might be a music style, worship service time or an emphasis on lay leadership.

Leaders tend to overlook the Ministry Setting, allowing whatever is in place to stay in place in terms of the physical, and not really realizing that the philosophical setting even exists. Once dialed into this way of thinking, leaders tend to think of virtually every element as a given element, not fully appreciating how many options are available. The rule of thumb is that virtually every element, physical or philosophical, is a chosen element and should be assumed to be so until proved otherwise.

How does God want to express Himself through this church in this community at this time? His vision will be discerned by church leaders in the Establishing of the Foundations, the Identifying of the M-PACT Group, and the Designing of the Ministry Setting. But what about Key Vision Question #2: What did God mean by that?

This second vision question could be thought of as a retrofit or a mid-course correction. Despite the best efforts of church leaders to discern God's vision for their churches, something will be missed or misinterpreted, or unexpected elements will surface that seem to be out of sync with the prescribed plan. When this occurs, leaders simply need to call timeout and ask, "What does God mean by this?" or prayerfully, "God, what do You mean by this?"

I'll share one example. Our revitalizing church in Phoenix, AZ, sensed that God wanted us to become a church that planted other churches. As we entered the third year of our revitalization effort, we determine it was time to engage church planting. We didn't have the resources to plant in the Phoenix area or in Arizona for that matter. But we reasoned that our meager resources might be sufficient to get new churches started in neighboring northern Mexico.

On a Friday, a small team set off for Nogales with the vision of getting a church started, then another, and ultimately establishing a network of Mexican church plants. Once we had established a foothold and had come to know Mexican leaders, at some point we would turn these churches and the network over to indigenous Mexican leadership, moving to more of a resourcing and supporting posture.

On Saturday afternoon we encountered a man who was a worship leader at a small church in downtown Nogales. He took us to his pastor and we traveled down the hillside together to the small storefront that was home to this church. For several hours this young pastor told us the story of a Mexican pastor in a nearby city who had planted one church per year for eight years out of his church, establishing a small network of church plants. These churches were challenged financially and the pastors and leaders of this network had little theological or ministry training.

Question: What does God mean by this? Answer: He did not send us to Mexico to *start* a network of Mexican church plants as we thought. He sent us to Mexico to *find* a network of Mexican church plants. We adjusted our original vision and put our resources behind this already growing network. We brought in finances and training in both theology and strategic ministry, and watched with great joy and satisfaction as the network grew from eight to eighteen churches over the next three years. Key Vision Question #1 got us started down the path, and Key Vision Question #2 made the mid-course corrections.

Phase 3 – Aligning Strategy

Two Key Strategy Questions

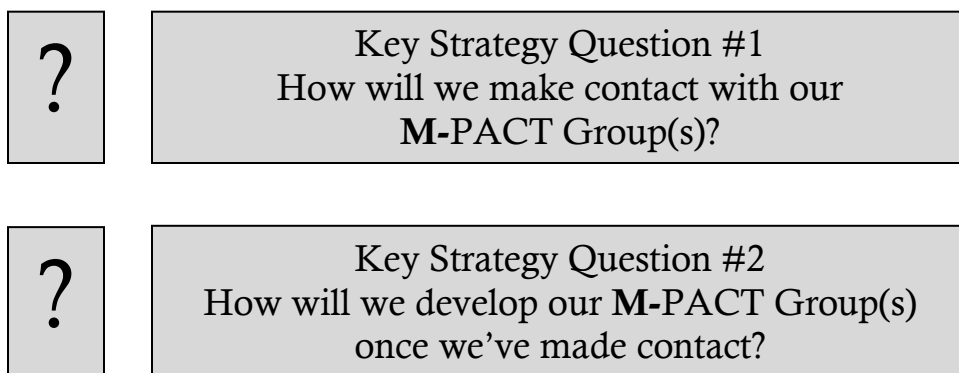


Figure 16

Key Strategy Question #1 is “How will we make contact with our M-PACT Group?” In the discussion of vision, all roads led to the reaching of an M-PACT Group (MG). First we considered the Content, the Biblical, Behavioral, and Historical Foundations that focused our attention on the growing of the kingdom of God by reaching the lost. Next we considered the dynamics of identifying the Context, an M-PACT Group, through the geographic and demographic targeting of “Minister With” and “Minister To” groups. Finally we considered the designing of a Container, a physical and philosophical Ministry Setting that would resonate with those we believe that our church is called to reach. Now, as we turn our thoughts to strategy, the first and obvious question concerns making contact with that M-PACT Group.

Many congregations seem to think that people from the community will simply show up at church some Sunday just because the church is there. Some seem to think that community folks *ought to* show up, as if they have some intrinsic moral responsibility to do so. Perhaps there was a time in America’s past when a cultural “ought to” compelled people to go to church, but that certainly is not the case today. In fact, if culture has influence it is a negative influence as in people “ought not to” go to church. The bottom line is that we in the church cannot depend on culture to do our outreach and evangelism. It’s up to us to make the first move, and the second, and the third, etc. If we fail to get into the life of the community, we will fail to make contact with lost people, we will fail to develop relationships with them, we will fail to bring the Gospel into their lives, and we will fail to turn our reclining and declining churches around. It’s as simple as that. We must make contact!

Key Strategy Question #2 is “How we will develop our M-PACT Group once we’ve made contact?” We must prepare to be successful in our new commitment to reach the lost, actually expecting a response, and when people respond and enter the sphere of the church’s ministry, we must be prepared with a ministry infrastructure that will develop them in their faith. The time to answer this question is not after a stream of newcomers arrives, but

before, ensuring that we are ready to follow through as God adds to the number those who are being saved.

The Progression of M-PACT Group Development (PyraMiD)

There are three primary tools that form the core of strategic development for HIGH M-PACT Revitalization:

1. The Progression of M-PACT Group Development (The PyraMiD);
2. Key M-PACT Ministries (KMMs)
3. The M-PACT Action Plan (The M.A.P.)

These three tools are inseparably linked as the PyraMiD will connect with KMMs to create the M.A.P.

The PyraMiD

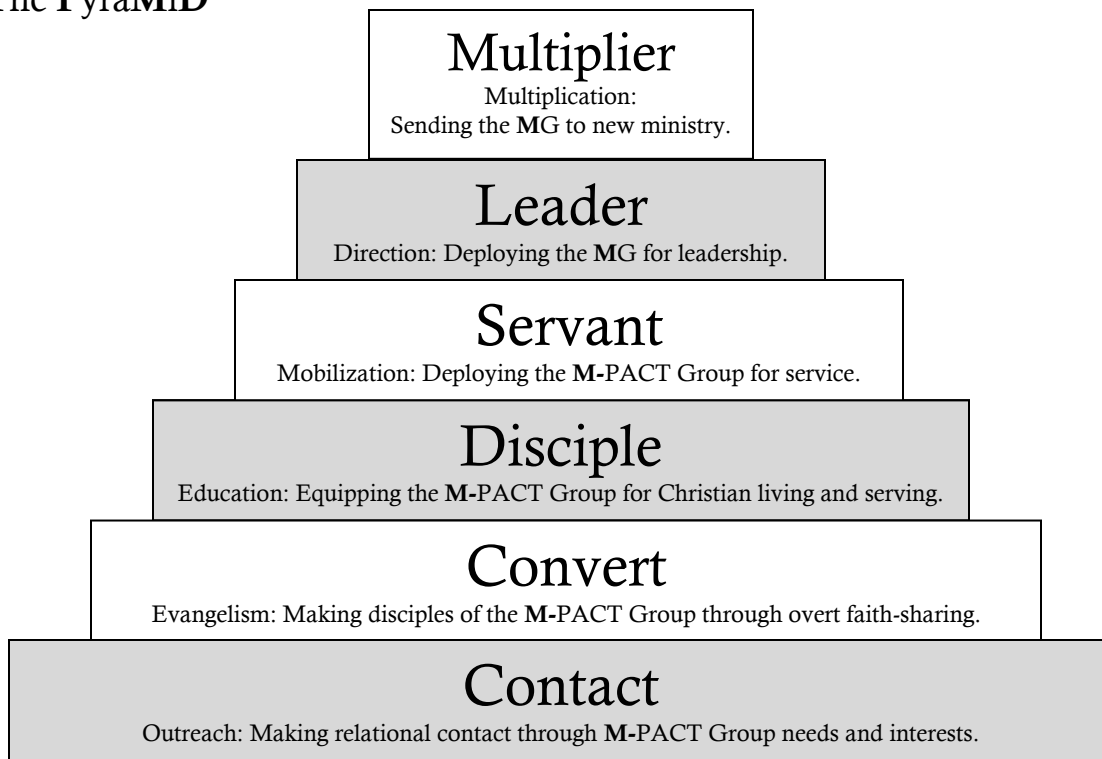


Figure 17

The PyraMiD (*Figure 17*) begins at the bottom tier and works its way upward. The first step in the progression is Contact. Without Contact, nothing that follows will really matter. Contact is the starting point and is the strategic priority. Each ministry of the church must develop and deploy contact strategies for connecting with the M-PACT Group through its ministry area. For example, children’s ministry must utilize contact strategies for connecting with children within the M-PACT Group through children’s ministry, youth ministry must utilize contact strategies for connecting with youth within the M-PACT Group through youth ministry, and small group ministry must utilize contact strategies for

connecting with people within the **M-PACT** Group through small groups. In essence, each ministry of the church must become a door to ministry, developing an outreach initiative driven by intentional contact strategies.

Effective contact strategies will deliver the **M-PACT** Group to Convert strategies as outreach gives way to evangelism. There are three essential components to conversion: 1. the work of the Holy Spirit, 2. the knowledge of the Gospel, and 3. the opportunity to profess. By far the most important component in anyone's conversion is the regeneration brought about by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Our participation with the work of the Holy Spirit involves our prayer for the transformation of the hearts and minds of the lost in our **M-PACT** Group, and our creating a spiritual environment that cooperates with the Holy Spirit's movement in people's lives.

The knowledge of the Gospel component recognizes that a person cannot profess faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior without an awareness and understanding of the basic Gospel message. Each ministry of the church must present this basic Gospel message throughout its calendar year in a cyclical fashion, taking care to make sure that these basic teachings are repeatedly covered. When the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit combines with the knowledge of the Gospel, conversion happens.

Finally, each ministry of the church must frequently provide the opportunity for people to profess their faith, their readiness to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. As I have worked with hundreds of churches, I have found that the typical church sees little to no conversion taking place within its ministries. When asked to provide profession of faith statistics for their churches, many leaders report no professions or no knowledge of professions within their churches. One would almost conclude that there is a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding professions of faith in most American churches.

Some leaders say their churches don't keep such statistics because conversion is a private transaction between a person and God. Others assume that conversion is taking place because the Word of God is being proclaimed and that His Word is being effective, even if church leaders are unaware of that effectiveness. Some leaders claim that their churches are not called to evangelism but to worship and discipleship. Others claim that their Christian education ministries take care of evangelism, especially those churches that offer a communicants class or something similar for the twelve-thirteen year olds of their congregations. Whatever alibi these leaders choose, the bottom line is the same: Most American churches are failing to evangelize their communities. Effective Contact strategies (Outreach) in tandem with effective Convert strategies (Evangelism) will reverse that trend.

Following Convert, the **PyraMiD** moves to the next tier, Disciple. Each ministry of the church must develop and deploy strategies to grow the recently converted, and long-standing believers, in their faith. Discipling strategies must include the development of a solid biblical, theological, doctrinal basis in concert with the development of spiritual disciplines. Key to effective discipleship is the realization that discipleship is not an end but a means. The goal of discipleship is not to gain more and more knowledge, but to live lives that are more and more conformed to the mind of Christ.

Discipleship is about being equipped to live a godly life and to serve in ministry in whatever role God's calling provides and requires. Unapplied knowledge is pointless, and yet most churches approach so-called discipleship as a full menu of programs designed to deliver biblical information to people who will never be called upon or held accountable to using it. Ironically, most people who have spent much time in "discipleship" know that it's the Book of James that teaches that faith without works is dead. Discipleship without application is dead as well.

Disciple strategies will naturally lead into Servant strategies. These are strategies developed and deployed in each ministry area that equip, recruit and deliver people into serving within the ministry of the church. The primary objective of discipleship is to equip people for serving and leading, and the handoff from Disciple to Servant intentionally moves the church toward that objective. Bear in mind that the people in view here are still the people of the **M-PACT** Group having grown through Contact to Convert to Disciple to Servant.

Of those who serve, many should emerge as candidates for leadership, and each ministry area must have Leader strategies in place to facilitate that movement. You will recall that the Inclining Characteristics include the development of New Leadership. Leader strategies in each ministry area will create a farm system for leadership development and will equip and empower a steady stream of new leaders to keep the church's ministry vital and fresh.

The top tier of the Progression of **M-PACT** Group Development consists of Multiplier strategies. A multiplier is someone who goes beyond serving or leading in the existing ministries of a church to serve or lead in new ministry, either developed within the church or perhaps outside of the church. An outside multiplier might be someone sent by the church to be part of the core of a church plant, or to serve on the mission field, or to go to Bible college or seminary for further preparation, or to embrace some other ministry application. It will be easy to release these mature, gifted people as more and more are rising through the **PyraMiD** to step into their shoes.

You will notice that as the progression moves from Contact through Multiplier, each tier gets smaller. That's because some of those who reach a given tier will likely go no further. Of all those who become Contacts, only some will become Converts. Of all those who become Converts, only some will become true Disciples. Of all those who become Disciples, only some will become Servants, and only some of them will become Leaders, and only a few Servants and Leaders will become Multipliers. Understanding this dynamic, then, forces us to realize that Contact is the key; it's the place where it all begins.

I have received many calls and emails in recent years from pastors and leaders who want help with leadership development. They'll say, "We don't have enough people to serve or lead. We're going back to the same people year after year asking them for more and more and they're burning out." The truth is that the problem is not a lack of servants or a lack of leaders; *the problem is a lack of making contact*. The reclining or declining church that fails at making significant contact is destined to close its doors. It's that simple. The

reclining or declining church that is serious about becoming a healthy, growing, and multiplying church that is truly impacting its community for Christ will make Contact its strategic priority, beginning today!

Revitalization Principle
Contact is the strategic priority!

Figure 18

Key M-PACT Ministries (KMMs)

Key M-PACT Ministries (KMMs) are ministries that must function at a high impact level for the vision to be fulfilled. They are small in number (3-6) at the outset of revitalization and are to be selected by their direct connection to the vision. Without these ministries functioning at high impact levels, the vision could not be fulfilled. All other ministries are of secondary strategic importance.

The concept of KMMs is derived from the realization that, though all ministries have value, some are absolutely essential to the fulfillment of the discerned vision. Churches in Recline tend to be over-programmed, trying to operate too many ministries at the same time, stretching their resources too thin. Declining churches are under-resourced, and an attempt to provide the program menu that might have prevailed earlier in the lifecycle also stretches resources too thin. Even Inclining churches, though in a season of ministry capacity expansion, tend to aspire to what will prove to be over-programming, again stretching resources too thin.

The solution to the program-driven dilution of resources that can influence Incline, Recline and Decline is a commitment to Key M-PACT Ministries. A very small set of KMMs must be identified as the ministries that are to receive primary focus, reflected in the fact that these ministries receive the lion's share of all available resources. What's the criterion for selecting which ministries will receive Key M-PACT Ministry designation? It's their direct link to the fulfillment of the discerned vision, their direct link to how God desires to express Himself through a particular church in a particular community at a particular time, their direct link to the seeking and saving of the M-PACT Group.

When we move into a discussion of the M-PACT Action Plan (M.A.P.) it will become obvious why only a small number of ministries are to receive the designation of Key M-PACT Ministries. Before that discussion, however, let me introduce a tactical tool, the KMM Identification Tool (see *Figure 19*).

producing ministry fruit). Once the list is complete, move from one program to the next analyzing each program's value and connectedness to the vision.

Several questions should be asked regarding each program. First, why do we offer this program? What is its purpose? If a solid, biblical purpose for a given program cannot be identified, that program should be listed in the column titled Programs for DeProgramming. This is a program that should be eliminated. However, if a solid, biblical purpose for a given program is apparent, then move to the second considerations; how much resourcing is required for this program and what fruit is being borne by this program, i.e. is its purpose being fulfilled? If you find that a given program requires significant resourcing and yet yields minimal fruit for that investment, that program should be moved to Programs for DeProgramming and should be eliminated.

Current programs that survive the cut because they have solid, biblical purposes and a strategically sound balance between resourcing and fruit should be listed in the column titled Potential KMMs. Though all ministries have value, not all are essential to the fulfillment of a particular godly vision, and not all are strategically wise. The task at this point is to determine which of the Potential KMMs should be Final KMMs. This task involves two steps: Step 1: Selecting and Step 2: Ranking.

Step 1: Selecting is the process of determining the strength of the connection between a given Potential KMM and the vision. How vital, how essential is a given Potential KMM to the fulfillment of that vision? In what ways does effectiveness in this ministry area contribute to the fulfillment of the vision? How is the vision affected if this ministry area proves unproductive? If this ministry area was removed from operation, in what ways would the vision suffer? Can the vision be fulfilled without productivity in this ministry area? These are the kinds of questions to be asked in determining whether or not a Potential KMM should be considered as a Final KMM.

Step 2: Ranking is the process of rating ministries considered as candidates for Final KMMs in their order of importance. Which is the most important? Which is the next most important, etc.? Importance is determined by the connectedness of a given ministry to the vision, the vitality that a given ministry brings to the vision. Ranking is important for two reasons. First, it guides leaders into making decisions of ministry priority, tending to first or most important things first. Second, it guides leaders into assigning a hierarchy to Potential KMMs that allows only the top six to be selected as Final KMMs. Less than six is better, but six are within reason.

At the end of the exercise, two categories of ministry are left standing. First there are the Final KMMs, as many as six, that will receive first priority because they have the strongest link to the vision. Second, there are those ministries that will continue to be provided, but that will not be considered the highest priorities in terms of focus and, in particular, resource allocation. All other programs are slated for deprogramming.

There is one remaining consideration. The vision might call for a ministry to be identified as a Final KMM that is not among the current programming and therefore would

not be listed in the initial column. This recognition will surface in the prayer and discussion that surrounds this exercise, so the list of Potential KMMs might need to include a ministry area or two that are not among current programs. It is recommended that at the completion of this exercise, no fewer than three and no more than six KMMs will be identified.

Revitalization Principle
Key M-PACT Ministries (KMMs) are the ministry priority.

The Progression of M-PACT Group Development combines with Key M-PACT Ministries to form the M-PACT Action Plan as represented by *Figure 20*. The congregation strategically develops Contacts, Converts, Disciples, Servants, Leaders, and Multipliers through each Key M-PACT Ministry as it Reaches, Grows, Equips and Sends men, women, and/or children from the M-PACT Group back to the M-PACT Group.

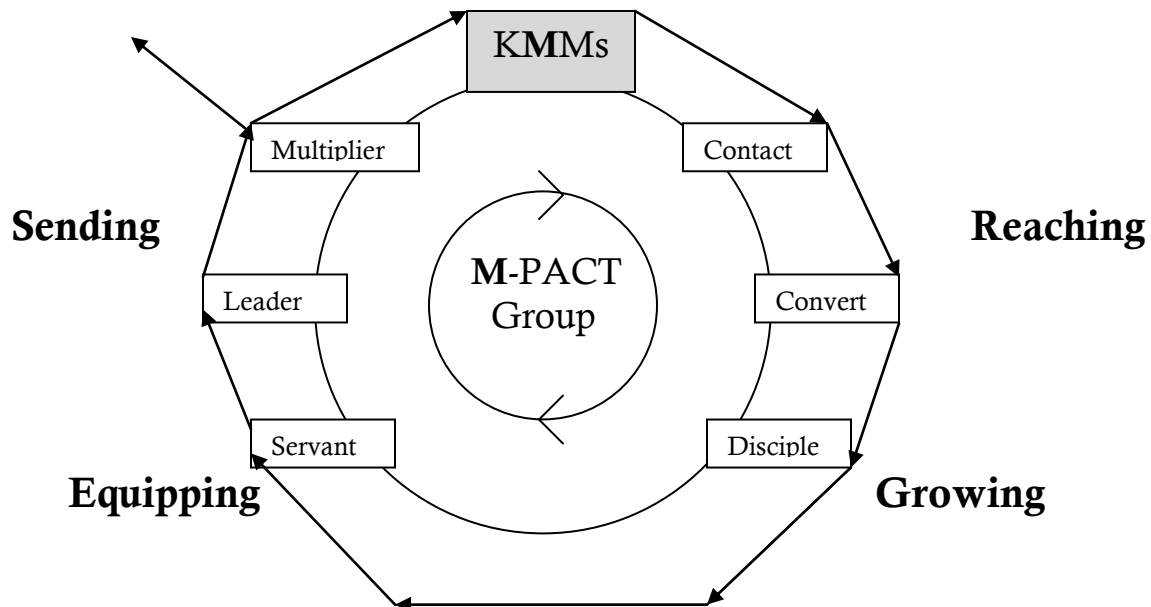


Figure 20

The M.A.P. – The M-PACT Action Plan: Connecting the Progression of M-PACT Group Development with Key M-PACT Ministries

The Strategy Formula
PyraMiD x KMMs = The M.A.P.

Figure 21

The M-PACT Action Plan is derived by multiplying the Progression of M-PACT Group Development by Key M-PACT Ministries (see *Figure 21*). Let's begin this discussion by zooming in on the M.A.P., taking a look at one KMM as it connects with the PyraMiD. As depicted in *Figure 22*, three strategies are developed in KMM 1 for each tier of the PyraMiD. For example, if it was determined that Small Groups Ministry was KMM 1, three Contact strategies for making contact with the M-PACT Group through Small Groups Ministry would be developed, three Convert strategies for sharing the Gospel with the M-PACT Group through Small Groups Ministry would be developed, and so on with Disciple, Servant, Leader and Multiplier strategies, all applied through Small Groups Ministry.

It's not necessary to hold to a rigid practice of having no more or no less than three strategies in each M.A.P. box, but three can serve as a rule of thumb. The idea is that each KMM is its own ministry universe, capable of taking people from spiritual birth to spiritual maturity within its own strategies and personnel. Strategies, of course, will vary from M-PACT Group to M-PACT Group and from KMM to KMM.

M.A.P. Zoom In	
PyraMiD	KMM 1
Multiplier	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Leader	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Servant	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Disciple	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Convert	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Contact	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3

Figure 22

Zooming out to a fuller expression of the M-PACT Action Plan reveals multiple KMMs multiplied through the PyraMiD (see *Figure 23*).

M.A.P. Zoom Out

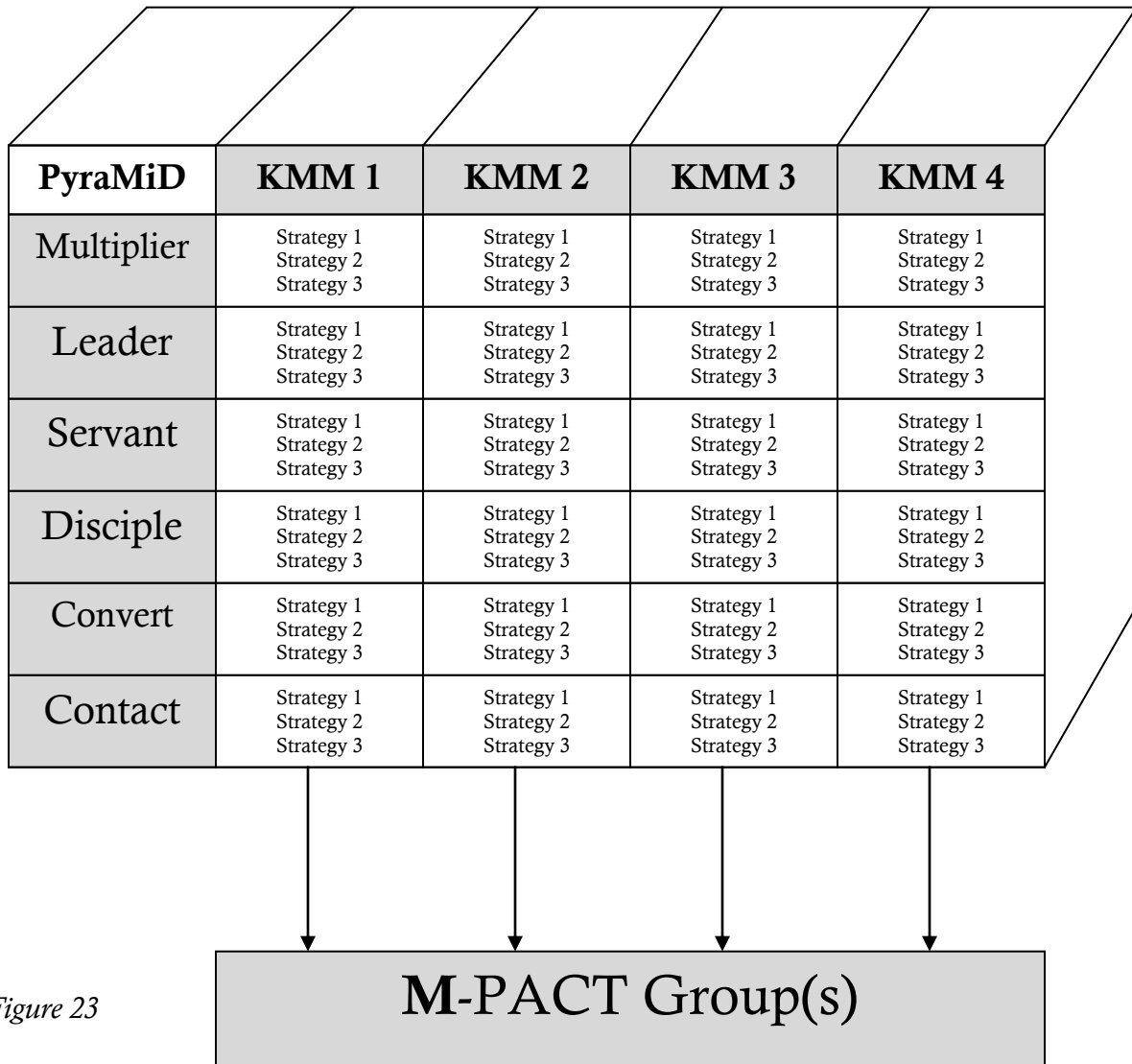


Figure 23

It's important to note that each KMM is a *front door* to the church as each KMM applies its own contact strategies. This is in contrast to the two most dominant models seen in the American church over the past fifty plus years. The first model is a traditional or conventional model that features a worship service on Sunday morning that is available to the community. Should people from the community decide to come, they enter through the front door of this worship service, and should they decide to get involved in the church, they would trickle down into other ministry areas such as men's ministry, women's ministry, small groups, etc. The Sunday morning service is the only front door and is passive in terms of outreach.

The second model is the seeker model, emerging in large part due to the recognition that the conventional model had lost its effectiveness. The seeker model also typically features a Sunday morning worship service that proves to be the lone or primary front door of the church, but it differs from the conventional model in that its focus is on the lost community rather than the found congregation, and it's proactive in reaching out to that community, encouraging and expecting its regulars to bring folks from the community to church. Once engaged with the Sunday service, the trickle-down effect again distributes people into other ministry areas.

The HIGH M-PACT Model stands in stark contrast to both of the previous models because it provides multiple front doors as every Key M-PACT Ministry, and ultimately every ministry, key or not, is a front door, thereby providing much more contact with the community and many more ports of entry. This feature positions the HIGH M-PACT Model for great effectiveness in reaching the lost in the community.

Reminder:

**Contact is the strategic priority.
Key M-PACT Ministries are the ministry priority.**

Figure 24

Note: Throughout HIGH M-PACT Revitalization I use the terms *ministry* and *program*, and there might be confusion in making a distinction. In essence, these two terms are virtually synonymous, though I tend to use the word *ministry* in the positive light of fruit bearing activity (a means), while I tend to use the word *program* in the negative light of often fruitless repetitive activity (an end).

Phase 4 – Aligning Structure

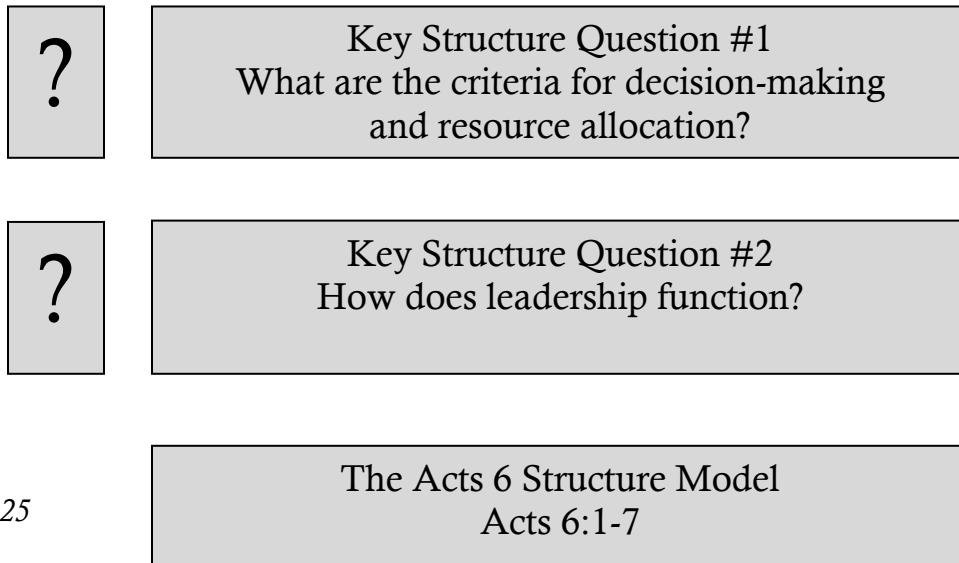


Figure 25

Structure is the behind the scenes support of ministry and includes such things as personnel, policies, procedures, polity, organization, boards, staff, committees, payroll, finances, buildings, grounds, etc. Structural alignment is the deliberate and consistent practice of designing and deploying structure in light of vision and strategy, providing the spiritual leadership and strategic resourcing required to fuel the strategies that fulfill the rightly discerned godly vision.

Key Structure Question #1 is, “What are the criteria for decision-making and resource allocation?” Resource allocation is a kind of decision-making, but it’s so significant that I articulate it in the question. Before I get into answering this first key question, let’s consider the typical criteria that are used for making decisions and allocating resources in the typical church. The first typical criterion is history: How have decisions been made in the past? The historical track record typically guides how decisions are made in the present? That would be fine if historical decision-making had been conducted with correct criteria, but that is rarely the case.

That leads me to the second typical criterion, tradition or convention: How do most churches go about making decisions? Most make decisions according to habitual patterns driven by denominational polity, or by mimicking other churches whose decision-making practices are driven by denominational polity. In my ministry as a trainer and consultant, I have the opportunity to sit in on many leadership meetings in cross-denominational circles as well as in non-denominational circles, and it’s striking to note the similarity that I find across the board. These standard practices are not theologically or doctrinally driven. They are the product of human nature.

A third typical criterion is money: What can we afford? What’s in the budget? Please understand that I’m not encouraging loose or sloppy fiscal policies, but finances are a

servant, not a master, and there are times when we are called to go beyond balance sheets and budgets in obedience to the calling of God. In short, limited finances shouldn't negate an obvious leading of the Lord.

To history, tradition and money we must add a fourth typical criterion for decision-making: the wants of the congregation. Remember the discussion of Incline and Recline and their respective characteristics of Community-Focus and Congregation-Focus. Among the evidence of an out-of-balance congregational focus is the tendency of the reclining church to expend virtually all available resources on congregational, or inreach, ministry. Many leaders mistakenly believe that to serve the congregation is to give the congregation everything it wants so that everyone is happy. In truth servant leadership is about leading congregations to where they *should* be in the faith, not simply to where they want to go. Congregational want is often adversarial to God's vision of seeking and saving the lost and might better be described as placating and satisfying the found.

So, then, what are the correct criteria for decision-making and resource allocation? Simply stated, the correct criteria are vision and strategy. If church leadership has prayerfully discerned God's vision for the church, and has developed strategies to move the church toward the fulfillment of that vision, then structure must be aligned to that vision and strategy, recognizing its responsibility to support the strategies that fulfill the vision. In a sense, vision and strategy turn to structure and say, "This is what we need from you in the way of support." Structural posture should be to turn to vision and strategy and ask, "What do you need from our structure to be effective?"

At this point, Key Structure Question #2 comes into view, "How does leadership function?" There is a difference between being in authority and being authoritarian. Often structural leaders hold an authoritarian position over ministry, expecting ministry to be ruled by their authority. The truth is, God is the authority and His vision should rule. Structural leaders are stewards of God's vision and as such, must place themselves under the authority of that vision in the exercise of their authority.

The Acts 6 Structure Model

It has been my observation that most church leadership, whether boards, sessions, administrative councils, consistories, etc., invests most of its time and energy in administrative and financial concerns. As I scan the typical agenda handed out at the typical meeting, most items are administrative or financial. Perhaps there is a perfunctory opening and closing in prayer, but the rest of the meeting could just as easily be a meeting at a typical business establishment.

Administration and finance are important, but they are not the highest calling and they are not to be the primary concern of the church's top level leadership. The higher calling is spiritual leadership and strategic resourcing. I call your attention to Acts 6. At the opening of this chapter, we find the disciples, let's think of them as the Board of Disciples, exercising leadership of the church. A problem has been brought to their attention; the Grecian widows are being overlooked in the distribution of food. How many times does

Scripture instruct God’s people to take care of the widows and orphans? In this case the widows are clearly not receiving proper care.

One would expect that the Board of Disciples would drop everything to take care of this need that is clearly mandated by Scripture, but surprisingly they characterize feeding the widows as “waiting on tables,” declaring that it would not be right from them to divert their attention away from their primary responsibility, that of the ministry of the Word and prayer, spiritual leadership. At the same time, however, recognizing that the widows do in fact need to be fed, they empower a ministry team, led by Stephen, to take care of this need. Reading between the lines one can envision a kind of community chest of resources from which the disciples allocate what’s needed to meet this need. Empowering this ministry team and perhaps providing the means could be thought of as strategic resourcing.

The text goes on to say that the Word of God continued to spread and that many came to faith in Jesus Christ. Imagine what would have happened if the Board of Disciples, in their well-meaning and biblically mandated care of the widows, had diverted their focus away from the ministry of the Word and prayer to “wait on tables.” Would the Word of God have continued to spread? Would many have come to faith in Jesus Christ?

Structural leaders need to shift their focus from administration and finance to spiritual leadership and strategic resourcing, supporting vision and strategy with the leadership and resources needed to fulfill God’s vision of seeking and saving the lost.

The Transfer of Authority to Vision

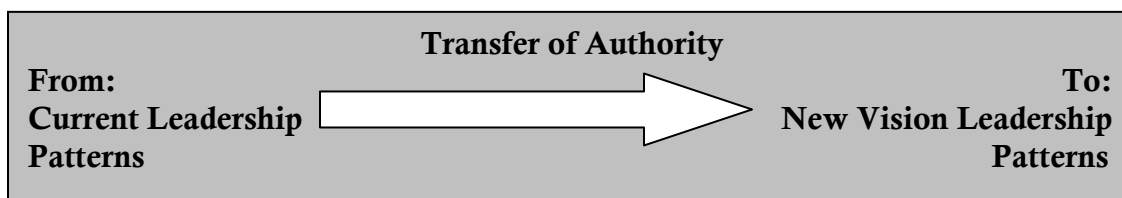


Figure 26

Since most structural leadership gives authority to administration and finance, a transfer of authority must take place, transferring authority from Current Leadership Patterns to New Vision Leadership Patterns (*Figure 26*). Structural leadership invests its authority differently depending on whether a church is in Incline, Recline or Decline.

Leaders of Inclining churches tend to place authority in the vision that launched the most recent season of Incline. They will need to **ReVision**, or transfer authority currently vested in the former vision to a newly discerned vision. Leaders of Reclining churches tend to place authority in the programs that predominate during seasons of Recline. They will need to **ReProgram**, or transfer authority vested in those programs to the newly discerned vision. Leaders of Declining churches tend to place authority in the structure itself, the structure that predominates during seasons of Decline. They will need to **ReStructure**, or transfer authority vested in that structure to the newly discerned vision.

The Transfer of Authority to Strategy

With God’s vision in the authoritative driver’s seat, how is structural authority vested in strategy? As discussed in *Aligning Strategy*, strategy flows out of vision in the form of the Progression of M-PACT Group Development connecting with Key M-PACT Ministries to create an M-PACT Action Plan (see *Figure 27*).

M.A.P. Zoom In	
PyraMiD	KMM 1
Multiplier	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Leader	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Servant	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Disciple	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Convert	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3
Contact	Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategy 3

Figure 27

Structural leadership is now called upon to supply the needed spiritual leadership and strategic resourcing to deploy each strategy that is part of the M-PACT Action Plan. For example, in Key M-PACT Ministry 1, what is needed in the way of spiritual leadership and strategic resourcing for Contact Strategy 1 to be effective, Contact Strategy 2, Contact Strategy 3, Convert Strategy 1, Convert Strategy 2, etc.? This puts structural leadership in the middle of hands-on ministry and not in an isolated meeting room pouring over an agenda of administration and finance.

Aligning Vision, Aligning Strategy and Aligning Structure, pictured in graphic form (see *Figure 28*) reveals how these three core phases of revitalization fit together. Notice that Structure gives ultimate support, not authoritarian rule.

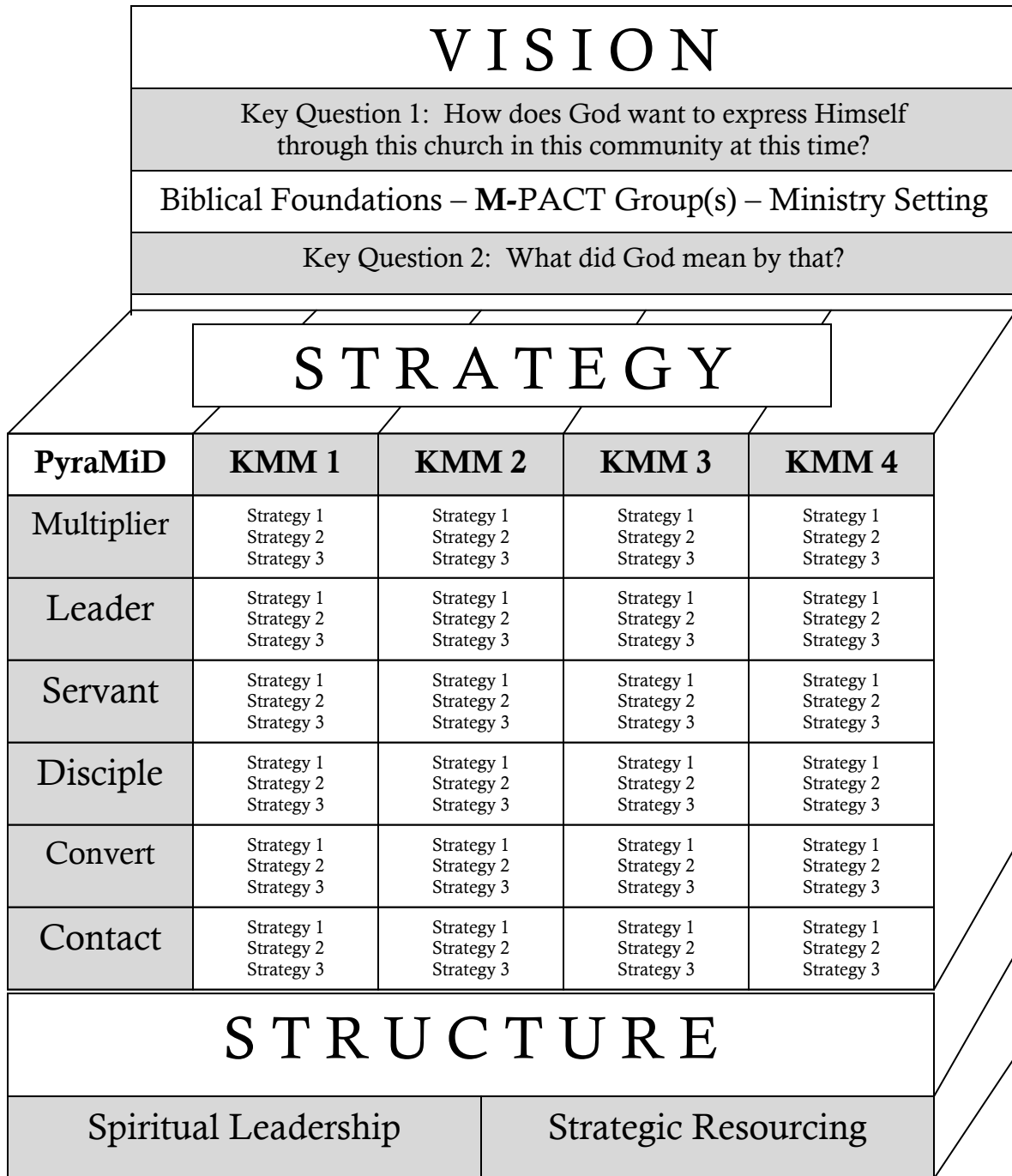


Figure 28

Phase 5 – Aligning People

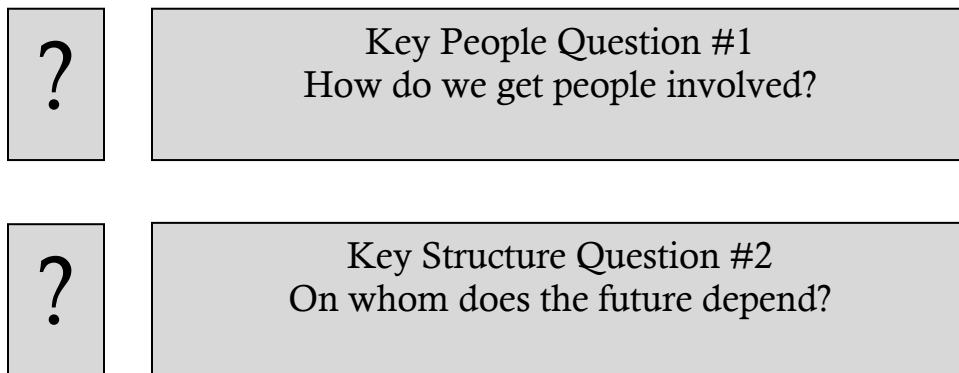


Figure 29

We have considered the first four Phases of Revitalization: 1. Aligning Perception, 2. Aligning Vision, 3. Aligning Strategy, and 4. Aligning Structure. This brings us to the final phase, Aligning People. The King James Version tells us that without a vision the people will perish. Equally true is the fact that without the people, the vision will perish.

Key People Question #1 is, “How do we get people involved?” Involvement begins by recognizing the various people and groupings of people that must be brought into the revitalization effort. The people of revitalization include the pastor/leader and staff, lay leaders, the Vision Team, the people of the congregation and the people of the community who are to be reached – the M-PACT Group. As vision and strategy develop, a Launch Team is formed, and it is helpful if a “Third Party” is engaged for ongoing consultation. People alignment is the deliberate and consistent practice of connecting people to the vision in order that they might give authority to the vision and “own” the vision. This ownership is demonstrated by their support and sacrifice in their commitment to the fulfillment of the newly discerned vision.

The People of Revitalization

1. Pastor/Leader
2. Other Leaders: Lay/Staff
3. The Vision Team
4. The People of the Congregation
5. The People of the Community
6. The Launch Team
7. The Third Party

**Without a vision,
the people will perish.
Without the people,
a vision will perish.**

See Proverbs 29:18 KJV

In considering the lineup of people, notice that first on the list is the pastor. It’s very simple. If the pastor is not one hundred percent engaged in revitalization, leading the way, revitalization is not going to happen. I know this because in the past, there have been

occasions when it was deemed best for someone other than the pastor to serve as the point person for revitalization. It could have been that the pastor's plate was full, it could have been that some other leader seemed to have a better skill set to serve in this role, or it could have been for some other reason. Regardless of the rationale, revitalization did not happen. If revitalization is not important enough to have the pastor's full effort and attention, then it's not important enough for the congregation to give it priority and make the sacrifices necessary for revitalization to succeed. So, the first person to engage is the pastor along with the pastoral and ministry staff.

Next are lay leaders, those who sit in the position of decision-maker, likely officers and ministry team leaders. There must be unity at the upper levels of leadership that is clearly evident throughout the congregation. The pastor, combined with a number of these leaders, will form a Vision Team. This team holds the primary responsibility for overseeing congregational assessment, discerning and articulating God's vision for the church, and identifying the first Key M-PACT Ministries. In order for the vision to have the authority it needs, the primary governing and decision-making body of the church should be well represented on the Vision Team.

With pastor, leaders, and Vision Team committed to revitalization, the congregation will be brought into the revitalization process as there must be widespread commitment to revitalization throughout the church. It's tempting at this point to think that all of the people bases are covered with pastor, leaders and congregation engaged, but there is another very important group of people to consider, the community, or more distinctly, the M-PACT Group. Though the M-PACT Group is yet to be reached, it's important that the M-PACT Group's "voice" is clearly being heard by those who are developing vision and strategy, and by the congregation at large that should be turning from an inreach to an outreach perspective. A major step toward effective revitalization is placing community need and interest above congregational need and interest.

As the Vision Team completes its initial assignments of assessment, vision and Key M-PACT Ministry identification, other leaders, people from the congregation, and perhaps even a few people from the community connect with the Vision Team to form a Launch Team. This team is responsible for developing and implementing the strategies within the KMMs that will move people through the Progression of M-PACT Group Development to make Contacts, Converts, Disciples, Servants, Leaders and Multipliers.

Finally, there is the advantage of engaging a "Third Party." This is a person outside of the church who is experienced in revitalization and who serves as an objective voice for consultation and training reinforcement. I typically serve in this third party role with pastors and Vision Teams that I have trained.

Four Dimensions of Change

Change is a complicated undertaking and I have no intention here of trying to explain all of the intricacies of leading a congregation through change fully, but I do want to point out four key dimensions of change.

Dimension 1: The Willingness to Change: Church leaders who endeavor to see change in their congregations often embrace a mindset that considers the willingness of the congregation to change as the beginning and end of the change process. It is not. At best, it's a beginning. Certainly we want our people to be willing to change, but willingness to change usually operates in the theoretical, the hypothetical. A new vision requiring change is put on the table for consideration, and we hope that our people will be willing. Many appear to be willing and even express their willingness to change, but this is before the fact, before the change has actually happened. In essence, people at this stage of the process are saying that when the change comes, they will be willing to receive it. This attitude typically precedes the change chronologically and holds sway until the change actually happens. At this point, many of the "willing" express that the change isn't what they thought it would be, or didn't turn out quite the way they wanted, or that they thought they could handle the change but now find they can't. This leads into the second dimension.

Dimension 2: The Ability to Change: There are those in the congregation who will be genuinely willing to change, perhaps many, who find that when the change actually is put in place they can't handle it. The change in reality differs from the change they had in mind. The change in music style made sense on paper, but when it actually arrives, it doesn't work for them. I've heard remarks such as, "When you said the music was going to be loud, I didn't think it would be *that* loud!" Sincere, well-meaning people can be willing to change but not able to change. When this happens a kind of buyer's remorse sets in and people withdraw their support from the vision.

Dimension 3: The Substance of Change: Change has two sides: 1. what we're changing from, and 2. what we're changing to. Side 1, what we're changing from, is much easier to deal with because it's known by everyone. Leaders and congregation have been experiencing the old for years and are intimately acquainted with its look, feel, sound, etc. When the old is clearly not working, many, most or even all can come to agreement that the church must change *from* what it's doing now. Let's say the discussion concerns music style, always a hot button issue. Ten people on a team recognize that there is a need to change from the current style and when a vote is taken, ten hands go up in agreement, "Yes, we need to change *from* our current style."

With that decision made, the discussion as to what to change *to* ensues and, guess what, there are ten different opinions as to what music style the church should change *to*. Changing *from* is always simpler and easier than changing *to*.

Dimension 4: The Pace of Change: This final dimension of change concerns how much change a congregation can handle and how fast. This is a function of knowing the people of the congregation and having a sense of what they can handle and what they can't. Of course, this will vary from congregation to congregation, and the limits are often discovered by trial and error. The rule of thumb would be to push the change envelope as far as possible without causing major mutiny in the church. Leaders will often need to lead without full congregational affirmation, but efforts need to be made to be considerate of people while not slowing the vision down. A key factor in the pace is the strength of the revitalizing church. The church that is deeply down the backside of the lifecycle needs to

change quickly, and yet it's the severely declined congregation that is most resistant to change.

Change is always complicated, even in the best case scenarios. It's far better to embrace change as a *choice* rather than as a response to *crisis*. Leaders and their congregations should position themselves to change because they want to and not because they have to. In other words, they should be willing to fix what's not broken. Change should be connected to what's best for the vision to seek and save the lost to flourish, not as a last ditch effort for survival.

Four Types of People

Change is a complicated process and people are complicated creatures. The relationship between the two is infinitely complex and worthy of volumes of material, but I want to highlight one aspect of this relationship in general terms that I have simply named *Four Types of People*.

Type 1: Theorists: The theorist is the type of person who is able to consider a proposal or proposition, in this case the vision, in its theoretical or conceptual form and buy in. The idea is sufficient if that idea is compelling and if projecting that idea into the future promises the likely impact that the theorist desires. If the theory or concept or vision sounds right, looks right on paper, and resonates with the heart and mind of the theorist, then the theorist is able to commit without further study, evidence or demonstration. The theorist is likely to be the first on board with a new vision. The upside of the theorist is this quick response. The downside is that the theorist might quickly shift to the next good idea that comes along.

Type 2: Realists: Unlike the theorist, the realist is not able to commit to a theory, an idea, or a concept. The realist needs reality. "Show me what this looks like in real life," insists the realist. For example, if the new vision to reach a particular M-PACT Group calls for a change in music style, the theorist will grasp that idea as valid and will dive in. The realist will want to experience the new approach in real life in real time. He or she will want to attend services for a season to see the new style musicians and singers on the platform. What songs are used? How many songs are used in a particular service? Does this new style use choir with organ or piano, or does it use an instrumental ensemble with a few singers? Are the singers on microphones? How loud is the music? These and other questions are on the mind of the realist, and so the realist will need to experience the new over a period of time in order to determine whether or not to commit. The realist will not join in before the fact as the theorist will, but is likely to be the second on board with the new vision. The upside of the realist is that by committing to something that is known, the commitment of the realist is strong. The downside is the challenge of providing the realist with the experience needed to buy in early in the vision process.

Type 3: Pragmatists: The pragmatist is not moved by the theory or the reality of the new vision. The pragmatist is moved by the results. "Show me that this works," challenges the pragmatist who is not compelled by the idea, not compelled by the experience, but is compelled when the new vision begins to bear fruit. In the case of a new revitalization

vision, that fruit would be in the form of new energy and vitality in the church, newcomers visiting the church, and newcomers responding through conversion and/or getting involved in the church. The pragmatist will respond much later than the theorist or the realist as time must elapse before results can be measured. The upside of the pragmatist is that conviction is high when results have been seen. The downside is that working with the pragmatist is something of a Catch-22; the pragmatist must see results in order to buy in, but it will prove challenging to get those results without the help the pragmatist could provide on the front end.

Type 4: Preservationists: The preservationist is so attached to the history, traditions and conventions of the church that he or she is not moved by the idea, the experience, or the results, even if those results are favorable. The preservationist wants church to be one way, the “way we’ve always done it,” thinking *that* way to be the *right* way, and is not going to support the new vision. At best, the preservationist will prove to be benign as it relates to moving the vision forward. At worst, the preservationist will work against the new vision, accusing the vision of being a “compromise” with accompanying righteous indignation. The preservationist is not going to get on board with the new vision. The upside of the preservationist is a long term commitment to the church and long term support of the church. The downside is that the influence held by the preservationist might be used to work against the vision and support might be withdrawn.

Key People Question #2 is, “On whom does the future depend?” Remember that the Inclining church is Future-Oriented, always looking ahead and making decisions today based on their implications for tomorrow. So the Inclining church, in thinking about the involvement of people, must consider its investment in people in line of the implications of that investment for the future.

Aligning Insiders & Newcomers: A Surprising Contingency

In the thinking of church leaders as they embrace revitalization, particularly leaders of churches on the backside of the lifecycle, there is a contingency that is typically in place by default. That contingency is the belief that before the church can move toward the future, toward the new vision, all of those currently involved in the church must be on board with the new vision. In other words, leaders position the vision as contingent on congregational buy in and support. Pastors and leaders work tirelessly to get everyone on board, hesitating to move forward until everyone has given his or her consent.

This is an understandable posture, but it’s absolutely lethal for the new vision. The congregation is made up of theorists, realists, pragmatists, and preservationists. Only the theorists will join in before the vision becomes visible. Later realists will engage once they have an opportunity to experience the manifestations of the vision. Still later, in fact much later, pragmatists will come on board as early returns on the vision investment are seen. And typically the preservationists will never truly own the vision. So, the church that waits for unanimous approval of the new vision goes nowhere as leaders wear themselves out trying to do the impossible.

There is a better way, and that better way begins by understanding that there is a contingency, but it's a surprising contingency, the reverse of the contingency church leaders typically embrace by default. The surprising contingency is the realization that once the new vision begins to reach new people, proving its validity, the reluctant people of the church will get on board. In other words, it's not, "Once we get the congregation on board we can begin to reach the community," it's "Once we begin to reach the community the congregation will get on board."

My first encounter with this contingency came early in my initial call into revitalization ministry. With a background in church planting, I was recruited into an "experiment." The question being asked by regional leaders was, "What would happen if we put a church planter with the remnant of a severely declined church, declared that remnant to be the core of a new church, and started all over as if this were a church planting scenario?" I felt the call of God, grabbed this hypothesis, moved the family two thousand miles and became the pastor of an eighty-seven year old church with a remnant congregation of thirteen members.

As I began to work with this core group, I found that the attributes needed in the core of a new church were absent, while many of the attributes that were present were antithetical to launching a new church. I was on the field to reach the community, while the thirteen were looking for a pastor. In the early months, there was clearly a disconnection between what I was thinking and what they were thinking.

The decision to relocate the church had been made before my arrival, so I moved my family into the area that had been identified as the relocation area and I began to work in that community as a church planter would, meeting new people and talking about the launching of a new ministry. The congregation I served had leased its buildings and property to another church and met in a storefront just to have space, many miles away from the relocation area.

For seven months, I served in what I now call "schizophrenic" ministry, meeting with the thirteen in the storefront on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, and spending the bulk of my time in the new community searching for new people. At the seven month mark of my tenure, a middle school in the new area opened up for us to have a place to meet and we moved in, offering Sunday services in the new community for the first time.

For seven months I had operated in two fields. The thirteen didn't understand what I was up to and I didn't understand their reluctance to go after the community. They weren't sure about me and I wasn't sure about them. We were all well intentioned, but were clearly seeing ministry differently. But on that very first Sunday in the new community, twenty-seven newcomers came to the service, and this was two months before we had scheduled our official Grand Opening. When the thirteen saw the twenty-seven, everything changed. The congregational perspective went from, "What is Ken doing?" to "Wow! God is moving! How can we help? What's next?" It was then that I began to understand this surprising contingency. When leaders begin to reach the community the congregation gets on board!

Consider *Figure 31*, a depiction of the milestone scenario that is typical of how the surprising contingency unfolds as the HIGH M-PACT Revitalization effort develops. The Vision Team discerns God's Future Vision for the church with its accompanying Key M-PACT Ministries identification and begins to cast that vision. Notice that the Congregation is set off to the side, not standing in between the Vision Team and the Future Vision. Most church leaders would tend to place the Congregation in between, thinking that the Vision Team would have to work through the Congregation to get to the Future Vision. This would be old-contingency thinking. Instead, the Congregation is set off to the side, giving the Vision Team a clear shot at the Future Vision.

The Vision Team begins working toward Milestone #1, the point at which the theorists in the Congregation, and perhaps a theorist or two from the Community, join in with the Vision Team to begin building a Launch Team. With the Vision Team and the early adopting theorists as a Launch Team, the early strategies of one or two KMMs are put in place and the vision is launched. This propels the process toward Milestone #2. With some of the vision/strategy now on the field, the realists are able to experience the vision in its early form. Some of the realists from the Congregation, and perhaps a few from the Community, join in at this point. The Launch Team grows, enabling more of the vision/strategy to be put on the field. With time, the early returns on this vision/strategy investment begin to come in and the process moves toward Milestone #3, the point at which some of the pragmatists from the Congregation, and perhaps some from the Community, get on board. At this point, HIGH M-PACT Revitalization has become a movement and revitalization has begun as the Vision Team and a growing Launch Team from both the Congregation and the Community are putting more and more KMMs and strategies on the field and the church's ministry capacity is increasing. The church is on the Incline. Please note that there is no Milestone #4, the point at which the preservationists get on board. This won't happen, though some preservationists might eventually join in for reasons that supersede temperament.

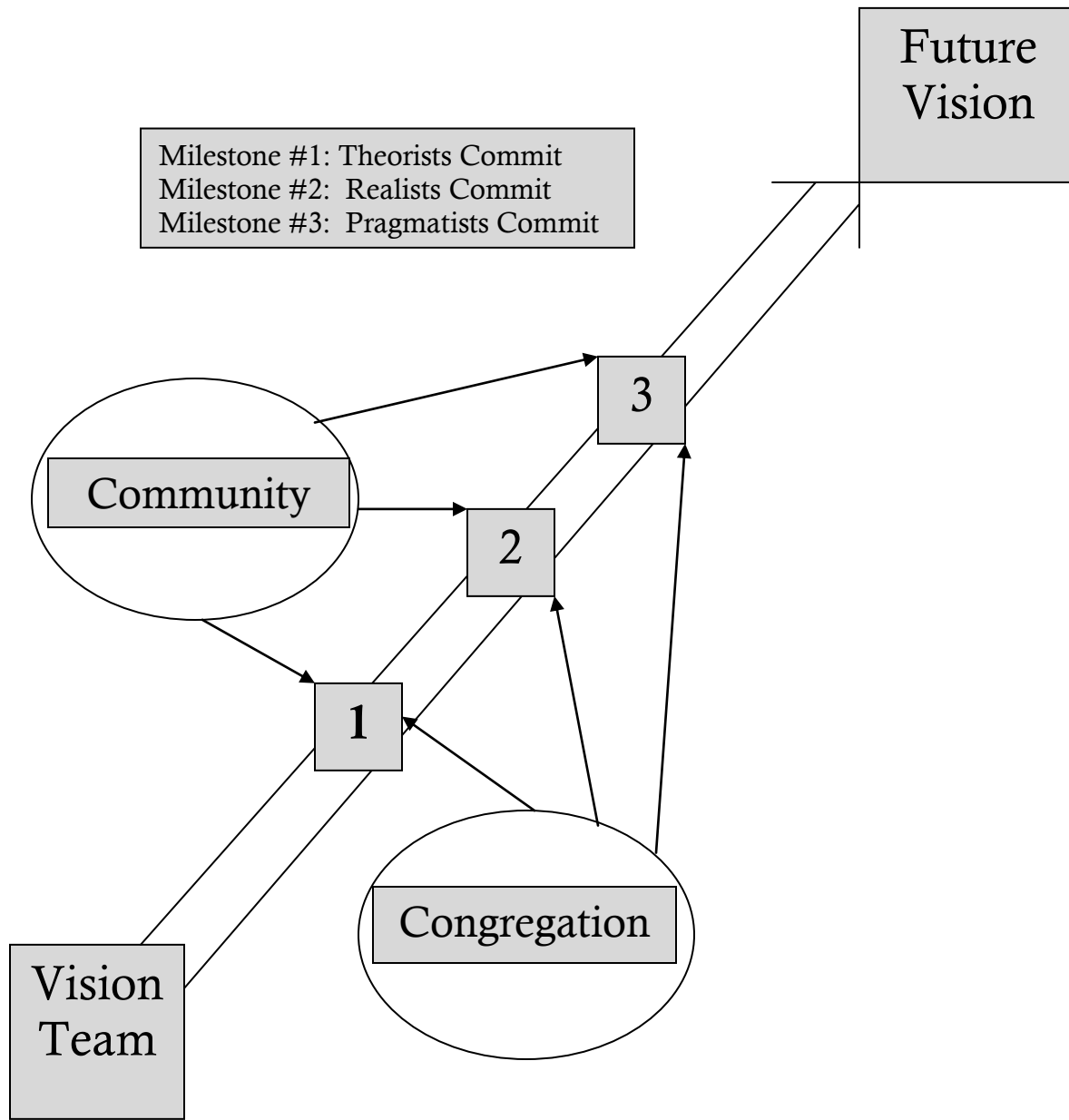


Figure 30

Given this understanding, it's apparent that the future of the church does not depend on its existing congregation. The future depends on a strong Vision Team with a well discerned godly vision working toward that future through an expanding Launch Team consisting of theorists, realists and pragmatists from both the Congregation *and* the Community. This collaborative movement reaches the lost in the community, growing the church, and the kingdom, by conversion, and expanding the church's ministry capacity. Incline is off and running.

Public Alignment of People

The alignment of people operates on two fronts: Public Alignment and Private Alignment. Understanding the distinctions between the two and their cooperative division of labor enables effective vision casting.

Public Alignment of People Requires High Visibility. The revitalization vision and process must be given high visibility within the church so that even the most lightly engaged attendee will see, hear and sense that the revitalization effort is at the center of the church's ministry focus. Banners, mailings, e-mailings, updates, testimonies, special features, announcements, etc., should be constant fare throughout the church and its ministries; the more the better.

Public Alignment of People Requires Repeated Communication. There is no such thing as too much communication when it comes to the HIGH M-PACT Revitalization vision and process. Those who are fully engaged in the process, such as the Vision Team and perhaps other ministry leaders, are up to date on all the latest developments, and constant repetition seems redundant or even insulting from the standpoint of those most involved. The truth is, though, that to those not so intimately involved, these multiple communications don't leave a lasting impression. It is necessary to inform and promote again and again and again. *Never* think that enough communication has been provided. *Always* communicate one more time, and then another.

Public Alignment Gives No Ultimatum: The typical pastor and leadership team that develops a new vision for a church works behind the scenes to accomplish its objective. Typically, the vast majority of people throughout the congregation, leaders, servants, members, and attendees, remain largely in the dark, perhaps knowing that something is in the works, but having little to do with the new vision's development and little to no input into its formation.

Once formed, the new vision is rolled out during an event that might be called, "Vision Night." The Vision Night Banquet endeavors to draw everyone together for the unveiling. A large gathering ensues with introductory speeches and a three-course meal as prelude to the vision presentation. The ninety-minute presentation goes off without a hitch, complete with charts, graphs, video and photos in a multi-media wave designed for maximum effect. Following a Grand Finale, an ultimatum is given. People are asked to commit to the new vision and to demonstrate that commitment by raising a hand, standing, coming to the front, signing a commitment card, or even pledging money.

The problem is that those being asked to make a commitment are not ready to do so. They have not experienced the journey that the team has. They have little sense of context when it comes to the new vision. They are confused by receiving so much information in one setting, and yet they feel guilty if they don't join the party. Typically, they respond to the ultimatum by crossing the line that's been drawn in the sand, publically offering support that they are not ready to give. They resent being put on the spot and they are likely to let

their support slip away as soon as they can find a way out. This is hardly the way to get Incline off the ground.

Private Alignment of People

This brings us to the private alignment of people, shifting the focus from *platform* communication to *relational* communication. Private alignment takes a slower pace, but gets more people on board in the long run, strengthening support for the vision and minimizing desertion from the vision on the back end. Leading a congregation through change is actually a misnomer. Leaders don't move a congregation through change as a single body. One person at a time is moved until more people are on the side of new vision than are not. At that point, the congregation has moved through change, but has done so one person at a time.

Private Alignment of People Requires Conversation - Not Presentation: The place to begin with relational communication is conversation, not presentation. Save the platform with a large audience for another day. One-on-one or very small group conversation is the best setting to begin casting vision. The vision should be covered in dialogue, making sure that the journey that has been taken is shared, not just the destination that's been reached. Help those in the church who have not been on the inside vision track understand the challenges that have been faced, the problems that have been addressed, the issues that have been raised, and the reasons behind the decisions that have been made regarding vision. It's not enough to communicate the "what." You must also communicate the "why."

Private Alignment of People Requires Answering Questions and Removing Obstacles: A question from a puzzled congregant is not a challenge to the vision; it's an investment in understanding. Unanswered questions prevent people from making strong commitments of support. Every question asked is an opportunity for communicating and building support, so questioning is to be encouraged. The same question asked again and again reveals a weakness in communication that can be strengthened. The vision caster should always inquire, "What questions do you have?"

In close proximity to the answering of questions is the removing of obstacles. The wise vision caster will ask, "What's standing in the way of your supporting the vision?" Once identified, the obstacle can likely be removed, paving the way to support for the vision. In short, people need to know what they are supporting and why, and having their questions answered or their obstacles removed creates maximum opportunity for support to be granted.

Private Alignment Gives Opportunity for Commitment: It's in the private setting that vision casters can offer the opportunity for someone to commit to the vision. After the vision has been given high visibility and repeated communication in the public setting, and after conversations that include the answering of questions and the removing of obstacles have taken place in the private setting, the time is ripe for commitment. Far from an ultimatum, this commitment opportunity is the culmination of prudent vision casting,

allowing a person to make a fully informed commitment to a rightly discerned godly vision. The Vision Team is offering people the opportunity to serve God well in moving His vision for the church forward. There is no greater honor that leaders can bestow on those for whom they are spiritually and strategically responsible.

Private Alignment Leverages the Divide & Serve Principle: Divide & Serve is an adaptation of Divide & Conquer. As leaders, it's not our goal to conquer people in our quest for vision support, but it is our goal to gather them into a force for vision in the seeking and saving of the lost. Divide & Serve recognizes the challenge of group vision casting and chooses to divide the large group into its component parts, ideally one person at a time. Large groups are dominated by large group dynamics. You know how this works. A presentation is made before a large group of church people. There are those in the large group that will always speak up, while others align themselves with the key influencers. Others will never speak up, leaving leaders always wondering what they really think.

The group dynamic and its high risk reactions can be avoided by working with people one-on-one rather than in the *town hall*. Negative influencers are not given a platform, and the quietest of the quiet has the opportunity to voice opinions and ask questions that he or she would never mention in a group.

Let me paint a picture of a typical Divide & Serve session. Two people from the congregation join me for lunch. In between ordering and being served, I say something such as, "Let me bring you up to speed on what's going on in our Vision Team meetings." With their attention now focused on the vision, I inform them that we have considered this issue and that issue, this question and that question, this opportunity and that opportunity. I share the struggles that we have had, perhaps even including a disagreement or two. I'm sharing the journey with them. Once I've laid out a vision proposition I ask, "What do you think? Could you see our church heading in this direction?" Once responses are forthcoming, I might continue with questions such as, "If our church were to go in this direction, could you see yourself getting behind this vision? What role might you play?"

In this conversational way I'm helping them see the vision and understand the *what* and the *why*. I'm answering questions and removing obstacles and placing them in the vision. Most importantly I'm listening, and giving no ultimatum.

Public alignment and private alignment, properly working in tandem, will bring people in the congregation to the point of committing to God's vision. Save the Vision Night Banquet until there is strong support for vision, and use it to celebrate the commitment that's already been made, not to sell the vision.

Sustaining Health, Growth & Multiplication

Church revitalization is not an event in the life of a church, it's a commitment to a *lifestyle* for a church. Without regular analysis and adjustment of Vision, Strategy and Structure, the younger church will again stall and the older church will again lapse into plateau or decline. *Vision Vigilance* is a must!

The Revitalization Cycle – Vision Vigilance/Lifecycle Intervention

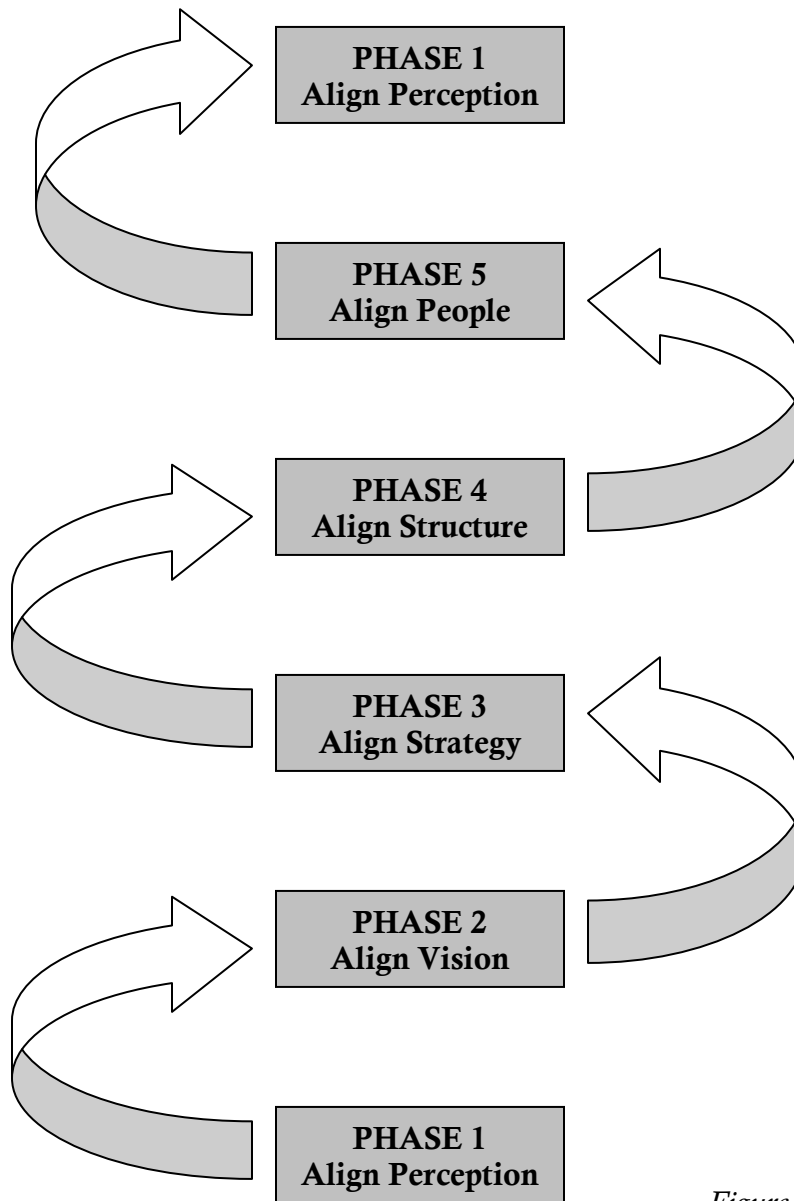


Figure 32

The church lifecycle is a journey from birth to growth to plateau to decline to death, or as HIGH M-PACT Revitalization tracks it, from Emerging Incline to Developed Incline to Emerging Recline to Developed Recline to Emerging Decline to Developed Decline. It's an inevitable journey if human nature with its preference for status quo is allowed to prevail. However, if church leadership commits to vision vigilance, lifecycle intervention in the form of HIGH M-PACT Revitalization will prompt church leadership to maintain a spiritual and strategic edge that stacks seasons of Incline on top of seasons of Incline, creating an ever expanding ministry capacity and an Incline that sustains.

The Revitalization Cycle (see *Figure 32*) works its way from Phase 1: Align Perception to Phase 2: Align Vision to Phase 3: Align Strategy to Phase 4: Align Structure to Phase 5: Align People, and through intervention places the church's ministry back in Phase 1: Align Perception for re-assessment and then realignment of Vision, Strategy, Structure, and People. More than a simple cycle, this is an upward spiral that consistently evaluates ministry to keep it moving on the Incline indefinitely. And with each re-assessment, ministry is refined as moderate revitalization adjustments are made. In theory, Incline could extend forever as long as routine assessments and alignments are made.

Think of it this way; church leadership wouldn't dream of operating this year's ministry on last year's budget, so a budget for the coming year is prepared every year. Why not consider a yearly assessment of ministry that keeps vision, strategy, structure and people in sync with God's unfolding plan for a church?

Leadership Effectiveness Factors

Frequent reassessment and realignment requires aggressive leadership that is not afraid to fix what's not broken and is not afraid to lead without affirmation. The most productive phase of the church lifecycle is Developed Incline followed by Emerging Recline. During these phases, ministry capacity is growing, both the present and the future appear to be in great shape, and the church is growing through a combination of both conversion and transfer growth. It's in the midst of this apparent prime time that leadership must embrace HIGH M-PACT Revitalization, intervening even in good times to make needed adjustments to stay on the path of health, growth and multiplication. In order to do this, several Leadership Effectiveness Factors will come into play.

Factor 1: Establish a Leadership Culture. For years the concept of the servant leader has been around, and most pastors and leaders have embraced this concept theologically, and, after all, Jesus Himself came as a humble servant, and yet He was and is our most dynamic leader. However, my observation of pastors and leaders has led me to the conclusion that the servant leader concept is not seen as two equally strong threads that are entwined with one another to produce something even stronger. Rather, these two are seen not in tandem but in continuum, with servant at one end of the continuum and leader at the other. The closer one moves toward leader, then, the less he serves, and the closer one moves toward servant, the less he leads.

It seems that most pastors and leaders in our day are more committed to serving than leading, having bought into a church culture that sees its leaders as those who serve by providing all that a congregation needs and wants. But this is not servant leadership; this is not leadership at all, and there is no biblical justification for shepherds who follow rather than lead the sheep.

For health, growth and multiplication to sustain, establishing a biblical leadership culture is vital. Leaders need to lead, not follow, they need to be decisive, willing to go with the minority report, and they need to take people where they should go, not where they typically want to go. The servant leader is not autocratic or authoritarian, but proactively grabs leadership responsibility by the horns and fearlessly serves God in moving His vision for the church forward. Such leaders are in ample supply in the Scriptures; Noah, Moses, Joshua, Abraham, Joseph, Samuel, Deborah, Ezra, Nehemiah, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul and, of course, Jesus. An effective church that sustains health, growth and multiplication must be a church where servant leaders *lead*.

Factor 2: Establish a Leadership Selection Process. Solid servant leaders don't happen by accident. They happen as the Spirit of God grants leadership gifts to those God would have serve as leaders in combination with a ministry process that recognizes those gifts and calls these emerging leaders into service. Revitalized churches that desire to sustain health, growth and multiplication create a leadership selection process that actively identifies and calls emerging leaders into leadership ministry.

This process will vary from church to church and from denomination to denomination, depending on polity and ministry organization, but several elements must be present for effectiveness. First, leaders must be in prayer concerning new leaders that will emerge. Second, ministry capacity must always be expanding, creating the need for more and more leaders to emerge. Third, proper servant leadership must be modeled throughout the congregation so that the church body will know and understand what authentic servant leadership looks like. Fourth, those who would lead must first prove they will serve. Fifth, the church must not shy away from sending its leaders, even its best leaders, out from the church to serve elsewhere in the work of the kingdom.

Factor 3: Establish a Leadership Equipping Process. Emerging servant leaders need to be equipped for servant leadership ministry. A dynamic equipping process must be established to provide what's needed to disciple emerging leaders into service. As with a selection process, the equipping process will vary church to church and denomination to denomination, but certain elements must be present. First, as much training as possible should be conducted on the field in on-the-job-training scenarios. Leadership is not developed in a classroom; it's developed on the field in real life applications. Second, leadership should progress from: 1. Leadership of Self to: 2. Leadership in the Home to: 3. Leadership in the Church. Leadership of Self is centered on spiritual disciplines as the emerging leader becomes self-feeding and self-accountable. Leadership in the Home is centered on being a servant leader in the living context, whether as a member of a family or as a person living with others, such as a single adult living with other single adults. With

solid Leadership of Self and Leadership in the Home in place, the emerging leader is ready to begin serving through Leadership in the Church.

Third, emerging leaders must become well versed in Scripture and its application to life. Fourth, these emerging leaders must prove themselves faithful in small things before they are given responsibility for weightier matters. Finally, the church that would sustain health, growth and multiplication will continue to expand its ministry capacity through leaders who are skilled at developing other leaders. Each time a new leader is added to the ministry, the capacity expands, Incline is strengthened, and the church becomes more effective at seeking and saving the lost.

Evaluation & Accountability – Part 1 – Design & Development

HIGH M-PACT Revitalization must become a church culture, a lifestyle in the church that pervades ministry and continues year after year. When this occurs, health, growth and multiplication will sustain for the long run. This culture of HIGH M-PACT Revitalization will not develop or take root by accident but by an uncompromising commitment on the part of leaders to ongoing spiritual renewal and strategic initiative. To stay on course, leaders must establish evaluation and accountability procedures that keep a watchful eye on the progress of ministry impact. The following components are vital to such procedures.

Ministry M-PACT Objectives (MMOs): In observing the behaviors of hundreds of churches, I have discovered a commitment to Ministry by Activity. The evaluation of ministry is based on the hosting of ministry activities. As long as an activity is marked on the calendar and presented at the appropriate place and time, leaders assume that the church has done its job by making the activity available to whoever would attend. By hosting more and more activities, leaders assume that they are providing a lost community with multiple opportunities to respond, that is if the lost are on the radar screen at all. If the lost, or even the found, choose not to attend, the burden is on them for passing up the opportunity.

Ministry by Activity is sure to generate low impact in terms of reaching the lost. The HIGH M-PACT church is not committed to Ministry by Activity but is committed to Ministry by M-PACT Objectives. With the vision discerned and the M-PACT Action Plan complete, and with the identification of Key M-PACT Ministries and the strategies that will be operated in those KMMs, leaders must begin to move people to Contact, Convert, Disciple, Servant, Leader and Multiplier through the reaching of M-PACT objectives, not through the simple hosting of activities. M-PACT objectives must be clearly identified and every aspect of ministry must be held accountable to the reaching of those objectives. Once this mindset takes hold, evaluation and accountability of any given ministry are well within reach through a few simple questions: What are the M-PACT Objectives? Is this ministry reaching its M-PACT Objectives? Why or why not?

Ministry M-PACT Competencies: With the M-PACT Action Plan developed and Ministry M-PACT Objectives identified, leaders must assess what competencies are needed to carry out the MAP and meet the MMOs. In most churches, inreach competencies are at

a higher level than outreach competencies. For example, many in the typical church have high level competency in the skill of Bible study, but few have high level competency in the skill of sharing the faith. Needed competencies to execute the MAP and reach the MMOs must be identified and an assessment made as to the strength of both leaders and servants in those competencies.

Ministry M-PACT Training: Having identified needed competencies, training in those competencies must be developed. Where strength in a given competency is utterly lacking, it might be necessary to go outside of the church to find training in that competency, but at some point all necessary competency training should generate from within the church as leadership at large develops the competency of self-training.

Ministry M-PACT Documentation: A consistent process of Ministry M-PACT Documentation must be developed in order to track the progress, or the impact, that each ministry, particularly KMMs, is having. Again, HIGH M-PACT is much more than hosting ministry activities. HIGH M-PACT is reaching spiritual and strategic Ministry M-PACT Objectives. Progress in ministry must be documented so that there is clear evidence of a given ministry's impact, i.e. that ministry's reaching of its MMOs.

Evaluation & Accountability – Part 2 – Analysis & Adjustment

Having designed and developed systems and processes concerning Ministry M-PACT Objectives, Ministry M-PACT Competencies, Ministry M-PACT Training and Ministry M-PACT Documentation, these processes and systems must be fully deployed and utilized, and must be routinely evaluated and held accountable. Evaluation and accountability processes and systems are pointless if not applied aggressively and faithfully. Three bottom line issues are the focus of this evaluation and accountability. Note the connection between these considerations and our discussion earlier concerning the identification of Key M-PACT Ministries and the practice of DeProgramming.

Meeting of Ministry M-PACT Objectives: First and foremost, are the spiritual and strategic Ministry M-PACT Objectives being met? If not, why not? What adjustments need to be made to strengthen this ministry area's effectiveness? Are there issues of personnel, time and place, content, presentation, resources, etc.? Are the objectives on target? Are they measurable, reachable by the grace of God? In terms of objectives, what's going on in this ministry area and why?

Quantifying of Ministry M-PACT Fruit: Closely related to the Meeting of Ministry M-PACT Objectives is the Quantifying of Ministry M-PACT Fruit. All ministries must be fruit bearing, whether that fruit is spiritual, strategic or both. This fruit should be anticipated and expected, though leaders must always remain open to God's moving beyond or outside of our expectations. The fruit, or results, of ministry must be tracked so that leaders are aware of the fruit that is being produced in each ministry area. In short: What are we expecting from our ministries? What are we getting from our ministries? If there is a negative gap between the answers to these two questions, adjustments are in order.

Counting the Costs of Ministry M-PACT: What is the relationship between the results that are being generated by a given ministry and the costs in terms of resources for that ministry? There should be a reasonable balance between the amount of resourcing that a ministry area receives and the amount of fruit being produced by that ministry. Where there is a negative gap between the amount of resourcing and the amount of fruit, again whether spiritual, strategic or both, adjustments are in order.

A Final Summary

Vision in the church is about discernment, not creativity. Church leaders are not to approach vision for their churches as if drawing on a blank canvas. The canvas is quite full with the brush strokes of God. That canvas is His Holy Word, the Bible. God's vision for the church is clear, and the role of church leaders is not to create or invent new vision for their churches, but to discern God's vision for the church at large, and then discern how that vision is to be applied in the contexts of their churches in their communities at the present time. To see God's vision is to first see God, and the place to begin is the understanding that God is a sovereign God with an eternal kingdom vision.

Church revitalization is the marriage of spiritual renewal to strategic initiative. My observation over the years is that most churches tend to approach revitalization through one or the other, but not both, rendering the attempt at revitalization incomplete. The spiritual without the strategic typically manifests as a spiritual pep rally, full of inspiration, passion and emotion, but void of cohesive action steps. The mountaintop experience wanes when back in the valley and true revitalization never transpires. On the other hand, the strategic without the spiritual typically grabs onto the methodology du jour, sometimes creating momentary statistical spiking, but failing to establish health and growth that will sustain.

HIGH M-PACT Revitalization is organized around five distinct phases that emphasize alignment and that build upon one another through Spiritual Renewal with Strategic Initiative: Aligning Perception, Aligning Vision, Aligning Strategy, Aligning Structure, and Aligning People. Aligning Perception is about self-discovery as church leaders determine where their church is on the lifecycle, and why, aligning their perception of their church with reality. Aligning Vision is about discerning God's vision for a church, building that vision on Biblical, Behavioral and Historical Foundations, the identification of an M-PACT Group, and the design of an appropriate Ministry Setting.

Aligning Strategy is about developing an M-PACT Action Plan that moves the church toward the fulfillment of God's vision. The MAP is the union of the Progression of M-PACT Group Development and Key M-PACT Ministries, and houses the strategies that drive the church's ministry toward achieving its Ministry M-PACT Objectives. Aligning Structure is about bringing the decision-making processes of the church into alignment with Vision and Strategy so that the M-PACT Action Plan receives the authority and support needed for maximum effectiveness. Finally, Aligning People is about casting vision, equipping and empowering people, both insiders and newcomers, so that lost people in the community, those in the M-PACT Group, are first reached and then engaged in reaching others.

The leadership that moves its church through these phases launches that church into a new season of Incline with the opportunity to expand its ministry capacity successfully, doing more and more ministry better and better over time, and fulfilling its vision of reaching the lost. To sustain this health, growth and multiplication, leadership will lead and not follow, and will create leadership selection and training processes. Through ongoing evaluation and accountability, the Inclining church will be fine tuned and adjusted to remain in alignment with God's unfolding vision as the church effectively joins the Son of Man as He seeks and saves the lost. Now that's HIGH M-PACT! That's a church that has learned how to fish!

COACHWORKS!

Implementation Guide

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

1. Catching a Vision of God: Seeing God – Seeing What God Sees

To capture God's vision for your church is first to capture a vision of God Himself. God is the vision. To capture God's vision for your church is next to capture a vision of God's vision for His kingdom, the Big Picture. Jesus promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and since the day of Pentecost the Spirit has been flowing like a river through, and yet beyond, time, carrying the history of redemption in its ever-moving current. Is your church in that current or is your church sitting on the bank as the river flows by? Simply put, are people coming to Christ through the ministry of your church? If not, why not?

Study the Catching a Vision of God chart and discuss its implications and applications for your church's ministry. Consider the following questions:

- What is God's Big Picture; what are His purposes from beginning to end?
- In what ways do the Scriptures and the contents of this chart address the vision of your church?
- What does this chart reveal concerning the importance of Scripture?
- What does this chart reveal concerning the importance of prayer?

Quote ... The thought of you (Lord) stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you. St. Augustine – *Confessions* – Book 1.1

Biblical Models

The serious student and practitioner of church revitalization is well advised to study the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther in their entirety, but for this exercise the focus will be greatly narrowed.

Study and discuss the implications and applications of Ezra 7:1-10, Nehemiah 1:1-11, and Esther 4:1-17 for your church's ministry. Consider the following questions:

- What is significant about Ezra's genealogy?
- What is significant about Ezra's being skilled in the Law of Moses?
- How is Ezra's role similar to that of Moses and Aaron?
- Why was God's hand on Ezra?
- How does the flow of Nehemiah 1 connect with the Five Phases of Revitalization?
- How does Nehemiah's petition to grant him mercy in the sight of the king connect with vision and strategy for revitalization?
- What is significant about Esther's royal position?
- What is to be learned from Esther's sacrificial commitment?

The Acts 2 – Ephesians 4 Church

The Church as Described in Acts 2

One might argue that the coming into being, or genesis, of the New Testament church in Acts 2 would suffice as the creation ordinance of the church. In other words, the description of the church in Acts might well be the genetic code of what the church is meant to be, much as the relationship described between Adam and Eve in Genesis serves as the foundation for what marriage is meant to be. **Could it be that the teaching in Acts 2 regarding the church is meant in some ways to be prescriptive, not just descriptive?** In his commentary regarding Acts 2:42-47, William Barclay says of this church:

It was a learning Church; it persisted in listening to the apostles as they taught. . . It was a Church of fellowship – togetherness – a band of brothers. . . It was a praying church . . . they were able to meet the problems of life because they had first met him. . . It was a reverent Church. The Christian lives in reverence (fear that has the idea of awe in it) because he knows that the whole earth is the temple of the living God. . . It was a Church where things happened; signs and wonders. Great expectations. It was a sharing Church; these early Christians had an intense feeling of responsibility for each other. . . It was a worshipping Church; they never forgot to visit God . . . It was a happy Church . . . It was a Church whose people others could not help liking. In the early Church there was a winsomeness in God's people (Ephesians pp. 30-31).

F.F. Bruce gives us another snapshot of first century Christianity, the standard by which the church today must still be evaluated. Bruce comments, “Three thousand added to the church following Peter's Pentecost sermon was partial fulfillment of Jesus' promise in John 14:12, ‘I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father’” (The Book of Acts p. 173). Clearly this is a model of a healthy church, not just a **description** but also a biblical **prescription**.

The Church as Described in Ephesians 4

Consider the four characteristics of the healthy church presented in Ephesians 4:1-16. First, *the healthy church is a unified church*. Verse 3 exhorts us to keep the unity of the Spirit. Our common bond is articulated in the confession of verses 4-6. G. G. Findlay writes of the significance of unity on the mission field and reminds us of how critical unity is:

In missionary fields, confronting the overwhelming forces and horrible evils of Paganism, the servants of Christ intensely realize their unity; they see how trifling in comparison are the things that separate the Churches, and how precious and deep are the things that Christians hold in common. It may need the pressure of some threatening outward force, the sense of a great peril hanging over Christendom to silence our contentions and compel the soldiers of Christ to fall into line and present to the enemy a united front (The Epistle to the Ephesians, p. 218).

Second, *the healthy church is a diversified church*. Verse 7 speaks of the varied apportionment of grace. Verse 11 identifies a variety of functions for some will serve as apostles, while others serve as prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers. And why do they serve in these various ways? Verse 12 tells us that these leaders are to prepare God's people for service.

Third, *the healthy church is a maturing church*. The goal of this God-given unity and diversity is described in verse 13 as becoming mature in our faith. This maturity concerns growing in the knowledge or theology of the faith, the discovery of each member's respective spiritual giftedness, and the application of that diverse giftedness for the benefit of God, his people, and those who will become his people in the spirit of love and unity.

Fourth, *the healthy church is a growing church*. Verse 16 gives us an image of an organic church in which each member of the body joins together with other members of the body and continues to grow. With Jesus as the head, the body grows corporately and its members, its body parts, grow individually. The picture is one of constant qualitative and quantitative growth. Verse 16 further explains that this growth is the product of each body member's doing its work. Francis Foulkes comments, "The *gifts* are the people. All, in their particular ministries, are God's gift to the church. . . . As it is, the apostle is not thinking of the ministers of Christ in their offices but rather according to their specific spiritual gifts and their work" (Ephesians p. 125).

The Acts 2 - Ephesians 4 Church

In combining Acts 2 with Ephesians 4, the description and prescription of the healthy church emerges. The healthy church is devoted to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2). The healthy church is unified, diversified, maturing, and growing (Ephesians 4). How is this possible? It is possible through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:33 states, "Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and poured out what you now see and hear." These are the words of Peter as he explains the spiritual phenomenon of Pentecost as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The same Holy Spirit is identified as "a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" in Ephesians 1:14 and is the one through whom grace is apportioned in Ephesians 4:7. Finally, the church grows as "the Lord adds to their number" (Acts 2:47), and "the whole body . . . grows and builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:16). How does the Lord add to the number? He moves in the minds and hearts of people through the Holy Spirit. How does the body grow and build itself up in love? These are products of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Five Be's of the Acts 2 – Ephesians 4 Church

Be Devoted! Be Unified! Be Diversified! Be Maturing! Be Growing!

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

2. Laying the Groundwork of Revitalization

The Vision Team is extremely important to HIGH M-PACT Revitalization and it's the pastor's responsibility to oversee the selection of the team. Certainly include others in the selection process as appropriate. The Vision Team is the group of leaders that is responsible for discerning God's vision for the church, developing that vision with its strategies, directing the congregation through the process of revitalization, and determining what evaluation and accountability systems must be in place to keep the church healthy, growing and multiplying. It is recommended that a team of six be selected as six is large enough for great synergy, and yet small enough to avoid bogging down in endless points of view. The Vision Team should ideally meet at least twice a month.

Vision Team Responsibilities:

- Discerning God's Vision for the Church
- Developing Corporate Vision & Strategy
- Directing the Church through the Renewal Process
- Determining Evaluation & Accountability

In selecting members for the Vision Team, there are four key characteristics that must be prayerfully considered. First, the team must be discerning, able to discern God's vision for the church. Vision is more about spiritual discernment than creativity. Second, the team must be visionary, able to translate the discerned vision that is seen into an applied reality. Third, the team must be spiritually mature, able to stand firm in the midst of resistance and able to lead an often reluctant congregation. Fourth, the team must be respected by the congregation and must have the credibility and authority to make decisions and move the church forward.

Vision Team Characteristics:

- Discerning
- Visionary
- Spiritually Mature
- Respected

Note: No one person might possess all of these characteristics, but each characteristic should be thoroughly reflected in the team as a whole.

Vision Team Selection Tool

Candidate: _____

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Discerning	1	2	3	4
Visionary	1	2	3	4
Mature	1	2	3	4
Respected	1	2	3	4

Vision Team Selection Tool (permission to photocopy for in-church use)

Candidate: _____

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Discerning	1	2	3	4
Visionary	1	2	3	4
Mature	1	2	3	4
Respected	1	2	3	4

Candidate: _____

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Discerning	1	2	3	4
Visionary	1	2	3	4
Mature	1	2	3	4
Respected	1	2	3	4

Candidate: _____

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Discerning	1	2	3	4
Visionary	1	2	3	4
Mature	1	2	3	4
Respected	1	2	3	4

Candidate: _____

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Discerning	1	2	3	4
Visionary	1	2	3	4
Mature	1	2	3	4
Respected	1	2	3	4

Candidate: _____

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Discerning	1	2	3	4
Visionary	1	2	3	4
Mature	1	2	3	4
Respected	1	2	3	4

Candidate: _____

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Discerning	1	2	3	4
Visionary	1	2	3	4
Mature	1	2	3	4
Respected	1	2	3	4

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

ACTION POINT: Use the following tool to recruit and register Prayer Teams:

VT _____
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VT _____
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Begin to discuss and consider the factors in Establishing Authority for Vision. More will be developed later under Phase 4: Aligning Structure.

Note: The Discernment Factor
 The Trust Factor
 The "Take-It-Back" Factor
 The Unity Factor

ACTION POINT: Use the following tool for an Ideal Pastor/Leader Self-Evaluation:

Circle the rating that best describes the pastor/leader's strength in each area:

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Attitude	1	2	3	4
Assurance	1	2	3	4
Accountability	1	2	3	4
Catalyst	1	2	3	4
Captain	1	2	3	4
Champion	1	2	3	4
Vision	1	2	3	4
Drive	1	2	3	4
Energy	1	2	3	4
Experience	1	2	3	4
Training	1	2	3	4
Support	1	2	3	4
Capacity	1	2	3	4
Health	1	2	3	4
People Skills	1	2	3	4
# Circled in Each Column				

Evaluation Workshop

What are your strengths? _____

What are your weaknesses? _____

How will you strengthen your weaknesses? _____

3. Five Phases of Revitalization

At this point in the revitalization process, simply recognize that the process is organized as a progression through these five phases. This same organizational motif drives the segments of this revitalization training. Each phase concerns alignment and should be understood as follows:

Phase 1: *Aligning Perception with Reality*. This is the assessment phase of the process with an emphasis on discovering and facing reality. Make sure that the congregation perceives itself and its circumstances as they actually are. This is an opportunity to look into the mirror and carefully examine the church and its ministry from all angles. The emphasis will be to discover where your church is on the lifecycle and why it is where it is. This will be the starting point of a new lifecycle of health, growth and multiplication.

Phase 2: *Aligning Vision with God's Vision*. Vision is about discernment, not creativity. The vision of any individual church must be in alignment with God's vision for the church at large, His kingdom vision for the church. Once God's vision for *the* church is discerned and understood, an application can be made concerning the vision of *a* church in a particular neighborhood at a particular point in time.

Phase 3: *Aligning Strategy with Vision*. Once God's vision for a church has been discerned, understood and articulated, a comprehensive strategy must be developed and implemented that is in alignment with that vision. Vision answers the questions "What are we trying to accomplish" and "Why." Vision speaks to purpose and motivation. Strategy examines the "What" and "Why" and determines the "How" and "When."

Phase 4: *Aligning Structure with Vision and Strategy*. With Vision and Strategy determined and placed in proper alignment, Structure must then be aligned with that Vision and Strategy. Structure concerns the systems of the church, i.e. staff, finances, budgets, payroll, facilities, organization, officers, boards, committees, teams, policies and procedures, etc. These combine to form the infrastructure of ministry. Structure that is in alignment with Vision and Strategy protects that Vision and Strategy and makes sure that all resources are deployed in such a way as to give Vision maximum opportunity for fulfillment through the identified Strategy. Structural alignment is largely about developing and following proper criteria for decision-making.

Phase 5: *Aligning People with Vision, Strategy and Structure*. We learn from the King James Bible that without a vision the people will perish. The reverse is also true. Without the people a vision will perish. Once designated leaders have developed Vision, Strategy and Structure and placed them in proper alignment, people must be aligned as well, long-timers currently with the church and newcomers who will soon arrive as the new vision is launched. The issue is not congregational *approval* per se, but congregational *alignment* as leaders lead, and strategic assimilation of newcomers into the new vision with its accompanying Strategy and Structure as they arrive.

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

4. Four Habits of HIGH M-PACT Churches

The habitual behaviors of a congregation reveal its true values more truthfully than its professions. For example, most congregations **claim** allegiance to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, but few truly **demonstrate** a sacrificial love for neighbor or a serious commitment to outreach and evangelism. The Apostle James might describe this kind of faith as dead. The good news is that habits can be formed and it's never too late to start.

Consider the Four Habits of HIGH M-PACT Churches. Identify biblical support for each habit. Analyze your church's strengths or weaknesses in regard to each habit. Design a plan to develop these habits to their full potential including a timeline for implementation of those plans.

Habit 1: HIGH M-PACT Churches pray with power.

Analysis _____

Plan _____

Habit 2: HIGH M-PACT Churches build on Bible basics.

Analysis _____

Plan _____

Habit 3: HIGH M-PACT Churches raise the bar (of commitment).

Analysis _____

Plan _____

Habit 4: HIGH M-PACT Churches reach the lost.

Analysis _____

Plan _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide _____

5/6. The Church Lifecycle: Three Primary Stages

Incline is the lifecycle stage when the church is increasing its ministry capacity, doing more and more ministry better and better over time, yielding both qualitative and quantitative gain.

Recline is the lifecycle stage when the church's ministry capacity levels off as the church does more or less the same ministry year after year at the same levels of quality and quantity. Quantity levels off when a resource is fully used and no increase in that resource is developed. Quality levels off at a place that is acceptable to the family of insiders, often less than what is needed to gather and hold newcomers.

Decline is the lifecycle stage when the church's ministry capacity decreases. Less and less ministry is done year after year with execution more and more compromised, yielding both qualitative and quantitative loss.

Refer to the Distinctive Characteristics of Incline, Recline & Decline. Go through each of the ten rows of characteristics, determining which of the three characteristics given most identifies your church. Place a check beside your selections and then tally.

How many checks were placed on Inclining characteristics? _____

How many checks were placed on Reclining characteristics? _____

How many checks were placed on Declining characteristics? _____

Based on this simple analysis, where is your church on the lifecycle?

My church is on the Incline. _____

My church is on the Recline. _____

My church is on the Decline. _____

Does your church show evidence of vitality lost over time? Please explain.

Will your church's revitalization be moderate, severe, or somewhere in between? Please explain. _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

7. Dynamics of a Stalled Church Plant

Review the material covered concerning:

- Identity Crisis: The “Who” Problem
- Blurred Vision: The “What & Why” Problem
- Starting Line Misfires: The “How & When” Problem

Consider the material covered under each of these three headings and determine what applies to your church. Identify the heading, the sub-heading, and explain your church’s connection. Next determine what needs to be done in the way of corrective action and formulate a plan to take that action including a timeline.

NOTES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
--

8. Dynamics of a Church in Decline

Review the material covered concerning:

- Community Transition: The “Them” Problem
- Congregational Psyche: The “Us” Problem
- Leadership Paralysis: The “Authority” Problem

Consider the material covered under each of these three headings and determine what applies to your church. Identify the heading, the sub-heading, and explain your church’s connection. Next determine what needs to be done in the way of corrective action and formulate a plan to take that action including a timeline.

NOTES _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

Thoroughly complete the following:

Getting the Facts – a Statistical Analysis

1. When was this church founded?
2. How many different locations have been this church’s home throughout its history? Please describe the various locations.
3. How long has the church been at its current location?
4. How has the community changed during the time the church has been at its current location?
- 5.

	This Year	Last Year	5 Years Ago	10 Years Ago
Church Membership				
Average Adult Attendance				
Ave. Youth & Children’s Attendance				
Total Yearly Professions of Faith				

6. Describe your church’s current staff.
7. Describe your church’s denominational polity.
8. Describe your church’s organizational structure in terms of both church government and ministries/programs.
9. How many leaders are required? What are the leadership positions titled?
10. How many servers (people serving in a non-leadership position) are required? What are the serving positions titled?
11. From your perspective, what other statistical information should be included?

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

Thoroughly complete the following:

Getting the Story – a Historical Analysis

1. Create a timeline of the church’s history identifying significant milestones throughout the church’s history.
2. What time period is generally considered the “prime” of this church’s history? Describe this prime time in terms of membership, attendance, professions of faith, giving, ministry/programs, etc.
3. Using the same categories as #2, compare the “prime” to this church’s current ministry.
4. Take a second look at Distinctive Characteristics. Consider once again which of the three distinctive characteristics in each category **most** describes your church. Mark with a check and tally.

Incline	Recline	Decline
Future Oriented	Present Oriented	Past Oriented
Vision Driven	Program Driven	Structure Driven
Community Focused	Congregation Focused	Core Focused
Innovative	Routine	Complacent
High Risk Faith	Low Risk Faith	No Risk Faith
Faith Decision	Resource Decision	Indecision
Serve > Gifts	Serve > Slots	Serve > Default
\$ = Investor	\$ = Provider	\$ = Preserver
New Leadership	Established Leadership	Incumbent Leader.
Conversion Growth	Transfer Growth	No Growth
Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____

Based on more discussion and review of the Distinctive Characteristics and other training material, where is your church on the lifecycle?

Emerging Incline _____	Developed Incline _____
Emerging Recline _____	Developed Recline _____
Emerging Decline _____	Developed Decline _____

5. What evidence and/or reasons can be given to explain why your church is where it is on the lifecycle?
6. Why are some people leaving your church? What are their reasons for leaving?
7. Why are some people staying with your church? What are their reasons for staying?
8. From your perspective, what other historical information should be included?

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

Thoroughly complete the following:

Getting the Pulse – a Spiritual Condition Analysis (Vital Signs)

1. Describe the spiritual condition of the leaders of your church.
2. Describe the spiritual condition of the followers of your church.
3. Is your church's leadership leading the church in a positive spiritual direction? Please explain your answer.
4. Is your church's congregation following its leadership in a positive spiritual direction? Please explain your answer.
5. Do your church's leaders have a defined vision for the church's future? Please explain your answer.
6. Is there evidence of negativity in the church? Please explain your answer.
7. Is there a cultural match or mismatch between the church and the community? Please explain your answer.
8. Using biblical mandates such as the Great Commission, the Great Commandment and Acts 1:8, in what ways is this church fulfilling the biblical purpose of the church?
9. How is God blessing this church? What can be pointed to in the past 6-12 months that is unmistakably God's blessing on this church?
10. Are there issues of unresolved sin in the history of this church; unresolved sin on the part of pastoral staff or key lay leaders or unresolved sin on the part of the congregation such as a bitter spirit or a prejudicial attitude toward the community? Please explain your answer.
11. What are three primary strengths of your church's ministry?
12. What are three primary weaknesses of your church's ministry?
13. What would motivate this church's congregation to embrace significant change? What would be so important to the people of this congregation that they would be willing to do things differently; to sacrifice?
14. From your perspective, what other spiritual condition information should be included?

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

Getting the Picture – an Objective Analysis

Getting the Facts, Getting the Story and Getting the Pulse are subjective in nature, requiring church leaders to be selective, evaluative and perhaps even opinionated in their responses. It is recommended that an unbiased, objective analysis be factored into a comprehensive assessment. There are numerous objective tools available to church leaders.

Identify available objective assessment tools and determine the tool that is best suited to your church's self-discovery. Contact your denomination's regional and national offices, contact ministry colleagues, and search online for recommendations and options. Recommended sources include:

Church Health Survey

The Lawless Group
4021 Old Farm Drive
Crestwood, KY 40014
502-243-4828
info@thelawlessgroup.com
www.thelawlessgroup.com

Natural Church Development Survey

ChurchSmart Resources
3830 Ohio Avenue
Saint Charles, IL 60174
800-253-4276 or 630-443-7926
customerservice@churchsmart.com
www.churchsmart.com

Church Readiness Inventory

Thom S. Rainer – Breakout Churches: discover how to make the leap
Appendix E pp. 241-244
Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2005

Once you have selected the objective tool that your church will utilize, thoroughly complete your selection.

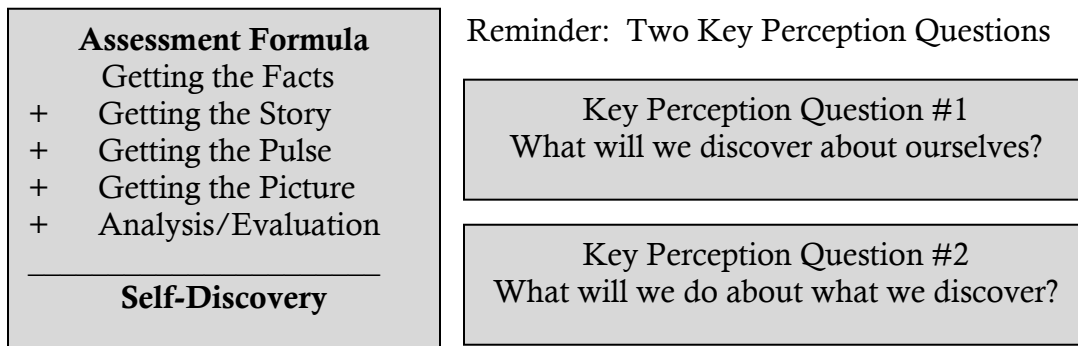


Figure 13

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

Analysis/Evaluation

The **goal of assessment** is self-discovery, aligning perception with reality in a manner that allows church leaders to see and understand what is truly going on in the ministry of the church. The analysis and evaluation of an “expert” is of little value as most reports of this nature simply gather dust on someone’s shelf. The findings of an outsider have far less impact than what we discover for ourselves. Taking a hard look in the mirror is the nature of this assessment process. The tools have been provided for you, but the gathering of responses and the analysis of those responses are up to you. Self-discovery is the key.

Study and discuss the responses produced by Getting the Facts, Getting the Story, Getting the Pulse, and Getting the Picture. Note responses that you deem to be of special significance and why you see them as significant. It is recommended that you record or highlight those particular responses in a manner that works for you. Once you have identified your significant responses, run those responses through the grid of a SWOT Analysis and a GRACE Analysis. These analyses are described below. Once these analyses are completed, determine steps to address your discoveries including a timeline.

SWOT Analysis: A scan of the ministry landscape is helpful for self-discovery. A SWOT Analysis provides a perspective for such a purpose that presents strategic insight. Identify responses that need to be expressed as:

Strengths: A church’s strengths are its resources and capabilities that can form the basis of developing effective ministry.

Weaknesses: A church’s weaknesses are factors that limit a church from developing effective ministry. A weakness can be positive in the sense that it actually exists and is a limiting factor, or a factor can be negative in the sense that its absence is a limiting factor.

Opportunities: A church’s opportunities are existing elements that present the potential to create or develop effective ministry.

Threats: A church’s threats are existing elements that present the potential to prevent, hamper or destroy effective ministry.

GRACE Analysis: Sensitivity to the emotional psyche of the congregation is helpful for self-discovery. A GRACE Analysis provides a perspective for such a purpose that presents spiritual renewal insight. Identify responses that need to be expressed as:

Grief: A congregation’s grief over loss should rightly be expressed. Godly mourning is appropriate and is necessary for moving forward.

Reconciliation: Where conflict, brokenness, estrangement, etc. are found, reconciliation is appropriate and is necessary for moving forward.

Alarm: When the proverbial wake-up call is sounded, alarm in the sense of a godly urgency to take action is appropriate and is necessary for moving forward.

Celebration: Placing all the emphasis on the negative is self-defeating. Discover what can be celebrated in your church’s ministry and by all means do so. Be specific.

Excitement: In looking ahead, acknowledge what there is to be excited about and express that excitement with verve and vigor. Be specific.

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Aligning Vision: What are we going to see?

Reminder: Vision is a defined but growing picture of what will be seen in your church at some future point (3, 5, 10 years) as your church reaches the lost in its community, a picture of a reached M-PACT Group.

Key ReVision Questions:

1. How does God want to express Himself through this church in this community at this time?
2. What did God mean by that?

Establish Foundations – Content. What/Who are we going to be?

Our Foundations are our non-negotiable commitments that define who we are in light of whom God calls us to be. These Foundations are ultimately to be captured in 6-8 short, narrative statements that will be the building blocks of the Story. Each of these narrative statements should also be represented shorthand in 1-4 words.

To arrive at these Foundations, your Vision Team needs to spend time soaking in the Mandate, the Mold and the Model. It's out of this body of material that these Foundations will prayerfully emerge.

The Mandate that Compels Us:

- The Great Promise: Matthew 16:18
- The Great Commandment: Matthew 22:34-40
- The Great Commission: Matthew 28:16-20
- The Great Witness: Acts 1:8
- The Great Mission: Luke 19:10

NOTES: _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

The Mold that Shapes Us:

The Four Habits of HIGH M-PACT Churches

- HIGH M-PACT churches pray with power.
- HIGH M-PACT churches focus on Bible basics.
- HIGH M-PACT churches raise the bar.
- HIGH M-PACT churches reach the lost.

The Characteristics of Incline

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Future Oriented | Faith Decisions |
| Vision Driven | \$ = Investor |
| Community Focused | Serve > Gifts |
| Innovative | New Leadership |
| High Risk Faith | Conversion Growth |

NOTES: _____

The Model that Shows Us:

- Acts 2:42-47
- Ephesians 4:1-16
- The Acts 2 – Ephesians 4 Church

NOTES: _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

In preparation for telling your Story, develop 6-8 definitive narrative statements that capture your church's Foundations, those non-negotiable commitments that will drive your church's decisions, behaviors, and resource allocation.

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

- 6.

- 7.

- 8.

Develop a shorthand statement (1-4 words) for each narrative statement:

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

- 6.

- 7.

- 8.

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Identify the **M-PACT** Group(s) – Context. Whom are we going to reach?

Reminder: The **M-PACT** Group is the group or groups of people who are to be reached by the developing church. These groups are found within the geographic and demographic targets. **M-PACT** Group identification is not a function of exclusivity, but is a function of focus, the application of resources to strategic ministry priorities.

Geographic Target: Identify your geographic target with as many specifics as possible. Go beyond a particular radius or a general descriptor such as, “everyone within a 15 minute drive of the church.” Include descriptors such as street names, housing developments, school districts, municipal borders, natural barriers such as rivers or mountains, psychological barriers such as interstates, railroad tracks and the like. The objective is to paint a vivid word picture of the geographic target so that people living within that target will clearly see themselves, and so that the target can be clearly communicated to everyone in your church.

NOTES: _____

Demographic Target: Identify your demographic target with as many specifics as possible. Go beyond general descriptors such as “young families with children.” Include in-depth descriptors discovered through professional demographic studies (see www.percept.info) and through anecdotal observation made by logging time in your community and finding out who really lives there. Don’t base your identification on your assumptions, but on your homework.

NOTES: _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Select the Ministry Setting – Container. What environment will we create?

Reminder: The ministry setting is the physical and philosophical environment of ministry that is created to connect the congregation with its M-PACT Group(s). For example: priorities, needs, styles, tastes, preferences, location, and facility.

Reminder: The given elements of the Ministry Setting are elements that are fixed and cannot be changed. For example, a given physical element might be a particular building at a particular address. A given philosophical element might be a denominational requirement.

Reminder: The chosen elements of the Ministry Setting are elements that are selected by choice from various options. For example, a chosen physical element might be a color scheme or a type of seating. A chosen philosophical element might be a music style, worship service time or an emphasis on lay leadership.

For example: A small church with a small facility determined that a chosen element of the ministry setting should be a warm, friendly and casual space for conversation and relationship building with those from its M-PACT Group who came to a Sunday service. However, given the small facility there was no such space available.

Another chosen element of the ministry setting was to make the worship service more intimate by bringing the small numbers of people who attended closer together instead of having them spread out over the large seating area.

So, they combined these two. First, they removed about a half-dozen rows of pews from the back of the sanctuary, limiting seating and bringing people closer together for worship. Second, they put window treatments on the windows in the room to give it a warmer feel. Third, with the space opened in the back by removing pews, they set up a pseudo-café with small sofas, coffee tables, other comfortable seating, and, of course, coffee. They also set up free standing corkboards for display.

This is not a recommendation, just an example of how one church approached its ministry setting.

NOTES: _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide _____

Now that you have identified and ranked your Key **M**-PACT Ministries, list the top four in order and explain why these ministry have been selected as **KMMs**:

Key **M**-PACT Ministry #1: _____

Explanation: _____

Key **M**-PACT Ministry #2: _____

Explanation: _____

Key **M**-PACT Ministry #3: _____

Explanation: _____

Key **M**-PACT Ministry #4: _____

Explanation: _____

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Key **M**-PACT Ministry #1: _____

Working with those who serve and lead in this Key **M**-PACT Ministry, identify three strategies for moving people through each level of the Progression of **M**-PACT Group Development in this **KMM**. Work from the bottom up.

Multiplier: _____

Leader: _____

Servant: _____

Disciple: _____

Convert: _____

Contact: _____

Note: There have been several opportunities for the Vision Team to identify weaknesses in the church's ministry. First in Getting the Pulse, second in the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and third in the Minimum Factor of the NCD Survey (if the Vision Team chose to utilize the NCD Survey). The place to begin to strengthen these weaknesses is in the context of Key **M**-PACT Ministries. The concept is to gain strength in the ministries that have been given strategic priority.

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Key M-PACT Ministry #2: _____

Working with those who serve and lead in this Key M-PACT Ministry, identify three strategies for moving people through each level of the Progression of M-PACT Group Development in this KMM. Work from the bottom up.

Multiplier: _____

Leader: _____

Servant: _____

Disciple: _____

Convert: _____

Contact: _____

Note: There have been several opportunities for the Vision Team to identify weaknesses in the church's ministry. First in Getting the Pulse, second in the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and third in the Minimum Factor of the NCD Survey (if the Vision Team chose to utilize the NCD Survey). The place to begin to strengthen these weaknesses is in the context of Key M-PACT Ministries. The concept is to gain strength in the ministries that have been given strategic priority.

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Key M-PACT Ministry #3: _____

Working with those who serve and lead in this Key M-PACT Ministry, identify three strategies for moving people through each level of the Progression of M-PACT Group Development in this KMM. Work from the bottom up.

Multiplier: _____

Leader: _____

Servant: _____

Disciple: _____

Convert: _____

Contact: _____

Note: There have been several opportunities for the Vision Team to identify weaknesses in the church's ministry. First in Getting the Pulse, second in the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and third in the Minimum Factor of the NCD Survey (if the Vision Team chose to utilize the NCD Survey). The place to begin to strengthen these weaknesses is in the context of Key M-PACT Ministries. The concept is to gain strength in the ministries that have been given strategic priority.

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Key M-PACT Ministry #4: _____

Working with those who serve and lead in this Key M-PACT Ministry, identify three strategies for moving people through each level of the Progression of M-PACT Group Development in this KMM. Work from the bottom up.

Multiplier: _____

Leader: _____

Servant: _____

Disciple: _____

Convert: _____

Contact: _____

Note: There have been several opportunities for the Vision Team to identify weaknesses in the church's ministry. First in Getting the Pulse, second in the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and third in the Minimum Factor of the NCD Survey (if the Vision Team chose to utilize the NCD Survey). The place to begin to strengthen these weaknesses is in the context of Key M-PACT Ministries. The concept is to gain strength in the ministries that have been given strategic priority.

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide _____

Key M-PACT Ministry: _____ (copy)

Working with those who serve and lead in this Key M-PACT Ministry, identify three strategies for moving people through each level of the Progression of M-PACT Group Development in this KMM. Work from the bottom up.

Multiplier: _____

Leader: _____

Servant: _____

Disciple: _____

Convert: _____

Contact: _____

Note: There have been several opportunities for the Vision Team to identify weaknesses in the church's ministry. First in Getting the Pulse, second in the S.W.O.T. Analysis, and third in the Minimum Factor of the NCD Survey (if the Vision Team chose to utilize the NCD Survey). The place to begin to strengthen these weaknesses is in the context of Key M-PACT Ministries. The concept is to gain strength in the ministries that have been given strategic priority.

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

Aligning Structure – How are we going to lead?

Key Structure Questions:

1. What are the criteria for decision-making and resource allocation?
2. How does leadership function?

Note: Authority must be transferred from current leadership patterns to new vision leadership patterns.

ReVision: Identify elements of current vision that must be removed:

ReProgram: Identify elements of current programming that must be removed:

ReStructure: Identify elements of current structure that must be removed:

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Connect the Structure to the PyraMiD in each KMM:

Having identified 3 strategies for moving people through each level of the **PyraMiD** in your top four KMMs, work with key leaders within the church's Structure to identify what Structure must provide as to Spiritual Leadership and Strategic Resourcing in each KMM.

KMM 1:	Spiritual Leadership	Strategic Resourcing
<i>Multiplier</i>		
<i>Leader</i>		
<i>Servant</i>		
<i>Disciple</i>		
<i>Convert</i>		
<i>Contact</i>		

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Connect the Structure to the PyraMiD in each KMM:

Having identified 3 strategies for moving people through each level of the **PyraMiD** in your top four KMMs, work with key leaders within the church's Structure to identify what Structure must provide as to Spiritual Leadership and Strategic Resourcing in each KMM.

KMM 2:	Spiritual Leadership	Strategic Resourcing
<i>Multiplier</i>		
<i>Leader</i>		
<i>Servant</i>		
<i>Disciple</i>		
<i>Convert</i>		
<i>Contact</i>		

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Connect the Structure to the PyraMiD in each KMM:

Having identified 3 strategies for moving people through each level of the **PyraMiD** in your top four KMMs, work with key leaders within the church's Structure to identify what Structure must provide as to Spiritual Leadership and Strategic Resourcing in each KMM.

KMM 3:	Spiritual Leadership	Strategic Resourcing
<i>Multiplier</i>		
<i>Leader</i>		
<i>Servant</i>		
<i>Disciple</i>		
<i>Convert</i>		
<i>Contact</i>		

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Connect the Structure to the PyraMiD in each KMM:

Having identified 3 strategies for moving people through each level of the **PyraMiD** in your top four KMMs, work with key leaders within the church's Structure to identify what Structure must provide as to Spiritual Leadership and Strategic Resourcing in each KMM.

KMM 4:	Spiritual Leadership	Strategic Resourcing
<i>Multiplier</i>		
<i>Leader</i>		
<i>Servant</i>		
<i>Disciple</i>		
<i>Convert</i>		
<i>Contact</i>		

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide ---

Connect the Structure to the PyraMiD in each KMM:

Having identified 3 strategies for moving people through each level of the **PyraMiD** in your top four KMMs, work with key leaders within the church's Structure to identify what Structure must provide as to Spiritual Leadership and Strategic Resourcing in each KMM.

KMM (copy):	Spiritual Leadership	Strategic Resourcing
<i>Multiplier</i>		
<i>Leader</i>		
<i>Servant</i>		
<i>Disciple</i>		
<i>Convert</i>		
<i>Contact</i>		

COACHWORKS! Implementation Guide

Review the Five Phases of Revitalization with their Key Questions.

Phase 1 Aligning Perception	Key ? #1: What will we discover about ourselves? Key ? #2: What will we do in light of what we discover?
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Phase 2 Aligning Vision	Key ? #1: How does God want to express Himself through this church in this community at this time? Key ? #2: What did God mean by that?
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Phase 3 Aligning Strategy	Key ? #1: How will we make contact with our M-PACT Group(s)? Key ? #2: How will we develop our M-PACT Group once we've made contact?
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Phase 4 Aligning Structure	Key ? #1: What are the criteria for decision-making and resource allocation? Key ? #2: How does leadership function?
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Phase 5 Aligning People	Key ? #1: How do we get people involved? Key ? #2: On whom does the future depend?
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Summary Outline of Phases 2-5

Aligning Vision – What are we going to see?

Establish Biblical Foundations: What/Who are we going to be?

The Mandate that Compels Us

The Mold that Shapes Us

The Model that Show Us

Identify Your **M-PACT** Group(s): Whom are we going to reach?

Geographic Target

Demographic Target

Minister “With” **M-PACT** Group(s)

Minister “To” **M-PACT** Group(s)

Design the Ministry Setting: What environment will we create?

C3 Vision Triangle: Content, Context, Container

Physical and Philosophical Given Elements

Physical and Philosophical Chosen Elements

Aligning Strategy – What are we going to do?

Commit to Making Contact: The Strategic Priority

Identify Key **M-PACT** Ministries (KMMs): The Ministry Priority

Plan the Progression of **M-PACT** Group Development in Each KMM

Develop the **M-PACT** Action Plan – the M.A.P. (**PyraMiD** x KMMs = the M.A.P.)

Aligning Structure: How will we lead?

Transfer Authority to New Vision

ReVision

ReProgram

ReStructure

Develop Support for the **M-PACT** Action Plan

Spiritual Leadership

Strategic Resourcing

To Think About: Key **M-PACT** Structures (KMSs)

Aligning People: How will we involve insiders and newcomers?

Align People Publicly

Align People Privately

Develop and Deploy Prayer Teams

The M.A.P.

The **M-PACT** Action Plan

MAP Part 1
The Vision

MAP Part 2
The Strategy

MAP Part 3
The Structure

MAP Part 4
The People

The MAP Part 1 – The Vision

Your church's new vision is emerging from the work done by your Vision Team in Phase 2: Aligning Vision of the ministry development process. This work has been captured in COACHWORKS! regarding the three components of vision:

1. Foundations – The Content
2. M-PACT Group – The Context
3. Ministry Setting – The Container

The Vision is to be articulated through a three-fold Vision Statement:

1. The Story – A Comprehensive Narrative
2. The Synopsis – A Summary of the Narrative
3. The Slogan – A Short, Memorable Phrase

The content of the Vision Statement is to be informed by:

1. Key Vision Question #1: How does God want to express Himself through this church in this community at this time?
2. Foundations:
 - a. The 6-8 definitive narrative statements that capture your church's Foundations.
 - b. The 6-8 shorthand Foundations statements.
3. M-PACT Group: Comprehensive Description
4. Ministry Setting: A Comprehensive Description of the “given” and “chosen” elements of the environment that you will create.
5. Strategy: Your top 4 Key M-PACT Ministries – the broad strokes of your strategy.

Utilizing these five elements of content, turn the page and develop your Vision Statement.

The MAP Part 2 – The Strategy

Your church’s strategy is emerging from the work done by your Vision Team in Phase 3: Aligning Strategy of the ministry development process. This work has been captured in COACHWORKS! regarding the top four Key **M-PACT** Ministries:

KMM #1: _____

KMM #2: _____

KMM #3: _____

KMM #4: _____

These four Key **M-PACT** Ministries were first identified by their connection to the fulfillment of the Vision. Then they were connected to the Progression of **M-PACT** Group Development. So at this point, you have COACHWORKS! worksheets that contain strategies for moving people through the **PyraMiD** in each of these four KMMs.

It’s now time to develop your M.A.P. Part 2 by planning for the implementation of those **PyraMiD** x KMM strategies, as follows:

1. Empower leaders from each KMM to finalize the strategies and take on leadership responsibility for implementation.
2. Empower leaders from each KMM to develop an aggressive timeline for implementation of strategies in their KMM that is consistent with Vision Team timeline objectives.
3. Meet with leaders from each KMM consistently to evaluate results.
4. Coordinate with Structure to make sure that Structure provides the spiritual leadership and strategic resourcing needed for each strategy in each KMM. Note that this step will also be included in the M.A.P. Part 3 – The Structure.

NOTES:
