

## *MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH*

### **BUILDING ON STRENGTHS.....VS.....REPAIRING WEAKNESSES**

#### **FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPT**

1. GOING INWARD: into a deeper understanding of faith and relationship to God and Holy community
2. FORMING COMMUNITY: Covenanting in genuine and authentic community that nurtures and provokes each other to understanding, love and service.
3. GOING OUTWARD: to tell God's story and care/advocate for the least and lost

#### **FROM "EVERYTHING MUST CHANGE" BY BRIAN MCLAREN**

1. Church asks and understands: What are the needs, burdens, concerns, longings fears of the people in the church's "neighborhood"?
2. Church discerns and acts on: "How are we uniquely called to respond to those needs?"

#### **CLASSIC UNDERSTANDING:**

1. Liturgia: Meaningful worship...joyful and an experience of God
2. Kerygma: Proclamation: Faith formation building knowledge and relationship with God
3. Koinonia: Community: A caring and safe place to belong
4. Diakonia: Service: Where one can make a difference in the world.

#### **FIVE PRACTICES OF FRUITFUL CONGREGATIONS** (by Robert Schnase):

1. Radical Hospitality: It is a priority towards every person who comes through the doors
2. Passionate Worship: Energized and energizing praise and experience of God
3. Intentional Faith Development: for all ages...
4. Risk-taking mission and service: Agape love gives sacrificially, expecting nothing in return
5. Extravagant Generosity: Having something worth giving to and giving joyfully and sacrificially without grudge or compulsion.

#### **EIGHT QUALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT**

1. Empowering Leadership: helps congregants move from member volunteers to servant disciples
2. Gift Based Ministry: help people identify the gifts and passions God has given them for service in and through the church
3. Passionate Spirituality: Faith formation that leads to energized intimacy with God
4. Effective Structures: Church Governance revised to align with discerned vision
5. Inspiring Worship: to inspire is to put the "Spirit" "into" a person's soul. Style of worship is not as important as an experience of the holy.

6. Holistic Small Groups: Groups of the size that builds relationship bonds with a focus on learning and serving.
7. Need Oriented Evangelism: that brings the healing and transforming love of God into the place of longing and need of friends and neighbors and community.
8. Loving Relationships: Congregation conveys an authentic sense of intentional love, caring, and compassion for each other.

## **US CONGREGATIONS RESEARCH**

### **TEN STRENGTHS OF U.S. CONGREGATIONS**

**<http://www.uscongregations.org>**

**Congregations that go *Beyond the Ordinary* excel in the following areas:**

1. Growing Spiritually -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations help worshipers grow in their faith.
2. Meaningful Worship -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations provide worship services that meet the needs of worshipers.
3. Participating in the Congregation -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations are places where worshipers are involved in many of the activities of the congregation.
4. Having a Sense of Belonging -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations provide people with a sense of fellowship with others.
5. Caring for Young People -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations ensure that the children and youth in the congregation are nurtured in the faith.
6. Focusing on the Community -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations reach out to and serve those outside their doors.
7. Sharing Faith -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations help their worshipers feel comfortable sharing their faith with others.
8. Welcoming New People -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations ensure that new people become part of their faith community.
9. Empowering Leadership -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations help worshipers to share in the leadership of the congregation.
10. Looking to the Future -- Beyond the Ordinary congregations focus on a positive future.

# **What would a UCC Church Look Like if it were to embrace the changing landscape of ministry?**

CAMERON TRIMBLE

Notes by Jim Antal on the Presentation to Interim Gathering 12-1-2011

## **1. Shifting Form #1**

- a. Understand the power of collective impact and leverage emerging opportunities: a shift from individualism to collaboration – from autonomy to covenant relationship.
- b. google “the dragon fly effect”  
[http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the\\_dragonfly\\_effect](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_dragonfly_effect)
  - i. Get everyone ALIGNED AROUND A COMMON SET OF OBJECTIVES
- c. Churches who don’t get this are obsessed with scarcity and squander their assets
- d. Darkwood Brew – church on line
- e. Small group ministries

## **2. Shifting form #2**

- a. Acts on the power of relational / collective networks
  - i. Make sure people are updating their Facebook status WHILE IN CHURCH
  - ii. Leverages current modes of communication (social media) to build community and share the church’s ministry of God.
- b. Churches that do NOT understand “congregational” to mean “independent”

## **3. Shifting form #3**

- a. See their pastor as a facilitator of open source faith and their church as a mission center
  - i. pastors who let their congregation create the sermon.
  - ii. pluralism becomes a value of church today
  - iii. personal mission is the primary entry point... they don’t come to learn about God, they can learn on the internet, they come to experience and encounter with the Holy.
- b. Churches who don’t get this see their pastor as their teacher and church as their learning center.

## **4. shifting form #4**

- a. The starfish (grows a new part to replace one that is torn off) and the spider (dies if part is broken off)
- b. Embrace “starfish” structures of open leadership
- c. Churches who don’t “get this” embrace the “spider structures” of hierarchical leadership – the head controls the body.
- d. Don’t get confused: remember - it’s not our job to be sure “that the UCC survives”... if our “head” is being cut off (through the death of denominations)... we need to become like a starfish

5. **shifting form #5**
  - a. Create tailored group experiences for a “one size fits some” audience
    - i. people expect to customize their God experience
    - ii. need to normalize this
  - b. Churches that don’t get this believe that one size fits all and design programs to please the masses.
  
6. **shifting form #6**
  - a. Create many ways to connect and legitimate participation
  - b. Churches that don’t get it honor only one path to legitimacy – full membership
  
7. **shifting form #7**
8. designs permission-giving open systems for leadership
  - i. Google is the key example of this!!! People whose ideas are affirmed and encouraged
  - ii. Note: for “extra grace required” people, you have a requirement that anyone wanting to initiate something must find someone else willing to join them.
  - iii. Treat adults like adults until they prove they’re not ready for this
- b. churches which are dying design closed systems of leadership – You cant be in key policy or financial decision making positions until you find out how we do things around here.
  
9. **shifting form #8**
  - a. Value feeding the heart (rather than the head only)
  - b. churches not succeeding focus on feeding the head only

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