

**Building  
healthy  
Churches.**

**Intentional  
Biblical  
Strategy.**

by Andrew Baughen

BECAUSE  
**3**

# Intro.

## The value of strategy

Strategy is about being more intentionally involved in church growth. Strategic planning is intentional planning – knowing why you do what you do. The tendency to do things because they've always been done, but our activities have so much more significance when they are done because we know we have been prepared and called to do it.

### Planning is about co-operating with Jesus

1. Christ brings the growth: Jesus will build his church (Matt. 16:18); God makes churches grow (1 Cor. 3:6).
2. Jesus apportions grace to us so we can serve (Eph. 4); We plant and water as God's fellow-workers (1 Cor. 3:6, 9).

### Planning is about following Jesus' example

1. At the beginning of Mark's Gospel we see Jesus under huge pressure and facing demands at every turn. He worked through the pressure by getting up early to speak to his heavenly Father and remember his calling – and then forming an intentional plan of what he was and what he wasn't called to do that day (Mark 1:35–39).
2. Jesus also taught his disciples to be strategic. For example, when he sends out the disciples he instructs them to find and invest in the 'person of peace' (Lk. 10:1–18). 'I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.' (Matt. 10:16)

### Planning is about taking responsibility for what God gives

Planning honours God by using wisely the resources of time, money and energy that he gives. The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–28) shows how we are called to use wisely what God has entrusted in advance for us to do' (Eph. 2:10).

## Three step biblical strategy

Strategy is about asking three fundamental questions. The clearer everyone is the more intentional the church will be;

### 1. The Because of Scripture: *Why should we do this activity at all?*

- Strategic Mandate: What has God put us on this planet to do?
- Output: Mission statement; Values statement

### 2. The However of our Setting: *Why should we do this here and now?*

- Strategic Motive: What needs are we being called to fulfil?
- Output: Analysis of contextual needs and Unique Gospel Contribution; Vision Statement

### 3. The Therefore of our Strategic Solution: *Why should we do this in the way that we are?*

- Strategic Method Map: What are we going to do? How are we going to do it?
- Output: Agreed Strategies and Programmes; Action Timeplan

# Because.

## 1. Because of Scripture.

### Our strategic Mandate

#### 1.1 Mission Statement

Mission statements are fixed as the over arching long-term goal against which strategies and activities are measured.

Biblical mission begins with God's commandment to be involved in growing his work:

- Adam and Eve were blessed to be a blessing (Gen 1)
- Abraham was promised a people who would be God's treasured possession and bless the whole earth (Gen 12)
- Jesus told us to remain in him and bear much fruit (Jn 15)
- Jesus commissioned his followers to grow his church in numbers (quantity) and in depth (quality) – make disciples (quantity) and teach to obey everything (quality) (Matt 28)
- Paul gives us the aim of attaining to the fullness of the likeness of Christ by building each other up (Eph 4)

All mission statements have at their core the same timeless biblical mission of the church to make and grow disciples. But the wording of the mission statement will reflect the character and context of a particular church:

- Some reflect geographic position (e.g. 'to win and hold the centre of a world capital for Christ' emphasises the role of this church within a city)
- Some reflect contextual emphases (e.g. 'to build a thirst for God's rescue and devotion to God's rule' emphasises the context of a church starting further back with people who have little interest in Christianity)
- Some reflect theological emphases (e.g. 'up, in, out' growing up towards God; growing inwards as a church family; growing outwards to the local community)
- Some reflect strategic emphases (e.g. 'bring in, build up, send out' which summarises the mission of the church in terms of what they will do rather than what they want to achieve)

## 1.2 Values Statement

The mission statement question is 'what does God want us to do', but more fundamental than that is the values question of 'What sort of a church does Christ want us to be?'

Values describe the beliefs that compel us, what makes a church tick – why we love being part of the church, go to events with a spring in our step and joy in our heart and are confident to invite others to come along.

Values relate to the unchanging nature and purposes of God. For example Jesus' prayer before the cross:

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." (John 17:20-21)

– Jesus is about people

"May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21)

– Jesus is about seeking and saving the lost:

"Righteous Father...I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order

that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (John 17:25-26)

– Jesus is about encountering God

For example, St James Clerkenwell has 3 values:

**Community** – we long to be a church where all people are welcome to be part of the family. Different socially but all children of one Heavenly Father.

**Discovery** – our passion is to engage with our culture so that the relevant gospel of Jesus is accessible to all. We aim to be SDDA (Spiritual Disability Discrimination Act) compliant.

**Engagement** – we want to be about life transformation not just head knowledge. Our aim is that we go out from meeting together transformed  
– knowing more of God's riches that change us as we live for him day by day.

# However.

## 2. However of Setting. Our strategic Motive

'However' is the things that just won't do – the divine disturbance inside us like Nehemiah who wept when he heard reports of how Jerusalem and the Temple had been left to go to ruin and the people were giving up. He didn't despair, he prayed earnestly, confessed his sin, gained vision and acted to make the vision a reality.

The classic example of divine disturbance is Jesus in Matt 9:36 who was filled with compassion when he saw how harassed and helpless the crowds were. He identified the gap between where people were and where God wants them to be and announces a plan to send workers into the harvest fields in Matt 10:1-16.

### 2.1 Carry out a contextual survey

1. Identify the main groups of people the church could reach

– identify geographic areas within the church's reach:

1. locals (walk to church); 2. Hoppers (quick hop on a bus, car, bike etc.); 3. Commuters (longer journey)

– identify cultural 'tribes' or friendship networks you could reach

2. Gather data on each group from published sources

3. Conduct a walking tour of each group's neighbourhood

– Summarize the worldview, economic forces and social dynamics

4. Make contact with local opinion forming unbelievers – interview one to one or in focus groups

### 2.2 Identify your 'divine disturbance'

– what's bothering you about the situation God has placed your church?

– what's not right in people's actions and attitudes and lifestyles?

– what parts of your mandate (mission and values) seem out of sight?

– what longings which are so far unmet feel like moral imperatives?

– what is your God given and equipped role in this?

### 2.3 Identify the contextual complication

In order for a church plant to have a reason for being, there needs to be a strategic need which is unmet by other gospel partner churches. Unlike the secular world, churches are not in competition with each other but are all branches of one church of Jesus Christ – working for him, accountable to him and speaking as representative of him.

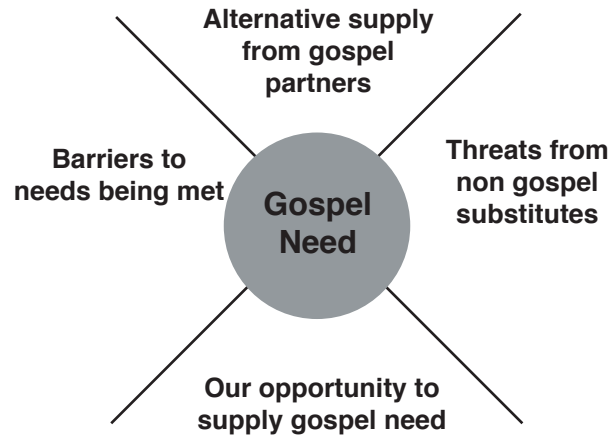
**SWOT analysis (Strengths; Weaknesses; Opportunities; Threats)**

Strength: gospel needs that the church plant has the capacity to most effectively meet

Weakness: gospel needs that an alternative gospel partner church has the capacity to most effectively supply

Opportunity: gospel needs unmet by other gospel suppliers

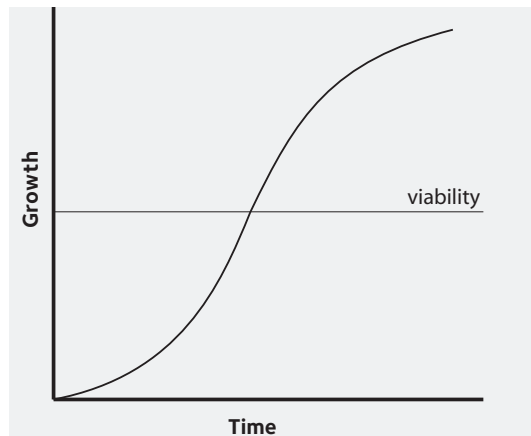
Threat: gospel needs seemingly met by non gospel substitute suppliers



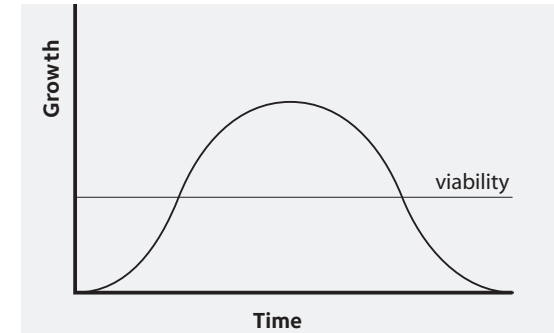
**2.4 Learning from S curves**

An S curve shows the growth progress that is typically observed in organisations, including churches.

– The first phase is start up when there is a lot of vision and energy poured into growth. The aim is to become self standing with enough people to do all the ministry needed or enough money to resource the ministry.

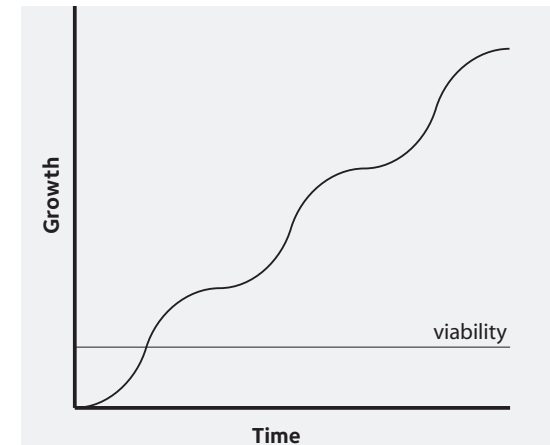


– The next phase is when viability is reached with an established team of ministry leaders, stable programme of activities and a fully funded budget. There's lots of vision fuelling participation by people and fast growth.



– In the next phase an increase in numbers and complex ministries requires transition from a family model to a more complex organisation. At this point demand by existing members can take precedence over new initiatives and slow growth.

– As growth plateaus, the danger is to ignore the signs. Without action, decline and extinction will follow.



The alternative strategy is to innovate:

- transitional organisationally into a more complex structure which allows for family sized groupings as well as the large congregation
- transition organisationally to leaders of ministries who develop and cast vision for their specific ministry
- launch a new initiative with new vision. Eg plant a new congregation with the advantages of smaller scale.

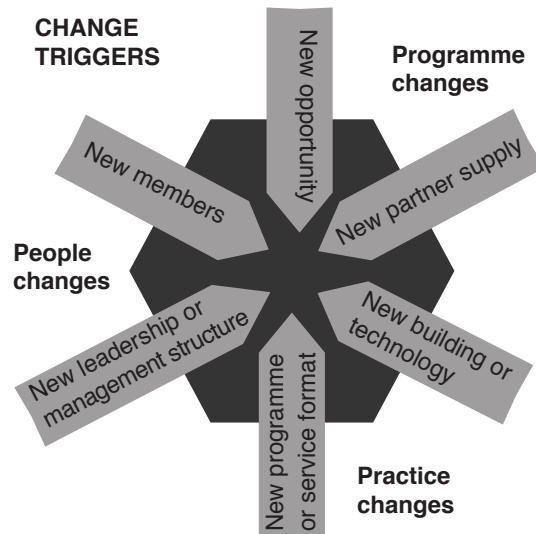
### Catalysts of S curve change:

#### • External market reactive catalysts

- New opportunity  
(E.g. new housing, renewal programme, office development or student hall)
- New members  
(E.g. new skills or demands)
- New partner supply  
(eg gospel partner church plant or ministry in same area)

#### • Internal environment proactive catalysts

- New environment  
(E.g. new building or technology)
- New leadership or management structure  
(E.g. new leader or responsibility delegation)
- New programme or service or service format  
(E.g. new youth service or small group structure)



## 2.5 Develop a vision statement

1. Describe why the gap between our scriptural mandate and current context won't do.
2. Clearly state the Unique Gospel Contribution the proposed solution aims to make to God's kingdom.
3. Dare to dream - what if we gave our lives to meeting that need with the powerful gospel of Christ and the unique gifts and opportunities we've been given by Christ - how will we do something eternally significant?

"A vision we give to others of who and what they could become has power when it echoes what The Spirit has already spoken in their souls." Larry Crabb

# Therefore.

## 3. Therefore of chosen Solution.

### Our strategic Method and Map

#### The journey of faith

The Great Commission of Jesus is go: go to the ends of the earth and make disciples; go to those who are spiritually blind and teach them the truths of grace which restore sight. In fact, Jesus' whole ministry was go orientated. Jesus would go from village to village and person to person proclaiming the good news. And from the start Jesus taught his disciples to do as he did and go.

However the reality is that people didn't always respond to Jesus. Some left everything and followed him but some stayed on the sidelines for a long time just looking and some were so hard of heart that nothing Jesus said or did seemed to have any effect. One of the most poignant moments in Jesus' ministry comes as he approaches Jerusalem in triumphal entry and weeps for a city that had every opportunity to know peace but remained blind (Lk 19:42). In Mark 8, when Jesus encounters continued lack of understanding we're told he "sighs deeply." Yet in his compassion he doesn't give up on people. In fact straight away Jesus provides a model of how their sight will be restored in the healing a blind man. The miracle is unusual in that it is a gradual process:

- Contact: Meets Jesus as friends bring him
- Observation: Led by the hand while still blind
- First Sight: Regains partial sight
- Insight: Regains full sight

These stages illustrate how spiritual sight is restored on the journey of faith:

#### Step one. Relationship building.

Step 1 is to go and build relationships with people disconnected from God. "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matt 9:38-39)

#### Step two. Respect building.

The next step is to build respect with the people we know by allowing them to observe how our relationship with Christ makes a difference in our daily life. *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.* (1 Pet 3:15)

#### Step three. Relevance building.

Step 3 is about building relevance with the people we know so they begin to see how knowing Christ would make a difference in their daily life. *By setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* (2 Cor 4:2)

#### Step four. Response building.

The final step to life involves building response by explaining the truth of the gospel so people turn from observers to followers and recipients of grace. *How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?* (Rom 10:14-15)

### 3.1 Relationship Building Strategies

1. Teach every member to invest in intentional relationships
  - 50:50 rule when inviting people to parties etc. and time spent when there
  - Add another person to your day; Be a strategic consumer
  - Go to the pub etc. and meet people; Take up a sport or hobby
2. Focus prayer on seeking the person of peace
  - In Matt 10 Jesus teaches: go with my authority (v. 1), where I send you (v. 5), to lost people (v. 6) with my message (v. 7) and seek out the receptive people (v11). Likewise our focus of pray as churches and individuals should be that Christ shows us the people of peace he is making open to accept him.
  - In Acts 16 Paul goes to the place of prayer in Philippi as he knows that's where people of peace gather. Where are the places in your community where people of peace are most likely to gather?
  - 111 scheme (Pray for one person for one minute at one o'clock)
3. Establish an unbeliever first culture
  - first impressions: welcome, coffee area, new person orientated service sheet, service welcome & intro etc.
  - communication: ensure answer the objections unbelievers have, relate to the culture of people, be aware of defeaters
  - vision: teach members to have a 'every week is invite a friend week' and 'family hold back'
4. Build your church's community profile and visibility
  - we exist (leaflets, signage, media, vox pops)
  - we welcome all (social activities & one-off events, welcoming strategy)
  - we're worth knowing (website, design, missionary small groups.)

### 3.2 Respect Building Strategies

1. Share life with unbelievers and serve them
  - Encourage members to serve as school governor, local festival planning, community projects, host a welcome meal for people moving in locally; offer free babysitting, do shopping, provide meals for new parents, party for neighbours etc
  - Church social events and fun days / community days, sports competitions etc. organised and hosted by the church
  - Pre church cafe so people meet others before going into the meeting
  - Culture events: Local history evenings, wine tasting, concerts, sports tournament or screen big matches etc.
  - Facilities open to local groups, parties etc.
  - Social concern: community work parties (home improvements, estates refurb, Christmas hampers, etc.); disability support; bereavement counselling; recovery from addictions; recovery from divorce, etc.; visiting in prisons; projects for the homeless; Offer to pray for people's needs / set up prayer line etc.
  - Family life: Toddler groups; after-school clubs; youth clubs; adoption support; dads clubs to see children; crisis pregnancy support; holiday kids clubs, senior citizens groups / holiday club
2. Build loving church community and allow unbelievers to encounter
  - Be real and share your joys and struggles and how your faith impacts you.
  - Care for needy in church / show that you love each other

3. think about how to engage unbelievers at church gatherings
  - Be inclusive of all in your community (in people served and people serving up front)
  - Allow people to discuss and ask questions; never assume
  - Glorify Christ with excellence

### 3.3 Relevance Building Strategies

1. Understand your audience and connect to their narrative drivers (tape playing in their mind)
  - what is the story which drives them and determines their decisions? (their hopes, dreams and disappointments)
2. Know how your Christ centred hope differs and how the gospel brings redemption change
3. Learn the art of asking questions
4. Connection social events. E.g.: A 'pause for thought' in a concert; A testimony after a meal; A talk on a contemporary topic and its relation to the gospel; A discussion of a film, play, book, etc.
5. Connection courses. E.g.: Parenting; Marriage preparation or Marriage building
6. Connection discussion events that start with the felt needs and questions of the participants . E.g.: The Conversation, a *Newsnight* style event which looks at an issue such as The Credit Crunch, Advertising, Darwin, Politics and discuss via video interviews and panel discussion with experts as well as a 'view from the vicar' and audience question time. For more info email: mail@jc-church.org
7. Connection services that deliberately connect scripture to the viewpoint of those who are not yet believers

### 3.4 Response Building Strategies

1. Challenge prevailing worldviews and the idols people invest in by which they forfeit grace (Jonah 2:8)
2. Teach the whole narrative of scripture: creation, fall, redemption, new creation
3. Plan a cycle of evangelistic events and courses
  - Establish a cycle of events linked together through the church year
  - Have a regular evangelistic course as a key part of your strategy
4. Appoint an evangelism point person to:
  - Keep casting a vision for evangelism and communicate the strategy of events, prayer for people of peace etc.
  - make evangelism a budget item
  - teach everyone to understand their role in evangelism
5. Encourage prayer partnerships and pray for each other's contacts in small groups, one to ones etc.
  - united, extraordinary, kingdom-centred, prevailing prayer (frontline rather than maintenance prayer)
6. Use variety: different course material, times, places, presentation methods
7. Encourage discussion: allow people to ask questions, spend time one to one
8. Make a call to response on Sundays as well as a key part of an evangelistic course and in one to one
  - don't leave people hearing but not accepting Christ; preach to the heart the expulsive power of Jesus

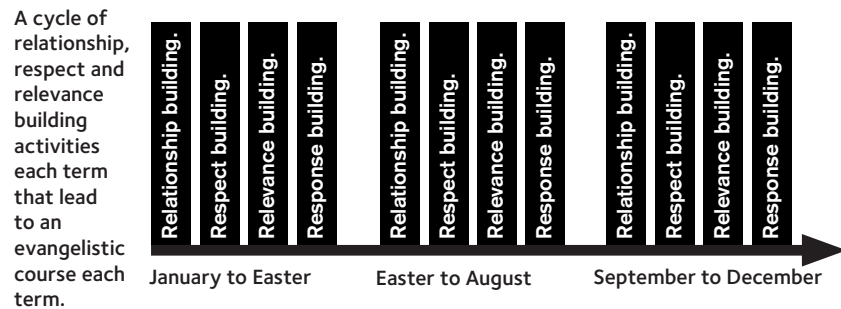
### 3.5 Establish a cycle of events

#### Link activities together in a progression:

- a. Start with relationship building to develop contact with people
- b. Next begin respect building activities to show that Christians are not weird.
- b. Then organize relevance building events that show how the Bible and faith make sense of the issues people face.
- c. Finally, hold response events that enable people to look at the claims of the gospel and accept Christ as Lord.

It's important to remember that people don't like being processed like peas and may not be ready at the right time for a 'one size fits all' annual evangelism course. So offering opportunities throughout the year to explore Christian faith:

- Gives greater flexibility of choice with more entry points
- Means there is never too long a gap before someone connecting with Christianity can explore Christ further
- Is a powerful reminder that evangelism is core to the church through the year.



#### Communicate your cycle of events

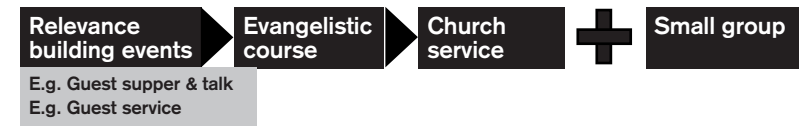
Describe your church's cycle in a form that is easy to remember and communicate. The clearer everyone is about what the church's evangelism strategy is, the easier it is for everyone to get behind the vision and be clear about where in the cycle the church is and therefore who the up coming events are for and therefore who they should think and pray about inviting and bringing to the next event.

### 3.6. Plan where an evangelistic course fits

An evangelistic course can be an entry-point activity or a follow-up activity for people already attending a church service or group. Three options are listed but it is worth noting that no option is more right than another but one option will be more appropriate in a particular setting. The key is to choose one option and adapt each element of the process to fit an overall strategy.

#### A. Course first strategy

This strategy puts the emphasis on an informal 'non-churchy' course as the most accessible activity for people starting to investigate Christian faith with starting to attend church services coming later when people have heard the gospel and are in relationship with people from the church.



#### B Mission first strategy

As 'A' but a focus of events first around a mission week / weekend / festival. Evangelistic talks and events organised by church members which feed enquirers into a subsequent course. Advantage of a big focus for preparation, prayer and special invitation to well planned and funded events.

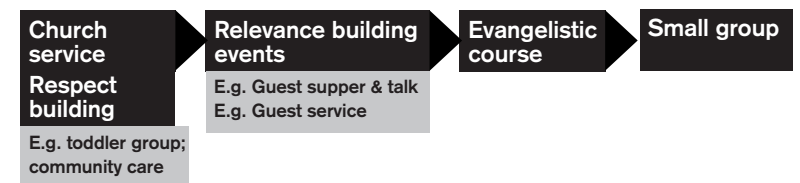


#### C. Compassion first strategy

Start with respect building activities and commend the gospel thus generating the question in people as to the reason for your distinct actions which enables an invite to a relevance building activity.

#### D. Church first strategy

This strategy takes the view that an outward looking church service is an easier first event for people to come to and begin to look anonymously without the structure of a course. In effect, church on this model is the 'shop window' – the entry point to other activities. It is deliberately 'non-churchy' and accessible to outsiders. At the service, guests and the regular fringe of people are invited to take things further by joining an evangelistic course during the week or on a Sunday if that is when they are used to coming.



#### E. Community group first strategy

This strategy has the strength of people's existing network of friendships as its starting point. Join up with other small group 'cells' and put on a regular 'community group' for your community of friends with food, a relevant talk that connects with Christians and unbelievers and an invitation to stay for discussion in smaller groups either that evening or subsequent weeks when you will run an evangelistic course.

### 3.7 Develop a growth strategy

This chart is a classic strategic planning tool that identifies the growth options available to organisations. The term 'Product' needs redefining in a church context. Fundamentally a church's 'product' is new life in Christ, but the programmes and activities of a church can also be defined as 'products' in that they are the many different ways the one message of Christ is distributed to all sorts of 'markets' of people.

		Product Emphasis	
		Existing Products	New Products
Market Emphasis	Existing Markets	<p><b>Retention</b> (encouraging existing church members)  <b>Assimilation</b> (integrating fringe church members into the core)  <i>This is a classic 'market penetration' strategy</i></p>	<p><b>New congregation, same location</b>  <i>This is a classic 'product development' strategy</i></p>
	New Markets	<p><b>Visibility and accessibility</b> (public awareness and welcoming strategy reaching people near the church or in contact with existing members)  <i>This is a classic 'market development' strategy</i></p>	<p><b>Planting</b>  <i>This is a classic 'diversification' strategy</i></p>

#### Breaking through gathering size barriers

Small church

- growth by personal invitation and friendship of everyone with each other
- to grow to the next level requires a more organised system of fellowship so all are included - a classic solution is home groups or a whole church gathering outside Sundays where the core membership meet to build each other up in bible study and prayer

Up to 200 church

- new people have relationship with the minister and / or other stakeholder leaders.
- to grow to next level involves adding more options (i.e. extra service time); add a senior ministry staff member; concentrate decisions in staff; more formal and deliberate assimilation; pastoral structure not dependant on the senior minister - he trains and equips others rather than doing ministry with everyone (more a rancher than a shepherd)

Larger church

- staff specialise; people's affinity is to a particular ministry; music and preaching expected to be of higher quality; vision casting key; often new facilities needed.
- Further growth depends on small group structure - quality & multiplication ([www.redeemer2.com/themovement/issues/2006/fall/church\\_size\\_dynamics.html](http://www.redeemer2.com/themovement/issues/2006/fall/church_size_dynamics.html))

### 3.8 Quality strategies

#### Natural Church Development 'qualities' of growing churches:

- Empowering leadership
- Gift-orientated lay ministry
- Passionate spirituality
- Functional structure
- Inspiring worship
- Holistic small groups
- Need-orientated evangelism
- Loving relationships

'Biotic principles'

- Interdependence
- Energy transformation
- Symbiosis
- Multiplication
- Multi-usage
- Function

#### Robert Warren '7 Marks of a healthy church'

- energized by faith
- outward looking focus
- operates as a community
- does a few things and does them well
- seeks to find out what God wants
- faces cost of change & growth
- makes room for all

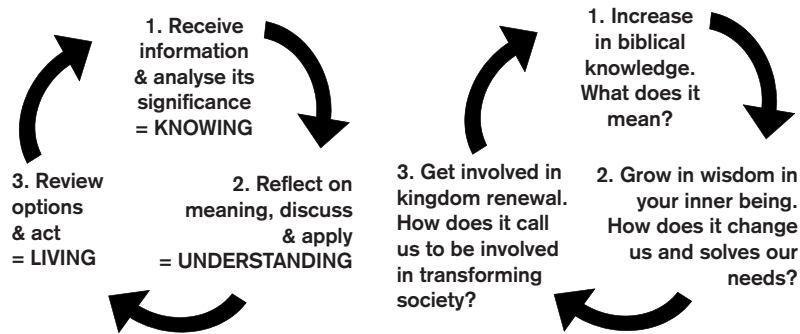
**EPIC** (Leonard Sweet EPIC church for a postmodern generation):

- Experiential: Postmoderns ask 'is it real?' rather than 'is it true?' They want to 'live' truths before embracing them.
- Participatory: People want to discuss, question and process information for themselves
- Interactive: learning needs more than just the mind engaged - multi-sensory learning.
- Communal: the predominant culture people experience is one of 'communal anorexia' - the longing to belong.

### 3.9 Learning process strategies

Learning is not just about the transfer of information. Learning comes when information is understood and then applied and acted upon. The different stages of the learning cycle take into account the different methods of learning and different ways people learn. A church therefore needs to teach principles but also allow people to see the link between theory and practice and see how the principles of scripture lead to transformation of people's daily lives.

#### The learning cycle

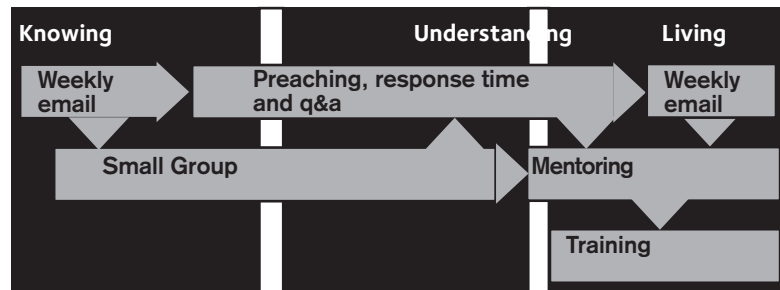


#### Cycle applied to whole church learning strategies

Traditional learning strategy:

Different passages / topic taught in preaching series, small groups, personal study of church members etc. Training and discipleship programmes also separately run. All in all this approach gives people a very rich diet of many studies of many bible passages every week which can be hard to process as more than just a mind of information.

Integrated learning strategy:

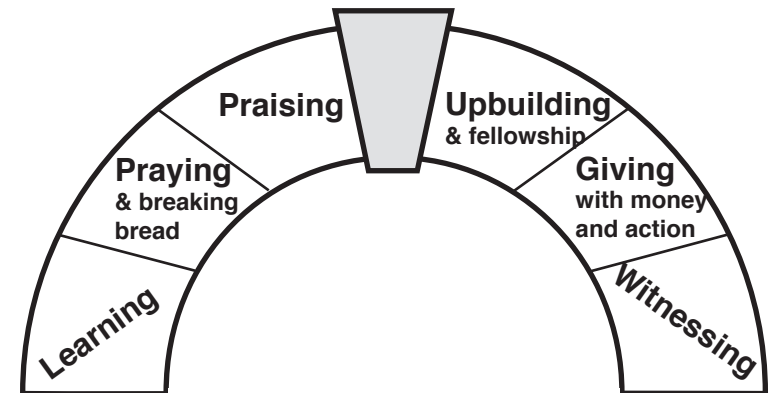


An integrated study of Scripture begins with studies in small groups which feeds ideas into the sermon preparation but also provides a solid base of understanding by church members of the passage before they hear the sermon.

The preaching is combined with an opportunity for people to reflect, ask questions and follow up in mentor relationships and training courses designed to help them take action in response. A weekly email can also be used to provide initial questions before and further thinking after the sermon so that people are reminded of the talk in the week.

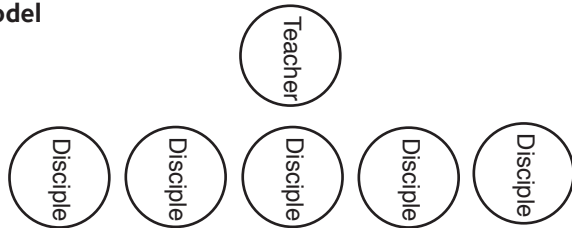
### 3.10 Gathering strategies

The activities of the early church in Acts 2:42-47 can be placed into six main reasons for meeting. It is instructive to analyse how much time your church spends on different gathering activities. What does that tell you about your priorities? Does that balance fit with your values and vision? Are there adjustments that you need to discuss in your number of gatherings, the overlap between gatherings and the balance of activities you focus on at each gathering?



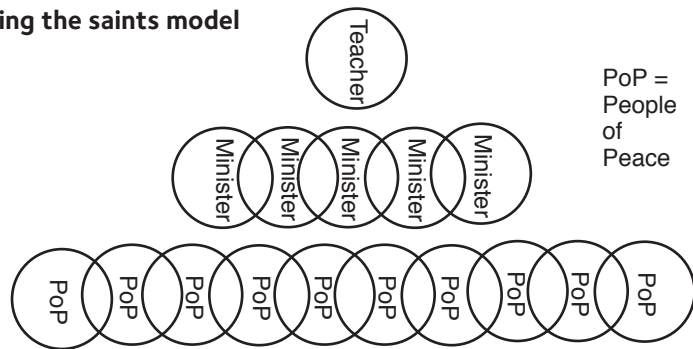
### 3.11 Disciple multiplication strategies

#### Teacher/pupil model



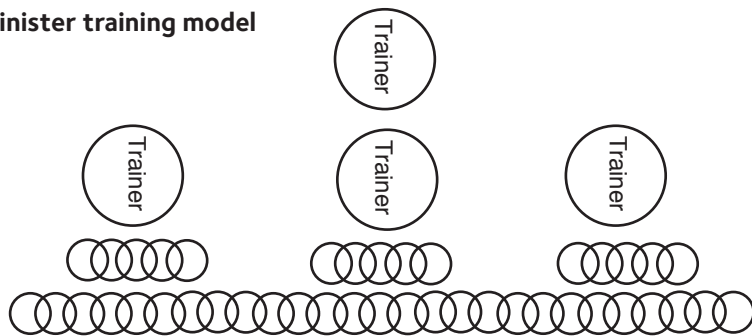
This is the traditional model when the Pastor Teacher is the source of discipleship to each member of a group of people. *"Leader as head of an aquarium rather than out fishing for new converts."* (Eddie Gibbs).

#### Equipping the saints model



In this every member model the pastor teacher equips the saints to do the work of ministry so everyone is involved in truthing each other in love so everyone grows together more like Christ (Eph 4).

#### Minister training model



This is a multiplication model where the teacher equips several trainers who in turn equip a group of gospel ministers.

### 3.12 Leadership multiplication strategies

#### Ministry training



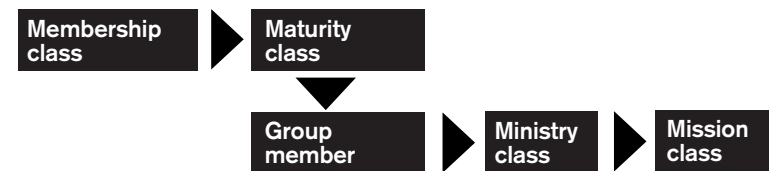
#### Mentoring model



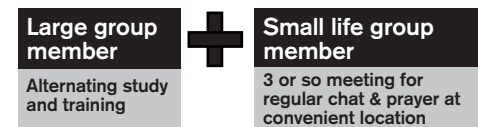
#### Apprenticeship model



#### Training programme model



#### Every member model





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