

# STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKBOOK

for

## CHURCH LEADERS

*Guide to Growing a Healthier and More Impactful Church*



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# INTRODUCTION

## Why Use Meet The Need's Workbook?

There are many church consultants today. Each promises revitalization and rapid growth. Renowned pastors publish articles and books giving advice from their experiences turning small congregations into thriving megachurches. Conferences feature speakers and promise ideas sure to intrigue and excite any pastor whose church is not growing – which applies to an astounding 93% of America's churches.

With all that information at your disposal, who should you trust and listen to?

It also begs the question – with all that advice available how can such a high percentage of churches not be growing? At Meet The Need we believe it's because nearly all of the consultants, articles, books and conferences are working within and perpetuating the same fundamentally flawed church growth model.

Given that the Church grew at a rapid clip for 1900 years, why has growth ground to a halt in recent decades? Something foundational has changed. We believe we know what that is.

In fact, a number of leading church advisors believe Meet The Need has come up with the “root cause” for why such a large majority of churches in America are in decline in terms of not only growth, but also in impact, influence and public perception. We contend that the church in America has gradually adopted a new baseline assumption – one which has caused the demise of countless organizations of many different types.

In the next section, Key Principles, we'll introduce this “root cause” and explain how the prevailing church growth models won't produce what they promise – at least not healthy growth.

## Our Commitment

This workbook will:

- be instrumental as a guide for your strategic planning exercises
- move your church's leadership team quickly and productively through your on-site or off-site planning sessions
- allow for rapid planning (e.g. a 2 day offsite) or more extended strategic planning efforts
- help your executive team analyze where your church is now, envision where the Lord wants you to go and then plot the path to get there
- give you a roadmap to take you through the transformation process from your current state to your desired future state
- provide suggestions yet enable your team to come up with its own plan based on a common, shared set of guiding principles
- facilitate buy-in to the changes, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation

# INTRODUCTION

- focus on translating knowledge into action, not leaving you with just strategy

Meet The Need also provides other sources of information to assist you and your team through the strategic planning process:

- **Blog** – <http://blog.meettheneed.org/>
- eBooks:
  - 1) **[The 5 Steps to Revitalize Your Church:](http://blog.meettheneed.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/5-Steps-to-Revitalize-Your-Church.pdf)**  
<http://blog.meettheneed.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/5-Steps-to-Revitalize-Your-Church.pdf>
  - 2) **[Transform Your Community Forever in 6 Months:](http://blog.meettheneed.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Transform-Your-Community-Forever-in-6-Months.pdf)**  
<http://blog.meettheneed.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Transform-Your-Community-Forever-in-6-Months.pdf>
- **Online Assessment** – <http://meettheneed.org/organizations/assessment/>
- **Personalized Consulting** – contact Jim Morgan directly at (813) 230-0189 or [jmorgan@meettheneed.org](mailto:jmorgan@meettheneed.org)

## What to Expect

Strategic planning in general is a process, not an event. Making the transition to a healthy, growing church will take time and patience. However, the journey is beyond worthwhile. It's the opportunity to break free from modern church-growth conventions that are not only stifling your church's progress but hindering the advancement of the Kingdom throughout America.

This workbook is an exercise in self-discovery. You may be surprised by some of the realizations you make about your pastors, staff and members. Meet The Need questions the underlying model for how most churches are run today, believing they don't align with Biblical mandates, the early church or the best practices of successful organizations of any kind. Therefore, be open to an entirely new way of thinking about your role in leadership, the role of members, and the church's role with those outside the "4 walls". Without an openness to change, strategic planning is unlikely to produce meaningful progress.

Some concepts that this workbook asks you to consider will be challenging, but warrant honest, careful debate. For example:

- Is your church more focused on building an institution than making/sending disciples?
- Are you fully leveraging the capabilities of your members or underutilizing the "power in your pews", concerned about what would happen if you challenged them to live up to their potential for Christ?
- Do your members and attenders act like church "shoppers" or do they realize that they are the living, breathing embodiment of church between Sundays?
- Are your actions and behaviors inadvertently feeding the perception that your church is not very interested in caring for those who need "a physician"?

# INTRODUCTION

## Layout

First we'll introduce Key Principles to determine your alignment with Meet The Need's philosophy about the current issues and recent direction of so many churches in our country. Unless you agree on some of those fundamental assumptions, there is a high likelihood your church won't take full advantage of the concepts and recommendations in this workbook. Next we'll explore a few introductory questions to stimulate your thinking about those topics. Then we'll dive into the first of 15 modules, each addressing a different component how leaders manage churches. Each module is broken into:

- Topic Insights
- Current State Assessment
- Future State Visioning
- Gap Analysis

**Topic Insights** speaks to common issues experienced by churches of all sizes within various geographies and demographics. Those articles outline helpful ideas and give live examples of the actions and behaviors that are contributing to the declining growth, impact, influence and perception of churches in America. You will likely see aspects of how your church operates in those articles, giving context to your own situation and a possible visual for how to emerge from the issues you're experiencing. This section also may help convince any leaders who are content with the status quo that change is needed. It is intended to adjust the lens through which church leaders view "success" or "health", shifting them from an internal focus on the quality of church services to the degree of impact the church is having on the lives of both members and the community at large. A fresh perspective may be necessary for some before taking the self-assessment and developing a future state vision.

The **Current State Assessment** includes three components to see where your church stands in terms of the framework we present in this workbook, benchmarking your church relative to the practices of other churches:

- Assessment Questionnaire
- Proficiency Model
- Scoring legend to plot yourself on the Proficiency Model

**Future State Visioning** is designed to prompt your thinking around how to institute changes at your church, putting you back on the path to growth, and more importantly, health. Rather than presuming Meet The Need can provide you all the answers, this section is an article providing key concepts to bake into your analysis of potential next steps, moving you further along the Proficiency Model. These articles will bring up problems that churches typically face when they subscribe to the prevailing church growth models. They also provide alternative frameworks to begin contemplating, showing how your church can emerge from underneath those flawed theories.

# INTRODUCTION

Likewise the **Gap Analysis** section includes only high level recommendations, with space for you and your fellow leaders to determine the appropriate action items for your church. We believe that if you build a consensus among your leadership around the Key Principles advocated throughout this workbook, then you are more than qualified to come up with the next steps best suited for your particular church. Our hope is that the readings, models and suggestions will be helpful in getting the ball rolling in an exciting new direction, knowing you possess the savvy and knowledge of your situation to devise the right go-forward plan – through prayer and the Lord’s leading.

This interactive approach – reading, then questions to facilitate open discussion on your end – will also facilitate buy-in across your leadership team. Unless all pastors, key staff, deacons and elders each believe they’ve been given an opportunity to draw their own conclusions and provide input, the likelihood of success dissipates.

This workbook contains printable pages you can distribute to each of those leaders to fill out.

## Preparing Your Team

Depending on your leadership style – either wanting participants in the strategic planning process to have some background or walk in without any preconceived notions about the concepts in the workbook – decide whether to have your leaders review some postings on the Meet The Need Blog. However, the Online Assessment contains many of the same questions and scoring models used in this workbook so we do not recommend pointing them toward the Meet The Need web site or having them take the Online Assessment prior to your strategic planning sessions.

Before engaging other leaders at your church in strategic planning, follow some of commonly-accepted change management best practices to set the stage for success:

- Ensure you have strong “executive sponsorship” for what’s about to take place
- Prepare hearts and minds to be open to change through:
  - Prayer
  - Bible Study around Jesus’ model for reaching the lost and the early church
  - Emphasizing that what they encounter may not be exactly what they expect
- Get leaders ready to take on responsibility for leading change initiatives that come out of the planning process

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## My Story

Meet The Need began fifteen years ago, during a long drive back home to Atlanta from a vacation in Jacksonville. Weeks earlier, I had asked my church where I could serve somewhere in the community. I told them my passions and interests, hoping for direction. I was surprised but they didn't have an answer for me. As I was driving, I was thinking about how the corporations I consulted all had those types of answers – they knew where to direct people when they wanted to buy something.

It didn't take much of an understanding of church history to know that the Church had been the food bank and homeless shelter for its first 1900 years. How could churches, even one as large as mine, be so disconnected from the needs in the community? Didn't Jesus and the early church model the power of demonstrating love and compassion in sharing the gospel? People don't care what you know until they know that you care, right?

## The 2nd Half of Meet The Need's Mission

To **mobilize** and **equip** the Church to lead millions more to Christ by following Jesus' example of meeting those in need exactly where they are.

That was the mission statement we came up with after I got back to Atlanta that day. And it remains the same today. We quickly learned back then that even if churches wanted to engage much more in the community (and we hoped they did), they lacked any modern day tools to help them share local needs with members. So we spent years and millions designing, building, testing and rolling out systems that empower churches and charities to show needs to those who could help. Meet The Need expanded nationwide and has had tremendous success in many cities.

However, **#1 Equip** – building systems that enable churches to do more – wasn't our entire goal. Our mission statement also calls Meet The Need to **#2 Mobilize** – encouraging churches to follow Jesus' example. That 2nd part of our mission is where Meet The Need plans to spend much of our time going forward. The systems are built, powerful and have recently been made much more accessible, simple to use and state-of-the-art. Now it's time to focus more of Meet The Need's energies on mobilizing and encouraging because...

## ...There's a Problem

We developed Meet The Need's systems based on an assumption – churches would move beyond seasonal events if Meet The Need could be the first to bring the tools they need to manage and communicate needs on a year-round basis. For many churches that has been the case. However, with or without Meet The Need, the general trend among churches in America today is not toward unleashing members into year-round ministry. Systems don't change heart and minds. We continue to see far too many unmet needs in communities across the country.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

The greatest source of help and hope available to families in need resides, largely idle, in the pews of America's churches.

My background was in management consulting – solving strategic problems for “Fortune 1000” companies. So for the past few years we've put on our management consulting hats and done extensive research, trying to find out why:

- the role of the Church in communities across America has fundamentally changed
- American church growth models encourage internal, not external, focus
- the Church (overall) in the U.S. is not succeeding on any significant metric – growth, impact, influence, or perception – in fact, 93% of churches today aren't growing

### We've Made a Huge Discovery

After all that digging, it turns out that organizational behavior best practices and principles, which align very well with Biblical principles, held the key all along to why the Church is struggling today. There is a flawed assumption underlying most decisions churches make. The modern American church is violating one of the most basic tenants of all successful organizations, including the early Church. Making that groundbreaking discovery would not have been possible without my extensive experience in management consulting followed by years of work with churches of all sizes. Little did I know the Lord was preparing me all that time to understand and unveil the “root cause” issue behind the Church's decline.

This workbook, along with Meet The Need's other coaching tools, explore and unveil those findings in hopes of fulfilling the 2nd aspect of our mission – to Mobilize the Church.

*Do you want to see your church growing faster and having a greater impact for Christ?*

Only recognizing and rectifying this faulty premise can reverse the decline. Treating symptoms won't do it. Turning the tide requires uncovering and dealing with the core, underlying issue.

### The Root Cause for the Church's Decline and its Path to Revitalization

This root cause is extraordinarily simple – yet profound. The logic is straightforward – yet compelling. I honestly believe the Lord placed me in strategy consulting to corporations for 10 years and then another decade working with churches across the nation so I could make this discovery. It took being in both of those positions to grasp this key concept. Without further ado:

#### **Baseline assumptions:**

1. A church is not defined as its pastor, staff and buildings. That's how we define companies – as its executives, employees and assets. Instead, in a church, the members and attenders ARE the church.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

2. Who an organization seeks to attract and retain and where it invests the bulk of its time, resources and dollars define who it considers to be its “customer”.
3. Studies show that nearly all churches today invest the vast majority of their time, resources and dollars on organizational management, facilities, programs, services and marketing to attract and retain members and attenders.

### **If you agree with those assumptions, the following must be true:**

4. According to our definition, churches today treat congregants as their primary “customer”. Churches in America have redefined their “customer”.
5. However, if members ARE the Church, they CANNOT also be the Church’s “customer”.
6. Therefore, churches are investing the vast majority of their time, resources and dollars in the wrong “customer”.

### **Further:**

8. Any organization that is not focused on its “customers” or focused on the wrong “customers” is unlikely to succeed.
9. Customers are always outside of, not internal to, an organization. Because the Church today treats “insiders” (members, who ARE the Church) as its “customer”, the Church is by definition internally focused. Internally-focused entities of any kind rarely grow.
10. Because churches treat congregants as “customers” they tend to cater to them and hesitate to challenge them (to be disciplined, to disciple, and to serve the Church’s true, intended “customer”) for fear of losing them to a church down the road (who won’t challenge them).
11. As a result, churchgoers have adopted a consumer mentality. As evidence, most churches growing today are those who can afford to provide better facilities and “customer” experiences than smaller churches – appealing to those consumers. Not all church growth is “healthy”.
12. Jesus and His disciples spent the vast majority of their time going out into the community to reach the lost and hopeless. And although Jesus had the perfect words, He nearly always healed and fed to demonstrate His power and love before He said who He was.
13. Therefore, Jesus, His disciples and the early Church considered the community to be the “customer”, continually engaging and serving those around them.
14. The Church followed Jesus’ model for centuries, serving as the food bank and homeless shelter, allocating a significant percentage of its time, resources and dollars to serving the community.
15. However, the Church today allocates a very small fraction of its total budget and time to engaging and serving the community – its true “customer”. The Church can’t possibly “outreach” Jesus, yet it has largely separated words from action.
16. Other religions understand the importance of spreading out and “taking ground”, infiltrating all facets of society; yet Christian churches continue pulling inward.

### **So, it stands to reason:**

## KEY PRINCIPLES

17. The Church is not succeeding – in terms of overall growth, number of churches closing, perception in society, or degree of community impact.
18. Since churches are not focused on the right “customers” (i.e. the communities where those churches are planted), those “customers” do not feel the Church cares about them.
19. People don’t “care what you know until they know you care”. The Church’s intended “customers” aren’t listening as much today to what the Church has to say. No longer seeing the Church actively engaged, interacting in relationship with them, most unchurched do not feel the Church has earned the right to speak into culture. As a result, too many of them now believe Christians are more about judgment than justice, condemnation than compassion, self-righteousness than selflessness, and hypocrisy than humility.

### **Ok, I’m convinced. Now what?:**

20. With proof of the misdefinition of the Church’s “customer”, a flawed assumption driving most decisions churches make, pastors have little grounds for maintaining the status quo.
21. If churches keep treating members as “customers”, the Church’s influence and reputation will continue to decline.

# INITIAL QUESTIONS

## YOUR MISSION, VISION AND MODEL

Purpose: Establish a solid baseline for who you are as a church and the foundation the Lord established for your church, which should not be fundamentally altered by this or any other strategic planning exercise

Do you have a church vision statement? If so, please provide it below.

What is your church's stated mission? Elaborate on any aspects of your mission or the calling your leaders received that stand out from other churches.

# INITIAL QUESTIONS

## PHILOSOPHICAL ALIGNMENT

Purpose: Provide your view on some of the core concepts addressed in this workbook

What is your perspective of the standing (position/place) members and regular attenders occupy at your church? In other words, are they participants in the work of the church or are they the embodiment of your church? How do you encourage them to live out the latter role?

How do you see the role you and your staff play relative to members/attenders in accomplishing the mission of your church?

Do members have any responsibilities or just options (i.e. are they held accountable at any level or simply viewed as volunteers)?

Why did you plant your church in your particular community? In other words, what did you hope the Lord would do through your church in your city?

Do you find yourself today allocating your time, energy and budget in ways that don't align well with your original vision for how you hoped to impact the community? If not, what changed?

## INITIAL QUESTIONS

Are you or your staff more focused on “retaining” people (i.e. making them happy to make sure they come back) than you would like? Do you agree that pastors who move too far in that direction contribute to some churchgoers adopting a “consumer” mentality?

Is your church doing as much as you think it should to prepare and push members to reach others for Christ? How could your church do better in that regard?

Is the orientation of your pastors, staff and members more inclined toward building a church (centralized) or building and deploying disciples (decentralized)?

What role does serving play in evangelism? Do you believe Jesus’ model for evangelism was to demonstrate His love and compassion before telling people who He was?

What do you believe are the reasons why 93% of churches in America aren’t growing? Why do you think the Church’s impact, influence and perception by society are diminishing?

In addition to prayer, what are your recommendations for what should be done to revitalize churches in America?

# INITIAL QUESTIONS

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Purpose: Provide your (self) rating of the strengths and weaknesses of your church and the Church in America in general

	Your Church (1-10)	Church in General (1-10)
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### CHURCH

Growth – Rate, in terms of number of members and attendees		
Culture – Unity, excitement, buy-in to vision/direction		
Impact – In the community (e.g. on spiritual climate, moral compass and/or alleviation of social issues)		
Influence – Leading by example; having a voice outside the “4 walls”; well connected to key influencers in the local area		
Perception – How well known is the church locally and how well it is regarded		
Openness to Change – Are deacons, elders, members set in their ways or willing to make adjustments as the Lord leads?		

### MEMBERS

Engagement – Large number of members regularly involved in activities organized by the church		
Compassion – For each other, for the lost and for causes in the community		
Generosity – Giving joyously, sacrificially and consistently		
Fellowship – Love for and companionship with one another		
Life Change – Personal growth in Christ; walking with the Lord		
Prayer – Strong relationship and communion with the Lord		
Evangelism – Courageous in sharing their faith with others		
Discipleship – Willing to be discipled and to disciple others; 1-on-1 or triads, not just attending a small group		

# INITIAL QUESTIONS

## INITIAL IMPROVEMENT IDEAS

Purpose: List any solutions you already have in mind for issues identified in the prior section, whether or not those initiatives are already planned or are not yet on the docket

Of the issues you're currently aware of at your church, areas where you'd like to see your church be more effective in carrying out its mission, what are your ideas or current initiatives to improve in those areas?

### Inside the church?

### Outside the "4 walls"?

# STRATEGIC PLANNING MODULES

## Overview

Structure the schedule and format of your strategic planning exercise around the following 15 modules, each of which should require no more than 1 hour to complete:

### Part 1: ORGANIZATION

1. Time Allocation
2. Budget Allocation
3. Role of Pastors versus Members
4. Expectations of Members
5. Organizational Structure

### Part 2: STRATEGIES

6. Marketing
7. Retention
8. Discipleship
9. Programs/Ministries
10. Local Missions

### Part 3: FRUIT/RESULTS

11. Member Engagement/Service
12. Impact on the World
13. Influence in the Community
14. Perception by the Community
15. Success Metrics

As we discussed in the Introduction, the outline for each module is as follows:

- a. **Topic Insights** – Thoughts to frame discussions and reset thinking in preparation for step 2
- b. **Current State** – Assessment and scoring on the Proficiency Model
- c. **Future State Vision** – Ideas to help you develop church's go-forward strategy
- d. **Gap Analysis** – High level recommendations and detailed implementation planning

Again, all recommendations are just that – suggestions. If you track with our “members are the church, community is the ‘customer’” assumption, then we believe you are well qualified to develop specific action steps to lead your church further in that direction, taking into account the vision the Lord gave you, the people He has led to you, the community where He planted you, etc.

**PART 1: ORGANIZATION****MODULE 1: TIME ALLOCATION OF PASTORS AND STAFF****TOPIC INSIGHTS****Assumption**

A church is not defined as its pastor, staff and buildings.  
That's how we define companies – as its executives, employees and assets.  
Instead, in a church, the members/attenders ARE the church.

Few pastors would argue with that. It's the people in the church who make up the church, right? A church is not those it employs or what it owns. That's what comprises a business – the business is whoever works for the company and whatever belongs to the company.

What does it truly mean to be a church that's not defined by its employees and assets? We understand in principle that the people – members, attenders, staff and pastors – are the Church, but do most churches really live out that belief? We hear it often on Sunday mornings from the pulpit – “you are the church” or “the church is a who, not a what”. *However, a church fully committed to that basic concept would look and act differently than most churches today:*

**The Members/Attenders Would Realize:****We Have a Job to Do**

- We have responsibilities – we aren't simply visitors expecting to be fed or entertained
- We are just as responsible as pastors for bringing people to Christ, discipling, and serving – let's not leave those tasks to the “professionals”

**We Need to Give up Some “Rights”**

- We are not here for ourselves, but for each other
- We lose our voice to complain. Customers can complain, but as members we surrender that privilege. Why? Because we are owners – we are on the hook for what happens in the church, not bystanders.

**We Should Reevaluate Why We Contribute**

- We're not giving to build an institution
- We're giving to build each other into a powerful force for Jesus

**We Are Called to Impact the World Around Us**

- We are the Church but we don't live in the church building – we live our lives primarily outside the 4 walls
- Therefore, Church is a decentralized, distributed model – it walks and breathes as we each go to work, neighborhoods, and soccer practice

- Church is not somewhere we go on Sundays and Wednesday nights

### ...and The Pastors and Staff Would:

#### Raise the Bar for Members

- Hold members accountable for their responsibilities
- Expect them to carry out those responsibilities at a reasonable level of proficiency
- Train them to perform effectively as the living, breathing body of Christ

#### Get Them in to Send Them Out

- Not focus on member/attender retention or engagement
- Instead, bring people in to prepare them for a life on mission
- Teach them the cost of following Jesus, not just the advantages of doing so

#### Stop trying to build an entity

- Unlike businesses, don't take steps to increase loyalty to the institution
- Build disciples, not an organization
- Equip and encourage members equally to serve both inside and outside the "4 walls"

#### "Flatten" the organization

- Empower members to "be" the Church, elevating their leadership role relative to pastors
- Prepare the church to outlive its leadership – since members/attenders, not just pastors, define the church
- Realize the power of leverage – increase the church's impact by no longer underutilizing the vast resources sitting in the pews

We've all seen how badly kids behave when parents spoil, defend and cover for them. Failing to let children take responsibility for their actions "enables" them to be slackers, expecting to be entertained, complaining when they don't get what they want, with no consequences for bad behavior and caring about no one but themselves.

Aren't their signs of some of those tendencies among today's church members? Too many remain spiritual children, spoiled because pastors were reluctant to push them to deeper levels of faith and commitment. Too many never advance to maturity because pastors, their spiritual parents, never fully entrusted them with the power, knowledge and responsibility to go and make disciples.

Accepting a role no higher than that of members, as a servant leader, takes a great deal of humility. Leading less, empowering more, relinquishing authority and no longer trying to build an institution works against everything seminary, books, articles and conferences today are telling pastors. Yet those are necessities for exponential disciple-building and "taking ground" in a city. A church built around one big personality or controlled by a couple powerful lay members can only grow so far. Pastors must be secure enough to surround themselves with

(and disciple) senior, capable individuals who have enough experience and savvy to (in turn) effectively disciple many others.

Are the same characteristics that make many people want to become pastors the same that should disqualify them from being one? For those who love the Lord, have an entrepreneurial spirit, and enjoy leadership becoming a pastor would appear to be the perfect career path. But what if the desire to lead a church means you shouldn't? Those hungry to lead are often those who will be most inclined to read and believe their own press when "success" comes. Those who like to present to groups are often not great listeners.

Christianity hinges on humility. It's the only religion that requires its followers accept that they are hopeless sinners in dire need of a savior. Pastors should model humility and be shepherds who are more inclined to one-on-one listening than presentations. Maybe pastors should be pulled into the pulpit – like Peter who never made leading his aim. A church cannot become vibrant and healthy if the pastor is susceptible to falling into the trap of enjoying leadership and centralizing power, knowledge and responsibility – thereby failing to challenge and empower members.

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: See where leaders in your church invest the bulk of their time and energy to determine whether their emphasis is more on building an institution or building world changing disciples:

Instructions: Enter a % distribution of time for each activity by each group. Make sure each role/column totals to 100%.

	Pastors	Staff	Elders/ Deacons	Lay Leaders
Worship Services and Preparation				
Programs (youth, singles, etc.)				
Meetings with and Services for Members (e.g. visitation, weddings, funerals, etc.)				
Staff/Internal Meetings				
Church Administration (Financial, Ops)				
Marketing ("Outreach")				
Discipleship				
International Missions				
Local Missions				
Networking with Community Leaders				

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

<b>1 – Consumer</b>	<b>2 – Caterer</b>	<b>3 – Climber</b>	<b>4 – Challenger</b>	<b>5 – Catalyst</b>
Nearly 100% of pastor/staff hours invested in member/attender-related attraction and retention activities	<10% of time invested in building and engaging disciples (versus building and growing the organization)	10%-25% of time shifted from attraction/retention to training and sending members into ministry work	25%-40% of time focused on activities that prepare and equip members to “be the church” to those around them	Majority of time spent discipling, empowering teams, equipping, deploying, and networking

Level 1 – Sum of last 4 rows for pastors or staff is less than 6%

Level 2 – Sum of last 4 rows for pastors or staff is between 6% and 19%

Level 3 – Sum of last 4 rows for pastors or staff is between 20% and 50%

Level 4 – Sum of last 4 rows for pastors or staff is between 51% and 80%

Level 5 – Sum of last 4 rows for pastors or staff is more than 80%

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

**Pastor’s Role Inside the Church**

If members are the church and the community is the customer, then pastors are the coaches, strategizers and organizers, responsible for rallying and mobilizing the troops into action. What does that entail in practical terms as it relates to a pastor’s activities inside the church?

- Act as the “Executive Sponsor” for the substantial changes we recommend to revitalize your church – in any organization, change projects always fail without strong advocacy from senior leadership
- Set the example for:
  - Compassion
  - Seeking and serving the lost outside the church – not just taking care of the church “family”
  - Evangelizing and networking, even if it means venturing outside one’s comfort zone
  - Getting involved in whatever local cause(s) the pastor holds near and dear
- Encourage the congregation to follow suit in all of those same areas
- Unite the church (i.e. members and regular attenders) by rallying them around a mission outside of itself (i.e. the “customer” – the city where it’s planted)
- Consistently promote the responsibility members have to lead people to Christ – many of whom would never accept an invitation to a church
- Disciple leaders and challenge them to disciple others

- Ensure a program is in place to help members discover their giftings
- Engage the church in local “care and share” activities year-round, not just through occasional events – providing enough outlets for members to apply their skills, interests and resources

As Acts 6 stresses, pastors are called to be teachers, not serve tables. Yet churches have become too teaching-centric rather than compassion-centric because pastors (teachers) have become more the definition of “church” than members (the instruments of compassion). Jesus was both compassionate and a teacher – to those among and outside of his closest followers. Pastors no longer represent both of those roles to their communities. Leaders act almost exclusively as teachers and rarely as sources of compassion to the world around them, as they did for 1900 years. No wonder most “unchurched” believe churches and Christians are more about condemnation than caring. Pastors must lead churches to reclaim a more balanced role in society, following Jesus’ model, or watch as the remaining 7% of churches that are still growing begin to stagnate as well.

### **Pastor’s Role Outside the Church**

Imagine if a CEO of a company, an Executive Director of a charity or Peter as pastor of the first church saw their role as pastors do today. Would the business have made a profit, the charity thrived or the early church exploded in growth if their leaders:

- rarely networked with other local leaders?
- only served those inside the organization?
- didn’t adequately train those “insiders” to pursue their target audience?
- were cautious about challenging them to step out of their comfort zones for the greater good?

To revitalize a church, the pastor must assume the external duties required of the chief executive of any organization that expects to be successful:

- primary networker with leaders of churches, charities, city governments, businesses and schools – with no set agenda or proposal, but willing to serve however needed
- visionary for how to demonstrate the love of God throughout the community
- spokesperson for the church in the city
- community organizer, assembling a consortium of diverse players to address pressing local issues

That means delegating several responsibilities pastors spend far too much time on today, entrusting them to deacons and elders, as well as to staff members:

- Church administration
- Pastoral care

- Staff meetings about internal matters

For more information, read our eBook [The 5 Steps to Revitalize Your Church](#).

**BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP**

**Quick Tips**

1. **Do Less** – Evaluate each initiative and program at your church to see if it is consistent with the concept that members ARE the church and the community is your “customer”. Are the investments of your pastors’ and staff’s time all geared toward (and effective in) preparing members to BE the church after they leave the building on Sunday?
2. **Exchange Good for Great** – Trade in some staff meetings for opportunities to network with local secular and Christian leaders, offering your church to serve where needed most. Pastors should reallocate much of their administrative time to personal discipleship of leaders and members.
3. **Delegate More** – Let lay leaders lead. Entrust more of the operations of the church and care of members to Deacons – that’s much of their Biblical role. Meanwhile, empower Elders to disciple, teach and pray as they were intended, alleviating much of the burden on pastors.
4. **Look for Efficiencies** – Whatever activities you decide are most worthwhile, do them more efficiently. For example, mobilize more members to engage in showing the love of Christ to your church’s intended “customer”, the community where your church is planted, using [Meet The Need](http://www.meettheneed.org) (www.meettheneed.org).

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4.

5.

## PART 1: ORGANIZATION

## MODULE 2: BUDGET ALLOCATION

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

The most controversial and challenging aspect of adopting a Biblical definition of the church's "customer" is – Money.

**Script Flip #1 – The Generous “Church”****Current Lens: Member Generosity**

Member generosity is one of church leadership's greatest concerns and the lens through which it views the generosity of its church. They see the church as the object of generosity, not the instigator of it. What percentage of members/attenders are giving? What's the average giving per family?

However, the congregation IS the church so if pastors are worried about whether members are giving enough TO the church, they're missing the point. It's not about "them" giving to "us" (the church), they are us (the church). If we've truly empowered the congregation to BE the church, we'll ask a completely different set of questions.

**New Lens: Church Generosity**

What leaders should be asking is whether their church (the entity) is generous. In other words, how much is the organization giving out of its budget to its real "customer" – the community? And how generous are its members in sharing their wealth with those in desperate need of help and hope around them? Would members be more generous if they fully grasped that they ARE the church and the community is their "customer"? Are churches aggressive enough in challenging members to give not only money to support community causes, but also their time and talents? Generosity should be defined to include all three – time, talents and treasures. Or are churches more concerned with getting members to do "church chores"?

**Script Flip #2 – First “Fruits”****Current Lens: Member Priorities & Obedience**

A common complaint among pastors is how churches winds up getting the "leftovers" after members pay all their bills. The Bible is clear on this subject – the Lord deserves the first and best of what we have to offer. Pastors know it's wrong for churchgoers to lock in so many fixed expenses that they only have a couple cents on the dollar available at the end of the day to give to the church.

**New Lens: Church Priorities & Obedience**

Yet aren't nearly all churches today doing the exact same thing? Buildings, salaries, programs, and other costs that accrue to the benefit of the "insiders" leave little left over to engage and bless the church's "customer" ("outsiders"). Churches were the food bank and homeless shelter for 1900 years. They started the schools and hospitals. They had far few fixed expenses and allocated a much higher percentage of their budgets to sharing the gospel through serving, as Jesus' modeled. Maybe if churches were more obedient in giving their first fruits, members would follow suit.

### Script Flip #3 – Investing for Growth

#### Current Lens: Reinvest Inward

It's interesting, and probably not coincidental, that churches budget roughly the same small percentage for local missions that members budget for their church. New Christians never plan to short-change God – but then life happens. Likewise, churches plant with a vision of the Biblical model – impacting the community mightily – but then get sucked in by the demands of running a church. Gradually, budgets get redirected toward staff and buildings to attract and retain people. One day they realize they should have never compromised, but as we said earlier, by then it's too late to extricate the organization from its fixed costs.

#### New Lens: Invest Outward

The same cycle occurs with nearly all entrepreneurs. The companies that survive reorient outward at some point. If they persist in serving internal stakeholders and neglect the marketplace, they go under. Over 90% of today's churches are not growing because they fall into the latter camp. They don't adequately equip churchgoers to pursue the real "customer". If church is not the end but the means, what does it mean to live that out financially? What if we budgeted to maximize community impact? Strategic planning with that as the goal would reverse some of the percentages. How many more people in your city would want to know what's up with your church if you reallocated 40% of your dollars to year-round community engagement – e.g. school partnerships, neighborhood "adoption", and employment assistance? What if you challenged members much more to BE the church and 40% of them engaged in weekly community service activities all over town? How would the brand awareness and perception of your church change?

### Script Flip #4 – Give More, Get More

#### Current Lens: Catering = More Dollars

Are churches being rewarded for "bad behavior"? In business, you don't make profits if you ignore your target "customers". Yet in churches, many leaders believe their financial viability hinges largely on catering to members – and wind up ignoring their intended "customers". For example, a wealthy family leaving is cause for concern in most small churches. That mentality is natural and expected, but wrong. It's also wrong if pastors would be more inclined to challenge their congregations more directly and preach the gospel more boldly if NONE of their funding came from members/attenders and if everyone HAD to come back the next weekend.

**New Lens: Challenging = More Dollars**

Would your church bring in more income if it were more focused on community engagement? No doubt that reallocation of funds would be painful at first. What about if leadership stepped up its challenges for members to BE the church? You'd quickly lose some long-time attenders who weren't prepared to alter their lifestyles for Christ. However, in the long run your church's income would actually increase:

- Evidence shows that members are more generous with generous churches
- People are more likely to donate if they know their dollars will go toward more emotional "causes" than administration and buildings
- More challenging translates into greater community impact, which in turn produces more attenders

Would you give to a charity that essentially gave back 97.5% of its donations to benefit donors? Charities and churches both share the same "customer" – the community. The beneficiary of a charity's or church's services shouldn't be almost exclusively those who give to it (e.g. members). In fact, charitable receipts state that "no goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation". Instead, the "customer" – those the church and charity are trying to reach (e.g. the community) – should be the primary beneficiary of those donations.

For more information, read the [7 Attributes of a Generous Church](#).

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Is your church as generous with its intended "customer" (the hurting and hopeless in the community) as it should be?
Would your church's members be more generous in giving (internally and externally) if your church's budget better reflected a spirit of generosity?

Complete the chart below to measure where your church invests its dollars. Ensure the line items total to 100%.

	<b>% of Budget</b>
Salaries & Benefits	
Facilities (i.e. mortgage, utilities)	
Technology and Equipment	
Operations (insurance, financial, supplies, etc.)	
Programs (youth, singles, etc.)	
Marketing/Advertising	
Pastoral Care/Benevolence (for members)	
Pastoral Care/Benevolence (for non members)	
Local Missions	
Externally Focused Teams/Ministries	
International Missions	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

<b>1 – Consumer</b>	<b>2 – Caterer</b>	<b>3 – Climber</b>	<b>4 – Challenger</b>	<b>5 – Catalyst</b>
Nearly 100% of budget spoken for by largely “fixed” internal expenses; little to no investment in community ministry	<10% committed to local/global impact through funding discipleship, local and int’l missions and ministries	10%-25% freed up to train and send disciples and support local ministries; realizing people are more generous with a generous church	25%-40% redirected to support and empower internal impact teams, discipleship programs and local ministries or causes	Church operational expenses cut to point where 40%+ can be dispersed to member-led and non-member-led ministries and causes

**SCORING:**

- Level 1 – Sum of last 4 rows is less than 3%
- Level 2 – Sum of last 4 rows is between 3% and 9%
- Level 3 – Sum of last 4 rows is between 10% and 25%
- Level 4 – Sum of last 4 rows is between 26% and 40%
- Level 5 – Sum of last 4 rows is more than 40%

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

The pastor of a large church in a wealthy area made what most would consider an unthinkable decision. Going forward the church would allocate 40% of its annual budget to local and international missions. It would form mission teams charged with engaging members in year-

round ministry, whether launched internally or through partnerships with local organizations. Lay leaders would take ownership of administration and recruiting for these externally focused teams. The church would stand behind all of this – providing moral and financial support. Of course, this new plan met with resistance, but the foundation had been laid for this transition through years of discipleship, usage of Meet The Need, and “on-the-job training” running prayer, care and share initiatives in the community.

Why was this church’s move seen as so radical by most other pastors? Interestingly, it reflected the budget allocation of the average church for 1900 years. It aligned with the decentralized view of church that prevailed until recent decades, with members empowered to be the “hands and feet” of Christ.

### **Let’s Share Another Story...**

A single mom with two young children walked into a 200 member church looking for help. Her lights are going to be turned off next week if she doesn’t come up with enough cash to pay her power bill. She also needs clothes for the older of the two and a better stroller than one she has with the bent wheel. From the way she’s looking down when making the request, the staff member picked up a sense of shame and an expectation of rejection. It seemed likely she’d been to few other churches in the neighborhood and received a polite explanation from each as to why they weren’t in a position to help.

### **How Would Most Churches Respond?**

“We don’t have enough in our budget. Sorry, it’s been a tough year.”  
“There’s a charity down the road that can help you with that. Have you checked with them?”  
“If you start coming to our church, I’m sure we can find a way to do something.”

### **What’s Really Going on is the Church...**

- ...didn’t make any room in its budget for benevolence for local families
- ...is not willing to share needs of non-member individuals and families with the congregation, even though some of them could likely help
- ...has no way to easily communicate needs to members even if it were willing to do so
- ...isn’t sure who those walk-ins are and is worried about being taken advantage of

Today, the vast majority of families approaching churches for help are quickly, yet courteously, turned away. Churches miss those opportunities because they don’t see them as just that – opportunities. They’ve redefined the “customer”. Attention, funding, facilities, and programs have been redirected to attracting and retaining – building an organization. Struggling individuals and families in the community are no longer recognized as valued “customers”. Few churches still follow Jesus’ model of leading with service and compassion, then telling them who He is. Consequently, the role of church in society has changed – with the pastor’s blessing.

What would your church do if this young mother walked in the front door?

### Should Your Church Do Something?

- **Biblically** – Jesus healed and fed those who weren't his followers – at least not yet. Once they experienced His love and power, most became followers. Jesus also sent the disciples out not unarmed but fully supplied with the artillery necessary to open ears and eyes to the gospel – the ability to heal. Numerous times Jesus, Paul and Peter spoke of the importance of helping the poor, linking it inextricably to the sharing of the good news of hope found in Christ alone.
- **Historically** – Since America's founding, churches have been the "center of town" – the cultural, charitable, academic, and spiritual hub in cities across the country. Government and secular charities weren't the "go to" sources of assistance when times got tough. Families could walk into a church and leadership and/or members would do what they could. As the local food bank and homeless shelter, a significant portion of the church's income went toward supporting the "least of these" – and not just those attending on Sunday. Rather than offering "hand outs", churches formed relationships with those hurting and helpless, working with them to extend a "hand up".

### Whether a Church Will Do Something Depends on Its:

- **Definition of the "Customer"** – If leadership and members see the lost in the community as their "customers", clearly they will sense an obligation to serve those who don't know the gospel – many of whom would never step foot into a church building. Yet church leaders are unlikely to be as conscious of their responsibilities outside the "4 walls" if they're busy placating members and attenders who are conditioned to evaluate how well the pastor is preaching, how the music sounds, how the political landscape of the church has shifted, and why leadership doesn't recognize all they've done for the church. Bible verses that begin with "I desire compassion..." and "Pure religion..." won't be ringing in their ears if criticisms are on the tips of their tongues.
- **Definition of the "Church"** – If leaders and members truly see those in the pews as the embodiment of "church" – a decentralized army rather than a centralized institution – then suddenly the burden to help local families is dispersed among the many versus the few. Even if a church has budget for benevolence and is willing to bless a non-member, maybe the impact would be far greater if members assisted families in need directly. Pastors and staff don't have capacity to build long term relationships with many local families – but that kind of leverage does reside there in the sanctuary. In this scenario, the task of leadership is only to communicate needs and prepare members to BE the church at every opportunity. That responsibility should also carry over throughout the week, where each congregant acts as the church personified – caring and sharing with neighbors, friends and coworkers in need of help and hope.

### What if Churches Don't Do Anything?

Fewer people in need approach churches for help today because they don't think churches are willing to help. However, studies show that people generally believe churches should be among the first to help. That dichotomy creates the prevailing poor perception of churches and Christians by society. Every family in need that churches turn away at the door drives home the idea that they're more about judgment than compassion – deeper and deeper into the American psyche. Every time a pastor speaks out on cultural, social, or moral issue when that church hasn't demonstrated a commensurate degree of mercy to the needy – the ditch widens. To the unchurched, Christians haven't earned the right to be heard. Jesus realized people “don't care what you know until they know you care” – they traveled miles on foot to hear what Jesus had to say because He proved He cared each and every day. The gradual detachment of caring from sharing – abdicating that role to others – is possibly the most damaging trend in the history of the church in America.

### What Exactly Should Your Church Do?

Because of that growing perception, churches simply can't keep turning people away. Instead churches should:

- **Assist families even if they don't go to that church** – Imitating the first church at Antioch and being wary of abuses are valid reasons to focus more assistance on congregants. However, as we've discussed the church is clearly called to serve the poor regardless of their religious or church affiliation. Churches today invest disproportionately in catering and caring for members versus challenging and mobilizing them to bless others. [Note: Read about the [“Alternative View”](#) which holds that corporate worship is only for those whose names are registered in heaven (Hebrews 12:23). Under that interpretation, all churches that won't help families who aren't part of that church, assuming that the church is only supposed to be made up of believers, are logically precluding doing anything to help non-believers. In this case, the only way churches can follow Jesus' model of caring then sharing is if members individually act AS the church and choose to help those who aren't Christians.]
- **Don't be so quick to refer them to an agency or charity** – Follow this sequence to show your true “customers” that your church and the Lord cares for them when they ask you for help:
  - **Step 1 – Show Respect:** Take the time to get to know them. Listen to their story, ask questions, learn their name, and pray with them.
  - **Step 2 – Show Compassion:** James 2:15-16 warns that simply saying “Go in peace” or “Be warm, be fed” isn't enough. Make some effort to help, like sharing their need with members via [Meet The Need](#), which manages all communication logistics.

- **Step 3 – Make Assistance Relational:** Don't do a "transaction" and send them on their way (outputs). Ensure a member gets to know each individual/family personally (outcomes).
  - **Step 4 – If You Refer, Follow up:** If your church/members can't provide all they need, refer them to a local agency, but contact the agency yourself about the family. Ask for an update on what the agency was able to do for them.
  - **Step 5 – Stay Connected:** Church should be the place the family lands when they get back on their feet. An agency or charity can't put them in relationship with believers and lead them closer to Christ over time.
- **Carve out more for benevolence** – The modern day model for running a church that attracts and engages "consumers" leaves little over for assisting members in need, much less those outside the church. Remember, the lost in the community, not members, are your "customer". Cut operational costs that are not playing a direct role in equipping and challenging members and regular attenders to BE the church to those around them.

### BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

#### Quick Tips

1. **Be a Generous "Church"** – Rather than defining your church's generosity in terms how much members give to the church, reevaluate generosity in terms of how much of your church's budget goes toward your real "customer" – the lost in the community. As spelled out in the Future State Vision article above, those investments may be both in terms of empowering (i.e. funding) internal teams to do externally-focused work and benevolence support directly to non-member families.
2. **Give Your "First Fruits"** – Churches often accuse congregations of giving its "leftovers" yet churches do the same thing – their fixed expenses are so high there's little remaining when all the bills are paid to invest in loving and serving those who don't know Jesus.
3. **Investing for Growth and Impact** – Church plants begin with a vision for impacting a community, but typically retrench inside the "4 walls" once the demands of running a church take hold. Recapturing the initial vision God gave the church often entails moving back toward the church's initially allocation of dollars.
4. **Give More, Get More** – Ironically, as a church is more generous, investing in its community, the resulting growth and excitement about making a difference drives more donations to the church. Members are more generous with generous churches.

#### Your Next Steps

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**PART 1: ORGANIZATION****MODULE 3: ROLE OF PASTORS VERSUS MEMBERS****TOPIC INSIGHTS**

In the last module, we “flipped the script” on generosity, asking whether most church budgets model generosity for their members and to their communities. Now we’re going to follow the logic and central assumptions and “flip” something else – the organizational structure of nearly all of today’s churches.

The concept that “members ARE the church and not the ‘customer’” dictates that churches...

**Squash the Org Chart****Pastors Move Down**

The prevailing hierarchy in the respective roles of pastors versus members should flatten. As “insiders”, members should no longer leave the heavy lifting to the “professionals”. Relegating church members to a role as inviters rather than trained evangelists demeans them and unduly elevates pastors by comparison. Companies can expect no more of customers than to secure referrals. However, churches should either raise the standards for members or risk treating them as “customers”. Members should “close the sale” – not just bring people to church but to the Lord. Most churchgoers feel unqualified to do so because leaders were hesitant to challenge them to become disciples. Consequently, they default to letting the pastors handle “closings”.

In that respect, pastors act as the “church” while the members are their “customers”. Yet pastors are not the embodiment of church, nor are the staff. They are the paid workers; the lead teachers and administrators. They should not be elevated to a position they were not intended to occupy.

“Pastor dominated” sounds like a negative way to describe a church – and it is. Yet by our definition, nearly every church today in America is “pastor dominated”. This is not an isolated issue. It’s not restricted to prosperity or mega churches. Only a church heavily engaged in deep personal discipleship and challenging members to BE the church in the community – to the point where it’s having a noticeable impact – can be considered adequately “flattened”.

**Members Move Up**

In “pastor-dominated” churches, members are not considered “insiders” (i.e. assets or stakeholders in a corporate sense). They don’t share the leadership load. They’re seen as voluntary, casual participants that leaders need to keep happy or they’ll leave the church.

The alternative, diminishing the status of pastors and elevating the standing of all others by comparison, will meet with resistance. Yes, flipping the org chart does involve costs, but they are minute relative to the enormous upside:

### Costs

- Pastor stepping down from any pedestal and accepting no greater recognition than that of any other member
- Losing some “consumers” who aren’t ready to accept a role involving more responsibility

### Benefits

- More disciples
- More “leverage”
- More growth
- More servants bringing help and hope to the world around them
- More churches known for love and compassion

### Where is POWER Held?

#### Issue

Pastors are servants called by God to teach and to shepherd a flock, as Jesus did. There’s no room for taking on a role of greater importance than the “flock”, particularly because doing so severely inhibits the proliferation of the gospel. Unfortunately there’s a long history in Christian churches (as well as other religions) of viewing leaders as more holy and closer to God than anyone else in the church. In too many cases, a church’s viability hangs on the popularity and celebrity of the pastor. If the pastor retires or dies, the church may too.

As an illustration of the issue, fewer and fewer churches have deacons and elders today. They’re “pastor led” without lay member involvement in leadership. As a result, fewer congregants are empowered to:

- Provide input into important decisions
- Hold the senior pastor accountable
- Lead discipleship efforts
- Even form a search committee if the pastor is hit by the proverbial bus

#### Solution

Churches should have a strong “cabinet” of empowered and equipped lay leaders, not necessarily for the purpose of setting direction, but to take “ownership” of their role as the living, breathing church. There is far more growth potential in a church where members are given some authority to lead as opposed to a pastor-led “genius with a thousand helpers”. Churches need less centralized control, not more. As opposed to the preponderance of articles and books today, revitalizing a church is not about leading better, it’s about leading less and empowering more.

**Where is KNOWLEDGE Held?****Issue**

The differential is far too great between the Biblical and evangelistic knowledge of pastors and members. As opposed to many other religions throughout history, in today's churches that knowledge gap arises not out of a desire to exploit but a fear to challenge. There is too much reliance on the pastor to teach while the vast majority of congregants sit back, enjoy the show and head home. As evidence of this "consumer" mindset, how many criticize the sermon, make suggestions to the pastor on how to improve it, and decide whether to come back based on how well they were "fed"?

**Solution**

A pastor can't provide enough deep, challenging content during a 30 minute sermon once a week, particularly with part of the church committed Christians and the rest visitors or non-Christians. So where else are congregants going to get the deeper stuff? Pastors don't challenge members adequately to do self study and small groups aren't intensive enough to qualify as discipleship. Only personal discipleship can close the knowledge gap. There's tremendous power in sharing versus centralizing knowledge. Leverage is created in the number of people now equipped to represent and expand the organization. With a strong discipleship program, churchgoers will feel far more confidence in their ability to share their faith and bring people to Christ.

**Where is RESPONSIBILITY Held?****Issue**

Pastors and staff alone can't materially impact a church's true "customer", the community. A company or church must have "all hands on deck", trained and active in pursuing and serving the organizations "customer". Yet few churchgoers sense that as a "responsibility". Instead they see evangelism and serving others as an option. I would contend that most go so far as to pat themselves on the back each time they do either. Doesn't the prevalence of that perception confirm once and for all that too many churches are failing to teach the Great Commission as an imperative?

**Solution**

To flip the org chart, pastors should make it clear that "We're ALL in THIS together". The "THIS" is the cause of reaching the community and world for Christ. The "ALL" reflects that members are "insiders", equally responsible as pastors for accomplishing that mission. Pastors are simply the coaches, strategizers and organizers, responsible for rallying and mobilizing the troops into action. Churches should no longer underutilize its most critical resource – the manpower sitting idle in the pews. However, rather than seeing members as a resource to be utilized, most pastors fear challenging them lest they take their "business" elsewhere.

CURRENT STATE

Self Assessment

Purpose: Determine whether your leaders truly consider members to be the church.

If you're a pastor, if you think back on the vision God gave you for the church, do you ever feel like you're spending so much time on internal management and member responsibilities that it's taking you away from bigger-picture strategic leadership and undermining the impact you had hoped to have in your community and throughout the world? If so, how could you shift more of your energy toward that original vision?
What percentage of your members/attenders are passive "pew sitters" (i.e. not active in church activities beyond worship services)?
Do most of your members/attenders sense that they "ARE" the church or expect to be served by the church? In other words, how are you preventing them from being church "consumers"?
How do you make sure members/attenders sense when serving that they're working for the Lord (i.e. "as" the church) and not working "for" the church?
What steps are you taking to better leverage, empower and mobilize members to accomplish the mission of the church in the community?
Is your church "pastor-led" or is there a broad base on senior, empowered leaders in place?

As it relates to others in the church (of course the Lord comes first), where does your staff’s allegiance lie – to the senior pastor, other staff, the members, or to the church itself?
Do you see benefit in elevating the role of members, relinquishing some control and empowering lay leaders with greater authority for leading (e.g. micro church outposts)?

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
Hierarchy where pastor is in charge, staff exists to serve pastors & members, and members are passive participants in church activities	Members given responsibility for some ministries, but generally sense they’re working “for” the church and not “as” the church	Members beginning to be seen as “insiders”; plans in place to create leverage by better utilizing members to reach others	Pastors humbling themselves to relinquish some control; lay leaders and members accepting greater responsibility	Pastors, staff are on essentially equal footing; lay leaders equipped and empowered to run micro church outposts

To plot your church on the Proficiency Model above for this module, respond Yes or No to the following 5 questions:

- 1) Are more than 30% of your members/attenders active in church activities beyond attending worship services?
- 2) If you doubled your service duration from 1 hour to 2 hours, do you think 90% of your congregation would still be in attendance the following month?
- 3) Are most of your programs and ministries run by lay leaders?
- 4) Are at least 10% of your members involved in training/discipleship (beyond small groups) preparing them to reach others for Christ?
- 5) Is your pastor spending more time equipping members to BE the church than caring for members and running the church?

**SCORING:**

Level 1 – No on all 5 questions

Level 2 – Yes to 2 questions

- Level 3 – Yes to 3 questions
- Level 4 – Yes to 4 questions
- Level 5 – Yes to all 5 questions

### FUTURE STATE VISION

Building and deploying disciples should be the primary job of pastors and staff. The Great Commission is a far more effective and Biblical church growth model than the arms-length attraction and retention approach used by most churches today. Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” As soon as visitors become believers, they should be discipled and deployed into service, not just inside the “4 walls” but to bring more people into the “4 walls”.

There are vast resources within our “4 walls” that can create tremendous leverage for the Kingdom. Take a full inventory of what your church has to offer to each other and the community. Some may not have an interest or gifting in the area of greatest social need. The Bible does speak of a variety of roles within the church. That’s true of any organization, but successful companies take employees with different skill sets and ensure all hands are on deck pointing toward the overall goal of pursuing and serving their “customers”. To maximize the church’s impact in the community, pastors should encourage nearly everyone in the church to consider:

1. What role they can play in advancing the church’s mission around the key cause(s)
2. How they can develop greater skills and passion for the cause of reaching the community
3. The Great Commission as an obligation of great urgency, not an option

As that process unfolds, the Lord will show your church how so many latent capabilities lying dormant in your pews align perfectly with the most pressing concerns in your community.

Knowing what resources you have at your disposal isn’t enough. You have to also put them in a position to be effective. That means setting members up for success in living up to their intended standing as critical parts of the church “body” – charged with exceeding “customer” expectations, not their own. Pastors and staff alone can’t network or work hard enough to make significant progress reversing society’s perception of churches as more judgmental and hypocritical than caring and compassionate. Leaders have to empower members to lead, likely requiring alternative organizational structures such as those mentioned in Action Items below.

Far too often, pastors rely on sermons as the primary forum to convince entire congregations to serve and evangelize. And too many pastors rely on small groups as their discipleship vehicle and instruct group leaders to find a service project every few months. However, members are “insiders”, much more like employees of a company than its customers (“outsiders”). When a company hires a new employee, training is the first priority. Would a company consider a 30

minute presentation each week to be adequate training? What if it added weekly group discussions with fellow employees for a few months each year? Would the combination of those two be enough? Of course not. Companies know that proper training happens through 1-on-1 mentorship, group classes and in the “field” (i.e. on-the-job training).

**BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP**

**Quick Tips**

1. **Bring Them In to Send Them Out** – Your members and attenders, not just the pastors and staff, ARE the church. The job description for church leaders is to equip and mobilize the entire congregation to be effective in their role as the living, breathing body of Christ.
2. **Build Disciples, Not an Institution** – Why do you market your church? Why do you encourage others to come to your church? It’s important for pastors, staff and lay leaders to examine their hearts, ensuring the goal remains the Great Commission, not church growth.
3. **Challenge and Direct Members** – Any hesitancy to boldly challenge members and frequent attenders to BE the church - for fear of losing them to the church down the road who still “caters” to theirs - is wrong. Instead, church leaders should train them as “insiders”, show them ministry opportunities to reach the “lost” and hold them accountable for living out the Great Commission.
4. **Flatten the Org Chart** – For churches to have a dramatic impact on the world around them, they need leverage. Fully utilizing the “manpower in the pews” entails pastors relinquish much of their centralized authority, knowledge and responsibility to members.

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4.

5.

## PART 1: ORGANIZATION

## MODULE 4: EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

Is it reasonable to hold members to a standard of performance?

At some point in a Christian's walk with the Lord they should begin living out the Great Commission. Churches should challenge them and expect them to do so. To become a highly impactful church, many of your members will need to be convinced that:

- They ARE the Church – critical parts of the “body” with unique, God-given skills and passions
- As the Church, they have a responsibility to pursue the church's “customer”, the hurting and hopeless in the community where the church is planted
- The Great Commission is an obligation of great urgency, not an option

Is your church willing to break the “consumer” mindset and turn the tables, expecting members to perform rather than vice versa?

Expecting people to “perform” sounds like a business concept, but churches do it every week.

How many showed up and how much did they give? Churches budget expenses and expect each staff member to pull his/her own weight. Performance objectives are established around a set of goals, which tie back to what the church views as its priorities.

1. If member acquisition and retention is the primary goal, then the metrics will reflect that, e.g.:
  - Membership
  - Attendance
  - Giving
2. If building and sending disciples is the primary goal, then the church will measure:
  - Involvement in discipleship
  - Lives impacted and changed (whether inside or outside the church)
  - Engagement in internal and external ministry

Which of those two sets of measures are tracked more closely at your church?

Those two goals are not mutually exclusive...

- More **members** can mean more **disciples** if the church offers discipleship programs beyond small groups
- More **attendance** can mean more **lives changed** if the church is aggressive in challenging them
- More **giving** can mean more **engagement** in impactful ministries if the church invests heavily in empowering and equipping leaders

However, which set of metrics take precedence demonstrates whether a church views its members or the community as its “customer”. In other words, they drive where the church invests the bulk of its time, energy and money. Is the church building programs to “please” members (to drive up the 1<sup>st</sup> set of metrics) or to prepare members to pursue the real “customer” (the 2<sup>nd</sup> set)?

Because the impact, influence and perception of the Church in America are in decline it’s clear that churches aren’t turning enough members into disciples, attendees into world-changers, and dollars into difference. We believe few churches have made the transition from the 1<sup>st</sup> set to the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of metrics.

### Who’s Evaluating Who These Days?

The 2<sup>nd</sup> set (discipleship, life change and ministry) demands significant commitment by members. They are big asks – and risky considering that **the balance of power today has tipped in favor of members. The law of supply and demand has given churchgoers the upper hand:**

- ...the vast number of churches, each carrying fixed expenses that have to be covered
- ...going after a shrinking “pie” of frequent attenders
- ...each of whom gives less today
- ...in a landscape filled with more Walmart churches, making life difficult for “mom-and-pop shops”
- ...with seminaries producing significant numbers of aspiring pastors every year

The math will only get worse – fewer people and funds to spread over the remaining base of facilities – if churches continue chasing after the wrong “customer”. Investing a limited pool of resources in trying to keep the lights on by attracting and retaining members is a losing game. The pie will continue to shrink if churches keep ignoring the real “customer” – the community where the church is planted.

How much leverage do churches have today? Are churches in a position to raise expectations of members? There are plenty of churches down the road ready to cater to their every whim – “people pleasing” churches who thank members profusely for barely doing anything – spoiling spiritual children. The mindset of most pastors today is far from increasing member standards

and accountability. Upsetting the apple cart could mean a faction revolts and splits the church, spelling potential doom, particularly if a patriarch or matriarch leads the mutiny.

Churchgoers today “shop” for churches, looking for the one that best meets their needs. They leave if churches aren’t meeting their expectations. Meanwhile, pastors read books and articles, selecting from among a wide range of church growth strategies trying to find the path to revitalization. The scales have tipped.

### What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible repeatedly makes the case that members ARE the church. Paul’s and John’s letters speak directly to the churches – meaning not just the pastors and staff, but the members themselves. Those letters hold all members to account for their actions, not just the leaders. Members weren’t seen evaluating churches – members were being evaluated based on the standards set by Jesus Christ. In fact, the concept of members evaluating the church was an oxymoron in the New Testament. Members were the church – there was no institution apart from them. If the church was screwing up, it was on them.

Because members are the church and the community is its “customer” – as Jesus, His disciples and the early Church modeled – performance measures should be aligned with those respective roles. Members are “insiders”, much more like employees of a company – and, like employees, can and should be held to a performance standard. Churches who are reluctant to do so are treating them like “outsiders” – or “customers”.

### How to Begin Raising Standards

Leaders should raise expectations of members rather than striving to meet their expectations. However, that’s not possible unless church leaders are willing to...

1. **Redefine** – Consider and treat members as the church and the community as the “customer”
2. **Reprioritize** – Put the mission first and institution second, diverting less attention to maintaining the church (institution) and more to building and sending disciples. That may mean few fixed costs and fewer programs and services that “please” members.
3. **Set New Goals** – Reorient metrics from the 1<sup>st</sup> set to the 2<sup>nd</sup> set above
4. **Empower** – As we discussed the past few weeks, train and put lay leaders in a position to “recruit” and mobilize others to venture into the (local and international) mission field. A small rebel band of Spirit-filled followers can change a community if they’re motivated and expected to reach others for Christ – Jesus’ disciples altered the course of history
5. **Equip** – Devote pastor and staff time to training/discipleship and commit church dollars to externally-focused initiatives run by lay leaders. People are not attracted to churches but to disciples – so build not only disciples but disciple makers.

- 6. **Direct** – Have the courage to challenge members to live out the Great Commission, and network to find opportunities and causes where the church can engage non-believers
- 7. **Track and Monitor** – Use measures as they’re intended – to incent action and modify behaviors – possibly pulling folks well outside their comfort zones. Ensure those actions flow out of gratitude for the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ as opposed to a sense of duty. Organizations rarely succeed at what they don’t measure. Trade in internally-focused performance metrics that track attendance and dollars for “customer”-oriented measures that gauge how effective members are after they walk out of the building on Sunday

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Complete the chart below to evaluate whether the church is doing more to cater to or to challenge members. In each row, consider which of the two options best describes your church in terms of what you expect of (emphasize to) members and assign a relative percentage score (each row should total 100%):

Option A	%	Option B	%
Invite others to church		Responsible for leading them to Christ	
Participate in a small group		Participate in 1 on 1 discipleship	
Serve in the church		Serve in the community	
Give to support church operations		Give to help church impact the world	
Be a leader inside the church		Be a leader for Christ in the community	
God wants you to have victory		God wants you to give it all to Him	
Enjoy a fantastic worship service		It’s not about the “experience”	
Attend our church		Attend any Bible believing church	
Fellowship with other members		Build relationships with the lost	
Regularly attend church		Study, pray and journal on their own	
Come back next week		Become a leader in the church	
Baby steps on the road to life change		Dramatic life change	
Members expect church to perform		Church expects members to perform	
Church is where we go on Sunday		We (members) ARE the church	
Build and deploy disciples		Build a church	
Pastors accountable for its success		Members accountable for its success	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
Primary focus on ensuring first-rate church experience for	Regularly asking members to serve and give but nearly	Testing concept of challenging members; transition	Weekly challenging members to “be the hands and	High expectations of all members; holding them accountable for

members/visitors; culture where members evaluate church performance and pastors/staff seek to ensure satisfaction	exclusively internally; little expectation and no accountability for life change or impact on others	underway from members expecting church to perform to church expecting members to perform	feet of Christ”, but no longer losing them - they’ve bought into “we are the church” mentality; limited accountability	performance in serving (in/out), evangelizing, engaging beyond service attendance; Full member buy-in
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**SCORING:**

- Level 1 – Sum of 2nd column is less 300
- Level 2 – Sum of 2nd column is between 301 and 450
- Level 3 – Sum of 2nd column is between 451 and 600
- Level 4 – Sum of 2nd column is between 601 and 750
- Level 5 – Sum of 2nd column is greater than 750

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

Just as we educate our children so they’ll stop being absorbed with self, believers must be trained (i.e. disciplined) to stop being consumed with self. Otherwise, even though they’ve come to faith, they’ll continue to be immature. Graduating to a higher level of education in their walk with Christ means coming to grips with what it means to BE the church – in other words, selfless. Paul refers to that process as dying to self – being crucified with Christ. The new believer has joined that camp of those called to die to self, just as a maturing child should put aside childish things and learns to put others first.

However, if churches don’t challenge and disciple new believers (i.e. spiritual children) all the way to maturity, they’ll remain “consumers” of church rather than the church personified.

**Changing the Mindset of Members**

Selflessness can permeate and transform a church culture. Not only will selflessness manifest itself in how members care for each other but it will be evident in how the church body (as a whole) cares for the church’s true “customer” – the community where the church is planted. That’s when the transition from childhood to adulthood is complete. When members recognize the “fields” are white for harvest and take personal responsibility for seeking seekers – in other words, being the Church.

Yet members won’t arrive at that place of maturity unless they come to realize...

### 1. ...where the “fields” are

Many today think that planting a church in a community means we’re “in the field”, and believe that churchgoers in the normal course of daily life will be good harvesters. However, most churches don’t prepare or empower members adequately – typically only asking them to invite people to church, leaving evangelism to the “professionals”. How many churchgoers share their faith or even talk about God between Sundays, except with their Christian friends?

### 2. ...why they’re at church

They are not at church to be served but to serve. They are Christ’s body, designed for praying, caring and sharing. Instilling a service versus consumer mindset will mean eventually members and attenders become less dependent on the church for what it can do for them and more engaged in being the church to others.

### 3. ...challenging is Biblical, catering is not

No longer catering to churchgoers doesn’t mean churches stop taking care of their members or ignore them. Church is a family. However, it does mean transitioning members’ thinking about their role by investing more in challenging them (e.g. with the Great Commission).

### 4. ...the urgency of the need

It’s human nature to need a cause outside of ourselves to force us to look beyond ourselves. The hopelessness of the lost in the community should be a mission-critical, common cause for every church. There are also often pressing social issues such as homelessness, hunger or troubled youth around which a church can rally. See our short eBook – [Transform Your Community Forever in 6 Months](#).

### 5. ...their own problems may not be as bad as they thought

Once churchgoers shift their focus to bigger problems in the world around them, their maturity process kicks into high gear. Self-absorption only drives people deeper and deeper into their own “stuff”, whereas loving their neighbors is the path to “recovery”.

## Changing the Mindset of Church Leaders

Pastors have to lead the way or the congregation won’t reach maturity – dying to self and taking the Great Commission as seriously as Jesus intended. Before pastors can help others adopt this new mindset, their own must adjust accordingly...

### 1. ...around “parenting”

Pastors are raising too many spiritual children in the church today. They fear consumers will leave if they challenge them to have a dramatic impact on the world around them – so they don’t. Enabling and coddling, particularly of long-time members/attenders, has to stop. The Kingdom needs more disciples – and disciple makers.

## 2. ...around expectations

Rather than seeing members as voluntary participants in church activities, view them in their proper light as “insiders” – more like employees charged with real responsibilities both within and outside the “4 walls.” Historically, democracies fail because politicians eventually give too much away in order to earn votes. Churches offering cheap grace perpetuate the church’s current decline in growth, impact, influence and perception. (see 2 Timothy 4:1-5)

## 3. ...around the term “externally focused”

We throw around that term as if it’s an optional characteristic of certain churches, or somehow deserving of merit. Yet externally-focused is what the Great Commission dictates every church should have as a core competency. I wonder whether the Lord is pleased with any church that’s not “externally focused” – one that doesn’t adequately prepare, send and serve such as to win more to Christ.

## 4. ...around giving back

People in the midst of building their careers often think “once I get where I’m trying to go, then I’ll start to give back”. Countless times I’ve seen and heard pastors say similar things – “We just need to get the new building done, then...” or “Once we get a little bigger, we can have more impact, then...”. Be a generous church now – at any size or any stage of development.

## 5. ...around how to share the gospel

Many pastors and churches find themselves trying to “outreach” Jesus. He had the perfect words, but knew they weren’t enough. The Church’s gradual relinquishing of the front-line compassion role in society to others over the past 100 years, no longer following Jesus’ model, instead telling people who Jesus is without showing them first, has severely damaged society’s view of Christians and the Church.

## BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

### Quick Tips

1. **Fear Factor** – Pastors demonstrate a great deal of faith and courage as they start a new church plant. At that early stage there’s little to lose – no large membership and limited investments of hours and dollars. As the stakes rise, pastors become more cautious about challenging members to do all they could and should to win people to Christ. Leaders should remember and rekindle that initial fire.
2. **Cheap Grace** – Companies don’t feel at liberty to require anything of customers – they would never demand customers read the owners’ manual and evangelize the company. Churches treat members similarly today – trading lightly when it comes to asking members to live out the Great Commission.
3. **What Have You Got to Lose** – The modern American church growth model isn’t working - 93% of churches aren’t growing. The perception of churches and Christians is in decline. Churches should take a chance and readopt the definition it had for 1900 years of its “customer” – the lost in the community where it’s planted.

- 4. **Who’s Evaluating Who** – Churches track attendance, worrying about losing members, and turning churchgoers into “shoppers”. Church leaders should turn the tables on the balance of power – despite fears of a smaller percentage of churchgoers distributed over a large number of churches - challenging members to BE the church and pursue its real “customer”.

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

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## PART 1: ORGANIZATION

## MODULE 5: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

No organization thrives without setting goals. The goals of a church are spelled out in the Bible – principally:

- Teach and care for believers
- Empower them to go and make disciples
- Serve and witness to the hurting and lost in Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth

Within the context of those goals, pastors and staff can set specific objectives designed to reach them. For churches among the 93% not growing in America today, objectives are primarily aimed at growth and revitalization. However, most of their strategies to achieve those objectives point in the opposite direction. Repeating the mistakes that led to the current state of the church won't result in a better future state. Today's prevailing church growth strategy of "Invite, Involve and Invest" is the rallying cry of the internally-focused church. Internally-oriented organizations nearly always fail. Tactics to make your church "sticky" may grow your church in the short term but only engaging and caring for your intended "customer" will make your church healthy and vibrant in the long run.

## The Path to Revitalization

...is essentially the same for all organizations, but for churches it's an ordained imperative:

- **Take "Ground"** – In business it's called "market share". Democracies call it "voting blocs". Unfortunately, nearly all churches in America think of it as "membership", "attendance", or giving. Churches who measure their footprint in those terms are (possibly inadvertently and unwittingly) viewing members as "customers". Because members ARE the church and the community is the marketplace, the amount of ground "taken" should be calculated in terms of lives "impacted", regardless of whether they go to your church. The Biblical goals of the Church are rooted in building and sending disciples, who in turn impact the lives of those around them for Christ.
- **Develop Genuine Relationships** – We think of relationships as being between two people. However, the church itself has a relationship with the community (its "customer"). Church is the convening of the "body" and that collective body is commissioned to work together to reach the "customer" – not just as a bunch of independent agents or only on occasion. Yet the church today is far more transactional than relational in terms of how it reaches out to the community (as a collective body) – relying on infrequent outreaches, which are often viewed and intended as

marketing. Society is waiting to see churches show sincere concern for them, not for their “own”. Likewise, society is not waiting for members to be generous in giving to the church, but for the church to be generous in giving to the community. You can see how the goals of communities and of churches are often in conflict.

- **Fuel a Positive Perception** – We each do life with Christ separately but when we’re part of a church, we are the church. Yet by highlighting pastors, buildings and brands, churches have caused society to see it as an institution, not a collection of individuals. In other words, our modern day emphasis on the institution has caused the unchurched to view church as an institution. As a consequence non-believers no longer assume that a churchgoer who is loving and caring means that the church is loving and caring. Many today think highly of a particular church member but have a poor perception of “church”. Unless pastors truly view congregants as the church, society won’t either. And unfortunately, studies show most unchurched (the intended “prospect/customer”) feel that the institution (of church) does not care about them.

### Setting your Church up for Success

Taking ground, relational propagation and fueling a positive perception all hinge on a single, critical enabler – people. Businesses can’t grow market share without employees and raving fans. Politicians can’t win office without staff and volunteers out on the campaign trail. If your church doesn’t leverage the people at your disposal, equipping them to reach others, there’s little chance of accomplishing the Lord’s goals for your church. In other words, unless you empower congregants to BE the church through more decentralized organizational structures and flatten the church hierarchy, you’ll never reach your objectives of healthy growth and revitalization.

In consulting, too often we saw companies broken up into functional “silos”, each acting not in the interests of customers, but around their independent objectives, which often conflicted with those of other departments. Those companies experienced tremendous inefficiencies, mis-alignments, and far too much internal politics – and consequently poor sales and customer service. Our consulting teams restructured those organizations, uniting them through cross-functional processes designed around the needs of customers, not the interests of internal departments.

Likewise, churches should restructure around the Biblical goals laid out at the beginning of this chapter.

Here are 5 proven organizational changes that will exponentially increase your church’s ability to pursue and win over your intended “customer” – the community where your church is planted:

1. Turn Small Groups into Neighborhood Groups, responsible for “prayer, care and share” in their particular locations (this is the most grass-roots example of structuring a church relationally)
2. Form teams assigned to work with particular local ministries and/or cause(s)
3. Facilitate “planting” of ministries by members to fill cause-related gaps in the city
4. Consider restructuring into semi-autonomous, medium-sized subgroups around geographic or cause lines (since entire congregations are hard to mobilize and small groups lack the scale to make a significant impact)
5. Assign a staff or lay leader to manage your local missions efforts and another to lead discipleship and elevate those positions to a high standing within the church, commensurate with the reversion to defining the community and not members as your “customer”

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Determine whether your church is taking steps to distribute power/influence within the church so as to fully leverage your members as the living, breathing church to those around them.

Have you made organizational changes to facilitate a shift from a Sunday morning, attractional model to year-round, between Sundays engagement with the community? If so, please describe.
What was the result of those organizational changes in terms of your unity, growth, impact, influence and perception in your city?
How are you empowering and equipping members to be leaders for Christ not just within the church but within their spheres of influence? Could those initiatives be more effective? How?

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

Which of the following best describe how you’ve set up your organizational structure?

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
“Pastor-led” structure with young, lower level staff; members are treated as “customers” to be served by pastors and staff	Slightly flatter org structure with deacons, elders and more senior leadership & staff; members are not viewed as part of the org structure but served by it	Modifying existing org structures to focus on reaching the “customer” (e.g. Small Groups into Neighborhood Groups)	Implemented new org structures to reach community (e.g. ministry teams to work directly with local ministries and engage members)	Reorganizing entire church body to ensure focus on engaging those most in need of help and hope (e.g. Mission-Shaped Communities)

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

Implementing organizational changes geared toward decentralizing and empowering – to better unlock the potential residing in your pews – will require your church to rethink:

- **Budgets** – Reallocate your church’s budget to generously fund member-led and external local ministry efforts. You can’t launch and empower neighborhood groups, ministry teams, ministry plants, or semi-autonomous subgroups without funding. Stand behind your commitment – financially.
- **Buildings** – Is it good stewardship to own a building that only accommodates a large crowd 1 day per week? How often is a significant portion of the building in use? How many members visit the building between Sundays? How much space does management and staff activities take up during the rest of the week? What percentage of those activities could be done elsewhere much less expensively? Would you pay a full mortgage on a house you only lived in 20% of the time? Only the very rich have second homes where they spend a small fraction of their time, but in ministry aren’t we called to be better stewards (with Kingdom resources) than the ultra rich? With a proper definition of the “customer”, fewer resources would go toward facilities and more toward serving and engaging the community. Alternatively, keep the building but use it all week for ministry incubation and to bring in people from the community for career coaching, tutoring, recovery ministries, health/wellness classes, etc. – all geared toward demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ and His church.
- **Content Delivery** – Speaking of which, are there more efficient means in this day and age for content delivery by the pastor and staff? Too many people drive in Sunday morning, stay for a non-interactive presentation, possibly hang around a few minutes afterward to chat, then head home. That single sermon cannot deliver the depth needed by mature Christians – pastors have to design messages to accommodate the mix of “students” in the congregation. Aren’t tailored messages based on discipleship progress more efficiently delivered while people are out exercising or driving to work? As we’ve discussed extensively, properly equipping members to BE the church in

the “marketplace” requires intensive training (discipleship) and deployment into local ministry. Yet there’s been little innovation in (or adoption by churches of) content delivery vehicles for discipleship or for serving others. Technology vendors invest in building solutions that churches have set aside budget to purchase, so there is significant innovation in online streaming of conventional church services, but not much around discipleship or local missions (besides Meet The Need, a non-profit ministry).

**BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP**

**Quick Tips**

1. **Turn Small Groups into Neighborhood Groups**, responsible for “prayer, care and share” in their particular locations (this is the most grass-roots example of structuring a church relationally)
2. **Form Teams** assigned to work with particular local ministries and/or cause(s)
3. **Facilitate “Planting” of Ministries** by members to fill cause-related gaps in the city
4. **Consider Restructuring into Semi-autonomous, Medium-sized Subgroups** around geographic or cause lines (since entire congregations are hard to mobilize and small groups lack the scale to make a significant impact)
5. **Assign a Staff or Lay Leader to Manage your Community Missions Efforts** and another to lead discipleship and elevate those positions to a high standing within the church, commensurate with the reversion to defining the community and not members as your “customer”

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

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## PART 2: STRATEGIES

## MODULE 6: MARKETING

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

Members ARE the church. Therefore, the church leaders' job is to grow them, not an institution. Ironically, if you grow disciples you'll also grow the institution. However, that can't be the objective – it's a byproduct of disciples being properly trained to be productive in the "marketplace".

If your hope is to grow a church, but you don't see the word "member" as synonymous with the word "church", then:

1. you're trying to growth the wrong thing (a "what" and not a "who")
2. you'll fall into the temptation of trying to hang on to members/attenders
3. you'll make a series of bad decisions that compromise the vision the Lord gave you

Building and sending disciples is the ultimate church growth model. The best church growth plan was the early Church's growth plan...and is what works best for any successful organization:

1. Discipleship (training) maximizes leverage
2. Sending disciples out creates relationships
3. Relationships with disciples create more disciples
4. Disciples get involved actively in the church

...and the cycle repeats.

Is that process in full effect at your church? To help answer that, consider the 3 questions we addressed in this workbook:

1. *Are your members really disciples?*
2. *If not, how do you get them there?*
3. *Once they are disciples how do you deploy them to maximize their usefulness for the Kingdom?*

### Two Types of Church Growth

The healthy way to go wider (i.e. grow) is to go deeper. Unhealthy churches go wider by allowing members to wade in the shallow end. The waters are calm and no dangers lurk beneath the surface. More folks will join them, safe and secure, knowing they'll never drown or

become “lunch”. They’ll never be asked to take the risk to head into the deeper waters of real life change and discipleship. Yet that’s where Jesus demands we swim.

In management consulting, we speak of two types of growth, which apply well to churches too:

### 1. **Acquisitive – Attracting people from other churches**

- Competitive Advantage – Offering facilities, programs and services (e.g. children’s ministry) that smaller churches simply can’t afford
- Trying to Build a “Great” Organization – Countless books, articles, consultants and seminaries tell pastors how to lead better, but better leadership isn’t going to make a bad business model successful. And nearly all churches today have the wrong business model – they ignore their true, intended “customer” and treat “insiders” like “outsiders”. Therefore, they don’t properly train “insiders” to go after the real “customer” – the community.
- Invite, Involve, Invest – Relying on growth models that may be “sticky” but don’t build or empower disciples
- Cautious Sharing the Truth – Avoiding too many messages about sin, repentance, and the costs of following Jesus
- Hesitancy to Challenge – To be discipled, disciple others and take time to serve the poor
- Focus on Visibility:
  - Marketing tactics and collateral likely to attract Christians, not the unchurched
  - Compassion as a means to greater visibility versus from a heart of sincere concern for issues in the community

### 2. **Organic – Reaching people who aren’t Christians**

- Train (disciple) “insiders” to be productive in reaching the lost
- Send disciples out to meet the “unchurched” where they are – in the “marketplace” (e.g. schools, businesses)
- Follow Jesus’ model of demonstrating His love through acts of service before telling them who He is
- Not measuring growth based on the number of people who darken the church doors but on the number reached and discipled by members
- Become attractive to those who don’t know the Lord as they see your church’s love, fellowship and service to the least of these

### **Which of Those Did Jesus and the Early Church Follow?**

At the height of his popularity, Jesus did the unthinkable. He preached His most controversial, challenging sermon. In fact, He knew few would be left standing beside Him after telling the crowd of followers to drink His blood and eat His flesh.

Imagine the pastor of a large church in the midst of rapid growth preaching the most demanding, challenging message members have ever heard, knowing with near certainty that few of them would come back to the church again. Imagine that same pastor pulling all the members aside and laying out the full picture of discipleship costs and expectations, knowing it was a pill few of them could swallow? That's exactly what Jesus did. He preached it down to a select few.

Jesus' disciples also violated nearly every principle of the Acquisitive church growth model:

- preached hard messages exposing sin, demanding repentance and boldly shared the highly controversial gospel of the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- performed miraculous acts of love and service before, after and often during those sermons
- were determined to spread the gospel far and wide to all those who would listen, knowing that few had the humility and audacity to stomach the implications of what it truly means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ
- went wherever necessary to find those with hearts ready and willing to commit their lives fully to Jesus, not waiting for them to show up at the front door of the church
- invested countless hours discipling others

### **Why is Discipleship the Ultimate Growth Model?**

Scale wasn't the goal for Jesus and his disciples. They were looking to build a rebel band of Spirit-filled followers fully committed to changing the world for Christ. And they did. And the church grew dramatically, not because people were attracted to the institution but because they were attracted to disciples.

The growth potential of discipleship is about leverage and empowerment, fueled by the Holy Spirit. There is so much latent leverage sitting idle in the pews. We just have to disrupt their comfort and complacency to mobilize that manpower.

Ironically, the more a church challenges versus caters, the more it will grow. And unless a church disciplines, it won't have the right kind of growth – the healthy exponential, organic expansion that comes from people who've experienced genuine life change. Acquisitive growth without discipleship leads to internal turmoil you'd expect of churchgoers who aren't fully committed disciples – squabbles, splits and consumerism.

### **CURRENT STATE**

#### **Self Assessment**

What types of outreach events do you do? How many have you organized in the past year?
Do you do regular servant evangelism (e.g. handing out water bottles) or community service? If so, do you include the name of the church on items you hand out or on shirts your members/attenders wear?
Is it possible that you would not need to advertise the church itself if you increased your visibility in the community through serving and offering programs for your community?

Complete the charts below to help understand how your church makes its name known and entices people to come:

Which **methods** are you most reliant on to attract new visitors? Rank 1 through 7 based on your relative emphasis (not based on effectiveness, e.g. best source of new visitors).

	Rank 1-7
Invitations to church by members/attenders	
Word of mouth (general reputation, visibility in community)	
Direct mail pieces	
Other advertising (billboards, newspapers, online)	
Outreach events (Servant Evangelism)	
Community service/engagement	
Evangelism by members/attenders	

What **messages** are you most reliant on (e.g. in your mailers and other advertisements) to attract new visitors? Rank 1 through 7 based on your relative emphasis (not based on effectiveness, e.g. best source of new visitors).

	Rank 1-7
Environment (casual)	
Relevant messages	

Facilities or amenities	
Children’s/youth/student ministry	
Other ministries or programs available to visitors/members	
Faith, hope & love	
Community/relationships	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

<b>1 – Consumer</b>	<b>2 – Caterer</b>	<b>3 – Climber</b>	<b>4 – Challenger</b>	<b>5 – Catalyst</b>
Advertises attractive features of services/ environment (only appeals to Christians from other churches); channels are member invitations, mailers and billboards	In addition to Level 1 marketing, does occasional outreach events, such as servant evangelism, but emphasis is on marketing the church	Members accept real responsibility for invitations and evangelism; they begin to understand inextricable link between prayer, care and share	Year-round service based outreach is primary marketing strategy; Little need for advertising due to visibility in community through service	Goal of church body has shifted from marketing church to showing God’s love by being the “hands and feet of Christ” in the community

**SCORING:**

- Level 1 – Total of last 3 rows of methods table + last 2 rows of messages table is more than 30
- Level 2 – Total of last 3 rows of methods table + last 2 rows of messages table is between 25-29
- Level 3 – Total of last 3 rows of methods table + last 2 rows of messages table is between 20-24
- Level 4 – Total of last 3 rows of methods table + last 2 rows of messages table is between 15-19
- Level 5 – Total of last 3 rows of methods table + last 2 rows of messages table is less than 15

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

Not all growth is healthy growth. Earlier we defined healthy, organic growth as building and sending disciples out into the community to demonstrate and share the love of Jesus Christ with those hopeless and hurting. The most successful church marketing – resulting in healthy, exponential expansion – comes from Spirit-filled disciples who’ve experienced genuine life change. Growth attributable to attracting people from other churches by marketing to them, catering better to them and expecting less of them is not healthy.

Intensive discipleship gives members the courage to seek the lost, the compassion to serve them, and the knowledge to speak words that bring them life. It transforms your church into a fully trained and equipped army of ministers. When the pastor asks the proverbial trick question “Raise your hand if you’re a minister”, for the first time all hands can go up with

confidence. Disciples know that their responsibilities as a critical part of the “body” don’t stop with simply inviting people to come to church.

However, the growth that comes from challenging members to become and make disciples, given the amount of effort that entails, also comes with ups and downs. Healthy growth is a roller coaster. You may “preach it down” at first, but you’re in good company – that’s what Jesus did. You’ll lose some due to “sticker shock” at the price they’ll have to pay to BE the church. But those remaining will create a foundation for growth and breathe life into your church’s culture.

### Who You’ll Lose

It takes faith to boldly preach the whole truth of the gospel – including sin, repentance and the costs of discipleship. On the surface, it would seem few want to hear that entire sermon. Many in the congregation may not come back for a second dose of that medicine. It also takes courage to ask churchgoers to muster the level of compassion and sacrifice demanded in the Bible from those who choose to follow Jesus Christ. Many will find another church more careful to “cater” to them. Others won’t step back into another church again and risk being confronted with such unreasonable expectations.

But let’s look more closely at who is most likely to leave your church when you begin to challenge them to become disciples:

- long-time complacent members and attenders who aren’t ready for changes or challenges
- consumers who complain when some aspect of church is no longer to their liking
- those in it for “cheap grace”, belief without confession, surrender, discipleship or material life change
- those more comfortable with sermons about relationships, parenting and a better life
- luke-warm fence-sitters undecided for years whether to dip all of their toes in the water
- people intent on being continually “fed” and served, unwilling to serve
- when they do serve, they may feel better about themselves than those they’re serving

Do you want a church full of those? Jesus and His disciples didn’t try to appease them either. They confronted sin and never tempered or qualified the gospel message regardless of whether listeners were ready to accept it or not. Forgive the analogy, but if someone is looking to get in better shape, that typically means dropping a few pounds. Maybe to become healthy, churches have to lose some weight too. Many could stand a little less “fat” (e.g. those unwilling to be challenged despite ample time to take a stand for Christ) and a lot more muscle (i.e. “disciples” in this possibly inappropriate euphemism).

Of course, keep in mind that Jesus and His disciples had already “primed the pump” by performing awe-inspiring miracles and jaw-dropping acts of kindness prior to sharing the gospel

– a model most churches rarely imitate today. Maybe that’s why churches have had to resort to softer, more palatable messages to attract and retain – because ears are not as ready to hear nor hearts to accept words not preceded by action. (2 Timothy 4)

### What You’ll Gain

Taking the risk that your attendance will shrink if leaders challenge members to BE the church and pursue the real “customer” is not optional – it’s Biblical. Pastors should have the faith to follow the Lord’s leading, whatever the outcome. However, while there’s risk, there’s also tremendous upside. The congregants who do stick around will be those who are:

- hungry for truth
- eager to grow deeper in their relationship with the Lord
- possibly poor in material wealth but rich in faith
- disciples, or willing to become one
- ready to make an impact
- committed to growing the Kingdom
- inspired and excited
- all in!

Imagine what a church could do with a couple pews full of those folks! Twelve disciples changed the course of history. But you’ll never really find out who those people are or how much they’re willing to do to impact the community for Christ unless your church challenges everyone. And you haven’t rooted out those at your church who would leave if you truly challenged them – because they’re still there. The only way to weed out the “who you’ll lose” and leave behind the “who you’ll gain” is to spell out what it REALLY means to live out the Great Commission.

Ultimately what you’ll gain in the longer term is a high capacity, rapidly growing, impactful church that’s a beacon of light in your otherwise darkening city. Without trimming the excess and training the remaining “insiders” to be unabashed Christ followers bent on pursuing your “customers”, your church will never morph into that lighthouse on the hill.

### What about Visitors, Infrequent Attenders and Non-Believers?

Seekers may be in a church but they’re not the “church” – at least not yet. They’re still a “customer” – the lost searching for answers.

Churches should emulate Paul, “becoming all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.” Advertising, facilities, programs, etc. are all fair game for attracting “customers” to come in to a church. Better yet, go out to them on their turf, on their terms, to show them the love of Jesus Christ as He did – healing, feeding and serving before telling them who He is.

Today, the first strategy of asking seekers to come to us has largely replaced us going to them. Attraction via amenities has proved time consuming and expensive, not leaving much staff bandwidth or church budget to invest in community engagement. Likewise, fear of losing members, those who pay for the amenities, keeps churches from challenging members boldly to live out the Great Commission in the world around them.

### How Did They Become a Seeker?

#### **Maybe they witnessed Christians showing kindness – and are curious**

When they come into the church are they seeing kindness lived out by the church? Are they seeing opportunities to give back to those in need in the community?

#### **Maybe something happened to them – and they want answers**

Are they getting those answers within the first couple times they finally dare to step into a church? Or are they getting life lessons that sound more like counseling than Christianity? How long will they keep coming back if they don't find the answers they need?

#### **Maybe they hit rock bottom – and are not only ready to hear, but to accept**

They're still "customers", but they're more ready to "buy what you're selling". Yet are they hearing the gospel and getting a compelling invitation to commit their lives to Jesus?

#### **Maybe they've seen the fellowship of believers – and they want community**

Few today probably see church as the place to make new friends, particularly given the common perception of churches today as more judgmental than caring. If they do show up, how many will be comfortable joining in church activities out of the gate?

#### **What do seekers hear when they get to church?**

Yet when seekers show up at church, they too often hear:

- More about how to have a better life than to turn theirs over to Christ
- Weekly invitations to serve yet quarterly invitations to be baptized
- More about classes to become a member than classes to become a disciple
- Many ways to give to the church versus many ways to impact the community

I'll never forget finally convincing an atheist friend to come to church, only to have the pastor harp throughout about inviting friends and serving at the church. A seeker darkened the doors that day – open to hearing answers to deep questions. What he got instead was validation of his suspicions – that church was about church. Of course, he never came back.

When seekers walk in, do they see Christ or an institution? Do they see a factory producing output or a warehouse storing inventory? Do they see a healthy, organic entity growing "out" as it grows "up", infiltrating and infusing all aspects of society with the love of Jesus?

Unfortunately, most churches today still subscribe to **Invite, Involve, Invest**, the “rallying cry of the internally-focused church”, as their growth model – keeping too many seekers from finding what they’re looking for.

**BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP**

**Quick Tips**

1. **Community Engagement is the Best Marketing Plan** – Ironically, if the intent is to market the church (institution) then marketing will bring in “consumers”. Instead, training and sending disciples attracts those looking for much more than that.
2. **People are Attracted to Christians, not Churches** – Church is not a what – a place. It’s a who – us. The church’s power is in the vast number and diverse giftings in the body – fueled by the Holy Spirit. Rather than cater to members, prepare members to be a light to those around them.
3. **Branding versus Targeted Marketing** – Consider your branding strategy, what people think of when they hear the name of your church, versus your targeted marketing strategy, how you reach out to those you want to attract. Few churches do either of those appropriately.
4. **Advertise Love and Compassion** – Messaging on mailers and billboards touting service format, facilities, children’s ministries, etc. – which only appeals to Christians – entice folks from other churches. Instead, use messaging of hope and love that brings in new believers.

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## PART 2: STRATEGIES

### MODULE 7: DISCIPLESHIP

#### TOPIC INSIGHTS

Your church won't change its [heart and mind](#), "[take ground](#)" or [work together as effective parts of the church body](#) unless it does this one thing – DISCIPLE.

How did we end up building "skyscrapers" that gather in but don't disperse world-changing Christians? Why have many of our "body" parts atrophied, reducing the Church's impact in modern-day society? How could 93% of churches not be growing? Because we didn't disciple adequately. Our members don't love Jesus enough. They don't pray enough. They aren't bold enough in sharing their faith. They don't look enough like Jesus.

#### Does "The Member is Not the 'Customer'" Mean Churches Should Pay Less Attention to Them?

No, in fact it's the opposite. Churches should focus more on their members; however, the orientation of that "internal" focus should shift dramatically.

Members are the conduit through which the Church accomplishes its objective in the world – the Great Commission. Therefore, ministry inside a church is actually more important than ministry outside its "4 walls" – because the internal dictates how much impact its members will have externally. If members ARE the Church, then you train them much like a company trains its employees. Companies don't survive if their employees aren't trained to be effective at their jobs. Likewise, your members are "insiders" – they are your church's and Jesus' workforce, His hands and feet.

Who a church views as its "customer" will determine how it conducts ministry inside the church. In other words, rather than catering to members/visitors with programs designed to attract and retain them, a church who truly sees its members as the church and the community as its "customer" would spend much more time challenging them with programs designed to disciple and prepare them to impact the world around them.

*Are your members disciples?*

*If not, how do you get them there?*

*Once they are disciples how do you deploy them to maximize their usefulness for the Kingdom?*

We'll address the first of those questions right now...

**Discipleship...The Key to Church Growth**

If your members aren't disciples they can't make disciples. That's why Jesus spent most of his time discipling 12 men. Through those first disciples, the Christian faith spread like wildfire.

Those disciples looked like Jesus. They acted like Jesus. Jesus was loving, selfless and compassionate. He attracted a large following. So did his disciples.

Nothing has changed. Disciples are still the key to growing the Kingdom and your church. Yet, are most churches in the U.S. building enough disciples? The litmus test is whether Christianity is growing in America today. The answer is no.

If disciples are the means by which Jesus intends for people to come to Him then the most critical function of the church should be to make disciples. (By the way, discipleship begins with leading people TO Christ. Then it transitions to leading them IN Christ.) Churches only have limited access to people each week, so if they spend any of that time not making disciples, they're wasting it. If a new program or strategy is not going to help make disciples, throw it out.

Three questions should drive every church's strategy and decisions:

- What is the next step for each person to grow in Christ?
- Are people changing, looking and living more like Jesus?
- If not, why and what do we do about it?

**What is a Disciple...Really?**

Some pastors believe they have a church full of disciples, but do they? What does a disciple look like?

Different people give different answers. A fully devoted follower of Jesus. A student of Jesus. A follower of Jesus. A follower who reproduces more followers. Someone who lives like Jesus. All of these are true to a large extent.

If any or all of those are accurate, then to discover whether our members are disciples, we have to see how well their lives align with the attributes of Jesus. Are they...

- not able to walk by the needy without helping them?
- broken-hearted for the lost and fully committed to their salvation?
- selfless to the point of stepping far outside their comfort zones for Jesus?
- wholly dependent on the Father, living and giving by faith?
- willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of the gospel?

If you examine the lives of most members and regular churchgoers, would they look a lot like that? How could their lives and hearts not be radically changed when they truly get who Jesus is and what He did for us? Yet how much time does the average church member spend studying the Bible or praying or journaling each day? How many go to church every Sunday and even pray each morning, then essentially forget about God the rest of the day? How many folks in your church does that describe?

**What a Disciple is Not:**

- Simply a believer – They’ve only taken the first step on the path to becoming a disciple
- A Christian , or someone who acts like one – Not necessarily a disciple
- An active church member – Hearing sermons, attending small groups, and serving at the church doesn’t mean they’re living like Jesus
- A person with great head knowledge – Understanding and heart change are two different things

**Why Aren’t We Making More Disciples?**

As we’ve discussed, churches have become more cautious about challenging members. True discipleship is:

- **Hard Work** – Much more time consuming than our modern day discipleship methods (which we’ll discuss next week)
- **Costly** – Luke 9 points out how much hardship being a disciple of Jesus entails
- **Risky** – How far from their safe, secure existence will members have to venture to “Go and make disciples”?

For more information, read our eBook – [The 5 Steps to Revitalize Your Church](#).

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: See how your church approaches discipleship and challenges members in that area.

If you have a 1 on 1 discipling program, what is the length of time/duration people are discipled?
How do you ensure that your small groups are truly discipleship? What is the typical format and agenda of your small group meetings?

What is the growth rate (in number and personal growth) of those participating in your small groups or Bible Studies?
What type/format of discipleship do you offer for children and teens?

In the chart below, in the first column indicate which discipleship options your church offers, and in the second column the % of your total congregation that participates in each.

	Yes or No	% Participation
Small groups facilitated by untrained members		
Small groups led by trained church staff/leaders		
Small groups led by members who've gone through 1-on-1 or triad discipling at the church		
Bible studies before or after church		
Accountability groups		
1-on-1 or triad discipleship of staff/leaders by pastor/leaders		
1-on-1 or triad discipleship of members by pastors/staff		
1-on-1 or triad discipleship of attenders/visitors by previously disciplined members		
1-on-1 or triad discipleship of non-attenders by previously disciplined members		

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
Not available except through small groups;	Small group format only but solid	1 on 1 discipleship only among	Small group format no longer viewed as key to	1 on 1 highly organized and intensive

seeing only limited participation in small groups with undisciplined leaders running them; no 1 on 1 discipling even among pastoral staff	participation; members role is to invite others to church, not pushed to evangelize or disciple, leaving it to “professionals”	pastoral staff and a small number of lay leaders/deacons/ elders; those disciplined leaders assigned to run all small groups	discipleship or organized such that it involves intensive Bible study by trained leaders; widespread 1 on 1 discipleship	discipleship required for all members and frequent attenders; requirement that all disciple others
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**SCORING:**

- Level 1 – 0 Yes responses in bottom 7 rows of 1<sup>st</sup> column
- Level 2 – 1 Yes responses in bottom 7 rows of 1<sup>st</sup> column
- Level 3 – 2 Yes responses in bottom 7 rows of 1<sup>st</sup> column
- Level 4 – 3 Yes responses in bottom 7 rows of 1<sup>st</sup> column
- Level 5 – 4 or more Yes responses in bottom 7 rows of 1<sup>st</sup> column

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

Earlier we discussed how members/attenders are the conduit through which the Church accomplishes its objective in the world – the Great Commission. We looked at how few of our members and regular attenders are actually disciples exhibiting the key attributes of Jesus. We promised to talk more this week about why churches aren’t providing the level of depth necessary to build congregations full of disciples – and what they should do differently.

**How Do We Make Disciples?**

If as we’ve assumed members are the Church, then they are “insiders”, much more like employees of a company than its customers (“outsiders”). When a company hires a new employee, training is the first priority. Would a company consider a 30 minute presentation each week to be adequate training? What if it added weekly group discussions with fellow employees for a few months each year? Would the combination of those two be enough? Of course not. Companies know that proper training for employees entails 1-on-1 mentorship, group classes and on-the-job (OJT), in-the-field experience.

However, the issue with most churches in America today is simply that few see members as the church (i.e. “insiders”). Therefore, they are careful not to challenge them to the point where they may leave. Since discipleship is hard work, costly and risky, pastors don’t push it on them. Churches provide “LITE”, easier versions of discipleship instead and nudge them toward those options.

As a result, most members and attenders are improperly trained to be effective ambassadors for Christ and His church. Pastors understand that 1-on-1 and group training classes led by professionals work best in business, but most consider those too demanding and risky to employ with members/attenders. OJT is also poor with most churches because they know members have little time in their busy schedules for living out Jesus' model for evangelism (i.e. compassionate service as the door opener to sharing the gospel).

Disciples must be well-trained, but we're not training members well. The Church today is feeling the effects – collateral damage from churches full of members/attenders who are generally under-equipped to fulfill the Great Commission (i.e. to pursue the real "customer").

### **The Discipleship Process**

- Relationship Building – Engendering trust through personal connections
- Conversion – This is just the starting point – it's someone else in heaven, but it's not a disciple. How many are still walking with the Lord, living changed lives, 3 years after accepting Christ at a crusade or concert? Very few according to George Barna's findings.
- Ongoing Discipleship – Intensive training

### **Small Groups Should Not be a Church's Primary Discipleship Method**

People come to Christ through personal discussions, events or maybe small groups. Small groups are effective for relationship building as well, beginning the process of living in community with other Christians. However, as we said, when it comes to discipleship, no effective organization would rely on occasional group gatherings led by untrained professionals as the primary means for delivering the intensive training required for "insiders" (and once people come to faith, they are "insiders"). Successful, healthy organizations know 1-on-1 and OJT are required.

Yet when pastors are asked about their discipleship strategy, their first response is typically, "small groups". It's no wonder the Church isn't growing, in number or impact. It's not surprising that more members aren't taking on more of the attributes of Christ. As long as churches don't fully buy-in to "members ARE the church" they won't dare challenge them to endure training at the same level of a corporate employee.

### **So Why Do Churches Push Small Groups So Hard?**

Given all this, we have to ask – why do churches push small groups so hard? Do pastors really believe that's the best method for discipleship, or is there another reason? As we've mentioned, the most common church growth model today is "Invite, Involve, Invest". In that model small groups are the predominant method for the "Involve" phase. Small groups do help bring people somewhat closer to the Lord, but they also build relationships and relationships are "sticky" – increasing the likelihood they'll come back next Sunday.

Each church should examine its own heart – is it promoting small groups more to get people involved (more loyal to the church) or more for discipleship (more loyal to the Lord)? If it's the latter, then that presumes the church is very concerned about discipleship – but a church that's discipleship-driven would certainly have additional, deeper methods of discipleship than just small groups. Our contention is that a church which sees small groups as its primary means for discipleship can't be that concerned about discipleship. All churches say that building and sending disciples is key to their mission, but is that reflected in how they spend their time and in how willing they are to prod members in that direction? In business, goals and intentions often don't line up with a company's allocation of resources.

The alternative, pushing 1-on-1 discipleship, will scare off many of those who don't feel like "insiders". Leading a series of meetings with another person over a long period takes a lot of time, studying and effort. And look what Jesus says about the costs of discipleship – possibly leaving those you love and being homeless. None of this is pretty when you present it as an "action plan" to the congregation! Yet if pastors know 1-on-1 (or triads) is the best method for discipleship, then any hesitancy to promote it is further evidence of the tendency to cater rather than challenge, treating members as a "customer" and not as the church.

### **Why 1-on-1 (or Triads) Work Best**

- The process of becoming a disciple is personal
- The best mentors in our lives were those who interacted with us personally, whether it was a teacher, a coach or some other role model
- People won't say in public environments that they would in private/intimate ones
- One of Jesus' favorite method of discipleship was personal questions, allowing for self-discovery, not just telling them the answers but letting them find them out for themselves
- Sermons can only cast vision around what it means to be a disciple and encourage them to take the next (personal) step

### **Assuming All That...What Should My Church Do Now?**

- Pastor disciples leaders 1-on-1
- Those leaders then disciple a couple people each 1-on-1 or in triads
- Encourage all disciplined members to disciple others – OJT
- Sunday School – Consider resuming this dying tradition, making sure it's taught by disciples
- Small groups – Facilitated only by disciplined leaders
- Immersion Bible Study – One night a week (several hours)
- Greater emphasis on private devotion – The fundamental blocking and tackling of Bible study, journaling and prayer
- Lay out a discipleship track for members

This approach will quickly and exponentially grow a base of disciples who can make more disciples. This is a significant part of the turnaround strategy for today’s church. It was Jesus’ model. However, are we willing to chase members this far out of their comfort zones, knowing so many will leave our church and go to another one that will cater to them?

**BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP**

**Quick Tips**

1. **Discipleship is the Key to Growth and Impact** – Even though the community is the real “customer”, ministry inside a church is actually more important than ministry outside the “4 walls” because the internal dictates how much impact its members will have externally.
2. **Are Your Members Disciples?** – Do you members and frequent attenders look and act like Jesus? Do they share his primary attributes – constantly seeking the lost, a servant, compassionate, sacrificial, and wholly dependent on the Father?
3. **If Not, How Do You Get Them There?** – Since members ARE the church, they’re “insiders”- more like employees than “customers”. Would a company consider a 30 minute presentation each week and group discussions with fellow employees to be adequate training? Of course not. Intensive, effective training is 1-on-1 and on-the-job.
4. **The Main Impediment to Discipleship** – Discipleship is hard work, risky, costly and messy. When presented with the truth of what’s involved, most “consumers” will leave for the less demanding church down the road. Be willing to challenge everyone in spite of that.

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## PART 2: STRATEGIES

### MODULE 8: RETENTION

#### TOPIC INSIGHTS

#### Profile of a Church “Shopper”

Because most churchgoers don’t see themselves **AS** the church, they’re susceptible to becoming consumers **OF** the church.

- “I’m looking for a new church home”
- “My kids don’t like it there”
- “The sermons aren’t very interesting”
- “The music is too loud”
- “The people are weird”
- “We don’t feel like we belong”

Americans “shop” because we want more. Or we want something else. We keep looking around to find what makes us happy. I’m not sure that should apply when it comes to church. What do shoppers do at a store? They find what they want (or not) and then leave. There are two types of “leaving” church shoppers do:

#### ...Leave a church after weekend worship

- and don’t continue to BE the church once they’re outside the “4 walls”

#### ...Leave a church entirely

- and start looking for another one

But we shouldn’t stop being the church on the way home. Nor should we leave our church family – any more than we can leave the family we’re born into. God chose both families for us – and for a reason. Our church family is one body now – the body of Christ.

#### Chicken or the Egg

Why do we look for something better?

#### ...Did our advertising-driven culture turn us into consumers of churches too?

- and force churches to adapt, catering to rather than challenging members

#### ...Did churches turn us into church consumers?

- using the latest church growth strategies to drive up attendance

In other words, did churchgoers become finicky on their own or did churches make them that way? For example, do most church ads today entice non-Christians to try out any church or

Christians to switch over to a new church? Advertising a “casual environment” or “fun for kids” isn’t going to attract someone who isn’t interested in church. People can find more relaxing places to go and more fun things for the kids to do elsewhere. Those kinds of ads would only pull in someone who isn’t happy with those aspects of their current church.

If we’re not careful, church membership can look a little like a country club or health club membership. At church, paying dues doesn’t entitle you to any benefits. Yet that sort of thinking causes folks to “shop” churches when their current one doesn’t meet their needs.

Or as the story goes, let’s not be the life-saving station that turned into a social club with a life-saving motif. Once church becomes too comfortable, we may have a little less interest in saving lives. Once the life-saving station replaces the cots with beds and rescue training with social gatherings, that ship may have already sailed.

Instead, church should feel a lot more like a training center. That means getting people out of their comfort zones and discipling them until they’re ready to disciple others.

### It’s All about Reaching the Lost

We do need first-rate facilities, engaging worship services, attractive signage and friendly greeters to attract the lost. What we don’t need is to use those as tightly choreographed retention strategies for members and regular attenders. We could possibly risk not leaving room for the Holy Spirit in our pursuit of perfection.

Clearly we can challenge members/attenders more than our non-Christian visitors. However, if we coddled them less, they’d actually be more likely to come back next Sunday. They’re hungry for truth and personal growth. They’re looking for redemption more than life lessons. Most walk in ready for 1-on-1 mentorship, which could evolve into discipleship.

### A True Story

A 3,000 member church hired consultants from one of the country’s largest mega-churches to rejuvenate its aging membership. The prescription:

- shut down local missions – young families don’t have time to serve the community
- upgrade the band and raise the decibel level – give it a concert feel
- gear the sermons toward counseling rather than discipleship
- more candy and games for the kids – no more boring memory verses
- get everyone involved in something inside the church
- change the “ask” message from Matthew 5:16 to Malachi 3:10
- fun banners and bulletins

The scary part – it worked! Smaller churches in the area simply couldn't provide the same "customer" experience. The church grew – in numbers, although not in disciples or impact. New visitors came, but nearly all were from other churches. Larger didn't mean healthier.

### We're Not Just Talking about "Seeker" Churches

Many Christians believe "seeker" churches are the problem. Some accuse "seeker" churches of "watering down" the gospel and never bringing new believers very far past a faith decision. Yet "seekers" are still "customers", not yet saved and therefore worth pursuing by any means necessary, "seeker" churches have a role in the Kingdom.

However, to illustrate where "seeker" churches do become an issue, let's use the analogy of the American educational system:

- **Elementary School** – Builds a foundation, comparable to the "milk" spoken of by Paul in Hebrews 5:13.
- **High School** – Taking believers a bit deeper, maturing in understanding – beginning to eat "solid foods" according to Paul. The majority of churches today fall in this category, offering only discipleship "lite" in the form of small groups.
- **College** – These churches provide more in-depth Bible studies and challenge congregation members with a steady stream of opportunities for on-the-job training in the community and around the world.
- **Grad School** – Members and frequent attenders of "grad school" churches are all expected to earn advanced degrees as disciples of Jesus Christ through 1-on-1 and triad discipleship and to live out the Great Commission daily.

Which one of these is your church?

"Seeker" churches rarely take members past high school, and many stop at elementary school. And that's ok as long as they encourage them to move up to a high school or college when they're ready to graduate...

### Graduation Day?

That question applies to all churches. I've never come across a church that confesses they don't provide all 4 levels of education and refers members/attenders to another church once they've exhausted all the depth their church can supply.

Instead every church tries to hang on to every person. That's a disservice to the Christian and the Kingdom. As we've mentioned previously in this workbook, if clinging to members in any way inhibits pastors from coming clean with them about the costs of discipleship or challenging them boldly with the Great Commission, then that constitutes sin. Calling members to be all

they should be in Christ does involve the risk that they'll leave for a less demanding church, but it's the right thing to do.

Few churches offer all 4 levels today. I believe the early Church did provide all 4 – it had the “milk”, the “solid food”, the on-the-job community engagement and the Great Commission mandate. However, it seems now churches select one or two of those to do well, whichever one(s) match up best with their mission, who they're trying to reach and the community where they're planted.

Why do pastors have such a difficult time admitting that? Why do few have the humility to send people on their way if they don't do it all? A church who simply doesn't have enough senior, disciplined, mature leaders to start a grad school program either should commit to fix that problem, or congratulate and bid farewell to those ready for a “masters” or “doctorate” level church. Some may argue that those senior, mature leaders should stick around to disciple others, but their skills are likely underutilized by elementary and high school level churches where serious discipleship isn't a priority.

### Repeating a Grade

What are the pitfalls of clinging to those who are ready to graduate from your church? Why should more elementary and high school churches develop college and graduate programs?:

1. The high costs involved in programs, facilities, staff and amenities to cater to “seekers” and immature believers, diverts valuable resources away from potential investments in starting college level and graduate programs.
2. Many actual elementary schools and high schools today have to teach “down” to the level of the lower students to try to bring them along. Unfortunately, the effort to leave no one behind means schools can't teach up to the higher level students (so the most intelligent and ambitious wind up “left behind” instead). In college and grad school, there's none of that. But few churches in the U.S. provide college or grad school level educations in Bible literacy or the Great Commission lifestyle, instead stopping at the “elementary teachings”. (Hebrews 6:1)
3. Elementary and high school don't directly lead into careers. They just build a basis for learning. In this analogy, the occupation of the churchgoer is the Great Commission. People who have only gone through elementary and high school aren't yet ready to “work”. They aren't disciples yet so how can they “make disciples”? They haven't been adequately challenged and therefore aren't highly motivated to “go” (out of their comfort zones). However, those going through college and grad school are preparing for their career, so they're ready to step immediately into “going” (motivated for real life change) and “making disciples” (knowledge of how to do so).

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Discuss ways in which your church encourages people to stay at your church.

In what ways do you try to make the church services and overall experience convenient for visitors?
If you measure retention or turnover in attendance/membership, how do you track that and use that information?
Invitations by members/attenders are sticky because friends want to spend time with one another. How do you encourage your folks to invite others to your church?
How do you involve and engage attenders and visitors quickly in church activities?
Do you find that getting people to give to the church is a good indicator of their likelihood to continuing coming? If so, how and when do you encourage them to begin giving?
What else have you found effective in convincing attendees or visitors to return next Sunday?
Where is the point where challenging people to do or give more causes them to become uncomfortable and not come back? Have you had to pull back on “challenges” in the past?

How far have you taken challenging members to go out of their way to be disciplined, disciple, and serve inside and outside the church? Give a couple examples or anecdotes.

In the chart below, rank (1-12) the importance the following have in encouraging visitors and occasional attenders to come back next Sunday.

	Rank 1-12
Convenient service times and comfortable accommodations	
Caring staff and friendly greeters	
Engaging church services, music and sermons	
Children’s/youth/student ministry	
Other programs and assistance offered to churchgoers	
Approach that’s not pushy, judgemental or demanding	
Invitation/existing relationships with other member/attende	
Involvement in activities/events (e.g. a small group)	
Investment through giving to the church	
Engagement through service inside and outside church	
Opportunities for growth through discipleship	
Church is making a difference in the community	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
Very careful not to inconvenience congregation (e.g. 1 hour service and only light pushes for more engagement); retention is a key metric for the church	Concerned about “revolving door” and taking steps to make church more attractive and engaging for members and visitors; tracking attendance	Walking fine line between catering and challenging, pushing more but not too hard for fear of losing people to churches down the road who still cater	Staff fully bought in (i.e. retention no longer an objective of leaders) but some members/attenders, still leaving as leaders step up call to discipleship/service	Pastors courageous in challenging church to go out of their way to be disciplined, disciple, and serve others; members fully on board, staying and responding

**SCORING:**

- Level 1 – Total of last 3 rows in the chart above is more than 30
- Level 2 – Total of last 3 rows in the chart above is between 25 and 29
- Level 3 – Total of last 3 rows in the chart above is between 20 and 24
- Level 4 – Total of last 3 rows in the chart above is between 15 and 19
- Level 5 – Total of last 3 rows in the chart above is less than 15

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

What if a company told its customers, “If you want to buy our products or use our services, you’ll need to spend several hours a week...

- studying our corporate manual
- sharing that information with your contacts, and
- helping them get started using our products and services”

Sounds insane, right? Those are customers we’re talking about – the company is supposed to serve them, not the other way around. How long would that company stay in business?

On the other hand, companies have no reservations challenging employees. Employees take orders. Managers expect them to perform. Employees are accountable, mostly for helping find new customers and keeping customers happy.

Are your members and regular attenders more like customers or employees? Our primary argument for the root cause for the Church’s decline is that members ARE your church – if so, they are “insiders”. They are much more like employees than “customers”. Yet we treat them like “outsiders”. Possibly the most convincing evidence that the modern American church no longer sees members as the Church but treats them as “customers” is our fear of challenging them.

**Challenge...to Do What?**

Look back at how we started this section. Let’s rephrase and insert “church” for “company”... What if a church told its members, “If you want to be a part of this church, you’ll need to spend several hours a week...

- being disciplined
- disciplining others, and
- showing those around you what it’s like to live a life on fire for Christ”

Doesn’t sound quite as crazy, does it? Actually, sounds downright reasonable. You could even argue that churches have a biblical mandate to challenge members to live out those 3

requirements of all Christians – it's the Great Commission. Imagine the impact on the world around us if churches had that kind of courage!

So why don't they? The simple answer – because most churches have redefined the role of members. We're afraid that if we ask "customers" to be and do what God wants them to be and do we may lose them to the church down the road – the one that will cater to them and not push them to do much of anything.

### **Fear Factor**

Churches won't take the risk of challenging until they decide to once again view members as the church. The church won't regain the voice it had in society until it once again views the community as its customer. As long as we have the model flipped, we won't dare challenge members to the extent that we should for fear they'll take their "business" elsewhere.

But at what point is it worth taking a chance? 93% of our churches aren't growing. Churches and Christians are widely seen as more judgmental than compassionate. How bad does it have to get before we risk truly challenging members to keep on being the church after they leave the building? When does the fear of not fulfilling God's vision for our church overcome our fear of losing members?

Unfortunately, many members also are content with the status quo. They wouldn't want to see their church get too big. If the church is a nice place to hang out and isn't rocking my boat, why would I want it to change? Who "moved my cheese"? Why would I want revitalization if it's going to mean:

- Less focus on meeting my needs
- Not having the same seat or parking spot
- Perceived loss of influence and standing in the church
- A shakeup in worship or leadership styles
- New people I don't know and may not like

We saw the same thing in business – employees were wary of consultants like me roaming the hallways. Consultants mean change!

### **We Started by Taking Risks – What Happened?**

As long as there's a church down the street catering to members, the fear of challenging them will still exist. So who is going to get the ball rolling? Who will start holding members accountable to a higher standard – to fulfill their intended role as the living, breathing church? The most successful companies are those that do the best job of training and incentivizing their employees ("insiders") to sell to customers ("outsiders"). Think of the

leverage that will be created for the Kingdom when we train and push all these “insiders” (members) to minister to “outsiders” (the community).

Think back to when your church first planted in the community. You:

- Studied what was going on and worked hard to reach people
- Got involved locally to put your church on the map
- Focused on serving that community vs. building an institution
- Stood by your principles and weren't afraid if someone left as a result
- Had a lot less to lose because you were just getting started
- Needed people to be advocates and play a big role or you'd never make it

Then suddenly one day, there was more at stake...more bills...a reputation and expectations to maintain. The demands of operating a church became more significant.

That's around the time that leadership's demands on members and regular attenders started diminishing. That's when the temptation increased to offer “cheaper grace” – no obligations, just options – belief without material life change. That's when the focus shifted internally – toward running something, toward attracting and retaining – in other words, treating members as “customers”.

### BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

#### Quick Tips

1. **Retention as a Goal is Wrong** – If hoping members or regular attenders will come back next weekend causes you to soft-pedal the gospel or the costs of discipleship that's a disservice to them and the Kingdom.
2. **Be Willing to Lose a Few** – The future trajectory of a church that decides it's time to reorient toward the model behind the fastest growth in the Church's history and the most successful companies is not a straight upward-sloping line. Those remaining after you challenge the congregation with the Great Commission can grow your church exponentially.
3. **Retain Through Impact** – Few will want to leave a church that's making a tremendous difference in the lives of people and in their city. Instead though, most churches misallocate resources and funds by trying to retain and grow through attraction and “customer service”.
4. **Let Some “Graduate”** – If your church can't offer all of the teaching and discipleship a person needs to become all they can be in their faith and walk with the Lord, encourage them to go elsewhere.

#### Your Next Steps

Fill in the blanks:

- 1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## PART 2: STRATEGIES

## MODULE 9: PROGRAMS/MINISTRIES

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

How an organization deals with people and where it invests the bulk of its time, resources and dollars determine who it considers to be its “customers”.

Churches today invest the vast majority of their time, resources and dollars in marketing, facilities, programs and services to attract and retain members/attenders. Churches are also careful not to push them too hard to step too far out of their comfort zones, even if it would mean they finally begin living out the Great Commission.

Therefore, churches tend to treat members/attenders as if they were “customers”. Organizations invest and serve their customers, making sure they’re happy so they don’t take their business elsewhere.

### Is the Term “Customer” Relevant for the Church?

The word “customer” should have no relevance to the church. But most churches today have made the term relevant by how they approach members, attenders and people outside the church.

Let’s compare how companies interact with their customers versus how churches today typically treat members/attenders. Companies treat everyone (except employees) as a current or prospective customer:

- Marketing at “arms length” through advertising and word of mouth
- Innovating to keep up with evolving customer needs
- Enhancing and expanding programs, products and services to better meet market demand
- Providing excellent programs and services to keep customers happy
- Taking whatever other steps are necessary to increase customer loyalty

Are most modern American churches much different? Read the list again. How do churches market today? Are we innovating more now to provide attractive programs and services? Are we more bent on retaining people, hoping not to lose them to the church down the road? There are stark similarities in how companies and churches in America attract and retain people; and stark contrasts with how churches “marketed” and “innovated” during the first 1900 years.

1. Time – Nearly 100% of pastor and staff hours are invested in member/attender-related activities. Staff assignments cover youth, singles, small groups, music, technology, etc. A pastor’s week is consumed with message development, touching base with members, staff meetings, visitations – not to mention funerals, weddings and the occasional crisis.
2. Resources – Programs, ministries and church assets (buildings, equipment) are almost exclusively dedicated to serving members/attenders. That may seem obvious and appropriate – but that was not the case for the Church’s first 1900 years when churches were the center of town and served as the local food bank, shelter, etc.
3. Dollars – Likewise, it’s estimated that 97.5% of the average church’s budget today goes back to the benefit of those who gave those dollars.

Of course, how churches approach members and attenders also determines whether they feel and act like “customers”. Evidence abounds that members/attenders are more inclined today to “shop” churches, expect to be “fed”, and complain or go elsewhere when their expectations aren’t met.

**You Can’t Have It Both Ways**

Yet if as we’ve already established (and few pastors would argue) members/attenders ARE the Church, then they can’t also be the churches customer!

Those two are mutually exclusive. They are one or the other, not both.

The disconnect is that few churches today live out their stated belief that members ARE the church. Churches inadvertently define the church as the pastors, staff and buildings and treat members/attenders as “customers” when they invest the vast majority of their time, energy and money in attracting and retaining them – using similar methods and means as businesses.

As a result, nearly all churches have it backwards:

- Accountability and expectations OF members are way too low
- Programs and amenities FOR members are way too high

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>We:</b>
Challenging them	Cater to them
Leveraging them (as the hands and feet of Christ)	Are careful not to inconvenience them
Training/discipling them	Make discipling optional
Sending them out into ministry	Focus them on serving internally

Designing programs around maximizing community impact	Design programs around maximizing member satisfaction
Holding them accountable (for impacting the world around them)	Require little or no accountability

It’s no wonder that American churchgoers feel like consumers today – “shopping” churches to see who best meets their expectations – and not as the living, breathing Church called and equipped to light the world on fire for Christ.

**Quite simply...the Church has Defined the Wrong “Customer”**

It stands to reason that the Church in America today is not “succeeding” – it has defined the wrong “customer”! Members ARE the Church, not the “customer”.

A key lesson I learned in over a decade consulting Fortune 1000 companies is that any organization not focused on its customers or investing too heavily in the wrong customers will not succeed.

We believe that Jesus, his disciples and the early church clearly viewed the lost in the community as their target “customer”. Members were the church personified, more like internal employees than customers (who are always external to an organization). Therefore, programs and ministries in the early church and for the better part of the next 1900 years were geared toward preparing those “insiders” to be effective in pursuing and serving the real “customer”. Programs that weren’t effectively equipping and training church members to live out the Great Commission and reach the lost in Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth were tossed out.

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Review the types of programs and ministries you offer to attenders/non-attenders

How do you define the word “ministry”? In your mind, has the definition of that word changed in church circles over the past few decades?
How many programs/ministries do you offer to members? Give some examples and describe what issue(s) you’re trying to address through each of them?

How many programs/ministries do you offer that are externally focused? Give some examples and describe what issue(s) you're trying to address through each of them?
For programs/ministries you offer to the public (non-attenders), how are you building awareness of them in the community? Are you confident that they are fairly visible outside the "4 walls"?
Which of those programs/ministries are ongoing (year round) or seasonal (annual)?

Rank the following 12 programs/ministries, if offered at your church that have been most responsible for your growth to date:

	Rank 1-12
Youth/Student	
Children's/Nursery	
Women's	
Men's	
Singles	
Senior Adult	
Benevolence/Member Assistance	
Outreach	
Evangelism	
Community-oriented (e.g. Celebrate Recovery, VBS, Sports)	
Local and International Missions	
Discipleship (e.g. Small Group, 1-on-1 or Sunday School)	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

<b>1 – Consumer</b>	<b>2 – Caterer</b>	<b>3 – Climber</b>	<b>4 – Challenger</b>	<b>5 – Catalyst</b>
Offers no ministries or programs for those who do not go to the church; the word “ministry” is defined to mean internal only	Has 1-2 seasonal ministries available to the public but invests very little in building awareness of them in the community	Defines the word “ministry” to mean ministering to the unchurched; identified key local issues to address	Designed and implemented 5-10 externally focused programs/ministries (some ongoing and some annual)	Structured and actively marketing 10 or more year-round ministries specifically addressing issues in the community

**SCORING:**

Level 1 – Total of last 4 rows in the chart above is more than 40

Level 2 – Total of last 4 rows in the chart above is between 35 and 39

Level 3 – Total of last 4 rows in the chart above is between 30 and 34

Level 4 – Total of last 4 rows in the chart above is between 25 and 29

Level 5 – Total of last 4 rows in the chart above is less than 25

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

Set members up for success in living up to their new standing as key parts of the church “body”, charged with exceeding expectations of the real “customer”, not their own. Empower members to BE the church by developing and investing only in programs and ministries that advance 4 key objectives:

- Preparing for ministry
- Equipping for ministry
- Connecting to ministry opportunities
- Deploying into ministry

These programs and ministries should all be geared around tapping into and releasing the latent leverage lying dormant in the pews, likely disrupting the comfort and complacency of lay leaders and members.

Redefining the church’s “customer” will require a radical shift in the mindsets of everyone about their intended roles in the church and the importance of winning over the community for Christ. Programs and ministries not intended to please them but to equip them to be a brighter light to those around them.

To ease the transition, you’ll need:

- A phased roll-out approach for the changes in the orientation of programs and ministries
- Buy-in of all leadership to ensure commitment to change
- Prayer and courage to continue down this new path despite certain resistance
- Understanding of the implications of adopting this new definition of your “customer” on your church’s strategic plan, organizational structure, budgets, activities and responsibilities. All of those are necessary to make members effective in carrying out their “jobs” as the church personified.
- A communication strategy around these changes.
- To rally members around common cause(s). Identify pressing social issue(s) to redirect attention away from internal focus (i.e. building the institution) and uniting the entire church around the goal of alleviating the issue(s). The health and vitality of any organization depends on focusing on something outside of itself.
- Tools to empower and equip leaders to run their ministries make members aware of vast array of opportunities to make a difference in the community and engage members year-round
- Strong discipleship program - otherwise churchgoers will likely lack the courage and commitment to actively share their faith – only 2% today do so by some estimates

### BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

#### Quick Tips

1. **Serve the Community** – Evaluate how many of your church’s programs are geared toward attracting and engaging members. Compare that to how many are truly preparing them to pursue the true “customer” (the community where the church is planted) and how many programs directly serve those “customers”.
2. **Empower Leaders** – To motivate members to become the “hands and feet” of Christ in the community, make them responsible for running and promoting your church’s externally-facing programs. Pastors and staff alone can’t manage the number of community-oriented programs your church should have. Consider how you’re using EACH of your internal ministries to equip and mobilize ALL to live out the Great Commission.
3. **Measure Success** – To see what ministries and programs are effective in reaching the lost, first develop goals for each one. Then determine whether they’re accomplishing those objectives and hold leaders accountable. Little gets done without setting and tracking goals.
4. **Publicize** – Invest in building awareness of your community programs and ministries. How visible are they? Make sure they’re promoted and run year-round to avoid the appearance that your love and compassion are transactional rather than truly relational.

#### Your Next Steps

Fill in the blanks:

- 1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## PART 2: STRATEGIES

## MODULE 10: LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

Members/attenders can't be both the CHURCH and the CUSTOMER. They are one or the other. Customers are always outside of, not internal to, an organization. Members ARE the church so they are "insiders", not "outsiders". However, a church that treats members/attenders as those they need to attract and retain views them as "outsiders". When an organization invests the vast majority of its time, energy and money into "insiders", and thereby largely ignores "outsiders" (its real "customers"), it is by definition internally focused.

***Because the Church in America today generally treats "insiders" (members, who ARE the church) as the "customer", the Church is by definition internally focused. Internally focused organizations of any kind rarely succeed.***

When the Church redefined its "customer", it ensured its demise. It violated the most critical mistake any organization can make – not focusing on "customers" (i.e. "outsiders") or investing too heavily in the wrong "customers".

### Why Internally Focused Organizations Nearly Always Fail

Organizations that retrench into their own confines atrophy until they decide to reconnect with the outside world. A club closes its doors to new members, enjoying the comforts of exclusivity, while its members age. A business restructures into functional silos and the accompanying politics and posturing ensue, causing it to lose sight of evolving customer needs. A charity gets short on funds, diverting more dollars to fundraising and cost cutting, and begins to compromise its original mission. A church wants to grow and tries new ideas to attract and retain members/attenders, believing the best route is to invest in more exciting church services and children's ministries rather than engaging and serving the community where it planted. All of those scenarios involve an inordinate degree of focus on "insiders". None of them lead to long term success because they redirect attention away from "customers" (i.e. "outsiders").

### The Temptation to Become Internally Focused is Powerful

#### Entrepreneurial Life Cycle

- A company begins with a solid understanding of customer needs
- Founder sees an opportunity to provide better products and services
- Those ideals take the company to the top
- But it struggles to manage growth
- Spurring process improvement and restructurings, turning the focus inward

- Becomes more out of touch with customer needs and competitors step in
- Must refocus outside at some point or go bankrupt

### Church Life Cycle

- A church plants intentionally in an area to reach that community
- Evaluates the needs of the community and ways to serve
- Starts to grow because of efforts to engage and reach out
- Gets caught up in how to run and grow the church
- Interactions with “outsiders” become more arms-length (e.g. mailers)
- Loses sight of the needs and issues in the community
- Must refocus outside at some point or growth and impact diminishes

### The “Rallying Cry” of the Internally Focused Church

The most common church growth model in America is Invite-Involve-Invest. It’s been a key catalyst in the shift toward the “member is the customer” mentality:

1. INVITE – Encourage direct referrals. Get members and attenders to invite their friends because invited people “stick”. Friends want to spend time with friends.
2. INVOLVE – Engage people in deep relationships within the church or entrenched in serving at the church.
3. INVEST – Where their money goes, their hearts will go also.

Nearly every aspect of the Invite-Involve-Invest model perpetuates an internally focused church. For example, Invite relegates members to “customer” status, asking them to extend invitations and leave conversions to the “professionals” rather than entrusting members with the responsibility to BE the Church.

### Paying the Price for Internal Focus

Numerous studies show that society clearly sees the Church as internally focused. The consensus view is that churches tend to “take care of their own”. They frequently hear the Church speak out on moral issues, but rarely see it engaging with those outside the “4 walls”. With more talk and less action, no wonder most now view Christians and churches as more judgmental than caring, condemning than compassionate.

When the Church redefined its “customer” and turned to a member-centric, internally-focused model, it:

1. Broke a Sacred Trust – Made society (“outsiders”) think the Church stopped caring
2. Ignored a Time-Tested Adage – “People don’t care what you know unless they know that you care”

As a result, the number of church goers is on the decline in America. The Church is on the losing end of the key social and moral issues of our day. Clearly, the Church's impact, influence and perception today are diminishing. Internal focus never works.

### The True, Intended "Customer" of the Church

So since members ARE the church, not the "customer" of the church, who is "customer" that all hands should be on deck pursuing and serving. Where should churches be investing the majority of their time, energy and money? Answering that question correctly is the key to the Church's future. The church is in decline today because it incorrectly redefined its "customer". To find the right answer, we'll look to the Bible and the early church.

First, it's important to note that customers are always outside of an organization, whereas members (as the Church) are clearly insiders. Because churches have turned their focus to serving and retaining "insiders", the real "customers" ("outsiders") have been ignored. Imagine a company that never spent any time reaching out personally to its target prospects. Imagine if you were a customer of a company that never answered your calls or emails when you had a problem. Would you want to continue "buying" what they're "selling"? Of course not. You typically become aware of a company because they market to you. You become interested because they reach out to you. You stick around because they show they care about you.

### What Did Jesus and His Disciples Model?

Jesus, the Lord incarnate, spoke the perfect words. Yet He knew the words were not enough. So Jesus almost always served, healed and fed, demonstrating His compassion and love, before telling people who He was. He spent time in the temple, but the bulk of his preaching was done out in the community. He engaged "outsiders" who didn't know much about Him. He reached out constantly to those in need – not just in word, but in deed. He met them exactly where they were. He didn't wait for them to darken the doors of a church building. He went to them. He didn't just preach. He served.

Likewise, Jesus sent the disciples out into the world around them, giving them the power to perform miracles and instructing them to follow His lead, preceding words with action. When Paul was called to go to the gentiles, the one thing the disciples told him not to forget was to serve the poor. Paul said it was the one thing he was most eager to do (Galatians 2:8-10). Clearly, Jesus and His disciples invested the majority of their time and energy in "outsiders". They considered the community to be the "customer".

However, few churches today follow Jesus' model. No pastor can "outreach" Jesus, yet most churches have separated words from action. They've replaced community service and evangelism with attracting and retaining members.

### Who Was the “Customer” of the Church until the Last Century?

The early Church replicated Jesus’ model and as a result exploded in growth. It demonstrated God’s love and compassion so remarkably that people took notice. Society saw a group of folks with so much love for one another that it spilled out into the streets.

For centuries the Church continued to serve first and then tell people who Jesus is. Churches were the food bank and homeless shelter. Churches started the hospitals and schools. The local church was the center of town – integral and integrated. The Church allocated a much larger percentage of its time, resources and dollars to serving the community than it does today. The early Church never outsourced community service, as it does now. Churches refer non-members who need help to a government agency or a local ministry (many of which the Church started but then severed ties). Historically, you didn’t have to belong to a church to get help – you could go to ANY church to get help.

#### **Whether the Church abdicated its role on the front lines of compassion or whether the government and charities usurped that role isn’t important...**

What matters is that the community was intended to be the Church’s “customer” and yet the community is largely ignored by the Church today. Of course society feels disenfranchised and neglected. It’s no wonder the unchurched view churches as uncaring. We turn away families in need and most only do occasional service events. Yet surveys show that people still expect the Church to be a first responder, to play a lead role in compassion. You know what happens when expectations aren’t met!

### Where Did We Go Wrong?

Jesus, His disciples and the early Church saw a church’s “customer” as the community where it was planted. Yet nearly all churches in America instead treat members as the “customer”, placating and paying attention to those who darken their doors. In an attempt to appeal to a consumer-driven culture, churches began roughly 100 years ago:

- Building Churches vs. Building Disciples
- Measuring Growth vs. Measuring Impact
- Lowering Expectations (of Members) vs. Holding Them Accountable (to BE the Church)
- Catering to vs. Challenging Members
- Transactional vs. Relational Community Engagement
- Advertising vs. Service-Based Outreach

By the way, advertising does not mean we’re treating the community as a “customer”. Advertising is not “outreach”, although many churches now consider those words synonymous. Mailers and billboards tout our preaching, service formats, and children’s ministries – which only appeals to Christians – attracting them from other churches. Arms-

length attraction is not what Jesus or the early church modeled. They would define “outreach” as interacting in love and service, opening the door to sharing the gospel.

*Ignore the “customer” or serve the wrong “customer” and you’re doomed to struggle. Here organizational behavior and business principles align perfectly with Biblical mandates.*

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Determine the degree and nature of the church’s commitment to Jesus’ model for serving before/while sharing the gospel

How do you define the word “outreach”? In your mind, has the definition of that word changed in church circles over the past few decades?
Do you intentionally structure certain community events to be purely service rather than marketing (your church)? Please give a couple examples.
How do you avoid the perception in the community or among members that events are not an effort to “check the box” but a sincere, ongoing concern for people in the community?
Do you follow up with organizations and individuals who were touched during service events to build ongoing relationships? How do you segue events into ongoing engagement?
Do your local and international missions efforts generally tend to be “relational” versus “transactional”? How do you structure your missions activities to make sure that is the case?

Do you consider care and love for the lost and the community to be baked into the fabric of the culture? Is there a sufficient amount of focus/activity on local missions in the church?
Are you satisfied with the degree of involvement by members in international and local missions? Do you have plans to try to increase the level and frequency of engagement?

Complete the chart below (refer to the legend under the table), then using the scoring to plot your church’s spot on the Proficiency Model.

	Ongoing or #/Year	% Dollars	% Emphasis	% Participation
International mission trips				
Mission families serving in the field				
Community service events (not marketing)				
Multi-church events				
Planting local ministries				
Funding local ministries				
Internal teams assigned to local ministries				
Members assisting on a partnership your church has with a local school				
Volunteers working year-round with local charities with whom your church partners				
Ministries located on your church’s campus				
Benevolence for your members or local families				
Drives (e.g. food, clothes, backpacks) for local families				

Key: Ongoing or #/Year = Enter “Ongoing” for year-round activity; if not, enter #/year  
 % Dollars = % spent on items in that column should equal 100% of annual budget  
 % Emphasis = Level of focus on each item in that column should total 100%  
 % Participation = Average % of members engaged in each activity

Scoring on Proficiency Model

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
No budget, only 2-3 service events per year, typically around the holidays, where church’s name is referenced to act as marketing	Frequent activity but limited participation and transactional; coming more from desire to “check the box” than a sincere concern for people in the community	Defines the word “outreach” to mean reaching out to the unchurched; 5-10% of budget and rate of participation in internally-run and external ministries	10%-30% of budget committed; relational year-round with follow up; tracking activity and impact; multiple local ministry partners; 1-2 on-campus ministries	Level 4 but where care and love for the lost and hopeless in the community baked into the fabric of the church’s culture; 30%+ budget and participation rate

SCORING:

- Level 1 – Total % in column 2 is 0
- Level 2 – Total % in column 2 is between 1 and 4
- Level 3 – Total % in column 2 between 5 and 9
- Level 4 – Total % in column 2 is between 10 and 30
- Level 5 – Total % in column 2 is more than 30

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

Read the following two short eBooks:

- 1) [The 5 Steps to Revitalize Your Church](#)
- 2) [Transform Your Community Forever in 6 Months](#)

**BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP**

**Quick Tips**

1. **Who You Are, Not What You Do** – Bake care and love for the lost and the community into the fabric of your church’s culture. If it’s not on the hearts and minds of pastors and lay leaders, then it won’t be near and dear for your congregation either.
2. **It’s all About Them** – Motives for community events must be pure - not about marketing. The definition of the word “outreach” in America today has come to mean advertising your church (to anyone) rather than engaging and serving (the lost in the community).
3. **Don’t “Check the Box** – Occasional service events can actually damage the perception others have of your church. People won’t believe your church genuinely cares unless you follow up with organizations and individuals touched during events to form ongoing relationships.

- 4. **See What’s Working** – Monitor and track the success of your local missions efforts in terms of outcomes versus outputs. Are enough members involved? How many lives are being touched? Is the gospel being shared? Are initiatives being run efficiently?
- 5. **Start Using [Meet The Need](#)** – Free solutions to equip churches to mobilize their members to serve their communities much more effectively and efficiently

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**PART 3: FRUIT/RESULTS****MODULE 11: MEMBER ENGAGEMENT/SERVICE****TOPIC INSIGHTS**

Jesus, His disciples, and the church throughout history viewed the community as its target audience – its “customer”. The church is the living, breathing body of Christ. The members make up that body. Each of us is an important body part. If each of those members hadn’t fulfilled their roles as the body, commissioned by Jesus – to GO and make disciples – would the church have seen such explosive growth during its first 1900 years? What if the early church members had stayed among themselves – not venturing out into Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria? Would Christianity have spread as quickly if the early church hadn’t followed Jesus’ model of demonstrating His love and compassion before telling them who He was? How many fewer would be in heaven today if those members had seen church as a place to fellowship with other believers and to worship on Sunday mornings? Yet my fear is that’s how most members and attenders view church today.

Church is not a what – a place. It’s a who – us. The church’s power is in the vast number and diverse giftings in the body – fueled by the Holy Spirit. For centuries those countless parts of the body of Christ – each recognizing their individual roles in expanding the Kingdom – created an unstoppable, irresistible movement.

So why isn’t Christianity still growing in America today? The explanation we’ve put forward is that most members/attenders no longer see:

- themselves as a critical body part
- how they weaken the overall body if they don’t carry out their intended functions
- the need to carefully evaluate their giftings and apply them adequately to ministry inside and outside of the church
- the Great Commission as an obligation, but as an option
- the same sense of urgency around their role in bringing the lost to Christ
- their position in the church as important as the pastor’s
- church or themselves as servants to the community, as Jesus did
- 

**3 Steps to Revitalize Your Church**

In this workbook we discuss the first two steps:

**Step #1: A change of heart and mind**

Confess we’ve largely ignored the community – our intended “customer” – and been too careful and cautious with members/attenders, concerned that they may not come back

**Step #2: Take ground**

Occupy a larger footprint by empowering members to BE the church to those around them, putting less emphasis on keeping them in and more on equipping and sending them out

In this chapter we take a closer look at...

**Step #3: The entire church working together to pursue the real “customer”****All Hands on Deck**

In my years in management consulting, we saw countless examples of departments not working in a company’s best interests:

- Sales – not aggressive in converting new customers
- Marketing – targeting the wrong (i.e. unprofitable) customers
- Operations – processes designed around needs of internal departments
- R&D – product innovation not keeping up with evolving customer needs
- Finance – not investing adequately in the optimal customers or products

No company can succeed unless all the departments are adequately staffed, aligned around the interests of the target customers and perform their distinct functions well. What the Bible says about the church is no different. The entire church – pastors, staff, members, elders, deacons, facilities, etc. – should work together seamlessly to prepare and equip themselves to reach the lost. In this analogy, members are essentially employees, insiders being trained and sent to bring help and hope to a community (outsiders) desperately in need of both.

How should each part of the church body be utilized in this “members are the church, not the customer” framework?

- Members/Regular Attenders – Like Sales, evangelize and serve the church’s true target “customers”, not simply by inviting them to Sunday morning services but by living out the Great Commission
- Deacons/Elders – Like Marketing, lead everyone in the church into a deeper relationship with Christ so they can have a greater impact in the community
- Staff/Administration – Like Operations, yet geared toward equipping and sending, not just keeping the machine running
- Pastors – Like R&D, cast vision for how to leverage the body to reach more people for Christ
- Finance/Facilities – Like Finance in a company, allocate limited resources to the uses that maximize the return on investment – in terms of the number of people who come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior

**Have Some Body Parts Atrophied?**

1 Corinthians 12:27-28 (TLB); “All of you together are the one body of Christ, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it. Here is a list of some of the parts He has placed in his Church, which is His body:

- Apostles,
- Prophets—those who preach God’s Word,
- Teachers,
- Those who do miracles,
- Those who have the gift of healing,
- Those who can help others,
- Those who can get others to work together,
- Those who speak in languages they have never learned.”

As for those first three, it’s clear that pastors occupy the lead role within the church. However, the remaining parts of the body listed could be any one of us – inside or outside the building. We are the hands and feet of Christ, yet far too few people are stretching and working out our muscles – so they’ve atrophied. Unless we exercise the body part we represent, both in how we serve others at church and in the community, the overall body becomes weaker. Unless pastors are willing to risk rocking the boat by challenging members to be stronger body parts, the church body will continue to atrophy in size, impact and influence.

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Church’s success in getting members involved in internal and external ministry

Which of the following best describes the attitude of members toward serving?

#	Attitude of Members Toward Serving	Choose One
1	Members expect to be fed, provided for and entertained	
2	Church reluctant to ask members to serve too frequently	
3	Members getting sense they ARE the church, meaning service is not optional	
4	Members fully see their role as to serve, not to be served	
5	Staff and members fully bought into the need to work together to reach the real “customer” (the lost outside the “4 walls”)	

Which of the following best describes the orientation of your service requests?

#	Orientation of Service Requests at Your Church	Choose One
1	Only options are internal besides 1-2 community service events, involving no contact of members with those outside the church (e.g. canned food drive)	
2	Normal “church chores” but 2-3 community service events involving members going into the community in direct contact with those they’re helping	
3	Church actively assessing gifts and deploying into a mix of internal and external options with	
4	Church publicizing service opportunities inside and outside the church on a monthly basis around causes and ministries championed by the church	
5	Empowering and equipping lay leaders to take ownership of internal and externally-focused ministries and to recruit others to join them in their efforts	

Which of the following best describes your level of member engagement in church-related internal and external service opportunities?

#	Level of Member Engagement	Choose One
1	Less than 5% engagement on average in service opportunities	
2	5-10% engagement overall	
3	10-20% engagement	
4	20-30% engagement	
5	30%+ engagement in international and local missions year-round	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
Members expect to be fed, provided for and entertained; 1-2 events that involve no outside contact (e.g. canned food drives); less than 5% engagement	Still reluctant to ask; nearly all requests for “church chores” besides 2-3 service events involving direct contact with those being helped; 5-10% engagement	Members getting sense they are the church, so service is not optional; Church assesses gifts and deploys into internal and external options; 10-20% engagement	Church publicizing service opportunities inside and outside church on weekly basis; members fully see role as to serve, not to be served; 20-30% engagement	30%+ engagement in international and local missions on year-round basis; staff and members bought into need to work together to reach real “customer”

## SCORING:

Assign a score of 1 to 5 (from top to bottom, as shown in the left hand column) to each of the options in each of the 3 tables. Add the scores for your 3 responses in the 3 tables:

Level 1 – Total is less than 5

Level 2 – Total is between 5 and 7

Level 3 – Total is between 8 and 10

Level 4 – Total is between 11 and 13

Level 5 – Total is more than 13

## FUTURE STATE VISION

***Churches should model the behavior they want members to imitate.***

Yet as we've discussed the past three weeks, few churches are having a continual, relational and meaningful impact in their communities. Instead, most:

- [rely on occasional events](#)
- [measure impact more in terms of outputs than outcomes](#)
- [rarely serve non-members families](#) (as Jesus so often did)

It's not surprising that church members and attenders have followed suit when it comes to living out the Great Commission, falling into one of four camps:

1. **Passive Christians*****DON'T SPEAK OR ACT***

Bill hardly misses a Sunday. He volunteers as a greeter one weekend a month, gives regularly and hosted a small group last year. By all accounts, Bill's an active church member. Considering how busy he is with career and a young kids, he does his fair share. There's not much time left over for charity work, nor is that something Bill thinks much about – and it's not a big emphasis at his church. However, his pastor does mention inviting people to church pretty frequently and Bill loves his church so he's done that a few times. When it comes to evangelism, that's about as far as Bill typically goes – he doesn't feel comfortable sharing his faith and rarely broaches "religion" with coworkers or friends.

2. **Pensive Christians*****SPEAK BUT DON'T ACT***

Rusty is concerned about where America is headed. Unlike Bill, he's not afraid to talk about religion or politics. As a Christian since the early 1980s he's watched the country go downhill, increasingly upset as our moral foundation crumbles under the weight of every secular, liberal court decision. Rusty's church recently held a ministry fair inviting members to express interest in local causes like hunger relief, the homeless or foster care. However, what caught Rusty's eye was the Christian conservative radio ministry asking for support to continue fighting for the values that made our nation great. Rusty signs up and notices that

over 150 others had done so as well, whereas none of the other compassion ministries had more than 20 on their lists.

### 3. Private Christians

#### ***ACT BUT DON'T SPEAK***

Stephanie is one of the nicest, most compassionate people at her church. She's always there for anyone who's going through a tough time – a family at church, a neighbor, coworker, friend or even a complete stranger. In fact, Stephanie is so caring that she would never want to offend anyone. If she knows that person is a Christian, she'll talk about her faith and offer to pray for them. Otherwise, she keeps her personal beliefs to herself because they're just that – personal. Her husband, Jeff, is just as kind-hearted, frequently donating money to local charities, but equally reluctant to impose his ideals on others.

### 4. Powerful Christians

#### ***ACT AND THEN SPEAK***

Unlike Bill, Rusty, Stephanie and Jeff, Tamara isn't passive, pensive or private – she's both personable and public. She's a disciple, following Jesus' model of meeting felt needs to open the door to sharing who He is. Tamara never misses an opportunity to do both, seeing wherever she happens to be at the time as her designated mission field. She understands she IS the church between Sundays. Tamara is deeply concerned not only with each person's welfare in this life but also their assurance of eternal life. She knows the Great Commission doesn't stop at a single good deed or the planting of a "seed" – it's about investing in longer-term relationships.

### Which of the 4 are Most Common Today?

Church leaders play a significant role in influencing whether its members are passive, pensive, private or powerful. Churches today are producing far too many of the first three. Few churchgoers see themselves as the embodiment of church once they walk out the front door. They may be active participants in church but they're not the personification of it outside. In effect, they're "customers" of churches who fear most would leave if asked to endure the level of commitment and discipleship required of those entrusted to BE the church all week long.

Yes, Powerful Christians are a rare breed these days, not often sighted in churches that:

- cater to members, hesitant to challenge them with the reality of what it truly means to live out the Great Commission
- emphasize serving inside the church continually but offer few chances to reach out to the poor and lost in the community
- focus more on build an institution than building disciples that "take ground" outside the four walls

Joining a church alone doesn't make someone a Powerful Christian any more than simply joining a gym makes someone a powerful weightlifter. Both require hard work and endurance. Only intensive and extended training will dramatically change their lives. That's why a large or growing church isn't necessarily a healthy church – showing up, serving and giving doesn't mean a churchgoer will make a difference for Christ between Sundays. Active church members are not necessarily disciples. Disciples would never stop at being passive, pensive or private. Disciples are healthy, impactful, forever changed – in other words, powerful.

### Implications for the Future

Why do so many Christians fall into the first 3 categories? Why do most no longer have an acute sense of urgency to see the lost saved? Jesus didn't intend for churches and the Christian walk to be as comfortable as they are in America today. Never did He expect His followers to be complacent or content – “consuming” church on Sunday and doing little to serve the Lord Monday through Saturday – while surrounded by the helpless and hopeless. How many churchgoers realize they've stepped into a mission field the second they get back in their cars in the church parking lot? How many try to win people to Christ and spend time making disciples each and every week?

Unfortunately, many have come to view church as a “safe” place to worship and fellowship, not courageous enough to act and speak in the light of day. Yet we're called to live boldly in a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to our faith. Ironically, it is likely our lack of impetus and preparation to be the hands and feet of Christ that have largely precipitated and fueled the attacks on Christianity that have already occurred.

What will happen if churches remain hesitant to challenge members to adopt the level of commitment and courage demanded by Jesus? How much longer can we remain satisfied with most Christians being passive, pensive or private?

The road is about to become much more rocky for followers of Jesus Christ. Only Powerful Christians will be ready for what's coming next. We must be willing to take a stand. But will we?

### BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

#### Quick Tips

1. **Are Members Being Adequately Challenged?** – Pastors talk about “fields white for harvest” and the Great Commission but is your congregation living those out between Sundays. Are all hands on deck pursuing the real “customer” or should your church push them harder to BE the church in the community?
2. **What are You Challenging Them to Do?** – Are your requests for volunteers much more geared around “church chores” than serving the community and reaching neighbors with

the gospel? Research needs in the community and train and prepare members to model a prayer, care, share lifestyle around all those they meet.

- 3. **Attitudes Toward Serving** – Do members see serving at your church or in the community as fulfilling an obligation, a good deed or a favor. If so, they haven't fully bought into their role as the living, breathing church but instead still believe church is an institution.
- 4. **Levels of Engagement** – How many in your congregation understand their spiritual gifts and are actively leveraging them for the Kingdom? Empower and equip more lay leaders to take ownership of internal and externally-focused ministries and to recruit others to join them in their efforts. Show more needs that fit the giftings of your members using Meet The Need.
- 5. **Start Using [Meet The Need](#)** – Free solutions to equip churches to mobilize their members to serve their communities much more effectively and efficiently

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## PART 3: FRUIT/RESULTS

## MODULE 12: IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND WORLD

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

The last few chapters have made the case that few churches today target the right “customer”. And no organization chasing the wrong “customer” can possibly succeed. Now let’s talk about how that “root cause” for the church’s decline leads to a clear transformation plan that will dramatically increase your church’s impact. Once a church realizes what it truly means to view and treat members AS the church, the filter and criteria by which you make every decision instantly self-corrects. Suddenly, you’ll have a better understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of your leaders and members, as well as the church’s place in the community.

## Change Isn’t Optional...

We MUST change our modern-day model for running churches because the model is:

...**not Biblical** – Jesus, His disciples and the early church all had a very different view of the “customer” than most churches do today

...**not Working** – By any standard of measure, in danger of heading down a similar path as the Church in Europe where it’s largely relegated to a “corner”

What grounds do churches have for maintaining the status quo? Organizational behavior and Biblical principles align perfectly here. The model is failing because it always does – inordinate focus on the institution and not on the target market violates business and Biblical best practices.

## ...but Will We?

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” But how does a pastor scrap the status quo when everyone around him is reinforcing it. Lead better. Build the best facilities. Design the most fun kids program in town. Consultants, seminaries, authors and conferences perpetuate the same “flawed assumption”. They work within its confines. Publishers can’t sell books telling pastors they have it backwards. Events questioning the fundamental model for how we “do” church won’t attract many attendees or sponsors.

Leading better isn’t going to make a bad model good. Reluctance to challenge members to truly live out the Great Commission isn’t going to grow the Kingdom any more than a new CEO in a dying industry is going to ensure the company’s long term success.

### What Does Change Look Like?

#### HEART CHANGE

The first and most important step for anyone who's missed the mark is recognition and repentance. We can't confess unless we recognize. We won't repent until we confess. Someone, somehow has to convince pastors that it is wrong to:

- Worry about losing a member to another church
- Pull away from the community, letting others take care of the helpless and hopeless
- Separate words from action, which Jesus never did
- Focus less energy on serious discipleship
- Make church the "end" (destination) and not the "means" (vehicle)
- Concern ourselves more with building OUR church than THE Church
- Lack the faith to follow our conscience and not conventional wisdom

Likewise, members and regular attenders must recognize and repent if they ever "consumed" church. Do they see themselves as anything less than the personification of Church, with mission-critical roles and responsibilities even after they leave the building?

#### HEAD CHANGE

The route to "fix" the church isn't more of the same. When times get tough, we've seen so many churches regroup, strategize, and reorganize – often centralizing control and introducing more structure. It's a natural reaction. Companies bleeding cash too often turn inward, finding ways to cut costs, including sales and marketing, thus ensuring their demise. Instead, the turnaround stories in business are those who decide to reassess and reinvest in meeting the needs of their target customers. It's true for all of us. Looking deeper within ourselves for how to improve, exerting greater control, rather than directing our attention outward, always drives us deeper in the hole.

In the case of the Church, getting those 9 out of 10 churches back on the road to growth is about reorienting our focus outside of ourselves:

- ...to the Lord – in prayer
- ...to the Community – equipping and challenging members to interact, engage and serve

In other words, the answer lies in:

- More faith to follow the Lord's plan for His church, whatever the outcome
- Less centralized control, not more
- Maximizing manpower sitting idle in the pews, disrupting the comfort and complacency of lay leaders and members
- Diminishing the status of pastors and elevating the standing of all others by comparison

- Measuring growth and impact by how many people our members lead to Christ, even if they never show up at our building
- Making decisions based on the optimal strategies for bringing as many people to Christ as possible, whether or not they currently attend our church

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Understand whether your church is making a significant difference in the eyes of the non-member families and leaders in the city

Which of the following best describes the level of impact your **pastors and staff** currently has in your local area?

#	Local Impact of Pastors and Staff	Choose One
1	Do not demonstrate an interest in playing a role in addressing critical social issues like hunger or homelessness	
2	Church runs small, occasional events but not with the goal or expectation to make a real dent in the spiritual climate, moral compass or social issues	
3	Beginning to take a stand for justice and mercy issues in the local area	
4	Deploying many members and dollars into the community in hopes of demonstrating God’s love powerfully to many across all walks of life	
5	Initiates projects and programs, and enlists partners, to address specific issues of concern to local citizens	

Which of the following best describes the level of impact your **members** currently have in your local area?

#	Level of Impact of Your Church Members	Choose One
1	Very few are engaged meaningfully in addressing local social issues because they aren’t challenged by pastors to do so	
2	10-20% show up for occasional service events out of a sense that they should do something, but lack commitment to causes	
3	Being challenged to be the “hands and feet” of Christ to those around them and are beginning to respond in their words and actions	
4	40%+ actively applying their talents and treasures in the community, seeing their role as evangelists, disciple-makers and servants	
5	Making a measurable difference in the community for Christ through widespread involvement in many local projects and programs	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

<b>1 – Consumer</b>	<b>2 – Caterer</b>	<b>3 – Climber</b>	<b>4 – Challenger</b>	<b>5 – Catalyst</b>
Staff nor members recognize church’s role in addressing issues like hunger or homelessness, in part because it doesn’t believe it can make a difference	Small, occasional events but not with goal or expectation to make a real dent in the spiritual climate, moral compass or social issues of the local area or world	Stands up for justice and mercy issues, even alongside non-Christians and those of other faiths; staff and members sense need to play a role in alleviating social ills	40%+ of members actively deploying talents and treasures in the community; demonstrating God’s love powerfully to many across all walks of life in the city	Level 4 plus initiates projects/programs , and enlists partners, to address specific issues of concern to local citizens; seen as a trusted source of hope and help

**SCORING:**

Assign score of 1 to 5 (from top to bottom) in the options in each of the 2 tables. Add the scores for your 2 responses:

- Level 1 – Total is 0, 1 or 2
- Level 2 – Total is either 3 or 4
- Level 3 – Total is either 5 or 6
- Level 4 – Total is either 7 or 8
- Level 5 – Total is either 9 or 10

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

**The “Go” in the Great Commission**

Seeing members as the Church and the community as the “customer” fundamentally alters the level of discipleship required and its emphasis. There’s a clear, compelling linkage between discipleship and local missions. Why disciple if you’re not going to send them out? Conversely, how can members be effective when sent out (to “care”) if they weren’t prepared well to “share”?

As you’d expect, churches who pull away from discipleship typically pull away from local missions as well. If churches aren’t highly focused on the one, they won’t be focused on the other. Successful companies train sales reps intensively before sending them out into the marketplace. However, most churches today don’t train (disciple) members well because they don’t view...

1. Members as the Church – and therefore don't think they have the right to impose on them
2. Community as the "Customer" – How many pastors interact regularly with local charity leaders, city council members, mayors, executives, etc. in the "marketplace"? How many churches conduct weekly "relational" service activities?

This is one area where the Church's redefinition of its "customer" really stings. Most no longer sense their latitude or urgency to train members to pursue the real "customer". Without adequate discipleship, members lack the inspiration, motivation and preparation to impact their communities for Christ. So as a result, studies show that churches and Christians come across to society as distant and judgmental, not engaged and compassionate. Faith without works is dead. Jesus modeled the power of works in demonstrating faith. Yet society sees a church that talks the talk but doesn't walk the walk. We've largely separated words from actions.

We can't "outpreach" Jesus. So if you can't beat Him, join Him.

### 5 Steps to Maximize Your Church's Impact

How do you build a discipleship program around Jesus' model for evangelism?:

#### 1. **Convince**...members that:

- a) They are the Church – there to serve, not to be served
- b) As the Church, reaching the lost and poor outside the "4 walls" is in their job description, not just the pastor's.

In other words, gear discipleship toward "growing" then "going".

#### 2. **Confess**..."break hearts" for those in need of help and hope

One pastor told me recently, "I'd love to have a church full of Nehemiahs who weep for the lost and poor in our community." That should be our response too, but is it? **You can't study Jesus' life for long without seeing His heart for those hurting and hopeless in the "marketplace"**. However, it's discipleship that convinces us to take on the attributes of Jesus. As we become more like Him, our heart melds with His, and compassion begins to outweigh comfort. Churchgoers will lack the impetus to radically shift their priorities if churches are afraid to challenge and train them to become disciples.

The equation is simple:

More discipleship = More broken hearts = More compassion = More service =  
More opportunities to share Christ = More help and hope for the lost and poor

**3. Coach...** to prepare members to succeed in the “marketplace”

Next, teach them how to take advantage of the many additional chances they'll have to share their faith once they start living out Jesus' model for evangelism through service. Unfortunately, most church members today struggle finding both the courage and the words – they're not sure what to say, nor are they bold enough to speak up when the opportunities present themselves.

If members are treated as “customers”, they've done their part when they've secured the “referral” – inviting someone to church. In business, after a customer makes a referral, it's the company's responsibility to close the sale. Today, churches typically don't push members for much more than invitations. Frankly, most Christians don't feel they have the theological background to do a lot more. If they can just get their friend to come to church, they can let the “professionals” handle it (evangelism, conversion and discipleship) from there.

**4. Connect...**to opportunities for On-the-Job Training (OJT)

People retain 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they see and hear, 70% of what they discuss with others, 80% of what they personally experience and 95% of what they teach others. In other words, the best way to fully absorb what it means to be a disciple is to live it out. As we discussed last week, companies understand that principle well, relying heavily on OJT.

It's rare that a church, at least one not using Meet The Need, puts local needs in front of its members on a real-time, year-round basis. How can churches deploy disciples into ministry if they don't help them see where their skills and passions can be best utilized? In the Confess stage, church leaders should share the stories and realities of how difficult life is for the handicapped, homeless, single moms, and for released prisoners trying to reassimilate – and then make them aware of what they can do to help. We can't let lack of awareness be an excuse for not engaging.

**5. Coalesce...**identify common causes around which to rally the church body

Once a church identifies those pressing social issues, it has to decide (corporately and each as individuals) how it's going to respond. As disciples, signing up for an occasional service event or mailing out a check is not the full extent of their responsibility to act.

Uniting around a common cause (outside of itself) revitalizes the culture of a church. On 9/11, a nation of seemingly (and increasingly) self-absorbed citizens pulled together to serve, love and defend one another. And it was hard to find a seat in church, at least for a couple months until the urgency of that common cause dissipated. Because churches don't

recognize the community as its “customer”, they are often guilty of making themselves (the institution and their members) the cause. Leaders in businesses, politics and all other venues know that an outside cause unites and motivates much better than an internal one. Without a compelling outside cause, unity and discipleship in the church will continue to suffer.

### BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

#### Quick Tips

1. **Implement the Five “C” Model Above** – If you do, will most members accept it, be excited or run to another church?
2. **Expand Your “Footprint”** – Deconstruct the “skyscraper” mentality and “take ground” by decentralizing, entrusting more responsibility to neighborhood groups, local ministry teams, and other structures that fully deploy the leverage sitting idle in your pews across your city.
3. **Become a Factory and Not a Warehouse** – Produce world-changing disciples who no longer view the Great Commission as a choice but as a commandment. Disciples realize that Jesus healed and fed before telling them who He is. They have more encounters with the lost and maximize the impact of every interaction. They don’t stop at inviting people to church, not leaving conversions to the “professionals”.
4. **Rally Around Cause(s)** – Uncover burning issues in the community and make a bigger difference by honing in on a couple of them. Convince everyone of the importance of the cause and get as many involved as possible, year round. Reallocate budget to support these efforts or your congregation and the community won’t believe your church is really committed to the cause(s).
5. **Enlist Partners** – No one church can do it all. Link arms with those already working on the selected cause(s) or think of creative solutions and recruit other organizations to join you in your efforts.
6. **Read the eBook [Transform Your Community Forever in 6 Months](#)** – If you haven’t already
7. **Start Using [Meet The Need](#)** – Free solutions to equip churches to mobilize their members to serve their communities much more effectively and efficiently

#### Your Next Steps

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## PART 3: FRUIT/RESULTS

## MODULE 13: INFLUENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

## TOPIC INSIGHTS

**Caring = Relationship****But Most Churches Don't Act Relationally (as a Collective Body) with the Community**

Relationships with a church have become conditional. They are contingent on you stepping into the church building. Then they'll get to know you. Those on the outside only get a brief glimpse of the church from:

- Occasional outreach or community service events
- Mailers
- Advertisements
- Signs in front of the church building

Each of these is transactional in nature. Few churches have prolonged relational contact with the community in the form of:

- Year-round programs (on and off campus) for non-members
- Ongoing involvement in local ministries and causes
- Regular presence at community meetings or events
- Working closely with non-member families to help them through tough situations

Unfortunately, there are many people who won't dare to darken the door of a church. They've tried church, had a bad experience, and wouldn't step back into one if their lives depended on it (and they may). Transactional interactions aren't going to bring them back. Transactions won't convince them we care.

We've got to go to them. Churches need to build relationships with the community. But most don't, because they no longer see the community as their "customer". Relationship building takes time – and churches assume they can't afford to invest all that time, energy and money in those who don't go to their church. Most don't see the community as the "customer" to reach at all cost. Instead, their attention has turned to members and attenders – attracting, serving and retaining them at all cost. The dramatic shift over the past century in staff time and dollars from external to internal is testament to this new definition of the "customer".

**...and on Top of That, Churches often Draw Individuals Away from Relationships with the Unchurched**

Churches know that getting members to form closer bonds, like joining small groups, will make them more likely to stay. Small groups create a circle of friends who do life together. They're "sticky". But a new circle of church friends and more involvement in church chores and activities can also have a "warehousing effect". That means spending less time with those outside the church – and fewer chances to influence others in the community for Christ. Jesus spent plenty of time with his disciples and in the temple, but knew the sick were the ones who needed a physician.

### ...and Then They Don't Equip and Mobilize Members Adequately to "Be the Church"

In hundreds of churches we've observed a direct correlation between discipleship and local missions. When churches pull away from community engagement they ratchet back discipleship as well. When churches ramp up "care" they realize they'd better prepare folks to "share".

The redefinition of the church's "customer", handing over the lead role in compassion to charities and the government, has meant less need (in churches' minds) for discipleship. Rigorous Bible study and 1-on-1 discipleship have been replaced by small groups, often run by untrained members facilitating as best they can. Most small groups evolve into fellowship gatherings with light teaching and prayer for the issues each person is facing. That's all fantastic and necessary, but it's not discipleship.

In the absence of discipleship, too often churches promote the "lite" version of evangelism – invite people to church and let the "professionals" handle it from there. That convenient, comfortable take on evangelism runs in direct conflict with the "members ARE the church" anthem.

### ...so How Can We Show the Community (our "Customer") We Care?

Imagine being a church that...

- would be sorely missed if it closed its doors, leaving a spiritual, compassion and social gap in the community that could not be easily filled
- is widely recognized as having a sincere, ongoing concern for the hopeless and hurting in the community – not one that just takes care of its own
- is looked to by local leaders for comfort, advice and support whenever trouble hits the community

How many more people would want to be part of a church like that? How much more generous would members be with a church that was having that kind of impact for Christ? How many more folks would care what we know because they know we care?

It’s possible to be that kind of church, but not if you enable a “consumer” mentality – not if you’re hesitant to challenge members to take time to be disciplined, to disciple, and to serve others.

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Determine whether the church has a “voice” in the city

<b>Indicators – “In the city, are your church/pastors/members...”</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
...primarily focused of the affairs and concerns of the church and its members?	
... building disciples that are moving the area’s spiritual needle?	
...connected to a solid network of local leaders (pastors, school superintendents, mayor, city council, local charity directors, etc.)	
...visible at many local community/civic organization meetings?	
...in influential positions in the community (beyond their jobs, i.e. boards of local charities, schools, ministries, foundations, etc.)	
...seen and heard on local topics of interest (e.g. social issues) in the local paper, radio or social media?	
...respected as a source of information, opinions or recommendations by local leaders and citizens related to local issues?	
...early responders when disasters or emergencies strike the city or local area?	
...looked to by leaders in the city for comfort, advice and support whenever trouble hits the community?	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

<b>1 – Consumer</b>	<b>2 – Caterer</b>	<b>3 – Climber</b>	<b>4 – Challenger</b>	<b>5 – Catalyst</b>
Internally focused; more concerned about building an organization than building disciples that move the area’s spiritual needle	No real voice – seen but not heard; Few connections of pastors/staff to other ministry, business or church leaders outside its “4 walls”	Pastors/members are well liked and fairly connected locally but not viewed as an authority or go-to-resource by local leaders	Pastors/members have earned “right” to speak on issues of concern to citizens in the community but could be more actively engaged	Church and pastor is looked to by local leaders for comfort, advice and support whenever trouble hits the community; truly valued in local area

**SCORING:**

- Level 1 – 0 Yes responses
- Level 2 – 2 or 3 Yes responses
- Level 3 – 4 or 5 Yes responses
- Level 4 – 6 or 7 Yes responses
- Level 5 – 8 or 9 Yes responses

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

Let's be realistic – the impediments to putting a church back on the path to revitalization is significant. Members, attenders and even lay leaders may head for the exits when the pastor unveils the new strategy – higher expectations, greater accountability, much more focus on serving others than being served. So maybe it's not in the cards. There's a good chance most churches will continue largely ignoring their intended "customer". Few may ever truly challenge members to BE the church in the community. Churches may not go back to following Jesus' model of nearly always demonstrating His love before telling them who He is.

**Runway is Getting Short**

The view Americans had of churches was much different 20 years ago than it is today, and the drop in opinion seems to be accelerating. The percentage of Americans who attend church regularly is also diminishing. Where will we be 20 years into the future?

Even the divide between the Church and Christian leaders in business, charity work, media and politics is widening. In the past year, I attended two gatherings of Christian conservatives from across the U.S. to strategize about ways to reverse the current course in America away from Biblical values. Nearly identical, broad-consensus conclusions were reached at both events – churches are too busy taking care of their own affairs, whether in survival mode or growth planning, to play a meaningful part in the turnaround of American culture.

How do we restore the lost confidence and improve the poor perception? We can't plant churches fast enough to atone for a model that defines the wrong "customer". It's like trying to sell more widgets when you're losing money on each one – as they say, you can't make it up on volume. If each new church is unwilling to risk upsetting the apple cart – doing all that viewing members as the church and the community as the "customer" entails – then we can't make it up on volume. Each new (internally-focused) church will only perpetuate the prevailing view that the church cares more for itself and for its own than for those outside the "4 walls".

**Building Skyscrapers**

You would think that planting more churches would increase the Church's footprint. However, most churches in America today don't take up much ground. They look and feel more like skyscrapers – skyscrapers:

- are tall, but have a small footprint – they go up, not out
- gather a lot of people together into a small space
- house workers whose goal is to help their organizations grow
- provide a nice office environment, far removed from the dirt and poverty just outside the ground floor
- try to attract tenants and keep them as long as they can
- measure success by the size of the building and number of tenants
- block the view of neighboring buildings and scenery

At the end of the workday, employees go down the elevator, walk briskly past the homeless in the park downtown, get in their cars and head for home.

See any similarities to churches today?...and the skyscraper metaphor doesn't apply only to large churches. No doubt part of a church's motive for separating from the world and becoming a "skyscraper" is to provide a protected environment, apart from the moral decline around it. The church building and relationships with fellow members provide that safe haven. Most churches only go into the world on their own terms, doing controlled, supervised events where members stick close to others from their own church and have limited contact with those they are serving. As Christians, we even formed a subculture where we're only exposed to acceptable versions of everything that's educational or entertaining.

Yet Jesus and His disciples did not shy away from the world, instead going out to serve and evangelize at every opportunity. It was dirty, hard work with danger around every turn. They didn't leave the temple, head home and shut the garage behind them – except of course to pray.

The attractional church model is also shrinking the church's footprint:

- Big churches get bigger while small churches scattered all over town shrink – they simply can't offer competitive children's ministries, facilities and programs
- The pie of regular churchgoers is smaller now, yet those remaining are more and more inclined to go to larger churches, so the trend is vertical and not horizontal
- In other words, more and more people are crowding into a smaller space in a few large churches versus spread out over a larger area in many smaller churches

### Deconstruct the Skyscraper and Tear Down the Warehouse

So the second step to revitalize the church is simply this – TAKE GROUND!

- Decentralize – "A church dispersed is the only church that works"
- Knock down the "4 walls" – They aren't keeping people in; they're keeping people out
- Reallocate – Invest more in "building in" and sending out than in building up

- Unite – Each church acting independently doesn't form a cohesive footprint
- Serve – Get messy and demonstrate compassion to a hurting and lost community
- Fight a ground "war", not an "air" war – Only the church can mobilize massive troops, with love as their chosen weapon not a louder megaphone
- Follow Jesus' model – We can't "outpreach" Him so let's precede words with action

It's interesting that the church persecuted tends to spread out, forming a maze of underground churches, yet the church in freedom and peace tends to build skyscrapers. Other religions also understand the importance of infiltrating all facets of society – getting involved in neighborhoods, local causes, politics, and service. As other religions continue to take ground, Christian churches can't afford to continue pulling inward.

How many more could be reached by the church dispersed? How many would be caught off guard seeing far more love and hope lived out in front of their eyes? How many more would want to check out church for the first time in their lives?

### BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

#### Quick Tips

1. **Network** – As church leaders build relationships with local leaders like school superintendents, mayors, city council members, local charity directors, etc. their influence in the community grows. Pastor presence at community meetings and members serving on boards of local charities, schools, ministries, foundations, etc. also give the church a voice and access to share the gospel with non-Christians.
2. **Demonstrate a Willingness to Help** – When approaching other leaders, don't tell them what your church can do but ask how you can help. Follow up with action, not more meetings. Do homework and become knowledgeable about issues of concern to the community.
3. **Talk about Issues, Not the Church** – Become a trusted source of advice, comfort and assistance for local leaders and citizens regarding key cause(s). Be a voice for justice and mercy, not just for your church.
4. **Be an Early Responder** – Show up when disasters or emergencies strike the city or local area. Be responsive and reliable other leaders call for help or counsel. Ensure many members are trained to be early responders as those issues provide great opportunities to share Christ.

#### Your Next Steps

Fill in the blanks:

- 1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**PART 3: FRUIT/RESULTS****MODULE 14: PERCEPTION BY THE COMMUNITY****TOPIC INSIGHTS****We've Established That...**

- A church is not its staff and buildings – that's how we define companies, not houses of worship
- Instead, a church is the body of believers
- Jesus, his disciples and the early Church proved by their example that the community was meant to be where the Church should spend the bulk of its time and money – i.e. its "customer"
- If a church's mindset is to attract and retain, to cater rather than challenge, it is treating members/attenders as "customers" – but the body cannot be both the Church and its "customer"

**Churches Today Invest Very Little in their Actual "Customers"**

The church was the food bank and homeless shelter for 1900 years. Churches started the hospitals and schools. They were the cultural, social, spiritual, compassionate "center of town". Churches were integral and integrated, actively engaging and serving the community. Few doubted that the Church cared. Few questioned the Church's right to speak up on issues of importance to the community or to society in general – in their eyes, it had earned the right to do so.

Surveys today show that non-Christians believe churches are more about judgment than justice, condemnation than compassion, self-righteousness than selflessness, and hypocrisy than humility. What do you think churches should do to change that perception? Is it possible that the community realizes it should be the church's "customer", getting much more attention, yet is left to wonder why churches won't take more time to build relationships with them?

**Investing Time**

Today, churches spend much less time and energy on community engagement and service. Pastors and staff are consumed with member/attender-related activities, such as service prep and programs for youth, singles, and small groups. How many staff meeting agendas include issues of concern to the community? How many churches have even one person assigned specifically to engaging and serving the church's true "customer"? Over the past few decades, churches have even throttled back on equipping and pushing members to be the hands and feet of Christ to the community.

Churches are no longer on the front lines in addressing the social issues in our communities. Rather than committing substantial time and resources to demonstrating God's love to those hurting and lost around us – our intended “customer” – we:

- Market to them, hoping they show up next Sunday
- Organize occasional service events which do little if anything to resolve social issues
- Fail to give the impression we truly care about what's going on in the world around us
- Perpetuate the perception that we're more concerned with taking care of our own
- Rarely get our hands dirty in relational, year-round service to the community

For example, churches are visible in the community over the holiday season, but most retrench back into their “4 walls” in January and February; but those same people the church served are still hungry and homeless when the holidays are over. From the community's vantage point, the church disappeared, maybe still celebrating how generous it was over the holidays.

In those respects, transactional, infrequent interactions with the community do more harm than good. Wearing church t-shirts and passing our water bottles with the name of the church on them only add fuel to the fire. Society wonders – was the event about “checking the box”, making members feel better for having done something, was it advertising, or was it a sincere loving concern for the welfare of the community?

### **Investing Money**

Some estimate that only 2.5% of the average church's budget finds its way back into the community. The rest goes back to provide services and programs for those who donated the funds. When the church was the food bank and homeless shelter, the percentage of dollars that was plowed back into the community was far greater – some estimate 40%+. Members tithed knowing much of it would be used to bring more help and hope to their city – alongside covering staff salaries and buildings.

History and case studies show that if you want more generous members, you should become a more generous church. How many churches have ever thought about the church itself being generous? They want members to be generous in giving to the church; but churches should first model the behavior they want members to imitate.

Member giving behavior largely reflects the Church's giving behavior. It's not coincidence that the percentage the average church member in America gives is nearly the same as the percentage the average church commits to the community. We'll see more giving to churches, and more people attending churches, when churches reinvest more generously in their true “customers”.

Most churches also reflect members in their spending habits. Nearly every cent in a church's budget is spoken for by salaries, mortgage, facilities, operations, marketing, and other expenses. These costs are called “fixed” costs for a reason. Once you're in, it's hard to get

out. So churches have little left over for its “customer” – the community it’s there to reach. Similarly, the pay checks of most church members are already spent by the time they hit their bank accounts. Although it’s not Biblical, churches often only get a portion of any remaining pennies after all those expenses are covered.

**...As a Result**

The implications of the Church’s misdefinition of its “customer” and resulting de-emphasis on the community are being felt today in terms nearly every significant measure of success – such as growth, impact, influence and perception.

Even many growing churches who think they’re succeeding are not “healthy”. Growth does not always imply health. Size does not always equate to success. Church goers today want excellent programs, facilities, children’s services – larger churches can offer much more on each of those fronts than smaller churches. However, church health is more about effectiveness in making and sending disciples than growth. When Jesus’ following would peak, He’d often preach it down with a challenging message until only a few remained.

Ask yourself whether your church is willing to risk challenging members to be the hands and feet of Christ in the community – the Church’s true “customer” – to the point where many would consider leaving?

What would your church leaders and members do differently and how would your community view your church differently if you all fully committed to the philosophy that members ARE the Church and the hopeless and lost in the community are their “customer”?

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: See how your church is viewed by leaders and citizens in your area

Which of the following best describes the perception non-attenders have of your church brand?

	Choose One
Those who’ve heard of it generally see it as taking care of its own	
Feel the church is much more likely to speak out on moral issues than address any pressing social issues	
Surprised to see the church recently begin to get involved in local partnerships in an effort to improve the lives of local citizens	
Recognized by most as having a sincere, ongoing concern for the welfare of people in the community	
If no longer in that community it would be sorely missed, leaving a spiritual,	

compassion and social gap that could not be easily filled	
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Which of the following best describes the perception **community leaders** have of your church?

	Choose One
Church and/or pastor have little visibility or are not well thought of	
If pastors expressed an interest in getting involved, community leaders would be skeptical of their motives	
Have seen church beginning to build relationships with other leaders, engendering some measure of confidence and trust in its intentions	
Not about building an institution but is a partner with others in building a better community	
An integral part of the spiritual, cultural and charitable fabric of the city	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
Church and/or pastor have little visibility or are not well thought of; those who’ve heard of it generally see it as taking care of its own	Starting to get involved in some local ministry work and in an effort to show that the church/Christianity is about love, not judgment	Building relationships and partnerships in the city; transitioning community service from transactional to relational in nature	Not seen as being about serving members but widely recognized as having a sincere, ongoing concern for people in the community	If no longer in that community would be sorely missed, leaving a spiritual, compassion and social gap that could not be easily filled

**SCORING:**

Assign score of 1 to 5 (from top to bottom) in the options in each of the 2 tables. Add the scores for your 2 responses across those 2 tables:

- Level 1 – Total is 0, 1 or 2
- Level 2 – Total is either 3 or 4
- Level 3 – Total is either 5 or 6
- Level 4 – Total is either 7 or 8
- Level 5 – Total is either 9 or 10

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

A ministry working with troubled youth couldn’t find any churches to provide mentors willing to invest the long, painstaking hours required to lead them into a relationship with the Lord and a better way of life. Gradually, as the ministry sought Christian mentors through all available

avenues, a few stepped up. When prodding to learn what each of these mentors had in common, it turned out they had all been disciplined by another individual. Someone had invested in them the same way they were now pouring into someone else.

Not enough churches are challenging members to step out of their comfort zones and do the hard work of building intentional relationships and loving people to Christ over the longer term. Instead, churches fear pushing churchgoers too hard, lest they head to a church down the road still catering to the congregation, promising “cheap grace” and reducing local missions to a couple quick compassion events.

### What’s Wrong with Events?

The church was the food bank and homeless shelter for 1900 years. It was engaged year round, helping deal with pressing social issues. Churchgoers were expected – not only by the Lord but by church leaders and the community – to be salt and light to those around them between Sundays, following Jesus’ lead, acting as both servant and evangelist continually.

Yet the priorities of church leaders and members have shifted. Assistance programs are handled by the government and local charities. Only a small fraction of church members regularly serve outside the “4 walls”, while the rest occasionally write a check or sign up for an event. Leaders have gotten busy running the church and members are busy with work, paying bills and raising families. Nearly all churches today merely “dabble” in compassion in the community, running infrequent events that unfortunately...

- Are transactional, not relational
- Don’t address the real, ongoing issues in the lives of the lost
- Fail to make meaningful or lasting change, providing a handout rather than a hand up
- Fuel negative perception by making society question whether the event was simply promotion, or meant to make members feel good for having done something (versus truly caring about others)
- Give the impression to the community that members are back at church patting themselves on the back for the good they did over the holidays when those in need are still hungry and hurting in January and February
- Enable the church to “check the box”, giving pastors, staff and members a false sense of accomplishment

Yet church is the only source of enduring help and hope – found in Christ alone. Government and secular charities can’t do that. And church is the best place for seekers to land, to fellowship with other believers and grow in Christ. Churches miss so many opportunities to reach people by abdicating relational compassion to other organizations and relying on transactional events. Jesus’ model was to heal and feed and then say who He was, knowing the words weren’t enough. Why do the vast majority of churches today try to “outreach” Jesus?

### So Why Do Churches Do Events?

With all that downside, why would churches use events as the primary vehicle for local missions? As with all other topics we've addressed in this workbook, the answer lies in the Church's gradual redefinition of its "customer":

- Reliance on events came with the territory as churches shifted from viewing the community to seeing members as their "customers". In other words, long-term relational engagement is much better for the community, but events are much better for institution-building and for catering to members:
  - As we discussed in our opening story, tasks like mentoring troubled youth are hard
  - Churches are cautious about challenging members to do the hard stuff
  - Getting members to do hard stuff requires discipleship, which is hard too
  - Because most churches don't challenge members to develop the right mindset about their role as the embodiment of church between Sundays, few go out of their way to take on the tough tasks
- So churches give members the "easy stuff" that keeps them coming back like:
  - a food drop-off in the church foyer
  - on campus meal packing
  - taking up an offering
  - a quick 3 hour event run by church staff
- Events have the side benefit in the eyes of church leaders of building the "brand" by making a big splash (whereas long term engagement is quiet and behind the scenes)
- Ironically, event management is harder on church staff but since most pastors and staff act as if they are the "church" and members are "customers", they're willing to endure that extra work rather than risk losing members by asking too much of them

### What Should Churches Be Doing Instead?

The greatest impact on the lives of individuals, the welfare of the community, the advancement of the Kingdom and the perception of churches comes from service that is highly:

- Compassionate – e.g. shut-in and hospital visitation (for non-members)
- Enduring – e.g. school partnerships
- Relational – e.g. tutoring
- Loving – e.g. prison ministry
- Challenging – e.g. foster care
- Sacrificial – e.g. inner city
- Interactive – e.g. neighborhood outreach by small groups
- Invitational – e.g. open the church for weekly career coaching, marriage counseling, recovery ministry, health/wellness classes, etc.

What other ministries have you seen churches run which fit those criteria and are making a huge difference in a community, shifting how society feels about churches?

**BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP**

**Quick Tips**

Take the following steps if the general perception among local “unchurched” and community leaders is that your church:

1. **Only Takes Care of Its Own** – No amount of saying you care will outdo actually showing you caring. Actions speak louder than words. Get members involved in serving others, not just through events but year round. Do so with no agenda except to love unconditionally.
2. **Is Judgmental** – Earn the right to speak out on issues (e.g. moral) by spending a commensurate amount of time demonstrating love and compassion. A louder megaphone won’t bring your city around to your beliefs. In the culture war, fight a ground war, not an air war. As you do your part to reverse the poor perception of churches and Christians, remember that renewing trust in your intentions will take time.
3. **Doesn’t Play Well with Others** – Reach out to secular leaders, even those who may not agree philosophically with you, showing you have an interest in improving the lives of local citizens (regardless of whether your church stands to benefit or get any credit).
4. **Operates Like a Business, Concerned with Filling the Pews and Coffers** – Don’t give anyone occasion to believe that your church is about building an institution, but instead give them good reason to believe you’re interested in building and sending out caring, loving disciples – year-round.

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**PART 3: FRUIT/RESULTS****MODULE 15: SUCCESS METRICS****TOPIC INSIGHTS**

Earlier, we described a disturbing phenomenon – how more churchgoers in America today demand churches live up to their expectations, causing fewer churches to ask churchgoers to live up to the Lord’s expectations of them.

**Bad Metrics Perpetuate the Church’s Decline**

Strategies align with vision. Metrics align with strategy. Incenting behaviors consistent with strategy is the only way to ultimately achieve vision. Bad metrics are symptomatic of bad strategy. Bad strategy in the church today stems from misdefinition of its intended, Biblical “customer”. Define the “customer” correctly and you’ll get the metrics right. Try to grow membership, attendance and giving and you’ll be inclined to cater rather than challenge, treating members as “customers”. Measure disciple-building, community impact and engagement in ministry and you’ll become more bold in calling members to BE the church to the real “customer” – the world around them.

The latter metrics hold church members to a simple yet critical standard for Christian life – the Great Commission. They reflect Jesus’ model for evangelism – demonstrating his love first, then telling them who He is. Churches who count heads and dollars will hesitate to challenge members to live up to those essential, Biblical expectations. What the Lord asks of His church requires a level of commitment and life change most members don’t think they signed up for when they joined. For church leaders, it also requires a leap of faith. Redefining the “customer”, raising expectations of members, and abandoning long-held, institution-building metrics – regardless of the outcome – isn’t easy, but it’s the right thing to do.

Churches who won’t take that risk enable members to remain “casual” Christians, regular attenders who never become disciples – or produce other disciples. Those “adolescents” rarely arrive at the level of spiritual maturity where love and compassion drives them out of their armchairs to serve and witness to the hurting and lost around them. They show up and give, but don’t look a whole lot like Jesus. They drive more away from church than they bring to it.

**Should Churches Be Measuring Anything?**

Hear me right. I’m not advocating more metrics for churches – just different ones. Frankly, having no measures would be better than using the current ones. Any metrics that incent church leaders to do the following should be scrapped:

- Hang on to members and givers by catering to their needs

- Enable members to “consume” church by asking little of them
- Stand by as members/attenders fail to live out the Great Commission
- Avoid challenging them to serve regularly in ministry outside the church
- Not encourage members regularly to give to causes outside the church

Aren't those exactly what tracking membership, attendance and giving leads pastors to do?

We hear more and more that churches are being run like businesses. The wrong definition of the “customer” is the reason why. Attract people, meet their needs, exceed their expectations and the church will grow and revenues will increase. Churches who subscribe to that school of thought measure success along business lines – member satisfaction, loyalty, engagement and giving. Those metrics work for companies because their customers are external, but they're inappropriate for churches because members are “insiders”, not customers. No wonder churchgoers “shop” today.

### If You're Going to Track Something, Track This

What if churches turned the tables on church “shoppers”? What types of expectations or measures would challenge members to become more devoted followers of Jesus Christ? What metrics would get them to pursue the church's real “customer” – the lost in the community – and thereby grow their church?

Counting heads and dollars obviously isn't working – it's not convincing churchgoers to attend and give more – 93% of churches in America aren't growing. The irony is more people would show up and be more generous if the churches would redefine its “customer”, which calls for a new set of performance metrics. Seeing the lost outside the “4 walls” as the prospective “customer” entails gauging how effective “insiders” are in pursuing “outsiders” after they leave the building on Sunday. All successful organizations trade in internally-focused objectives that cause “insiders” to look out for their own interests for customer-oriented measures that coalesce everyone around assessing and meeting the customer's needs.

The following new measures would dramatically change how churches make every decision and steer the congregation's actions and behaviors in the right direction. Decisions and actions would be based on the optimal strategies for bringing as many people to Christ as possible, whether or not they currently attend the church.

### Church Health

If the church IS the membership yet members are “consumers” of the church – how can the church be healthy? Members can't be both the church and the “customer”. The health of any organization depends on proper understanding of respective roles and incentives to perform each well.

Unfortunately modern American church growth strategies that appeal to “consumers” can grow a church yet make it unhealthy and ineffective at the same time. Growth does not always imply health.

**Health can be measured by a Balanced Scorecard for churches. In business, a Balanced Scorecard consists of 4 dimensions, each of which has an application for churches:**

### 1. “Learning” – i.e. Discipleship

Don’t stop at tracking professions and baptisms. Determine whether those baby Christians become mature Christians:

- # & % of Members Living out the Great Commission (i.e. # of Disciples Made)
- # & % of Congregation Engaged in 1-on-1 or in Triad Discipleship within the Church
- # of People Outside the Church Being Discipled by our Members

### 2. “Processes” – i.e. Empowerment

Process improvement shouldn’t be geared around providing an exciting or engaging experience for visitors and attenders. Those position congregations as “customers” and put undue emphasis on institution-building. Instead processes should be built around strategies to empower and equip churchgoers, leveraging them to bring as many “outsiders” to Christ as possible (not to simply invite people to church). Metrics aligned with this decentralized view include:

- # of Lay Leaders Trained to Run Neighborhood Groups and Local Missions Teams
- # of Local Ministries Launched by Church Leadership and Members
- # of Unchurched Who Have Joined a Neighborhood/Small Group
- # of Members Deployed into Ministry Leadership Positions

### 3. “Customer” – i.e. Community Impact

Church size and growth are not definitive or accurate proxies for impact. Better measures of a church’s impact and influence on the world around it relate to the church’s reach, footprint, and progress in addressing pressing issues in the community (your real “customer”) regardless of whether those impacted show up at your church:

- # of Lives Touched and Led to Christ by Members Living out Jesus’ Model for Evangelism (loving and serving, then telling them who He is)
- # & % of Congregation Actively Engaged in Ministry Outside the Church
- # of Families Helped During Church-Sponsored Service Events/Activities
- Cause-Related Metrics (e.g. Decrease in # of Local Homeless, Orphans and Shut-ins, # of Single Moms Assisted, # of Prisoners Reformed, # of People in Recovery Getting Back on Track)

**4. “Financial” – i.e. Generosity**

Measure your generosity as a church, not member generosity with the church:

- % of Church Budget Allocated to Internal and External Local Missions Efforts
- \$s Allocated by the Church to Each Selected Local “Cause”
- Return on those Investments (ROI) – e.g. making neighborhoods safer, stabilizing families, and improving school systems
- \$s Given by Members to Causes and Ministries Outside the Church

Do church leaders have the right to expect anything of members? In other words, is measuring something better than nothing? If so, are our proposed Balanced Scorecard metrics good measures for aligning a church with the redefinition of its “customer”?

**CURRENT STATE**

**Self Assessment**

Purpose: Use what the church measures to gauge its commitment to seeing members as the church and the lost as the “customer”

	Choose One
Primarily tracking measures like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Growth</li> <li>• Giving</li> <li>• Faith Professions</li> <li>• Baptisms</li> </ul>	
Not as concerned with tracking those internal metrics; but there is some disagreement among churches leaders on the importance of tracking those numbers	
Beginning to track external metrics focused on preparing and deploying members into effective ministry like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #/% Disciplined</li> <li>• # Disciplining Others Inside and Outside the Church</li> <li>• # Unchurched New Attendees</li> <li>• # Engaged in Serving (in/out)</li> <li>• # Community/International Partnerships</li> <li>• # of Unchurched Who Have Joined a Neighborhood/Small Group</li> <li>• # Gospel Presentations by Members</li> </ul>	
Also trying to measure impact via hard-to-quantify Key Indicators like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in # of Local Homeless, Orphans and Shut-ins</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving the local spiritual needle</li> <li>• # of Members Actively Engaged in Ministry Outside the Church</li> <li>• # of Lives Touched During Church-Sponsored Service Events</li> <li>• \$s Given by Members to Causes and Ministries Outside the Church</li> </ul>	
Actively monitoring Church “Health” not based on numbers, but on love for one another, prayer, engagement, impact, influence and by whether it’s known as caring across the city	

**Scoring on Proficiency Model**

1 – Consumer	2 – Caterer	3 – Climber	4 – Challenger	5 – Catalyst
Only actively tracking internal “customer-centric” metrics, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance</li> <li>▪ Growth</li> <li>▪ Retention</li> <li>▪ Giving per member</li> <li>▪ Faith Professions</li> </ul>	Not as concerned with #s; realizing that too much focus on internal metrics is not Biblical or healthy; but still some dissention among leaders on importance of tracking those #s	Beginning to track external metrics like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ #/% Discipled</li> <li>▪ # Discipling</li> <li>▪ # Unchurched New Attendees</li> <li>▪ # Engaged in Serving (in/out)</li> <li>▪ # of Service Partnerships</li> </ul>	Also trying to measure impact via hard-to-quantify Key Indicators like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Progress on causes (hunger and the homeless)</li> <li>▪ Moving the local spiritual needle</li> </ul>	Actively monitors Church “Health” not based on numbers, but on love for one another, prayer, engagement, impact, influence and by whether it’s known as caring across the city

**SCORING:**

- Level 1 – Checked box #1
- Level 2 – Checked box #2
- Level 3 – Checked box #3
- Level 4 – Checked box #4
- Level 5 – Checked box #5

**FUTURE STATE VISION**

A large church in California decided it was time to stop relying on the county to represent the “front line” of compassion – while churches stood idly by. Government can’t deliver hope – only help. The church approached county leadership, offering to be an outpost for job training and placement services. Not only did the county accept their offer, the church experienced a higher success rate than the agency was having!

Stepping forward to do something to help struggling families is commendable. Delivering in such a way that those within ear-shot sit up and take notice changes lives – and transforms communities.

Churches shouldn't simply provide assistance and be satisfied with any level of achievement. Businesses seek to maximize customer satisfaction and loyalty because that drives profits. Churches should seek to maximize their effectiveness in making a difference in the lives of its "customers" – the lost in the community – because that's what Jesus did.

### What are Outcomes Versus Outputs?

Outputs are what an organization does. In business, outputs may be making a sales call or responding to a customer complaint. In local missions, outputs may be serving a meal or handing out a toy. Missions directors prepare ministry reports, primarily holding them accountable for outputs, judging their productivity based on those numbers.

Churches who look through the lens of how much it does, and not the long-term impact of what it does, are giving members an easy out – treating members as "customers". In other words, it's much more difficult to persist in doing good to the point of changing lives than to "check the box", satisfied with having done something good. However, as we discussed last week, churches are hesitant to challenge members to do the "hard stuff" because there are always churches down the road willing to pat members on the back for merely doing the "easy stuff".

Outputs are about **US** – the church.

On the other hand, outcomes are what happens as a result of what we do. Outcomes don't focus on how much activity but how much impact. For churches, community engagement should be about seeing lives changed. Yet how do we know if lives changed if we don't maintain long-term relationships?

Only churches who see the community as the "customer" will be so genuinely concerned with outcomes that it will invest materially and spiritually in the lives of those who don't (and may never) attend their church. Only churches who see members as the church personified will adequately disciple them to endure in serving others over the long haul, and taking personal responsibility for making disciples – not stopping at extending invitations to church next Sunday.

Outcomes are about **THEM** – those hurting and hopeless.

### Is Your Church about Outputs?

1. **What do you measure?** – It's much more difficult to track qualitative outcomes than quantitative outputs. Measuring the true effectiveness of a compassion ministry requires understanding where people are now – are they better off today, with food on the table in Christ in their hearts? If "how many..." is the first question asked, then chances are your local missions activities are more about outputs than outcomes.

2. **If you do events, how do you follow up?** – When the dust settles, is the church catching its collective breath, celebrating the successful event, or racing to follow up with all those it encountered? When a conference ends, businesses immediately start chasing down every person they met and entering every business card in their database. Yet churches run events and crusades come through town, leaving behind a trail of new seekers or believers with little to no further contact. Even those making professions of faith are largely left to their own devices unless they decide to show up at a church. It's staggering to see the statistics of how few people who accept Christ at concerts or revivals are still walking with the Lord, living out their faith, just a few years later. Event leaders are quick to cite attendance and professions, but not how many actually got plugged into a local church.
  
3. **How does your church invest its time in members?** – Maybe event leaders were counting on whoever invited each person to answer their questions and disciple them. However, as we've discussed sermons and small groups haven't proved adequate for building disciples – or disciple makers. Most churchgoers don't view themselves as the embodiment of church, instead seeing their task as inviting people to church, leaving the rest to pastors and staff. However, someone who comes to faith after hearing the gospel at a Christian event (because the gospel is powerful) may have preconceived notions and wariness about stepping into church (because in their minds churches haven't reflected that gospel well). We have to go to them, meeting them where they are – not wait for them to come to us.
  
4. **Do you have long term service programs?** – Are your church's local missions activities designed to be transactional or relational? Are there a few sporadic campaigns or sustained compassion initiatives? Has your church adopted any causes that it feels strongly about addressing? If so, is a significant percentage of the congregation involved? All of this to say, how sincere is the church's concern with the welfare of its intended "customer"?

### How Can Your Church Become about Outcomes?

Success in any venture hinges on following a proven process for generating desired outcomes. There is no greater venture for a church than following Jesus' model of demonstrating His love and sharing His message, bringing help and hope to a world desperately in need of both. If more churches evaluated the success of their local missions work based on the actual difference made over the long term (outcomes) versus what they did (outputs), we would see a reversal of the Church's declining growth, impact, influence and perception. Let's look at the outcome-driven process utilized by successful organizations of any kind:

1. **Focus** – on target "customers" (i.e. the lost in the community) and their felt needs. No venture is successful if it pursues the wrong "customer", or ignores their most pressing issues. Determine where your church can make the biggest difference in your

community for Christ. For more insights on this step, read our eBook [Transform Your Community Forever in 6 Months](#).

2. **Align** – leaders within the church around the need to shift greater focus outward despite certain resistance by “institution builders”
3. **Set Goals** – or expectations for desired outcomes as more members engage in cause(s) and live out the Great Commission
4. **Rally** – the entire congregation around the need to apply their skills and interests in some way toward the critical cause and goal of being a light to an ever darkening world
5. **Train** – members to each do their parts through discipleship emphasizing that they should be the living, breathing church to those around them between Sundays
6. **Organize** – the troops, putting staff and lay leaders in positions of authority and holding them accountable for outcomes, not outputs
7. **Challenge** – even infrequent attenders and visitors to get involved. Many are millennials who left church because churches didn’t share their concern for justice and compassion. Life transformation occurs as seekers turn their attention to the needs of others and witness God’s love in action.
8. **Invest** – dollars strategically in creating relational outcomes rather than tactically in transactional outputs
9. **Track** – whether the church is actually making a dent, in alleviating homelessness, hunger, illiteracy, etc. and in bringing the community to Christ
10. **Maintain** – the emphasis on outcomes, evaluating and repeating steps 1 through 9 as necessary

Churches take internal aspects of their ministry that seriously – following that entire process – because most treat those in attendance as “customers”. Have you seen churches take their engagement with the community – their intended “customer” – just as seriously?

We have to ask again, if your church closed its doors tomorrow, would it be missed badly by your community?

### BRIDGING THE CURRENT STATE / FUTURE STATE GAP

#### Quick Tips

1. **Redefine Your “Customer”** – A wrong definition of your “customer” leads to bad metrics. Define the “customer” correctly and you’ll get the metrics right. What a church tracks and monitors will help reorient expectations of “shoppers”, encouraging them to BE the church to those around them.
2. **Discard “Customer” Metrics** – Try to grow membership, attendance and giving and you’ll be inclined to cater rather than challenge, treating members as “customers”. Instead, focus on metrics that coalesce everyone around reaching the real “customer” of your church – the community where your church is planted
3. **Monitor the Health of Your Church Instead** – As described earlier in this chapter, Church Health can be measured by a Balanced Scorecard for churches consisting of 4 dimensions around Discipleship, Empowerment, Community Impact and Generosity.

- 4. **Find Out Whether You're Really Making a Difference** – To measure this, consider surveying community leaders and citizens, seeing if they would miss your church if it was no longer there.

**Your Next Steps**

Fill in the blanks:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Success in revitalizing and growing a healthier church hinges on:

- **Ongoing Sponsorship** – Building initial excitement about becoming a church where the members truly are the personification of “church” and the helpless and hopeless in the community is treated and the “customer” will not lead to permanent change. The senior pastor in particular must continually drive home the new definition of the “customer”.
- **Monitoring Buy-in** – Leaders must bake the concept that members ARE the church and the lost is the “customer” into the fabric of the church culture, including teaching through messages and small groups as well as by example by modeling compassionate service to the community
- **Taking Action** – Strategic plans that sit on the desk of the senior pastor won’t transform a church. Planning has to transition into action, with responsibilities assigned to key leaders and holding them accountable for carrying out those actions
- **Continuous Learning** – Leaders must track results and debrief to refine the strategy, shifting metrics from those that emphasize size and giving to measures of health like life change and community impact
- **Expectations Management** – Calling members to act as the church year-round entails raising your expectations of them. Some may balk at being asked to do more than serving on the weekends because they have busy schedules and are ready to make the commitment required of disciples. However, making disciples is their responsibility as Christians and yours as a church.
- **Member Engagement** – There is tremendous untapped leverage in church pews across America, capable of becoming a powerful service and evangelistic force for Jesus. Mobilizing them is the key to increasing your church’s growth, impact, influence, and perception
- **Rallying around Common Causes** – Groups and individuals remain fragmented and unmotivated without a common cause to unite and excite them. Seeking and saving the lost around them should be the cause of any church, but specific causes like ending hunger and mentoring troubled youth will make a community understand that your church cares.
- **Partnerships** – Join the Lord where He’s already moving and make a much bigger dent in local social issues but working together with secular and Christian organizations. Show the community that you’re not interested in taking credit but in making a difference.
- **Following Up** – It’s tempting to do good and move on, yet one time interactions and unfulfilled promises will do more harm than good. Churches and churchgoers must form relationships to lead people to Jesus. That means segueing events into sustained outreach by following up with those served and running ongoing local mission programs.
- **Patience** – None of these changes will happen overnight but they are all necessary to revitalize your church and transform your community. The race is a marathon not a sprint so do not try to implement all of this immediately, but slowly build momentum by working first on hearts and minds, then launching initiatives to mobilize members into action.
- **Resolve** – There will certainly be resistance from leaders and members alike as well as a tendency to slip back into old ways of doing things to avoid losing key members. However, redefining the churches “customer” is the right and best path for each and every church.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Meet The Need providing a number of tools to help churches achieve the objectives outlined in this workbook:

- **Blog** (<http://blog.meettheneed.org/>) – Weekly postings about topics related to this workbook with live examples and case studies of churches who have implemented these concepts successfully
- eBooks:
  - 1) **The 5 Steps to Revitalize Your Church:**  
<http://blog.meettheneed.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/5-Steps-to-Revitalize-Your-Church.pdf>
  - 2) **Transform Your Community Forever in 6 Months:**  
<http://blog.meettheneed.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Transform-Your-Community-Forever-in-6-Months.pdf>
- **Online Assessment** (<http://meettheneed.org/organizations/assessment/>) – Quick online review of where your church stands today in terms of each module in this workbook and recommendations for how to move to higher levels of proficiency in each
- **Personalized Consulting** – Contact Jim Morgan directly at (813) 230-0189 or [jmorgan@meettheneed.org](mailto:jmorgan@meettheneed.org) to ask him to work personally with you to determine how best to put these ideas in place at your church
- **Coaching Webinars** – A small number of pastors gather monthly for presentations, Q&A sessions, group discussions and new relationships to share ideas and advice as they each work through these changes
- **Meet The Need** – A complete suite of tools that will alleviate the bottlenecks that prevent so many churches today from engaging and mobilizing their congregations effectively in the community. If the information listed above encourages your church to get more members involved in praying, caring and sharing then our software will enable you do much more with much less effort. As a Christ-centered ministry, Meet The Need offers all of its software to your church at no charge.

## ABOUT US

### About Meet The Need

Meet The Need ([www.meettheneed.org](http://www.meettheneed.org)) is the first organization to provide a comprehensive solution to a critical issue - the enormous communication gap in cities between those in need and those who can help. Because it is not commercially viable to develop technologies to connect cities to serve those in need, no for-profit software vendors have brought a solution to that fundamental problem. However, Meet The Need is a non-profit, ministry whose mission is to unite and mobilize the body of Christ to bring far more help and hope to those in need.

Charities have tried to share needs with local churches and businesses via email, phone calls and newsletters for far too long. And churches can't possibly communicate those needs and engage members to meet them via the pulpit and bulletin. Some have tried to solve these "bottleneck" problems through clearinghouses, but those haven't worked. Driving all traffic to one central site creates more work and gives too little control to each organization. Instead, Meet The Need's approach is to empower charities, churches and businesses with ALL of the state-of-the-art platforms they will EVER need to manage and communicate ALL of their charitable activities.

- Running and Broadcasting Events
- Managing and Recruiting Volunteers
- Connecting with Partner Organizations
- Accepting and Tracking In-Kind Donations
- Sharing Family Needs and Tracking Services Provided
- Running Collaborate Charity Drives

These systems are all private-labeled, access-controlled, and FREE. Despite over 10 years and millions developing them, Meet The Need believes the only way to ensure all organizations in a city say "yes" and wind up connected on the same underlying platform is to give away valuable, best-practice tools that churches and charities could not afford to buy or build themselves.

Since Meet The Need's national launch in 2012, the response has been truly amazing. Meet The Need now works with many of the largest churches and charities in the nation. In addition, the longstanding need Meet The Need filled for a solution to finally bring modern tools to local missions has also garnered attention from major players working on key social issues such as hunger relief, homelessness and church/school partnerships. Meet The Need has partnered with those organizations to design and build leading technology systems to alleviate the disconnects that were preventing collaboration among partners in those respective spaces.

To learn more, watch this brief overview [video](https://vimeo.com/28070912) - <https://vimeo.com/28070912>.

[www.meettheneed.org](http://www.meettheneed.org)

Questions? – [info@meettheneed.org](mailto:info@meettheneed.org)

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## ABOUT US

### About Jim Morgan

For years I was on the “fast track” – management consulting for Fortune 500 companies, investment banking on Wall Street, legislative aid on Capitol Hill, and MBA from the nation’s top business school. But all along I knew something was off. As a Christian, I wasn’t doing anything to serve God and others. My prayers for a mission and purpose grew more and more frequent.

Then, in 2000, it came – and be careful what you pray for. The Lord showed me that the same solutions I was bringing to large corporations were badly needed by the body of Christ. There were significant communication gaps in cities across the country between those in need and those who could help. So our team invested over a decade and millions designing and building Meet The Need, the first comprehensive solution brought from the business world to local missions – empowering churches to reach out to families desperately in need of help and hope.

Throughout that process, I wondered why the Church in America seemed to be struggling – in growth, impact and perception. Being a consultant, I couldn’t help but look closer – and what I discovered was shocking. The modern American church model doesn’t align with the most fundamental principle of successful organizations – nor Biblical mandates. There is a flawed assumption underlying nearly every decision churches make today and we believe it’s the root cause for the Church’s decline.

That discovery prompted the blog, eBooks, assessments, workbook and consulting that Meet The Need now offers. Technology does not change hearts and minds, so we have developed materials and best practices to encourage churches to do more to engage the lost in their communities. Now Meet The Need has a complete set of solutions, strategic roadmaps as well as state-of-the-art software, to revitalize and mobilize churches to impact their communities for Christ.

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