



Expanding Capacity For Ministry

Using

Quality Characteristics of Healthy Growing Congregations**

Empowering Leadership

Leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering *other* Christians for ministry. They consider it as one of their most important tasks to help Christians develop greater degrees of empowerment, which according to God's plan already belongs to them. They equip, support, motivate and mentor individuals to become all that God wants them to be.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity:

- Have every existing leader commit to identifying and taking under their wings one growing leader
- Value and regularly recognize different types of leaders in your congregation
- Preach and teach consistently about shared ministry

Gift Oriented Ministry

When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, they generally function less in their own strength and more in the power of the spirit. The role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity:

- Offer a Gifts Discernment workshop
- When seeking volunteers, ask members to consider in which tasks their talents and gifts would be best used
- Let a ministry or project end if no-one feels called to do it

Passionate Spirituality

Church development depends neither on spiritual persuasions nor on specific spiritual practices. The point separating growing and non-growing churches, those which are qualitatively above or below average, is a different one, namely: Are the Christians in this church on fire? Do they practice their faith with joy and enthusiasm? The degree of spiritual passion is demonstrably the point that sets growing churches apart from non-growing ones. The methods a church uses are really a secondary concern.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity:

- Offer small group/s focused on spirituality and spiritual practices, e.g. a “spiritual journey” group or a labyrinth group
- Have clergy and lay Leaders model passionate spirituality – show and share their personal response and engagement of the life of the Spirit.
- Create prayer experiences that are “accessible” to people with little or no church background

Functional Structures

One of the biggest barriers to recognizing the significance of structures for church development is the widespread view that “structures” and “life” are opposites.... Church structures are never an end in themselves but always only a means to an end.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity:

- Clarify roles among: Rector, Staff, Vestry, Committee Chairs (Over⇒)

- Have representatives attend church property meeting on March 5, 2004
- Commit yourselves to achieving Diocesan and Canonical requirements
(Minimum salary for clergy, Diocesan pledge on time, Insurance, Audit)

Inspiring Worship Services

Countless Christians believe that they must adopt particular worship models of other churches, because they supposedly represent a church growth principle. The criterion “is the worship service an ‘inspiring experience’ for the participants?” demonstrably separates growing churches from stagnant and declining ones.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity

- Use the gifts of the people--from acting to flute playing, to bread baking
- Congregational music that is easy to sing, and at least somewhat familiar
- Present scripture as our own story

Holistic Small Groups

Growing churches have developed a system of small groups where individual Christians can find intimate community, practical help and intensive spiritual interaction. These are exactly the elements of the biblical concept of holism.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity

- Help members discover their common interests and concerns
- Empower members of the congregation to form groups on their own
- Nurture and support existing small groups (e.g. vestry and choir)

Need-Oriented Evangelism

The key for church growth is for the local congregation to focus its evangelistic efforts (its sharing of the Good News) on the questions and needs of non-Christians. But it can be shown that “pushy” manipulative methods represent the exact opposite of the practice we learn from growing churches. Their secret is the way they share the gospel in a way that meets the needs of the people.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity

- Use Percept (Link2lead.com) demographic data to learn about your community
- Discover what worship opportunities and programs your neighbors need
- Offer worship opportunities for ministry participants and space users

Loving Relationships

Growing churches manifest a measurably higher “love quotient” than stagnant or declining ones. Unfeigned, practical love endows a church with a much greater magnetic power than all the marketing efforts of this world.

Suggestions for Increasing Capacity

- Become more than just a Sunday People. . .offer services/opportunities during the week.
- Welcome visitors before, during, and after Sunday services
- Embrace “Outreach” – encourage people to look beyond themselves and their physical plant