

## INTRODUCTION

### History of the consultation

Sycamore Presbyterian Church has been part of the Cincinnati community for more than 200 years. It is not only rare for a ministry to survive that long, it is unusual to have a church with such a tremendous heritage thriving in today's rapidly changing world.

The landscape of the surrounding community has undergone significant changes in the last several decades as the greater Cincinnati area continues to spread. Many strong leaders have served Sycamore since its founding. Rev. Ted Kalsbeek completed more than 40 years of faithful ministry to the church and community in 1994. After several seasons of change and a number of rough years, the church extended a call to Rev. Larry Kent, who began his ministry as senior pastor in 2004. His compassionate heart and personable style have brought the church through a time of healing and into a time of growth and increasing optimism.

The leaders of Sycamore Church began asking many important questions a few years ago. The Strategic Planning Committee more recently took their charge to assess the congregation seriously and began developing long range plans for the ministry and campus of Sycamore Presbyterian. As worship attendance began to increase again, the team wrestled with space utilization questions. In an effort to relieve some of the pressure on seating in the 11:00 worship service, an abbreviated third service was launched in the Ted Kalsbeek Chapel. When some on the Strategic Planning Committee discovered value in the principles of *When NOT to Build*, Living Stones was contacted for help in developing an integrated facility and ministry plan.

### Goals of the consultation

Every church is unique in its cultural context and its ministry purpose, and the process of evaluating those things can be daunting without guidance. Your leaders asked Living Stones to build from the great work already done by the Strategic Planning group. The goals evaluated through the self study for this consultation were taken from the Mission Study Review given to the congregation in December 2007, and center on the following:

- 1. Continue to develop Lay Leadership in order to: (a) relieve appropriate responsibilities from Staff; and, (b) enable sufficient support of current and future programming. Children's and Music Ministries are in particular need of increased Lay involvement.**

2. **Assess sufficiency & design of SPC physical facilities, and create optimized plans which both address current challenges and conservatively anticipate some level of additional growth.**
3. **Continue development of staffing, operating, and physical systems which are aligned with a “corporate” church model.**

Living Stones specifically incorporated the concepts of the book *When NOT to Build* in addressing the goals of the consultation. The 3 key principals in the book are: **Focus** – keeping your energy on what God wants your particular congregation to be doing in ministry and on how to follow that call; **Use** – making full use of your resources wisely and efficiently, practicing good stewardship in everything that you do; **Provision** – understanding fully what God has already provided.

### **Integrated Planning Consultation**

Each of these goals is addressed in this report as we review the four areas evaluated during our time with you: **Ministry, Staffing, Facilities, and Finances**. The purpose of an Integrated Planning Consultation is to look closely at these areas in a holistic way, identifying both your strengths and weaknesses, and identifying barriers that hinder health and growth. Once major barriers have been identified, recommendations are offered that provide a framework for understanding and removing those barriers.

The term “integrated” is used because we have found it an ineffective change strategy to address just one component—all four areas are interrelated. While the majority of your initial questions were related to facilities issues, those questions cannot be dealt with in a vacuum. The complexity of your ministries, the needs in your equipping and support staff, and how you handle financial resources all fit together to determine how you should address facility needs.

Our goal is to guide you as you continue to develop strategic plans that will help you become even healthier and allow you to accommodate growth to more than double your present average worship attendance with reasonable changes. Living Stones cannot be the change agent at Sycamore Presbyterian Church. You have to be. We can bring focus and be a catalyst for needed changes, but we cannot do these things for you as outsiders. Our desire is not to write every prescription you think you need, but rather to teach you how to think differently about every aspect of your church environment.

This report addresses the questions you asked, reviews the information shared during our site visit, offers recommendations for which “tools” might be useful for what jobs, and will help you prioritize which items require attention first. Your **Church Health Team** will use this report most effectively as a springboard for creating concrete action plans that will address specific issues. You will be the best judges for determining how each recommendation or paradigm shift needs to be contextualized to fit Sycamore Presbyterian Church and its ministries.

## Sycamore Presbyterian Church – Leadership Session Schedule

### Sunday, March 9, 2008

<i>Ministry</i>	10:30-11:15	<p>Introductions Goals of the consultation The Sycamore Presbyterian Timeline</p>
<i>Ministry</i>	11:15-12:00	<p>Vision issues: <b>Natural Church Development</b> (NCD) Survey Results Your <b>Strength – Gift-based Ministry</b> Your <b>Minimum Factor – Need-oriented Evangelism</b> “<i>Why would we say that?</i>” Definitions</p>
	12:00-12:45	<b>Lunch</b>
<i>Ministry</i>	12:45-2:00	<p>A changing church, a changed world Leadership issues</p>
<i>Ministry</i>	2:00-2:45	Vision issues: Program driven or Call guided?
	2:45-2:55	Break
<i>Ministry</i>	2:55-3:30	Membership, Discipleship, Spiritual Formation
<i>Staffing</i>	3:30-4:05	<p>Expectations: Equipping staff Support staff Facility staff</p>
	4:05-4:15	Break
<i>Facilities</i>	4:15-5:30	<p>Immediate – KEEP YOUR FOCUS! Steps for removing the barriers Beyond the <i>Known</i> Future?</p>
<i>Finances</i>	5:30-6:00	Financial observations & parting challenges

# MINISTRIES

## The church as a living organism

God designed his church as a living organism, not a religious organization. Scripture pictures the church as a living body with many parts and one unique head in Jesus Christ. The church is not a building or a place, but living, breathing, flesh-and-blood people. It's a body, not an institution. You don't "go" to Sycamore Presbyterian Church—you "**are**" Sycamore Presbyterian Church. Jesus illustrated in Mark 4:26-29 the idea that healthy things seem to grow "all by themselves," like plants in nature. Just as God alone produces a tree from an acorn, it is God alone who produces genuine growth in his church.

When we attempt to artificially "grow" the church in ways God did not design, we only add to the base of another social organization rather than God's eternal kingdom. Paul echoed the concept when he said, "***I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth,***" in 1 Corinthians 3:6. Jesus reserved the task of producing the authentic harvest for himself when he said, "***I will build my church***" in Matthew 16:18.

When he did that, though, he also assigned us the task of being good farmers. He expects us to make sure the soil—the church environment—is healthy enough for growth by removing barriers that hinder it. The job of pulling weeds, adding fertilizer, or watering and breaking up the dry ground is ours. The goal is to maintain a healthy church environment where seeds of life can sprout and barriers to God's "all-by-itself" growth are removed.

Part of the process of moving forward is a clearer understanding of the starting point. As we looked at the life cycle of a ministry, we noted that all living things were created to reproduce and not necessarily grow infinitely larger. That also holds true for disciples, leaders, and churches. By recapturing a compelling vision for what God calls this congregation to be and do, similar to what the vision must have been for the original pioneers of Sycamore Presbyterian Church, the slope of the life cycle curve shifts once again to an upward direction rather than remaining plateaued or declining toward death.

## A changing church, a changed world

The world around us is drastically different today in many ways than when many who call Sycamore their church home first arrived. Much of what was taken for granted as normal and understood in the past in our culture no longer has value or is embraced in the same ways. The world around us no longer considers the institutional church as normal, relevant, or even where someone goes to explore spirituality. And the pace of change is not slowing. If the church is to be the influence in our world that God calls us to, we must learn to think missionally about the cultures around and within. Recognizing that, even within the mostly Caucasian, middle to upper class congregation at Sycamore Presbyterian Church, there are distinctly diverse cultural influences shaping the way individuals view God, themselves, their world, the church, and their place in all of that.

As a beginning point for this understanding, we discussed several ideas from *THE PRESENT FUTURE* by Reggie McNeal. We talked briefly about ways the six living generations in our world and within our congregations see things differently, and as a result, connect with God and each other in different ways. Though we talked about these “generational tribes” each having their own distinct heart language, it’s important to see the different groups as distinct not simply because of chronological age, but defined more by the attitudes and mindset they share. We have met some exciting folks in their seventies and eighties who think more like Millennials than Seniors.

The reality is that once Sycamore grew larger than 70 or 80 people, it was no longer one congregation but a cluster of several divergent cultures (or “tribes”) experiencing church together. That’s not only OK, it is natural. You have not been “one congregation” for quite some time, and that is all right. You can still be Sycamore Presbyterian Church—one church that expresses itself in a variety of ways. Isn’t that a picture of Christ’s body around the world? Does the church in Africa express itself the same way it does in Latin America, or in Romania, or in Manhattan? No, but if Christ is the head, it is still one church. Being “one” as Jesus prayed in John 17 does not mean uniformity, but unity of purpose and focus.

People need to connect with God in the language of their heart, which includes the emotion of music and stories. While some speak multiple languages, all of us have a primary heart language in which we communicate most effectively. Expecting everyone to speak the same heart language when it comes to their relationships with God and each other is naïve at best, and it is ineffective as a missional strategy. An attempt to launch a contemporary worship service at one point in the recent past resulted in unhealthy competition and wounds that still shape the thinking of more than a few Sycamore people. We see this attempt as doing the right thing, but implementing it in an unhealthy way.

Thinking about those you hope to touch for Christ as people of different cultures or tribes, and including those within the church, will help you think differently about how you deliver the glorious message of grace and hope. It helps you think more strategically about learning to speak their language. The church should never compromise the message, but the delivery methods and the languages used must adapt to differing cultures and a changed world if we expect others to even listen. You must realize that if they won’t even tune into your radio station to hear the music, they will never get the message you really want them to hear.

*“If you don’t like **change**, you’re going to like **irrelevance** even less.”*

**General Eric Shinseki (USAR, Ret.)**

We boiled “church” down to its core essentials. This means no longer thinking of the church in terms of programs, but thinking in terms of what the essentials are that are common to all ministry as taught in scripture through Christ. The three essentials discussed were:

- Love God
- Love Others
- As you go..., make disciples

These represent the essence of all ministry: relationships. It's all about relationships. If we are not creating environments where these essential things are the focus of what's happening, then the ministry will be shallow, or even hollow. For example, if something in your disciple-making process needs to be addressed, it does not mean you create another program. It may instead mean reframing the goals for all existing ministries to make sure that loving God, loving people, and inviting others into an authentic discipleship journey with Christ is understood by everyone, and that it becomes part of everything you do.

## Natural Church Development Survey

Your Natural Church Development (NCD) scores show graphically where you are already healthy, and where there is room for improvement. The NCD scores offer a snapshot of how you compare to all other churches in the eight universal Quality Characteristics present and measurable in growing churches.

The key is to analyze how far above or below the average score of 50 Sycamore Presbyterian Church falls in each of the 8 Quality Characteristics, and to identify your **Strengths** and your **Minimum Factor**. The higher above 50 the score is, the greater the comparative health. Keep in mind that the life-giving focus of what the scores indicate is found in the *adjective*, answering questions like, "How truly *loving* are your relationships, or how *holistic* are your small groups?" The **adjective** measures the health level of each characteristic.

Your current NCD scores are as follows:

- |                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| • <i>Empowering</i> Leadership    | 50 |
| • <i>Gift-based</i> Ministry      | 62 |
| • <i>Passionate</i> Spirituality  | 46 |
| • <i>Effective</i> Structures     | 54 |
| • <i>Inspiring</i> Worship        | 60 |
| • <i>Holistic</i> Small Groups    | 51 |
| • <i>Need-oriented</i> Evangelism | 40 |
| • <i>Loving</i> Relationships     | 59 |

What do these scores mean? A score of 50 is a median score which is normed for English-speaking churches in the U.S. This means a church that scores 50 is healthier than half the English-speaking American churches and less healthy than half those churches. These are not percentile scores. Rather, these scores measure how far above or below the median a church falls. In addition to the dashed line on the graphs at the average of 50, there are two additional horizontal lines at 35 and 65. These represent the standard deviation from the average, based on the survey's statistics. Since this survey uses a standard deviation of 15, that means that 68% of all churches score between 35 and 65. In other words, a score of 65 represents the 86th percentile.

The goal for a church engaged in the NCD process is to raise the scores of all eight characteristics to 65 or higher and keep them there. When a church scores 65 or higher on all 8 characteristics, there is a 99.9% probability that it will also be growing numerically. The idea is for a church to focus not on numerical growth, but on becoming healthier, letting the numerical growth take care of itself. Based on the overall average score of 52.70, Sycamore Presbyterian

Church's health is above average. Overall, Sycamore has great pockets of health and life, and is a vibrant church with many great things going on. Your NCD results confirm and quantify that in objective ways that will help you focus on becoming even healthier.

### *Strengths*

Since healthy things grow “all by themselves,” the goal of the NCD information is to help you focus intentional effort where it can have the greatest potential impact. Your highest score is in **Gift-based Ministry**. These scores likely reflect Sycamore's response to some difficult days when it seemed like everything was out of control. The lay leadership of the church was challenged to step up and bring order from that chaos, and that resulted in the base of your current decision making systems with an emphasis on Session's connectivity and responsibility for almost everything in the church.

The fact that you have many dedicated and talented leaders serving on various boards and committees is a testimony to the heart of the church. The influence of the corporate environments from which many of you come has probably shaped, in part, why you have done well at getting many of the right people doing tasks in which they have experience or gifts. Some of your healthiest responses indicate an atmosphere of joy and expectation in the area of using your gifts. There is also a healthy sense of team cooperation, which may have roots in the corporate structures from which many of you come.

Sycamore also has strengths in the area of **Inspiring Worship**. We saw evidence of that in the excellent music ministry and the effective way Pastor Kent connects with the congregation in his message. You also have points of strength that cross several quality characteristic boundaries, as shown on the NCD chart labeled Current Highest 10. The Church Health Team will look for ways your strengths can help as you develop an action strategy to address areas needing attention, especially your Minimum Factor. You need to apply these strengths strategically.

### *Your Minimum Factor*

Every church has a Minimum Factor, no matter how healthy it is. The Minimum Factor at Sycamore is **Need-oriented Evangelism** with a score of 40. The NCD folks describe a church environment that demonstrates health in this area as place where people intentionally cultivate authentic relationships and engage in appropriate ministries (meeting them at their point of need) in order to guide pre-Christians toward a journey of faith as followers of Christ.

Keep in mind that this score does not indicate “cluelessness” about this important characteristic of health. You are already doing some of what the NCD principles look for when measuring the life-giving nature of this area. You obviously connect well with the needs of people around you. What your scores do indicate, though, is room for improvement and a better understanding of what Jesus calls the church to do as a response to his amazing gifts of grace and love to humankind.

A major stressor for some at Sycamore seems to be the term “evangelism” and the distorted picture that particular word paints mentally. Rather than remaining hung up on a negative, non-biblical image, concentrate more on the connection of the life-giving adjective to what it means to share the positives of your spiritual journey with non-Christian people in appropriate ways. In

several aspects, the NCD description above confirms portions of the Sycamore **A.L.I.V.E.** Mission Statement. In it you said: *Acknowledge and **proclaim** the Gospel of Jesus Christ; Live, model and imitate Him in **serving others** and loving one another; **Invite all to know Christ** and have a living relationship with Him; Value **outreach and mission as we share Christ's Spirit with others**; Enhance our biblical and experiential knowledge and worship of God.* The underlined parts of your wording seem to describe Need-oriented Evangelism. Whether or not you use these defining terms from your wonderful mission statement, you need help others understand and come to agreement on this important NCD principle.

The chart detailing the Lowest 10 responses shows us that 4 of those lowest 10 responses to individual questions relate to your Minimum Factor. That means there are unhealthy points in those other 6 responses from the other quality characteristics. While the focus remains on the area of Need-oriented Evangelism, paying attention to the how these other low responses might connect to your Minimum Factor is important. For instance, two of the lowest scoring questions relate to prayer. Two others relate to the behavior and attitudes of church leaders. Are there possibly ways that your concept of prayer and the attitudes of your leadership impact how intentional you are at connecting with pre-Christian people at their point of need and inviting them to consider embarking on a spiritual journey?

The Church Health Team will spend time probing for the underlying attitudes—the reasons *why* we would say these things about us—in this area and the other questions on the Lowest 10 chart. They should do this by meeting with various groups of people, asking strategic questions, and listening very carefully. What do the answers to these questions reveal about what may have been going on at the time? What circumstances may have been influential? How are these answers interrelated? Why would we say these things about ourselves? What past wounds or baggage might have influenced our attitudes? What can we learn about our culture, the times, and ourselves by this? Identifying root causes enables you to develop action plans that address the reasons rather than just dealing with the symptoms.

## **MINISTRY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Church Health Team and Facility Task Force**

*Timing: next 2-4 weeks*

These two teams need to be fully identified and agreed upon how they will function in terms of meeting times, individual task assignments, and communications between meetings. Use the ideas presented on CoachNet NCD Document 202 – Creating an Effective Church Health Team. The Church Health Team (CHT) is to bring focus to the process of understanding your NCD Minimum Factor and removing the barriers identified in this report which impact overall church health. Use the examples of a CHT charter and Activity Guide in the Appendix as models to create your own. Once your charter is created and agreed to by the team members, make sure you send a copy to your ministry coach.

The Facility Task Force (FTF) will be the team that maintains focus on the recommendations and resulting actions related to the buildings, as well as act as a resource and guide for the CHT, Session, and the congregation. Take the principles described in the report and apply them to your specific circumstances.

Both teams should realize they are not policy-making bodies but resourcing teams charged with developing recommendations for positive steps forward. Action plans and recommendations are to be made through the current channels of decision-making at Sycamore, which involves Session. You must work within the polity you have to maintain the integrity of the process. If there are decision-making dysfunctions in your current system, they will show up along the way. You will have to wrestle with them in context. Find healthy ways to address the dysfunctions, knowing that you may need to change some things that no longer work as originally intended.

The CHT is not the group charged with implementing the resulting action plans, but they will be responsible for making sure actions are taken by other appropriate ministries or teams. They should meet on a regular basis and will likely need to meet more often for the first few months than they will later in the year. They will also be the team that periodically reviews the progress of actions taken relative to the results desired.

Evaluation will become a key part of their role as time moves forward. Consider utilizing the many additional resources and exercises available in ***RELEASING YOUR CHURCH'S POTENTIAL***, available from ChurchSmart. CoachNet, an on-line NCD resource available by subscription, provides more than 20,000 pages of worksheets, guides and on-line training courses, some specific to your Minimum Factor. We encourage you to invest in and take advantage of these and other helpful resources.

### **Intentional communication strategy**

*Timing: next 2-4 weeks*

The first and most important task for both the Church Health Team and Facility Task Force is to develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy. Be deliberate about how you keep each other, the elders, staff, ministry team leaders, other leaders, the broader congregation, and your Living Stones coaches informed as you make progress on the journey. Ask yourselves: Who do we need to talk to? Who do we need to hear from? What do we need to say? What do they need to know? What do we need to know? Who will talk for us? How will we listen? How often will we communicate? What forms of communications should we use? And on it goes.

Your Living Stones ministry coach expects you to develop this part of your strategy right away. You should immediately open the lines of communication and set up a regular schedule of email updates and telephone coaching sessions that keep your Living Stones coach informed of CHT activities and issues related to the process. You have unlimited access to your coach by email, and should also schedule an hour of telephone coaching monthly for the duration of the four months of coaching you opted for in your IPC acceptance. This access will not help you if you don't use it. We can only guide you when we know what direction you are moving or not moving.

You must also be intentional about seeking feedback and guidance from each ministry and church leadership group. Communication is two parts listening and one part telling. It is extremely difficult to over-communicate. Be diligent to communicate regularly with the congregation about where you are in the process. While there are no secrets, not everyone can be or should be part of the detailed process. That often makes some individuals or groups feel as

though they are on the outside. Use your intentional communication strategy to get the word out in as many ways as you can, to as many people as you can, as often as you can.

Find creative ways to communicate what you are doing as you make progress. Drop in a few minutes during announcements, stick a half-page note into the bulletin, publish something on a web site, send church-wide emails, mail newsletters or postcards, but find ways to let folks know you are moving forward. Don't wait until you have all your action plans in place to let people hear about the appropriate aspects of your deliberations and how they fit with where God is calling the church. It is extremely difficult to over-communicate with people during this process.

When you do your next NCD survey in about a year, you will likely have a different Minimum Factor. At that point you may choose to have a few members of the CHT rotate off to make room for others who, because of their spiritual giftedness and passions, might be more effective in addressing that new Minimum Factor.

### **Prioritize report recommendations**

*Timing: within 2 months*

The Church Health Team should take time to review this report together in detail. Team members should understand the major themes of the report individually. Each person should read the entire report with a highlighter in hand. Only then will you be ready to work together to evaluate the recommendations, work with them to make them fit with the direction God is leading Sycamore, and begin the process of prioritizing them for action by appropriate ministries, individuals, or committees. Utilize the principles in the NCD steps of **(1) Prepare, (2) Diagnose, (3) Plan, (4) Implement, and (5) Evaluate** as you tackle this report. Remember that you will be unable to write accurate prescriptions for the root causes unless you've done the hard work of getting an accurate diagnosis. Don't short-circuit the process.

Cooperate closely with the Facility Task Force to determine which building-related items have the greatest potential to impact the health of your ministries and relationships. Turn them loose on things they can do right away, but remain engaged with them in evaluating potential actions that may have greater impact on church health and specific ministries than it might first appear on the surface. Sometimes even small changes in the building can have a big impact on how people do things in ministry.

Build on the good work you and other Sycamore teams have already done to bring focus and energy into the church. Also remember that your goal is not to fix everything at once, but to work toward the 3 to 5 potential actions that, once taken, have the greatest potential to remove barriers to what's healthy. Make sure you celebrate what has been done that brought you to this place and respect your decision-making processes, but be strategic and intentional with the recommendations and action plans that will move you in the direction God intends.

## Analyze the NCD information

*Timing: within 3 months*

The Church Health Team should complete its analysis of the detailed NCD survey information. Look for underlying reasons for the identified barriers to health in your Minimum Factor of Need-oriented Evangelism. Conduct targeted focus groups to help you get to the root issues. Employ the “5-Whys” approach as you talk with and listen to others. For example, one of the feedback comments was, “The Need-oriented Evangelism score was low because we misinterpreted the questions.” Ask that person, “Why?” They might say, “Because door-to-door evangelism is just not part of our Presbyterian culture.” You again ask, “Why is that?” They may reply, “Because we tend to be more rational than emotional about our faith and how we share that experience.” You again ask, “Why do you think it’s that way?” Can you see the pattern? As you probe deeper by asking “why” questions about 5 or 6 times, you get closer to the real root issues that are needed for a more accurate diagnosis.

Once potential root causes are listed, do some sorting as a team to evaluate the most likely reasons. Some of you who have corporate team experiences can use various sorting and ranking exercises for this. Brainstorm and evaluate potential solutions to the identified issues, and then develop 3 to 5 Action Steps for addressing those issues. The Action Steps should include what is to be done, who will be responsible for implementation, a timetable for implementation, and how and when the effectiveness of each action will be evaluated. Take advantage of the resources provided on CoachNet as recommended. Use the ideas outlined in Steps 2-4 of the NCD Process as your guide.

## Deal with underlying tensions

*Timing: within 3-6 months*

A couple issues are complicating the Sycamore situation and presenting an internal struggle. Our discussion about generational or cultural differences pointed out that Sycamore is, in reality, not one congregation but several cultural communities within the church that each need to express themselves in different ways. Coming to an understanding that this is reality and that it’s okay will help relieve that struggle. Reggie McNeal’s book and DVD series ***THE PRESENT FUTURE: SIX TOUGH QUESTIONS FOR THE CHURCH*** is a great way to help broaden your understanding. Invest time as a leadership team, including staff and Session, to work through this helpful resource, then develop a plan to share that understanding with the broader leadership group and the congregation.

Specifically, look at the way you create opportunities for differing cultural heart languages to connect with God and each other in worship. The other side of this significant shift is to intentionally create more opportunities to connect in disciple-making relationships and ministry service teams that are intergenerational, like the activity we observed in your Wednesday evening WINK program. It is this kind of intergenerational “doing life together” idea that has long been a missing piece of how we transfer the application of our faith from one generation (hear “cultural tribe”) to another. Build this dynamic into every facet of the Sycamore culture.

## **From small to large**

*Timing: within 3-6 months*

Another issue we did not have enough time to unpack in detail is that, in some ways, Sycamore still attempts to function like a small or medium-sized church when reality says you are a large church. There is a fundamental understanding of this shift, evidenced by that fact that some have described the church in the terms “pastoral, program, and corporate.” Rather than bogging down in debate over semantics or details, understanding the principles of these growth shifts is what is important. Tension is created because of the need to understand and navigate the numerous shifts required for the church to make those transitions as it grows.

To better understand these shifts, we recommend that staff leadership and Session work together through the book ***ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL*** by Gary McIntosh. Written in story form, it relates the transitions that are part of a healthy growth process. Several key areas that change in a growing church environment are leadership structures, decision-making processes, the roles of pastor and staff, and the patterns, obstacles, and strategies for continued growth. Consider scheduling a leadership retreat, either with someone from Living Stones or a staff member willing to learn the material and lead it, that is geared to understanding where Sycamore currently operates in these key areas and how to develop strategies for making the needed shifts in a healthy, timely manner.

## **Address Need-oriented Evangelism**

*Timing: 3-6 months*

Once the church health team has done a more thorough diagnosis of your NCD information, they should be closer to the core issues of what needs to be improved. If so, you are ready to develop the kinds of prescriptions that will actually address the roots causes.

Since the survey responses indicate that people understand what it means to meet the real needs of real people (see the graph for Q36), it is likely there are more Sycamore folks involved in those kinds of activities outside the walls of the church. Some may serve at a food pantry or a community social agency, and others might be part of a service organization that meets the needs of underprivileged or marginalized individuals. Other Sycamore folks who are new to their faith journey might just now be learning about God’s desire for his body—the church—to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, visit the prisoner, give water to the thirsty, and generally care for the widows and orphans among us. How do we help them learn what it means to meet needs in Jesus’ name?

What if the church and her leaders thought differently about the role of its members who are already touching people at their point of need? Even outside the church? What if the church helped Jesus-followers see the people they interact with or encounter daily as individuals with needs that deserve to be noticed and touched? What if, instead of trying to get members more involved in church activities inside the walls of the Sycamore campus, the church blessed the good work those folks are already engaged in—or are getting ready to do—and officially commissioned them to become missionaries of the Sycamore family and ambassadors for the

God who loves his people deeply? Don't missionaries meet the needs of people from different cultures as representatives of God?

Brian McLaren wrote a book titled ***MORE READY THAN YOU REALIZE: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix***. It is the story of how he interacted in an appropriate way with a young lady who was hired to play the harp at his church one evening. Over time, and a long series of email conversations, the young woman became a follower of the Jesus Brian loves because he developed a safe, spiritual friendship that allowed her to journey toward Christ at her own pace. He describes the journey of faith as a captivating song this way:

Over time, your whole life begins to harmonize to the song. Its rhythm awakens you; its tempo moves you, so you resonate with its tone and flow with its melody. The lyric gradually convinces you that the entire world was meant to share this song with its message, its joy, its dance. If more people heard the music, their hatred would give way to reconciliation; their greed would melt into generosity; their grumbling would transform into gratitude; their mourning would be turned to dancing. People would stop polluting and start planting gardens, if they lived by the song. They would stop fighting and start playing hilarious practical jokes on each other, throwing joyous picnics and parties, playing raucous games, dreaming wild dreams, and enjoying a good laugh every chance they got.

It's a song that is best shared not by coercion, arm-twisting or judgmental pressure, but a beautiful melody that is best shared in the context of a safe, appropriate, caring relationship.

Consider ways to improve the health of this quality characteristic by using your existing strengths as identified in the NCD information. There are people at Sycamore who are energized by working in areas that fit their gifts. They probably serve in a wide variety of ministry settings already. How can you intentionally engage those folks to develop a broader understanding of what it means to offer the reason behind what we do when we are meeting needs? Could you do that in small groups, or Sunday school classes, or workshops, or retreats, or a printed devotional, or an on-line newsletter? There are strengths in the life-giving inspiration of your worship services. How can you leverage the way you connect with God and with people in worship to raise the level of importance for making this kind of connection with people outside the family who are more ready than you realize? Be innovative and creative about taking these principles to a new, exciting, life-giving level.

## **From control to empowerment**

*Timing: starting within 6 months*

Before going into this issue, we ask that you not hear what we did not say. Please remember that Sycamore Presbyterian is not clueless when it comes to Empowering Leadership (50) or Effective Structures (54). You are a little higher than average. But as we interviewed staff and leaders, looked at the information in your self study, looked deeper into the NCD information, and listened a great deal, it became evident that something about your decision-making processes is producing frustration and getting in the way of people actually engaging in disciple-making

ministry relationships. Left unaddressed, the forward momentum that began as Pastor Kent facilitated a time of healing and stability will be at risk of stopping or even reversing.

There are lots of people serving on boards and committees, doing very good things and actually using their gifts, but being so wrapped up in church work that they have no time or energy to engage in meeting people at their point of need and walking with them on a journey toward becoming more like Christ. Too busy “doing” church; too little time to “be” the church for people who need it. That is the issue needing attention here.

To be specific, there needs to be a change in the way decisions are made and control is exercised by Session and other governing committees. Moving from the control structures that were put in place out of necessity as a result of the chaos of the past is an essential component of removing a barrier to continued sustainable growth at Sycamore. You also need to recognize the connection between this shift in decision-making structures and the next section outlining the move to a call-guided culture of ministry development.

Good leaders, new and old, who discover in themselves a passion to serve in ways that make a difference for God’s kingdom, will grow frustrated if they are not in an environment that equips and empowers them for that service. If they are deterred from engaging their gifts in the area of their passion, they will either grow frustrated enough to leave Sycamore and find another place to serve, or their passion will get pushed aside as they settle into a comfortable, harmless expression of religious activity that produces little joy and even less God-honoring results.

We were given a copy of the 92+ page Session Handbook which details the responsibilities of your most visible governing body. Without knowing the details of how and when that document reached its current state, I suspect the days of confusion after the departure of Rev. Kalsbeek had quite an impact on it. Session was probably urged to make sure that every church activity was properly managed and adequately accountable to the leadership in charge. It was important to get things back to being done “decently and in order.” Sycamore is one of the fortunate churches because you had a core of lay leaders with the background, skills, and experience to step up and take charge when it was absolutely necessary. Those who had a part in this are to be thanked and their contributions to Sycamore celebrated.

One of the difficulties some have with our call to let go of disempowering control structures comes from those among you who lived through the difficulties, and who have no desire to relive that divisive experience. No one is advocating a return to chaos, but rather a healthy move from a “command-and-control” mindset to an “equip-and-empower” mindset that also maintains oversight and accountability for all involved.

This shift is in sharp contrast to the “control” mechanisms of boards and committees that say what kinds of ministries people can and cannot do. It moves you from a bounded-set approach to a centered-set approach as described by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch in their book ***THE SHAPING OF THINGS TO COME***. “Control” structures tend to abort creative grassroots ministries before they begin by saying to people, “Unless you have been elected to a board or are on staff, it's not your place to envision new ministries or new ways of doing things here.” And the occasional entrepreneur who does come up with a new ministry idea may be placed in the position of trying to persuade one or more committees and/or boards to be passionate about her call (which, perhaps, they are not supposed to be all that passionate about if God has not called them to it) and to try to make the case in advance that the new ministry venture is likely to succeed. (What board would want to be caught approving a venture that eventually fails?) This kills creative risk-taking. See the additional discussion about this issue in the section about Call-guided Ministry.

To better understand why and how to make this important move, we recommend that staff and Session leadership study together the principles in the book ***HIGH IMPACT CHURCH BOARDS*** by T. J. Addington. Pay special attention to Part Three of the book because it provides practical ideas for navigating the process of releasing unnecessary control while developing healthy structures for leadership and accountability.

One way to begin this shift is to conduct a Post-It exercise to chart every step of the current decision-making process. Begin with a typical idea about a specific ministry that requires something new or a change from what has been normal. Write down on individual Post-It notes each and every action that happens from the time the idea is birthed to the point it has been implemented and/or evaluated. Stretch the notes out across a whiteboard or wall in the right sequence. Look at each individual step and evaluate it by asking who, what, when, where, why, how, and how much types of questions. Is this step necessary (a “tollbooth” or “directional leadership”)? What result is needed from this action? Are there ways to eliminate steps without sacrificing the desired results? Are there other ways to get the desired results more efficiently?

You get the idea and are fully capable of doing what is described. The goal is to identify the reasons for why some things are required, and then look for ways to maintain integrity and accountability while streamlining the process. Look honestly for ways to let go of unnecessary control, and develop a culture that encourages innovation, experimentation, and diligent evaluation to see what God is blessing with kingdom fruit. We are not telling you to give up your responsibility to lead, but challenging you to embrace new ways of doing it that frees people—including leaders—to move from doing lots of *good* things to doing more of the *best* things.

## **From program-driven to call-guided ministry**

*Timing: starting in 6-9 months*

One of your stated goals deals with how to energize and mobilize new members. This issue is absolutely and directly related to the one just described. Sycamore is not unique in this. Many churches struggle with how to get new people involved or how to find enough willing workers to carry out all the good programs in the church. It relates to both the mobilization of ordinary people for their God-ordained “works of service” and the development of current and future leaders.

The most common way to connect people to ministry tasks is to put people into open slots in existing ministry programs. This sometimes includes spiritual gift testing and providing trained ministry mentors to help people find the right places of ministry. The Gift-Based Ministry score for Sycamore’s NCD survey was quite healthy, so you already do a good job of getting people into ministry slots that match their gifts. A church that does gifts assessment will likely do a better job of placing people in more appropriate ministries, but doing a better job of slot-filling only partially addresses the problem.

A more thorough solution requires a fundamentally different approach to mobilizing people into ministry. Rather than starting with the open slot and asking, “*Who could do this job?*” we begin by helping every member in the congregation discern their gifts and discover their call, and then asking, “*How can we empower you to do what God is calling you to do?*” In some cases, people get connected to an existing church ministry. In others, it requires the church to see an individual’s ministry outside the walls as missionary work, then equipping them for it.

A program-driven or slot-filling approach tends to concentrate workers on maintaining programs that primarily serve church members. A call-guided approach that begins by helping members get in touch with their God-given passions tends to result in an approximately equal balance between ministries of outreach and ministries of nurture. Remember—once you become authentic followers of Jesus, it’s no longer just about you.

Sycamore Presbyterian Church leadership, at all levels, must consciously provide the empowerment and equipping mechanisms needed to transition the entire culture to a call-driven approach. Doing so requires the courage and willingness to release more people from maintaining church programs so they are free to invest time and energy into touching those outside the church for whom God has given them a passion. This may require letting go of some church programs, including good ones; streamlining programs and committees so they require fewer workers; or combining programs with similar purposes so they don’t need as many workers.

The idea is that when the people working in a ministry are those who are called and gifted by God to do it, the effectiveness of that ministry increases. We saw evidence of this as we observed a number of leaders in classes or ministry settings, like WINK. We saw adults who were connecting with the kids under their care on a heart level that we know goes beyond just a task-oriented mindset. You need to celebrate those existing connections, but recognize that the challenge is to be more intentional about how you graft that into the DNA of all Sycamore ministry activities.

If we start with people's passions and gifts and watch where God is calling them to minister, it really becomes a matter of letting God have greater influence in our ministry and programming priorities, and sometimes beginning new ministries in areas where God is calling people. It means letting previously fruitful ministries die a natural death once the people whom God at one time called to lead them have moved on, and coming up with creative ways to do other ministries that may be less worker-intensive.

### *Clues to Call*

Many churches today have become institutionalized “consumer” churches. As the label suggests, these churches see ministry and growth in terms of giving people what they want. Consumers choose churches on the basis of “What will this church do for me?” or “How can I get the preaching, the programs, or the ministries I need for myself and my family?” In contrast to the consumer church is the empowering church. This type of church sees its purpose as growing disciples and empowering these disciples to serve others and make other disciples.

The core values of a consumer church focus on meeting the needs of members; the empowering church reaches out to hurting people outside the faith family. A consumer church is program-driven (finding people to fit ministry positions in our programs); the empowering church is call-guided (equipping every member to minister according to their passions, gifts, and call). The consumer church sees professional staff as “ministers for hire”; empowering churches understand that the most important task of professional ministry staff is to equip people (translated every member) for place of ministry. An empowering church sees itself as missional (a Christ-centered spiritual community that incarnates Christ in the larger community using “Go” strategies); a consumer church is primarily attractational (seeing itself as the place others must join to be served, mostly “Come” strategies).

Every disciple of Jesus is called to serve according to the unique gifts, abilities, and passions God has given them. An empowering church encourages the development of ministry teams that help identify, equip, and encourage each individual to effectively discover and fulfill their unique ministry calling.

Clues to call often involve asking and answering two critical questions: *What need do I see around me that breaks the heart of God that also breaks my heart?* and *What kind of personal ministry would you love to do, along with others, to touch this pain with God's love?* Clues to call, both individually and corporately, are found in discovering passions and gifting for ministry.

*"... The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."*  
- Frederick Buechner

Bill Hybels advises us to look for our "Popeye moments" in his book **HOLY DISCONTENT** as he reminds us to pay attention to what angers us. What injustice finally makes you say, *"That's all I can stand, and I can't stand no more!"* when you see it? Passion or call tells you which ministry team to join, while gifting and abilities tell you the role you are to play on that ministry team.

According to Frederick Buechner, true purpose is found and true joy experienced when you discover where "your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

One major task that will bring clarity in this area is to broaden this listening and call discernment process described for you in the Saturday leadership session. The process needs to move leaders all the way through to a more thorough understanding of their individual gifts and calls. Your next step, then, will be to take a much broader portion of the congregation through that same discovery process. Facilitate times, places, and ways for the entire congregation to explore the ideas of individual giftedness and call in this way.

The book **WHEN THERE'S NO BURNING BUSH** by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch is a great resource for the process of helping individuals discern God's call. Use these resources in Sunday school settings, small groups, or retreat environments. Consider developing the ministry Jerry already started for spiritual gifts discernment into a ministry team that incorporates understanding call for everyone at Sycamore. Doing so will not only energize and engage folks, but help you more fully understand what God might be doing among the people in your congregation that will focus and shape the corporate Vision (see next recommendation) as illustrated by the VIP circles. This is one of the most important puzzle pieces to help you clarify your future.

### ***Starting new ministry teams***

While some people who are called to work outside the walls of the church join existing agencies and ministries in the community that may or may not be officially connected to your church, one of the most exciting options is that of giving birth to new ministries. The church committed to empowering members for ministry must have in place a clearly-defined and well-understood process by which new ministry teams can come into existence.

This must include the expectation that new ministries do not have to originate with church staff or with governing bodies, but with members to whom God has given a vision and passion

for a specific ministry. There must be a process by which people are invited to share their sense of passion with church leaders and the wider body in appropriate ways and where others are invited to explore together the possible formation of a ministry team. It also requires redefining the roles of staff members to even more appropriately fit their calling as equippers of ministers.

Sycamore's leaders must create an environment in which risk-taking is rewarded. If one self-organizing ministry team out of three actually takes off and flies, that is a good percentage. For the two out of three that don't fly, the experience of organizing a ministry team should not be looked upon as a failure as much as a learning experience. Team members learn more about their calls, their gifts, principles of leadership, and what does and does not work as they attempt to develop a new ministry. They take these valuable life lessons with them to the next ministry team they join, applying this wisdom to the new context.

Consider officially commissioning the many Sycamore people who are already involved in ministries outside the walls of the church as missionaries. If they are touching the needs of people who are not part of your faith community in Jesus' name, why not treat them as missionaries by acknowledging their efforts? You may even determine that more of them deserve financial support as part of your local and community mission budgets.

### *Staffing for call-guided ministry*

In a church characterized by call-guided ministry, staffing roles are critical. In the program-driven church, it is the responsibility of staff to envision, implement, control, and fill slots for programs. In the call-guided church, it is the responsibility of staff to nurture a culture in which every member truly sees him or herself as a minister and a missionary. It is the responsibility of staff to help every member identify their call and gifts. It is the responsibility of staff to create an environment of creative risk-taking as opposed to one of control. This includes changing the way Session, boards, and

committees function so that they no longer focus on giving or withholding permission, but focus on the question of "How

*"How can we help you discover and fulfill  
God's call?"*

do we provide guidance and accountability to the Sycamore Presbyterian Church vision while we help you fulfill your call?"

This may result in the dismantling of some existing committees because their work can be done more creatively and powerfully by ministry teams—people who are personally called to do the ministry, not merely supervise those doing ministry. It is the responsibility of staff and leadership to set in motion a process by which new grassroots ministry teams can be born and nurtured, and by which ministries can be gracefully put to rest when they have fulfilled their usefulness or when they are no longer viable for lack of leadership or other reasons. It is the responsibility of staff to be available to provide coaching to ministry team leaders and members since, for most of them, this is a very different way of doing ministry.

Core ministry teams (those responsible for ministries the church considers essential to its core identity) will be handled somewhat differently than "edge" (non-core) ministry teams. Non-core teams will have much greater freedom to try things and fail. Core ministry teams will still require direct supervision and staff will be responsible to step in if the team flounders.

More of your ministries, perhaps most, may become focused on ministry to those outside the

church. As that happens you will likely have fewer committees, and those remaining will likely become smaller. Much of the time once spent on committee work will move to hands-on ministry. As discussed in the staffing section, defining and transitioning staff roles in light of this paradigm shift will be essential for all involved to function effectively.

### ***Leadership development***

If Sycamore is to become a call-guided church and develop a culture of disciple-making, you will need to further develop ministry leadership. Decide consciously to cultivate ministry leaders as you do ministry, which is also inextricably linked to the NCD characteristics of Effective Structures (54) and Empowering Leadership (50). Create a culture of apprenticeship. This also requires intentionality from staff in the way they lead their leaders and equip their equipers.

Ministry activities like serving a meal, passing out groceries, helping out when it's Sycamore's turn to house the homeless, or making care visits to hospitals or a nursing facility should all become apprenticeship opportunities. Start by identifying others who have a heart for whatever ministry you are doing, then decide never to do ministry alone. Take someone along, and invest your heart and knowledge into them.

Employ the Show-How method that Jesus used. It looks something like this: (1) I do ministry, I invite you to watch, we talk about it; (2) I do ministry, you help, we talk; (3) You do ministry, I help, we talk; (4) You do ministry, I watch, we talk; (5) You do ministry, and invite someone else to watch, then talk about it. Paul told Timothy to entrust the gospel to faithful men who could teach it to others. He was setting the stage for leadership multiplication to the fourth generation, not just simply the addition of one more leader. You need to do the same in all your existing and new ministries.

### **Expand worship capacity**

*Timing: within 9-12 months*

One of the pressures that caused the leaders of Sycamore to contact Living Stones for help was the feeling of crowding in the 11:00 worship service. There are times when the room seems full, yet new people continue to connect. If not addressed properly by expanding worship capacity, the growth in that service will stop and it will begin to decline. The addition of the abbreviated service in the Ted Kalsbeek Chapel has helped, but only slightly.

There are several ways you could address this barrier, some of which are practical. You could start a building project right away to make your worship space larger. You could add a new worship time slot on Saturday night or on Sunday evening. You could attempt to balance the attendance in the two existing services by adjusting worship times.

One immediate move that can increase both seating capacity and flexibility of the space is to remove the existing pews and replace them with high quality, comfortable, stackable worship chairs. Depending on your choice of chairs, you can retain the look of pews while adding anywhere from 5% to 15% more seating capacity. While this additional capacity helps in the short term, the greater benefit is really the added flexibility it gives you to use that large space creatively in the future.

Another effective way to accomplish this goal of increased worship capacity is by creating a new worship venue somewhere in the building that allows for continued growth in another space. This is a variation of what you have already attempted with the service in the Chapel, but approaches it in different ways. We suggest you develop this new venue to occur at the same time as the existing worship service, but with its own worship leader and worship team and a method for delivering the same message as the other settings. If done in the right ways and for the right reasons, this additional venue will not compete with the existing worship but create even greater unity and cooperation. In fact, it should be strategically designed to connect with another one of those tribal cultures not currently being addressed.

The two spaces with the most to offer are the Chapel and Harper Hall. Either space will require modification to make it usable, so you have to weigh the potential benefits and costs for making significant changes in each. Because of the long-term facility view that will be detailed later in that section of the report, we suggest you consider using Harper Hall for this initial venue launch.

Larry Osborne, pastor of North Coast Church in the San Diego area, faced the same cramped worship space issue a number of years ago. They ran out of room in the original space designed for about 500, and stumbled onto a strategy that has allowed their church to continue growing to more than 6,000 in weekend worship. They still have no room on their main campus that holds more than 550 people. He and his leaders decided to create a new venue that was designed to be attractive and welcoming, rather than a penalty box for late-comers. In their case they made use of video technology so that worship in the new venue would be live, but the sermon would be delivered by video from the main auditorium. This has allowed them to maintain unity of purpose in the church through one “message” while allowing diversity of expression in worship. In fact, more than 80% of their adults are engaged in small group life that revolves around how to understand and live out the meat of each Sunday morning message.

Explore the principles of this rather than adopting a canned approach. You can consider shifting the time in the service when the message is preached so that the same pastor can deliver the message live in both venues each service. You can consider having the message fed live from the main worship center to the venue, or recorded at the earlier service and then played in the venue when it’s time for the message. Your pastors could collaborate on writing the message, then have one pastor deliver that message live in one venue while the other speaks in the main auditorium. This process is used by churches like Community Christian in Naperville, Illinois, for their multiple-campus/multiple venue church, and is described in the book *THE BIG IDEA* by Dave Ferguson, Eric Bramlett, and Jon Ferguson. A few of our Living Stones team recently worshipped with them in their newly launched “Icon” venue, a more traditional, contemplative worship venue in their main campus.

We recommend you investigate the helpful resources of Leadership Network as you weigh this option. Consider taking a team of people to one of their valuable Coast-to-Coast Multi-Site Church teaching conferences. Make a trip to visit with North Coast Church in Vista, California, spending time with Pastor Larry Osborne and his leadership team to learn the “why’s” and “how’s” of creating additional worship venues like this. Visit <http://www.northcoastchurch.com> to learn more about them. They enjoy sharing what they have learned as pioneers of using video worship venues.

You will especially want to work with North Coast’s DVD resource titled **THE VIDEO VENUE & MULTI-SITE STARTER KIT**, and Osborne’s book *THE UNITY FACTOR* as you begin your journey. Community Christian Church in the Chicago area, Ginghamburg

Church near Tipp City, Ohio, and Seacoast Church in Charleston, South Carolina, are a few among many churches you can learn from in the process.

We also recommend that a small team of people who are passionate about seeing Sycamore Presbyterian connect with not-yet-connected tribes of people through differing heart languages join in the development of this, knowing that you need to make this addition in the right timing and the right way. Adding worship capacity will involve expanding your leadership capacity so that new praise teams, worship leaders, and technology teams can be identified, developed, and equipped for service.

Once a team of people who are passionate about making this happen is identified and empowered, take the necessary time to plan and execute this process properly. You need to diligently pray about, properly plan for, and carefully launch another worship setting at the right time, at the right pace, in a healthy way, and for the right reasons. Charles Arn's book *HOW TO START A NEW SERVICE* is one resource that can help you engage this process differently and end up with a much better result than last time.

It is important to clarify WHY this is important for Sycamore to do. If the "why" isn't compelling enough, people won't endure the pain of "what" or "how." What positive results would you pray earnestly to see from adding this worship venue at Sycamore? That's the picture you need to clarify, then communicate and execute.

## Clarify values and vision

*Timing: within 9-12 months*

In the New American Standard Bible, Proverbs 29:18a says, "***Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained.***" The NIV says, "***Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.***" Eugene Peterson's *The Message* paraphrases it this way: "***If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves.***" In any translation, God seems to say that when we don't clearly see what we are to **be** and **do**, we will miss His purpose. It has a great deal to do with the "creative tension" between present reality—where we are right now—and where God intends for us to be. Remember: only when the "Why" is clear and compelling enough will we endure the pain of "What" and "How."

The book *LEADING CONGREGATIONAL CHANGE* defines vision as "**a clear, shared, compelling picture of the preferred future to which God is calling this congregation.**" This

*"Churches that grow will graciously welcome sinful people while showing them there is a better way to live. They understand that any uneasiness should come from a person's realization of sin, not from their way of dress or from their musical taste, political affiliation, or type of car. A faithful church must be relevant to the society it is reaching."*

*Gary McIntosh - Biblical Church Growth*

vision is God's unique call to a specific congregation, and always stems from the eternal mission of the church as described by Jesus in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Your leadership team needs to spend time reviewing what God is calling Sycamore Presbyterian Church to **be** and **do** in the place, time and circumstances he has put you. They need to continue to clarify the unique vision God has

for this congregation at this point in time. To do that, they must look for tangible ways to answer the questions, “**Who are we?**” and “**Why are we here?**”

You heard it repeatedly during our weekend together: **It’s NOT just about you!** Worship services are no longer just about you. Fellowship times are no longer just about you. Community outreach activities are no longer just about you. The changes you decide to make in attitudes, actions, and facilities are no longer just about you.

Understanding the shared ministry vision of the church is an extension of the Call-guided ministry principle. Rather than trying to be “all things to all people,” each church needs to define those particular areas where God has called it to serve as well as identifying those to whom it is called to minister. Dr. Thom Rainer, in ***BREAKOUT CHURCHES***, states that the shared vision of the church is determined by what he calls the church’s VIP, or “Vision Intersection Profile.” The VIP is shown in the following illustration:



In other words, the shared vision of the church could well be that place where all three circles—leadership passions, community needs, and the passions and gifts of the congregation—intersect.

Join the dots between common areas where folks are already engaged in or would love to be involved in ministries inside or outside the church, then examine how that shapes the corporate Sycamore Presbyterian Church vision. This process will take time and effort, and involve a variety of focus groups, but the results of the work will far surpass what could ever happen without it.

It is extremely difficult to over-communicate vision. In his book ***PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH***, Rick Warren says, “*Vision and purpose must be restated every twenty-six days to keep the church moving the right direction.*” You may not agree with his time frame, but the

*“None of us casts vision enough. For vision to stick, it has to be cast over and over and over and over, and not just over and over.”*  
Andy Stanley – *Vision Leaks* (Leadership, Winter 2004)

principle rings true in any case. Find innovative methods of making the vision *clear, shared, and compelling* through spoken words, printed flyers, newsletters, postcards, artistic banners, inspiring music, and other creative avenues. Use as many voices as possible to share it, as often as practical, and in as many ways as you can imagine.

## Discipleship as Christian education programming

*Timing: the next 9-12 months*

Jesus gave us no recorded command to start and grow churches. That is the byproduct of what he told us to do. He was powerfully clear, however, that we—in full awareness of his divine ability and his abiding presence—are to make disciples. This transition in thinking lays the foundation for Sycamore Presbyterian Church to develop a culture of holistic, disciple-making communities rather than trying to simply implement programs.

While education in the traditional classroom sense is valuable for producing a foundation of basic knowledge in students, it falls short of the goal Jesus gave the church in the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Here's one way of viewing the essentials of this directive. As we **GO** about living life, we **INVITE** others to see Jesus so they can **FOLLOW** him as we now journey together. We **TEACH** them what Jesus says, and together we learn to **OBEY** what he says by applying his teaching to all aspects of our lives in community. To be a truly devoted, sold-out follower of Jesus—a *disciple*—is to be on the road to becoming more like Jesus.

The Heavenly Father's goal for us is a transformed life. True discipleship in the Hebrew model—Jesus' model—had as its goal not just the transfer of information, but the transformation of character. While it's true that most young people no longer have exposure to foundational Biblical principles, some people in the church don't need to be told to learn more Scripture; they need to learn to live out what they know in ways the world can see—ways that demonstrate the difference faith makes in real life.

The goal of discipleship is not simply for the student to **know** what the teacher knows, but for the student to “be **like**” his teacher. Paul told us in Romans 8:29 that the Heavenly Father's desire for his followers is to become “conformed to the image” of his Son – to become **like** Jesus.

Discipleship in this fashion was, and still is, created most effectively in the context of person-to-person relationships within the bounds of authentic Christian community. Discipleship happens as we experience the trials and triumphs of life together in ways that allow others to see the impact faith in God has upon those situations. It requires time, commitment and intentionality. It demands that we *do life together*.

A strategic ministry recommendation is for Sycamore Presbyterian to make the conscious decision to become a church committed to the development of self-initiating, reproducing, fully-devoted followers of Jesus. It's a call to help adults, students, and young children become A.L.I.V.E. in the Sycamore community of faith. Be intentional about evaluating existing and future activities to determine how well they help you accomplish the key purposes of the church, and how effective they are at helping you cultivate and grow disciples.

*While some form of cognitive training is essential, if that is all that's being done, then it's only half of what's necessary. Both cognitive training and modeling make for a culture of equipping.*

**BEYOND THE BOX**

Authentic discipleship happens best when we experience long-term, loving relationships with each other that are Christ-and-others-centered. This rarely happens when people just sit in pews or chairs looking at the backs of each other's heads. Discipling relationships develop in smaller clusters of people where they can share the important questions and the deeper things of life and journey together on our walk with Christ.

Mark Devries, in his book *FAMILY BASED YOUTH MINISTRY*, takes an interesting look at what makes a youth disciple-making culture sustainable. He suggests that the most effective predictor of whether a young person in the church will be an active follower of Christ as an adult is not whether they attended Sunday school, their youth group, worship, or even whether they were a youth leader. The thing that most effectively predicts whether a church youth will have an active faith as an adult is whether they were involved in long-term discipling relationship with a mature Christian adult. There is lifelong impact when a young person can walk through the good and bad of life with someone who loves them enough to be authentic with them, living out their faith with the masks off. It's wonderful when this sort of relationship happens at home, but let's be honest. When you look around at your children's friends, how many of them have a shot at that kind of spiritual foundation in today's culture?

No youth pastor can build a sustainable youth ministry alone. If your youth group suddenly tripled in size you would have some extremely burned out youth leaders. Only when a small army of adult followers of Jesus, passionate about seeing kids learn to follow Christ for a lifetime, are identified and equipped to build long-term relationships with those kids can that kind of vibrant and sustainable culture exist.

That means a significant portion of the next student ministries director's energy must be devoted to finding other adults whose hearts yearn for kids to have a great faith walk and who are willing to give themselves to that passion. As you search for someone to fill this staff role, look for a person who is as willing to find and equip adults for relationships with the youth as they are to build their own relationships with the kids. By identifying, guiding, and empowering adults in the church who have a heart passion for the youth and are a vibrant part of the congregation, an environment can be developed where healthy, long-term, disciple-making relationships occur.

Older Christians who build into the lives of the youth don't have to know everything, or even completely understand today's youth culture, but they must be growing in their walk with Christ and have a heart that is willing to guide a young person on their journey with the Lord through life. They should understand that a disciple-making relationship begins by meeting people wherever they are on their spiritual journey, either toward the cross or toward Christ-likeness, and helping them take the next step in the right direction. This model is much healthier and sustainable than one which expects the youth pastor to develop close, long-term relationships with everyone in a youth group. Think sustainable, lifelong disciple making.

As a way to engage others into ministry to children and youth, we suggest you reevaluate the team teaching approach that you tried in the past. Review the article by Eddy Hall in the Appendix for an example that might be helpful. It is a way to create connecting points of ministry for those who are not gifted as teachers but who might be passionate about the children and youth. The additional benefit of this approach is that it allows you to combine some of the smaller age-graded classes, which relieves pressure on CE space when there is a particularly large "bubble" of ages and a need for rooms occupied by only a few children.

If one delivery method is effective in creating the kind of relational, disciple-making environment where people are not only "getting the information" but are learning how to live it

out, why not celebrate and equip that activity? Rather than trying to sustain programs that compete for leadership resources, it's better to do one thing with excellence and passion, and allow less effective activities to die. This often frees those filling a slot to pursue a ministry they're gifted and called by God to do.

Pay more attention to the desired results, and hold less tightly to the strategies and methods. It may mean that, if your goal is making disciples through relationships, more activities need to happen at times other than Sunday morning, or in places other than the church. Understanding what the purpose of Sunday school is at its core helps you become more willing to adjust the methods, times, or settings. The message never changes, but the delivery method must, as demonstrated by Paul on Mars Hill. Be willing to hold tightly to what does not change, and to hold loosely those things that need to shift with the changing times.

### *Small group culture*

Rather than getting hung up on one model of a small group program, add resources that help you graft a culture of **relational** disciple-making into the DNA of Sycamore Presbyterian Church. One of those resources, a book titled **TRANSFORMING DISCIPLESHIP**, brings to light the model Jesus and Paul used as they transferred their hearts and mission into the lives of a few others. The author, Greg Ogden, recommends the formation of triads, or groups of three, who mutually commit to help each other grow toward maturity in Christ over a period of at least one year. They use a companion curriculum as a guide book to lead them through the foundations of the Christian faith in small chunks.

Another resource, **CULTIVATING A LIFE FOR GOD**, focuses on the transforming power of Scripture and specific accountability questions. Author Neil Cole uses a concept he calls Life Transformation Groups (LTGs) to describe his model. His newer book, **ORGANIC CHURCH**, provides a look at what God has done through the concept of LTGs in powerful ways around the world. The interesting concept both of these present is that the most effective method for creating an environment where God can accomplish the work of transforming us into Christ-likeness is a group of 2 to 4 individuals—a “small” group. The other common concept is that neither requires an extensive training program to get started. All three of these resources are available through the Living Stones online bookstore.

We often meet folks who would be much more comfortable engaging in a process like this with a few others than leading a traditional small group. Groups can be formed around topical studies, shared needs, like interests, doctrinal issues, or a wide variety of other things that connect people, as long as you equip and guide them to be holistic at their core. The point in suggesting these resources is to offer additional ways to get people started which don't require a great deal of initial training or administration. What they **do** require is time, and a mutual commitment to each other.

*You'll never really get to know someone until you've spent time with your feet under their kitchen table.*

Use a variety of methods to build and grow fully devoted, reproducing followers of Christ. Make it part of your culture. Further develop authentic Christian community, and create environments where you can truly get to know one another. Create commonality and accountability by making sure every group and team knows their purpose and that those purposes fit with your vision and the church's mission.

## Connections ministry

*Timing: within 12 months*

Meeting people at their point of need and connecting them on a journey with Jesus is part of what it takes to fulfill the Great Commission mandate to make disciples. Notice it doesn't just say, "Make converts" or "Make new members." Discipleship is much more than getting folks to join the church: it's walking with them on their lifelong journey of becoming more like Christ and teaching them to do the same with someone else. Doing that starts by getting to know them the first time you meet them, and intentionally connecting them to the community of faith that is Sycamore Presbyterian Church. Outreach efforts can help you get introduced, but you need to be intentional about connecting people into disciple-making relationships for the long haul.

Sycamore has a good start on making a good first impression. Your greeting area, portable welcome center, and information tables create an inviting environment for first time guests. There were a few people who greeted us on Sunday morning who had not met us earlier in the week, but only a few. Whether guests decide to become part of the church family is often determined in the first few minutes when they drive onto your property for the first time.

While you have a good start on this, we recommend you identify a team of people within Sycamore who are passionate about making guests feel at home in your church, then empower those folks to function as the core of a larger Connections Ministries Team. This team will become responsible for your greeting and ushering ministry, for follow up, and for looking at your service and programs through the eyes of first-time guests to suggest ways they can be more visitor-sensitive.

We suggest that you charge this ministry team with four goals, then leave it to them to experiment to find the best ways to achieve these goals.

**Connection 1:** Every weekend guest who does not wish to be invisible will not leave the building until he or she has made at least one friend--a person who, when that guest returns a second time, will know their name and be looking forward to seeing them again.

**Connection 2:** Every first-time guest will receive a doorstep visit from a Sycamore member (not a staff member) within 24 to 48 hours of their first visit to the church. The caller will leave a gift and information about the church, but will not go into their home.

**Connection 3:** The Connections Ministries Team will facilitate a process of helping newcomers find a place in some form of small group (home-based small group, Sunday school class, men's fellowship, service project team, etc.) within six weeks of their first visit. (Research shows that if they haven't connected in this way within six weeks, you've probably lost them.)

**Connection 4:** The Connections Ministry Team will facilitate a process of helping newcomers identify their spiritual gifts and call and move into intentional personal ministry within three to six months after their initial visit. This does not mean that the Connections Ministry Team does the ministry of gift/call counseling, but that they will work closely with

that ministry to make sure newcomers are connected to that ministry.

When a new guest has found a home in a small group setting and moved into an intentional personal ministry, they can be considered a part of the congregation. According to Charles Arn, the average non-growing church enfolds one out of ten visitors into the congregation. Churches that are growing at the rate of 5% or more a year enfold two in ten visitors into the congregation. Having an effective Connections Ministries Team may be the single simplest thing you can do to increase the growth capacity of your church.

Because welcoming is a ministry to which people are called, greeting should not be considered a chore that everyone has to take a turn at. It should be done by those who are most passionate about making people feel welcome. The same is true of those who do the 24- to 48-hour follow up. This can be a minor ministry hat that many people can wear, but it should not be something people do as an assignment or out of guilt. It should be something people do because they really want to make newcomers feel welcome.

Give your Connections Ministries Team the authority and the budget to do whatever they need to do to fulfill their ministry goals. Empower them to create a welcoming atmosphere. Encourage them to try different approaches to making people feel welcome, to always be on the lookout for ways to improve your welcome. Be prepared to try lots of things that don't work very well before finding those that do work well. Charge this group with evaluating what you are now doing and sorting through what parts of it work well and which might be improved upon. Have fun with this, but don't stop there.

## **Complete the first NCD cycle**

*Timing: 12-16 months*

As you approach the first anniversary of your site visit, make plans with your ministry coach to engage in your first follow-up NCD survey. The survey itself was included in your original Integrated Planning Consultation package, so Living Stones will assist you with the necessary forms and resulting data files. This is often a great time to have your ministry coach return to the church for the review of the new NCD information and to help with an evaluation of how effectively you have implemented your action plan. You will likely have a new Minimum Factor, which should reshape the makeup of your church health team to include a couple of people who might be gifted and passionate about this new area of focus.

## **The 3-Time-Slot Principle**

With today's hectic pace of life, it is no longer realistic to expect people to be there every time the doors are open. Too many choices and not enough time are just facts of life. A more realistic expectation is for people to fit into the 3-time-slot principle. Most committed members will only give three significant time periods a week to church life. If worship is one and Christian education or an intergenerational small-group is another, that only leaves one more for some sort of hands-on ministry or serving opportunity.

Keep in mind that hands-on ministry takes time, but is eternally significant. Remember to tie the smallest task anyone does to the greater Kingdom story. Bob Logan states, “If you can’t tie the most menial task you ask someone to do in the church to the overarching plan of God in history, then don’t ask them to do it.” Help everyone realize that their contribution to the work of God is valuable and needed.

As Sycamore continues to grow, recognize the benefit of this principle. Decide what core things are important for the development of authentic disciples and make sure your structures and expectations do not pour more on someone’s plate than they can manage. That is not to say you don’t stretch people when the purpose is right and the need is great.

The best is too often the victim of the good. Everyone is so busy doing a bunch of *good* things that we don’t have enough energy to do with excellence the few things it would be *best* to do. Be intentional about learning how God gifts and calls people, help them learn to prioritize the time they devote to the church and its ministries, and teach them to say no with grace when they should.

## **The 2-Hat Principle**

It was obvious to us from what we observed that there are more than a few people at Sycamore who have trouble saying “no” when something needs to be done and they have the talent or ability to do it. It is not unusual for us to see a majority of people in our leadership sessions with their hands sheepishly in the air when we ask how many serve in three, four or even five ministry programs on a regular basis. To those who fall into that category we suggest the 2-hat principle. Simply put, this means that as a general rule, non-staff members should wear no more than two ministry hats in the church: one large hat and one small hat.

The large hat represents a ministry requiring more than two hours a week in preparation and execution, like preaching, leading the music ministry, teaching a Sunday school class, or leading a small group. The small hat would be something requiring less than two hours a week on a regular basis, such as being a greeter, a children’s ministry helper, a prayer partner, assisting with the coffee time, or spending a session in the nursery as a helper.

It is better to do two things that bring you energy and joy and do them with excellence than it is to do five things grudgingly, with little or no enthusiasm. It’s not a sin to say no in many cases. Sometimes, making a “stop doing” list can be more productive in the long run than making a bigger “to do” list.

The 2-hat principle can free those who were just filling slots to discover what God wants them to do, then to do it with all their heart. See the benefit? Make it a guiding principle, not a hard-and-fast rule. The goal is to not make wearing too many “hats” a normal way of doing ministry, and to start applying that mindset now as part of the church culture.

## **Evaluate present activities**

### ***Know the purpose***

As part of how you address barriers to healthy ministry, take time to assess the primary and secondary purposes for each existing program or activity. What is the purpose of this activity?

What are we attempting to accomplish? Does it compete with another activity with the same purpose and target, draining people and resources in the process? Does it fit with our core values? Which of our purposes or goals does this enhance? Does it help us accomplish what God is calling us to do at Sycamore? Does it help us connect with each other and with others, meeting needs in the name of Jesus? Does it lead us to become healthy, maturing, reproducing Jesus-followers? If the goal is discipleship, then you want to build on the success of your current programs and intentionally create more opportunities for nurturing, disciple-making relationships to grow.

As you assess each activity, you may discover that two activities are duplicating the same purpose, competing for the time and energy of gifted workers. If so, one activity may not be necessary. Combine the best of both activities into one, and do that one with excellence. It is better to do fewer things with energy and excellence than to try to do too many things with mediocrity. If you see it's time to let a program or activity go, don't just kill it without a funeral. Celebrate all that program did to contribute to the foundations laid by good people and good ideas, and how they contributed to the growth of Sycamore in the past. Acknowledge those who pioneered the program, thank God for its previous effectiveness, then look to the future with hope because of it, and then let it go.

### ***Remember why you are here***

Living Stones has looked at the financial habits of the healthy and unhealthy churches we worked with over the years. One interesting side discovery of that study was a correlation between the amount of time the equipping staff spends in ministry to people outside the church and the rate of healthy growth. Churches where staff members spend approximately 20% of their time in ministry activity outside the church had a significantly higher rate of growth than those whose staff members spend little or no time in outside activity.

Knowing who God is calling us to **be** helps further define our mission as we respond in obedience to what he desires us to **do**. If we are to be on mission with God, we need to think like missionaries. Missionaries don't sit at home and wait for their target people group to come to them and speak English. Effective missionaries learn about the people they want to reach, study their customs, enter their world, immerse themselves in their culture, build bridges of friendship with those they want to hear the Good News, learn their language, then tell them stories about God's love and grace in ways those people can understand.

The message doesn't change, but the delivery methods must. The language we speak must change to be understandable to different hearers. Truth must never be sacrificed, but it needs to be understood. That doesn't mean you discard your traditions and heritage, but that you help new people understand the significance those traditions and heritage bring to your faith journey.

### ***Celebrate, look up, and decide***

It is important to celebrate what has gone before. Because change brings separation from things familiar, it's like grieving a death. People need to celebrate all that the past has done to get you to this point. Celebrating tradition is not the same as clinging to traditionalism. As someone once stated, ***“Tradition is the living faith of dead people; traditionalism is the dead faith of***

*living people.*” We do well when we recognize the difference. Sycamore has a tremendous heritage, and you have put great energy and resources into honoring those who had a part in that heritage. One of your documents says, **“Rejoice in Our Heritage, Commit to Our Future.”** You now stand at a crossroad of choices that will either build on that heritage or attempt to institutionalize it. Be careful that the message you intend to send with all your memorials and plaques is the one actually being heard and understood by those who join you now.

It is time to find creative ways to honor the memories of those important to your heritage, but to do it in ways that don’t make the memories more sacred than the mission for which they are remembered. Search for imaginative ideas like the addition of a Columbarium, or the creation of a Memorial Courtyard or Memorial Pathway around the reconfigured pond as you move to that point in your facility plan.

Keep in mind that change is a process and not an event. Think of change in terms of making adjustments along the way. If a change you make in a specific area doesn’t help as it was intended, recognize that it isn’t cast in stone. Adjust it. Fine-tune it. Perform mid-course corrections. Don’t be afraid to fail as many times as it takes to finally get it right. The goal is to learn how to be an authentic, loving community of Christ-followers into which you can invite those who have yet to fully engage a journey with God.

Keep looking for opportunities to develop friendships with those around you by meeting them at their version of the Samaritan well. Then, be ready to share Living Water with them.

## MINISTRY RECOMMENDATIONS CHECKLIST

- ✓ Within 2-4 week after receiving this report, solidify your Church Health Team and Facility Task Force. Develop an intentional strategy to communicate with each other, the board, the congregation, other Sycamore leadership, and your Living Stones coach.
- ✓ Within 2 months, prioritize the recommendations of this report.
- ✓ Within 3 months, complete the analysis phase of the detailed NCD information, working to apply your areas of strength in the actions taken. Begin developing 3 to 5 specific Action Steps that you will take to strengthen Need-oriented Evangelism throughout the church culture.
- ✓ Within 3-6 months, more fully explore the reality discussed in *THE PRESENT FUTURE* to better understand the idea of cultural distinctions and the touch questions the church must ask in response. Learn about the transitions necessary for a church to change from being a small to a medium to a large church using *ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL*.
- ✓ Within 3-6 months, begin addressing Need-oriented Evangelism. Develop ways to use Sycamore's existing strengths to create better understanding of and a way to engage people in meeting hurting people's needs in Jesus' name.
- ✓ Starting within 6 months, begin moving from a "command-and-control" decision making structure to one that engages and empowers leaders and people alike. Use *HIGH IMPACT CHURCH BOARDS* as a guide, and enlist the help of Sycamore folks who have experience in this arena from outside the church environment.
- ✓ Within 6-9 months, begin an intentional transition from being program-driven to call-guided in ministry. Develop a process that helps existing and new members connect understanding their gifts and discerning God's call on their hearts. Empower them to serve God's kingdom where he leads them, especially outside the walls of the church.
- ✓ Within 9-12 months, plan and launch a new worship venue that expands the capacity of the 11:00 Sunday morning service to allow for continued growth. Make the needed furnishing and facilities changes to increase worship capacity. Get the training and help needed to do this in the right way and at the right pace.
- ✓ Within 9-12 months, work together to further discern the clear, shared, compelling, God-given vision of the preferred future of Sycamore. Discern how God's call on individual hearts might shape the corporate call for Sycamore Presbyterian Church. Use your communication strategies to repeatedly paint that picture with passion.
- ✓ Within 9-12 months, cultivate a culture of creative discipleship. Encourage your existing small groups to become more holistic, and allow other individuals to engage in the Life

Transformation Group or triad form of making disciples. Create as many apprenticeship opportunities as possible as you deliberately cultivate and develop new ministry leaders.

- ✓ Within 12 months, identify and launch a Connections Ministry Team to help you welcome and connect new people into long term disciple-making relationships and ministry at Sycamore.
- ✓ In 12-14 months, make plans to continue the NCD cycle by completing your follow-up NCD survey. Engage your ministry coach in the process of review and evaluation of overall progress with the report recommendations.
- ✓ Follow the 3-Time-Slot and 2-Hat principles as your guides, not rules, for a more realistic expectation of involvement in church life. Free people from doing too many things, even if that means some things no longer get done. As much as possible within your polity, streamline committees, boards, and meeting frequencies to free people for active ministry.
- ✓ Evaluate the purpose of each new and existing activity and program. Be sure it helps you fulfill God's call for Sycamore by squaring it with your vision and the church's defined purposes. If two programs compete to serve the same purpose with the same group, do some pruning.
- ✓ Remember who you are here to serve. Consciously decide what path Sycamore is called to walk, which determines what you do with facilities and how your staff needs to adjust. Rejoice in your heritage, and commit to your future!

## **STAFFING**

As God continues to mold Sycamore Presbyterian Church through its transitions, the way you define your corporate vision will further shape the understanding of your staff and lay leadership roles. As discussed briefly, Sycamore still functions in some ways like a small or medium-sized church even though you are a large church. That causes difficulties as you make decisions and attempt to lead, and has unintended consequences on your equipping staff. If Sycamore is to move from being program-driven to being call-guided in ministry, and to embrace what it means to more fully connect people to Christ and each other as disciples, your equipping staff will have to do more equipping and the congregation will need to do more hands-on, person-to-person ministry.

As the church continues to grow, the roles of your pastoral staff need to change from doing a majority of the ministry to that of equipping the equippers and leading the leaders. A larger portion of their energy will need to be invested in identifying, equipping, and empowering others in the church. They will need to devote less time to daily issues of operational details, and more time with other leaders understanding and casting God's vision for Sycamore Presbyterian Church's role in the community and the world.

Other decision-making leadership bodies, like Session, will also need to shift as they invest less time on command and control issues. They need to spend more time encouraging, resourcing, guiding, evaluating, and providing accountability for staff, ministry teams, and those other individual leaders who desire to touch their world in Jesus' name.

## **Sabbath**

*Timing: within 6 months*

Your ministry staff knows from personal experience the time demands created by unending needs. There just aren't enough hours in a day to meet all the needs that present themselves. This demand level can create a dysfunctional and even dangerous situation. If your pastoral staff members are too busy taking care of crisis needs to connect with and hear from God on a regular basis, then they are too busy to lead. At that point all they can do is manage. When that situation exists for too long, burnout occurs. You can't continually give water from a bucket that's running dry. They need, as even Jesus did, time away from the pressing needs and all the giving.

We strongly recommend you officially make it part of the responsibilities and job descriptions of your pastoral staff to practice an intentional day of Sabbath on a regular basis. Spending deliberate time with God will bring refreshment and clarity to their ministries like few things can. This Sabbath time is absolutely not to be considered a day off, but is in reality a paid day of work. It should be a minimum of one full day every two weeks, or a half-day every week if that fits the schedule better.

You have to determine what works best in the rhythm of things at Sycamore. Pastors and leaders: we challenge you to refer to chapter 8 of Reggie McNeal's book, ***A WORK OF HEART: UNDERSTANDING HOW GOD SHAPES SPIRITUAL LEADERS*** as a point of

conversation and reflection on this important practice. There are also a number of great articles about this topic in various Christian leadership publications.

This is not to be a day to run errands or prepare lessons. This time is to be taken by your pastors to spend with God, nurturing his or her personal relationship with the Lord. It is a time for them to honestly share their heart with God, and to “be still” long enough to listen for God’s leading in their life. It will be a challenge. Unless the importance of this (the *why*) is big enough that other expectations are adjusted to make room for it, it will not be implemented.

Pastoral staff members should work together to design the details of this Sabbath time schedule. Each pastor knows what he or she needs to feed their spirit, what God uses most often to effectively to speak into their heart. They need to find a place away from home, the office and the church that only they, their spouse, and the office manager know about. If it means that the church needs to rent a room at a retreat center, a nearby park, or a lake, then do it. Treat it as a staff equipping expense.

This Sabbath time should only be disturbed in the case of an extreme, personal family emergency. The staff person is not to catch up on paperwork. They should take *only* a Bible, some devotional material, perhaps some relaxing or uplifting worship music, and a journal. The church elders are to be responsible for creating accountability for this regular appointment time with God, otherwise good things will interfere with it. The spiritual vitality and focus of Sycamore’s pastoral leaders are too important to the church to let this slide.

## **Equipping staff**

*Timing: within the next 6-12 months*

One widely used staffing ratio says a solo pastor can maintain a church of about 125-150 people in their span of care. To sustain growth beyond that level requires additional equipping staff. Equipping staff levels becomes a barrier to sustainable growth if staff is not added ahead of the growth. That means Sycamore, with the current equivalent of about 4-5 full time equipping and program staff members, should be able to sustain a congregation of about 525 to 750 in worship before staffing levels get in the way of sustainable growth, as long as the equipping load is shared in an effective way. The reality is that Sycamore is not all that far from that level now with an average attendance of about 520, and a membership roll of more than 1,000. The other point is that your current staff configuration does not effectively spread the broader ministry load in an optimal way. That is partly behind the low score on NCD question Q-28, “*Our pastor(s) have too much work to do.*” This means that, in addition to filling the positions of another associate pastor and someone to champion student ministries, it’s time to consciously rethink the primary and secondary roles of the entire equipping and program staff.

When a small church is ready to move to multiple staff, they often hire a specialist like a youth pastor as their first staff addition. In our experience, this is more often a mistake than a benefit. Because most youth groups in small churches are not large enough to warrant a youth specialist on staff, we often recommend that the second staff person be a generalist rather than a specialist. The scope of responsibilities of the second staff member should not be focused on a narrow segment of the congregation, but broad enough to share the ministry load with other staff and contribute leadership in areas where current staff is less gifted. As churches move from

being medium-sized to large, the staff roles shift again to being more specialized in nature. That's where Sycamore is now.

Scripture is clear in 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 when it says that the healthiest body has many parts, all of which are important to the whole. As good as they are, your current ministry staff does not contain the scope of gifts and abilities Sycamore needs as you grow. That is precisely why developing an empowering leadership culture and engaging others in ministry leadership must become part of their focus and the church's commitment.

In other words, additional pastoral and program staff members need to have skills and gifts that augment rather than clone the current staff. They should bring gifts and abilities that provide a more complete balance of talents and perspectives to the team so that the broader needs of the congregation are addressed in healthy ways. They should also be someone with proven ability to work with others in a team environment, and with the appropriate people skills to effectively engage and empower others in their respective area of responsibility to reach their full God-given potential. You made a strong move in this direction, in our opinion, when you added Jack Taylor to your staff, although his role is a hybrid of responsibilities in both program and support. The point is that you need to be intentional in the next additions as well.

You are currently looking for another associate pastor to focus on adult ministries, and someone to coordinate the efforts of your student ministries. You are right on target, and should move ahead with that process as long as you keep these principles in mind as you search for the right candidates. Make sure they fit well with the current team. To help you in that respect you might consult the book *STAFF YOUR CHURCH FOR GROWTH* by Gary McIntosh, which can help you understand this principle more fully.

One of the first arguments against the current and future staff additions will be the finances. Simply put, that cannot be used as an excuse. You must step up to the plate on this in order to develop your staff for sustainable, long term ministry. Sycamore's financial ability to meet this need is discussed in that section of the report. If staff needs are left unaddressed at the right time, the risks are that growth will stop and actually reverse, or that your current staff will burn themselves out by trying to meet the growing needs of the ministry without an effective, healthy balance.

### ***Realignment dialog***

Because you are being challenged to develop an even more intentional call-guided culture, your staff roles should undergo some adjustments. As Sycamore moves that direction and your governing structures take on a more empowering look, the staff responsibilities need to be evaluated in light of each staff member's unique gift mix, passion, and experiences so that you more effectively engage them in responsibilities they are actually best suited for.

While we are not advocating that you scrap everyone's current job description and responsibilities, or abdicate essential staff expectations, we are recommending that Session allow your equipping and program staff to engage in creative dialog about their individual gifts and the call God placed on their hearts, and how those things fit with their current roles at Sycamore and the vision of the church. Give them room to dream about what realignments to roles might do to potentially bring even greater effectiveness to the Sycamore staff and ultimately the congregation. Use what they learn together as a way to think differently about how you can purposefully reshape current and develop future staff expectations.

## **Office support**

*Timing: 9-12 months*

It is not effective, scriptural, or even good financial stewardship for your salaried ministry staff to perform routine office tasks that others are better gifted to handle. They should be free from doing things others can do more effectively in order to do more of what they have been called and gifted to do. Rather than spending time doing routine clerical activities, their energies should be concentrated more on listening, learning, leading, equipping, and teaching. The administrative and clerical duties of an office are best done by people who are gifted and skilled for those tasks.

Based on a common ratio of one support staff for every two equipping staff members, you are close to being understaffed with the equivalent of about 2.75 full time support staff. The current workload has likely not pushed the limits terribly because of the current opening in student ministries. As the ministries of the church and the size of the equipping and program staff continue to expand, you will need additional capacity in the support staff.

It is our recommendation that sometime in the next 9-12 months you begin looking for an addition to your office support team who can start on a part-time basis. He or she should be someone with whom the current staff and support team can work, and whose skills and gifts complement rather than duplicates those already there. This person might be someone already in the congregation with the gifts and skills that fit. Define the needs, then start looking to see who God might provide.

## **Facility support**

*Timing: as increased activity warrants*

The Sycamore buildings are used by multitudes of groups for a large variety of activities throughout the week, which requires a great degree of coordination, maintenance, and configuration changes. Doing so with one or two custodians and maintenance employees becomes increasingly difficult, even when it is supplemented by volunteers.

You have dealt well with the current level of facility change-over. As you add another worship venue and your facility use increases with more frequent room changes, Sycamore should prepare to increase the capacity of your paid facility support staff. We recommend you plan to add someone on a part-time basis who can be available with the flexibility to facilitate room change-over and building use coordination. They should be knowledgeable about how the ministries of the church fit into the overall vision, and be willing to coordinate additional help for special events and extraordinary activities. Watch for someone within the church who might be retired or close to retirement, but who has the energy to be flexible.

The Sycamore campus is becoming increasingly complex. As you continue to grow, it is our belief that the church would be well served by having a facilities manager who would not only be responsible for the custodial issues, but would also provide oversight of a comprehensive maintenance plan and serve to coordinate the work of outside contractors and services related to the buildings. You should also consider the purchase of a good facility management software program for this task.

This position is probably more detailed than what you have now. You will need to work out those details as you move forward and assess how to staff this position. Whether you believe your current staff has the ability to adjust to this type of expanded role is something you need to work through in a mutually agreeable manner.

## **Equipment**

Be sure to equip your paid and unpaid ministry staff, support staff, and ministry leaders with the most current, properly working office equipment including up-to-date computers with networking software, functional email, a working phone system with voice mail capabilities, and whatever else they need to function properly. You may also want to consider a video monitoring system that allows your office staff to see by camera feed the various points of entry into the building. Ask those who are doing the work to list what they need to accomplish their tasks most effectively. Increase your budget as necessary to support those who serve you.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS CHECKLIST

- ✓ Within the next 3-4 months, work with staff and leaders to formulate written job descriptions that help define responsibilities and expectations for those you employ and place into leadership roles.
- ✓ Within the next 6 months, formalize the practice of a regular Sabbath day for your paid equipping staff. Recognize the purpose as refreshing their spirit and nurturing their personal relationships with the Lord. Have the elders develop and maintain accountability for this consistent appointment time.
- ✓ In the next 6-12 months, complete the process of filling the associate pastor and student ministries director position. Recognize the need for equipping roles to transition as the vision and direction of the church is clarified. Begin dialog about redefining the roles of your senior and associate staff job descriptions so they more appropriately match the needs of the congregation and consider individual gifts and passions.
- ✓ In the next 9-12 months, monitor the need for additional support staff capacity as additional equipping and program staff come on board.
- ✓ Add to your facility support team as appropriate. Adequately provide for the facility and infrastructure maintenance plan in your budget process.
- ✓ Provide updated and fully functioning office equipment for all staff members and unpaid ministry leaders.

# **FACILITIES**

## STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

### Growth Strategies

One of the most strategic questions Sycamore Presbyterian needs to wrestle with is what operational model you will embrace for continued future growth. We suggest consideration of the following four categories of growth models.

#### *Traditional one campus*

(larger facilities, gymnasiums, family life centers, etc.) ... Saddleback Valley Community Church <http://saddleback.com/flash/>

The traditional North American church model for accommodating growth is to build a bigger sanctuary so we can all stay together. This paradigm is a holdover from the “builder generation.” Their life experiences tend toward the belief that building a successful institution (church) is dependant on everyone being together as one group. The result has created many of today’s mega-churches in a variety of contexts, but most with the desire to remain “one church” in the same place. The difficulty lies in the presence of multiple generational cultures concurrent in the U.S. today who do not see being one homogenous group as a prerequisite for societal or religious community success. (RE: *THE PRESENT FUTURE* by Reggie McNeal)

#### *Traditional church planting*

(mother/daughter congregations)

Churches that birth other churches are nothing new. In fact, they are closer to the design God intended than the ones that grow infinitely larger. The traditional approach to birthing new churches has been to simply clone the mother church in as many ways possible, similar to the franchise approach in the business world. The idea is to just duplicate what has already worked so you can do more of it in a new place.

Most often this approach is driven by demographical issues, so the growing church plants a new congregation somewhere on the outskirts of their current geographical sphere of influence. The resulting new outlet relieves the mounting pressure on the mother church as they give away core leaders to the daughter church, and opens the doors to an expanded pool of potential members.

Over the last two decades, alternative models for growth have been successfully developed. In general these can be thought of in two categories; the multiple congregational models and the multiple site models.

### ***Multiple congregations***

(tribes, off-campus ministry, “go” vs. “come”) ... North Coast <http://www.northcoastchurch.com>  
Fellowship Bible Church <http://www.fbclr.org/fbchome.aspx>;

Multiple congregation models recognize that different life experiences and worship languages exist for connecting with God within any large group, especially those with multiple generations. These models also recognize the practical limitations of community size. Even in very large groups, we cannot “know” more than a couple of hundred people in any meaningful way.

The multiple congregation models accommodate separate groups of limited size (multiple services) and are designed around differing worship languages in various venues and music styles). Separate congregations often have their own congregational or venue pastor who communicates from the same cultural or generational language. These multiple congregations are still part of one church in mostly one location.

### ***Multi-site***

(one church / many locations) ... Seacoast Church <http://www.seacoast.org/> Willow Creek Community Church <http://www.willowcreek.org/> ***MULTI-SITE CHURCH REVOLUTION***  
Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, Warren Bird

Multiple site models may include the characteristics of multiple congregation models but are not always at the same location. These churches, though still one church body, are in separate neighborhoods or even in separate cities. Each “campus” will likely have its own pastoral staff and may include multiple congregations.

As Sycamore Presbyterian moves forward, it becomes more and more important to understand the strategic advantages and limitations of these various growth models and invest wisely in preparing for the future. The next step is making the move toward a multiple congregational growth model.

## **Traditions**

The second strategic question for Sycamore is consideration of creative alternatives to honoring the past and your traditions without limiting God’s preferred future. Sycamore is operating under the misconception that honoring past contributions from giants in the congregation must be tied to physical monuments dedicated to those contributors. The chapel, the pews, the library, etc., for some Sycamore people, have become monuments to those who went before. In some ways you may have made a place or a person or a thing more sacred than the mission for which they gave themselves.

Sycamore needs to seriously consider adaptive reuses for the Kalsbeek Chapel, remove the pews in both the Chapel and the main worship space (which are considered “sacred” by some), and establish another memorial method for the library. We are not saying that you should not honor the memory or the contributions of those whose names these things bear, but that you investigate and use different ways of doing it that does not paralyze the church from making more effective ministry use of something that was never designed to be worshipped. While on site it was mentioned that the pond is fed by an underground spring, which was a reason for the

founders choosing this site. At least one person suggested “designing” the facilities around the pond to honor the founding traditions of Sycamore Presbyterian Church. Taken to an extreme, this position can greatly hinder your ability to make necessary adjustments in the facilities and properties to accommodate continued growth.

These statements are not intended to dishonor the heritage of Sycamore Presbyterian in any way. They are intended to point out a scriptural model for honoring institutional history and persons. God has always considered names important. He requires that we honor His name. He chooses names of people and places that characterize their nature. He establishes traditions and markers for the purpose of giving an answer to new generations when they ask “what does this mean”. His concern, however, is about the application of that heritage to the future life.

## **Priorities**

Whatever the final disposition of how you honor these traditions without institutionalizing the wrong things, the paradigm shift is required to move forward. In our opinion, the other major prioritizing factors for when to move forward with these facility changes will be how you embrace the ministry recommendations, and when finances are in place to move forward without going into significant debt. The Facility Task Force is to work closely with your facilities coach to fully evaluate and prioritize their tasks according to the removal of financial and attitudinal barriers.

## **FACILITY NEEDS**

### **Site maximization & parking**

Sycamore Presbyterian has not had to plan its property to maximize available land until now, and therefore doesn't know the limits to growth accommodation. The planned widening and upgrades to Montgomery and Mason will impact the church's property. The separation of the Seven Gables property and crossing Mason Street creates usability and safety issues. There are additional life safety and code issues associated with both the Seven Gables property and the Manse.

The existing pond creates two limitations. Its location limits expansion to the east which is the only direction allowed by the building placement; and the elevated levee bank to the south limits parking expansion in that direction.

The planned widening and traffic flow improvements for Mason and Montgomery create bigger impacts for maximizing the property. Existing parking on the west side of building along Montgomery will be reduced as you lose the outside row. The widening of Montgomery with a turning lane will move the public “front door” entrance to the property to the southwest corner.

### **Infrastructure upgrades**

The unplanned but phased additions to the church campus over time has led to a patchwork infrastructure (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, etc.) in the older parts of the building which

have come to the end of their useful life. This issue is making environmental control very difficult and certainly limiting the ability to further expand. The boiler plant in the 1959 addition is not modernized for energy efficiency. Some system components for air handling, particularly ventilation and return air, need attention in the classroom wing and worship center.

### **Regulatory compliance**

Zoning ordinances, building codes, life and fire safety standards, and accessibility requirements will all demand facility updates as you expand. The current facilities are not fully ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant, particularly in the older parts of the building, and will need upgrades so as not to become a barrier to continued growth.

### **Storage**

Storage is an issue both in the new storage building (“Garage-Mahal”) and inside the main buildings. The bulk of the storage building is used for Lawn Fete storage, which is a large but once a year event. Internal building storage space is at a premium. There are things stored in rafter spaces, boiler rooms and electrical space which will never again be used and don’t belong there. The fellowship hall (Harper Hall) lacks active storage space to handle furnishings for facilitating multiple-use conversions.

### **Offices and administration**

The staff offices are not organized to encourage staff interaction and team building. Offices are split across a hallway serving the Kalsbeek Chapel, Morrow Room, and exit. Some offices are in other parts of the building and there is no work space for lay ministry leaders and volunteers. The restrooms serving the area do not meet accessibility standards and cannot be made to comply within the available square footage.

### **Foyer and fellowship hall**

The foyer is split between the worship center foyer which is much too small to act as a community plaza encouraging connection, and the parlor space serving the fellowship hall, which is reduced by the library. Foyer space is not large enough to accommodate concurrent use of the worship center and fellowship hall. Restrooms are not located optimally and don’t meet codes. The kitchen serving area is in the hallway across from restrooms serving the office and fellowship hall. This constricted configuration limits serving access to the foyer and creates congestion.

### **Christian education / nursery / preschool**

The classroom wing works pretty well. However, as you grow, you will eventually need more space. Alternative teaching methods and class structures should be investigated to accommodate growth. The preschool function occupies valuable classroom space and creates security issues during the week. Restrooms on both floors of the classroom wing and the basement of the worship center come the closest to compliance with updated accessibility codes (though not completely), but likely do not have the fixture count to serve the building population if expanded.

### **Student ministries**

Junior and senior high students are currently meeting in Seven Gables on Sunday morning during the second service. Using Seven Gables for youth ministries has several problems. (See the discussion under site maximization.) Alternative spaces for youth ministries are needed that safely give them the opportunity to be kids.

### **Worship ministries**

The worship center is full enough to require expansion provisions, which was the impetus behind the third service in the Chapel. Holding services in the Chapel can be done with some already mentioned modifications, but isn't very practical as a long-term solution. Other options should be considered for longer term continued growth. Some infrastructure issues such as air flow are inadequate in both the main auditorium and the Chapel. The worship center is not very flexible with pew seating. It lacks full technological integration such as multimedia and recording capabilities for other types of services. The basement level of the worship center is underutilized.

## **FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Again, keep in mind that the primary prioritizing factors for how you move through these facility recommendations will be your responses to the ministry recommendations, the development of your leadership capacity, and the availability of sufficient funds without the addition of significant debt. Keeping your focus on what's absolutely essential—ministry to people—is the goal for how you approach these next steps.

### **Site maximization & parking**

Every site has a limit of use that it can ultimately accommodate without additional property. There is room for growth on your current property that can be increased through some reorganization. Your property holdings include the 8.9 acre main "campus" with the church

building, the former manse and the storage building, plus the 1.25 acre Seven Gables property across Mason Road.

From a real estate development perspective, the existing manse is not a good investment for adaptive reuse. Aside from the serious mold issues in the structure itself, the building, life safety, and accessibility code requirements for non-residential use will require a greater resource allocation than the property is worth. It would cost less to replace the square footage than to renovate this building. We are therefore recommending that you demolishing the manse in preparation for another use for that section of the property.

The Seven Gables property shares similar issues, plus is separated from the campus across a heavily travelled street creating a dangerous traffic and pedestrian situation. We recommend selling the Seven Gables property and applying those resources to other adaptations of the campus.

The storage building is underutilized because it primarily serves as Lawn Fete storage. From the perspective of leveraging resources, it makes sense to consider upgrading most of the storage facility into usable program space to replace Seven Gables. That means utilizing off-site rented storage for the Lawn Fete items. (See Youth Ministries for further discussion)

The ratio of building square footage and total worship attendance to parking capacity will ultimately determine growth limits. Organizing the property for more effective development by relocating and resizing the pond and removing the Manse improves the ratio of land to building and parking. For planning purposes, if we assume two worship times with 30-45 minutes between sessions, as well as two worship venues with concurrent services seating a total of 650 and a ratio of 1.5 per car, you will need parking capacity for roughly 450 vehicles. Parking for 450 at 300SF per space means you need about 135,000 square feet, or 3.1 acres (35% of the property). You have 230 spaces on site now. Adding another 220 spaces at \$3,000 per space, exclusive of earth work and grading, means an investment of about \$660,000. Manse demolition, land clearing, pond relocation, earthwork and grading, utility relocations, etc., are all unknown costs at this time. When implemented together, the cost of preparing the land for building expansion and supplying parking to serve the site could easily exceed \$1 million dollars.

The first step in filling in the needed details for this concept is to engage a qualified planning and/or architectural firm to work with you on a site master plan that is based on the building concepts and programming recommendations contained in this report. Once contracted, that process should cost around \$30k and take about three months to finalize recommendations. It will be an investment well spent in the long run.

Estimated investment: Manse demolition, site work, additional parking -- >\$1,000,000

### **Infrastructure upgrades**

The original 1848 Chapel and the 1953 office addition (about 4,400 SF) are served by boiler and air handlers in the attic rafters above the Morrow Room. The 1959 Harper Hall addition (about 5,600 SF) is served by boilers and air handlers next to the kitchen. The 1983 Sanctuary, library and basement addition (about 12,400 SF) are served by a boiler and air handlers in the worship center basement. Air exchanges in the ground well north of the library serve the worship center and Harper Hall. The 1994 Vogel Hall addition (about 13,600 SF education wing) is served by a terminal VAV system with air exchanges on the ground west of the addition.

The air handling equipment in the rafter space above the Morrow Room needs to be evaluated and likely replaced or reconfigured to improve performance and efficiency. The access to this equipment is by outside wooden stairs, which is better than it used to be but not the best situation for service. The ductwork to and from these air handlers is fairly convoluted which is probably creating pressure losses and certainly making balancing difficult. This results in hot and cold spots.

There were complaints while on site about temperature controls in the classroom wing. The existing system should be evaluated and balanced by a mechanical engineering company to determine if the system design or the controls system needs modification.

Supply and return air in the worship center needs particular attention. The primary return air collection point is behind the platform privacy wall, which does not allow for proper air flow in the space. The system should be modified for return air facing the seating. Return air in the back of the sanctuary is not adequate either and needs to be reconfigured. The system should be reengineered.

We recommend that all the building mechanical and electrical systems be assessed and evaluated for current functioning and efficiencies plus accommodation for future additions. Designing the systems for energy savings and operational efficiencies offers potentially huge benefits for the whole complex, both in the present and the future.

There is no way for us to put a budget figure to this work without the engineering evaluation. The cost of these infrastructure improvements can't be determined without the detailed engineering study. However, based on planning square foot allowances I would anticipate a \$600-800k investment. We encourage you to undertake that independent study soon.

Estimated investment: Infrastructure upgrades - very roughly \$600-800,000

## **Regulatory compliance**

There are some regulatory issues limiting the use of the building and future expansion which will need to be addressed. The restrooms in Vogel Hall are fairly accessible as are those in the basement of the worship center using the elevator. Since codes change constantly, it is likely that neither fully comply with latest versions of ANSI accessibility standards in things like 5' x 5' interior stall dimensions or door jamb clearances. However, unless those areas are renovated beyond legislated limits, it is likely that officials will not require upgrades.

The restrooms in the office area are another matter. They do not comply with accessibility standards and required upgrades are likely. The area available in their current location is not adequate to redesign for compliance so new facilities will be needed. In addition to accessibility standards, compliance with plumbing and health standards for fixture counts should be considered not only for the existing building but including expansion plans. To address this issue we recommend you consider new accessible restrooms in the area now occupied by the library (see Foyer/Fellowship discussion) plus new single occupancy accessible rest rooms serving the office area (see Offices/Administration discussion).

Fire separations based on square footage and type of construction will likely become an issue as you expand. There are two ways to address this. Fire walls for area separation and sprinklers, or some combination. Most churches try to avoid the expense and disruption of retrofitting their buildings with fire sprinklers. The intent and direction of building and fire codes is over time to

require all buildings to be sprinklered. Fighting to delay the inevitable is foolish considering the proven outcome that upgraded fire safety measures save lives and reduce insurance costs. Providing sprinklers also allows for the design of larger facilities without more cumbersome fire separations.

Though difficult to quantify, allowing \$50k per new rest room and \$1.25 per square foot for fire sprinklers, it could require about a \$250-300k investment.

Estimated investment: New rest rooms and fire sprinkler system - \$250-300,000

## **Storage**

As mentioned in the site maximization section, the storage building is not solving the needs of the church. We recommend renting off-site storage to accumulate the Lawn Fete needs. Not that those needs are less important than other uses, but that other demands for on-site space cannot be met elsewhere. Part of the storage building may need to be retained as storage for equipment or seasonal needs, but the bulk of the space would be better used for program space.

Storage related to flexible space conversion (e.g., worship to banquet and large group meeting space) must be adjacent to the area to be of most benefit. Storage space will need to be added to make the fellowship hall more flexible. Cost estimates for this issue are included with Foyer / Fellowship and Youth Ministries discussions.

## **Offices and administration**

The office area needs to be renovated and expanded to encourage team interaction and accommodate future hires. The current layout works against team building with non-adjacent offices separated by hallway access to the Chapel and Morrow Room, which are not specifically administrative use spaces. The office support space is too small for support staff and lay ministry use. The current reception layout doesn't encourage welcoming and compassionate interaction with drop-ins (see Guidelines for Church Office Layout in Appendix 4).

We recommend renovating space to the east of the hallway and an addition designed for future expansion to create a staff suite including a kitchenette / coffee bar and new single occupancy restrooms. The offices west of the hallway should be converted to house reception, office manager, business manager, office support and lay ministry functions. The Kalsbeek Chapel could be adapted to a mid-sized conference room serving the office group without destroying its historic nature. To free up the floor space and accommodate the columbarium function, urn niches could be built along the exterior walls while preserving a few of the pews to create a small area for contemplative reflection.

Estimated investment: Office renovations - about \$800,000

## **Foyer / fellowship**

One of the keys to accommodating more people on-site and relieving the current worship congestion is to enlarge the foyer, or what we prefer to call the community plaza, to serve both connections ministries and fellowship support for two concurrent venues (see worship ministries discussion). To expand the foyer footage and centralize it to the sanctuary and Harper Hall we recommend enclosing the courtyard with a greenhouse type glass system and opening up the existing exterior walls between columns to form a large plaza. The glass enclosure should be environmentally sound using fritted glass for sun control. The roof configuration will require some careful drainage detailing to ensure a workable installation.

In order to make the expanded community plaza function as program space we recommend removing the existing outdated restrooms across from the kitchen and opening the space up to the new foyer as queuing space, which will also make the existing kitchen serving counter work more effectively.

Estimated investment: Community plaza renovations - about \$500,000

## **Christian education / nursery / preschool**

Vogel Hall (the education wing) works pretty well. There are some complications, however, created by housing the preschool there. Security for entering the preschool from the parking lot is in place, but security for entering the preschool from the church side is not in place and securing the upper floor from the parking lot vestibule is an added complication.

One reason you feel short on classroom space is the preschool's presence. While there is nothing inherently wrong with including the preschool in the main building, it does not have to be so for functional reasons for a church your size and with your history in the community. Relocating it to a stand-alone facility may, in fact, provide certain advantages that should be considered in added growth potential, improved traffic flow, building and programmatic security, and set-up and tear-down time. When congregational growth demands eventually require more classroom space for CE activities, we recommend the construction of a new stand-alone preschool building where the manse is now located. The other alternative is to build or rent space off-site in the neighborhood as an outreach ministry.

The timing for when you need additional classrooms has a great deal to do with how intentional you are at cultivating a small group culture that develops off-campus activities rather than needing more Sunday school classes. The move to multiple sessions of CE programming during multiple worship sessions also increases the capacity of the building to handle this issue. Coordination of this option is often more of a mindset shift and requires adequate planning and staffing to accomplish, but is an integral aspect of the When-Not-to-Build approach to facility utilization.

As an interim measure to accommodate more people for CE programming on-site, we recommend you consider opening up and combining some of the classrooms to create larger rooms and grouping classes together, using a team teaching approach which should also help in volunteer recruitment (see "The More We Teach Together" by Eddy Hall in the Appendix). Combining rooms while making them dividable with movable storage units or folding walls has the added advantage of flexibility in size, thus providing some mid-sized group meeting rooms

lacking in the facility now. It may also help with the temperature control issues due to air flow balance that were reported to us.

The existing nursery space works well and should serve till capacity becomes an issue, which appears to be downstream quite a while. You have done a good job of meeting the needs in this area, including proper sign-in / sign-out security measures and a parent paging system. Make sure those features stay up with the continuously changing environment.

The cost for a new preschool facility for 160 children could easily reach \$750k (+/- 20%) including building, parking, and a secure outdoor play area. The renovation cost for classroom space should be in the range of \$250-500k for both floors, depending on the flexible subdivision method employed.

Estimated investment:           Stand-alone preschool - \$600-900,000  
   Classroom renovations - \$250-500,000

## **Youth ministries**

As discussed in other sections of this report, youth ministries represents one of the most serious facility needs but also one of the best opportunities to shift thinking about ministries, discipleship, and outreach. Though you are currently without a staff position dedicated to youth ministries, the Sycamore volunteer group that is in place now is doing an excellent job. One of the critical elements for effective youth ministries is, from a facility standpoint, a place the youth can call their own. This sense of place can be achieved within the main building, on-site, or even off-site. The current use of Seven Gables fulfills this need, but the condition and location of the building is a health and life safety issue which cannot be economically alleviated.

We recommend you upgrade the relatively new storage building, which is bigger than necessary for storage purposes once the majority of Lawn Fete storage is moved (see storage discussion), to house youth ministries as an on-site replacement for Seven Gables. Call it your student ministries center. Some portion of the storage building should be retained as on-site storage, but the bulk of the ground floor and the loft space would serve as a youth center very well. The on-site location will easily accommodate both Sunday morning functions and mid-week or weekend youth activities, freeing up space in the main building.

Not being in the main building also lends itself to drawing from the neighborhood as outreach ministry those who might be less inclined to come into a “church” building, which is a growing segment of the real world. It also allows for non-traditional hours without compromising church building access. A section of the space could easily be configured as post-modern worship venue space with digital multimedia connections from the main worship center or Internet-based links for the broadcast of preaching and teaching events if desired. Take another look at North Coast Church’s Edge venue as an example.

Long term, youth ministries may be one of your first excursions into off-site outreach ministries as well. If youth ministries decide to incorporate a more direct community service component into their discipleship process, a store front or retail strip mall rental space can quickly become an extension of this important ministry.

Estimated investment: Student ministries center - about \$200-300,000

## Worship ministries

The discussion in the introduction concerning multiple congregations is the basis of our recommendations here. Recognizing and accepting that you are no longer one congregation, indeed haven't been for some time, leads to the facility response providing more than one worship venue geared to differing worship languages.

The creation / renovation of a larger community plaza (aka foyer) for fellowship functions accommodates multiple congregations and allows redefining Harper Hall as a second multi-purpose worship venue. That initially means creating an active storage space serving the room and upgrading audio visual systems and digital technology capability. It also means adequately equipping a new technology team. The ceiling is a little low for a raised platform but a 12-18" sectional platform should provide enough height for sight lines to work, given the size of the room minus creating a storage space. The venue should accommodate about 160 people (14 rows x 14 chairs at 80% full) with a 12' deep storage room and a 10' deep fully modular platform. Adding this to the current 370-person capacity in the existing worship venue (460 at 80% full) and two concurrent worship times, you can grow to about 1000 in Sunday worship attendance in this configuration. That much growth capacity gives you time to raise the funds necessary for expanding Harper Hall.

The long-term answer will mean major expansion and renovation reorienting Harper Hall for greater capacity. This venue should be designed for multi-purpose use including worship. It will require a higher ceiling at about 15' minimum, probably necessitating removal and reconstruction of the existing roof for Harper Hall. The venue should have zoned and dimmable lighting, high end audio and video technology, digital and wireless communications, and a modular, reconfigurable, movable platform system. Though not shown on the plan sketch, a "back of house" area may be advisable behind the platform to provide more staging flexibility or additional mechanical and electrical equipment. This expansion and modifications will, when completed, allow you to accommodate about 350 (440 at 80% full) per service, creating a nice size contemporary worship congregation. It more than doubles the venue's initial capacity, bringing the site total for two venues and four weekend services to capacity of about 2,800 in worship.

There are some improvements worth consideration in the existing worship center (Sanctuary) and the basement of that section. If you can make the paradigm shift from thinking of the sanctuary as the place where God dwells to thinking of it as a multiple purpose space where God's people worship, then changes in the space become a way to enhance the church's mission. Part of the answer to space shortages lies in a willingness to use this space for multiple and diverse events. In order to do that, replacing pews with upholstered chairs provides more seating capacity by 5-20% and more flexibility of arrangement. You should seriously consider this as a viable option.

In addition to the mechanical issues addressed in the infrastructure discussion, some sound system deficiencies were noted while we were on site, particularly in the lower rear and balcony of the sanctuary. We recommend you upgrade your sound and recording systems. Employ the services of a reputable audio/visual design or engineering firm to help you design the optimum level of equipment and acoustical treatments for the space, and to provide your technology team with the necessary training on all related equipment.

There is no video capability or projection system installed in the room and some concerns were raised over a screen location. There is a valance across the front of the main platform that

can house a large motorized screen that would be retractable. That should allow its use with minimal visual impact. Another option might be to install two screens on either side of the platform, angled in a way that maximizes visibility to as much of the room as possible. You could also install two smaller screens for the chairs in the rear under the balcony overhang to serve that area. The valance might also be redesigned to hold improved return air collection to help with that problem. There was some discussion about the lighting controls as well, which may require attention and upgrading to allow for more diverse needs.

The basement holds great promise for better utilization of space. When the office suite is expanded, the music ministry offices should become part of the staff grouping. It may also be possible to move the music library to the office suite, which would free up even more space in the basement. The building maintenance office (or cubicle) probably should be with the office support staff since that position is managed by the office or operations manager. Facilities functions such as scheduling, maintenance, set-up, and tear-down, including custodial and volunteer facilities staff, should be closely coordinated. By consolidating choir storage with the choir room, that additional small to medium-sized meeting space could be freed up. This is not an attempt to short music ministry space but an effort to create more multiple purpose space which becomes usable through proper scheduling.

Estimated investment: Worship center furnishings, equipment and renovations - about \$700,000

### **Beyond the Known Future**

You will encounter many decision points before you get through these phases. The notion that you can plan the route this far in advance is a mistaken one. What you will need to do, though, is be prepared to engage the changing world around you with the unchanging message of faith in God in ways that people from many tribes, tongues, and nations understand. Be prepared to follow where God leads you. Be prepared to ask for guidance when the way becomes unclear. Be prepared to obey the call God has for Sycamore Presbyterian Church, wherever that leads. It may be in planting multiple sites or new churches. It may be in launching incarnational, organic ministries that develop into churches in ways we have yet to imagine. It may be another expansion of the current campus. Whatever it looks like, remain faithful to the One who calls you there.

### **Facility Task Force**

Your Facility Task Force is charged with taking these recommendations, modifying them to reflect your more intimate working knowledge of your needs as well as your priorities, and developing budgets and recommendations for each phase of facility improvements. These recommendations are not a master plan, but rather suggestions to point you in the right direction and jump start the planning process. We will know we have done our job well if we have stimulated you to think differently about your facility so that you are able to apply those principles and actually improve on our recommendations. Far from feeling hurt if you improve on our ideas, we will be disappointed if you don't.

The Facility Task Force will want to consider such questions as whether to combine or

subdivide phases, and whether to follow a different sequence in making improvements to the facility.

Once a budget and schedule have been approved for the first phase of facility improvements, the Facility Task Force is charged with managing the implementation of the improvements. This is critical! Many churches get sidetracked during building projects because pastors, ministry staff, and council members try to manage the construction process and their focus shifts from ministry to buildings. Perhaps the single most important function of the Facility Task Force is to insure that your pastor, ministry administrator, and council members continue to give their full attention to ministry. Their role during a building project is to watch from the sidelines and cheer.

This does not mean that ministry leaders should not be consulted about building decisions. The input of ministry leaders is critical for designing the spaces used by their ministries. What it does mean is that once those basic design decisions are made, the Facility Task Force should be trusted to implement them, coming back to the Session for additional authorization only if there are major changes in cost or design.

## FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CHECKLIST

Rather than a “1-then-2-then-3-then...” format, these recommendations are designed to bring the entire campus complex into long-term focus while allowing you to tackle the items that need the most immediate attention. The goal is for you to deal with these issues in a fiscally responsible way without compromising the critical component of ministry to the people who are and who are “yet-to-become” part of the Sycamore Presbyterian community of faith. See them as the driving concepts for positive action.

- ✓ Pay off existing debt.
- ✓ Demolish the manse.
- ✓ Convert most of the “garage” storage to student and youth ministries, and move Lawn Fete storage off-site.
- ✓ Sell the Seven Gables property.
- ✓ Make initial renovations to Harper Hall for worship venue two.
- ✓ Reconfigure the pond and prepare site for building and parking expansion.
- ✓ Create the community plaza (foyer) by expansion and renovation.
- ✓ Reconfigure Sunday morning to multiple services in two venues two time slots (9:15 and 11:15).
- ✓ Complete office renovations and expansion.
- ✓ Expand venue two (Harper Hall).

# **FINANCES**

## Current giving levels

Based on the specific information you provided in your self study, the average household income at Sycamore Presbyterian Church is \$92,763. Some may dispute these figures, but they are what you reported. Reflecting on the economics we observed both within and around Sycamore, it is probably a fair representation. As such, average household giving for all 411 recorded giving units for 2007 was \$2,114, or about 2.28% of average income. Of those 411 giving units, there were 330 that gave more than \$500 last year. We view the threshold giving level of \$500 per year the point at which a household actually begins to embrace the mission and ministry of a church by supporting it with their financial resources. Until they reach that threshold, they really do not embrace the mission of the church as their own. As supporting givers those 330 giving units accounted for an average \$2,766, or about 2.99% of the average household income.

Of the 411 recorded givers listed for calendar year 2007, 182 giving units (41% of all recorded givers) accounted for about 7.6% of the total recorded giving. The remaining 259 giving units (59% of all givers) account for the remaining 92.4% of the total recordable giving income. There are a couple observations we draw from this information. First, Sycamore Presbyterian Church folks as a whole are giving at a level that is at or just below the national average. It also indicates there is plenty of room for Sunday worship attendees to catch a more compelling vision for how God can use Sycamore to make a difference in people's lives. People won't give their time, talent, or money simply based on need, but will do so when they believe that what they're contributing to will make a real difference in some tangible way. With more than 40% of Sycamore's recorded giving units supporting the mission with contributions of less than \$20 a week, it says there is work to be done in clarifying that mission and vision.

## Current budget priorities

According to the Summary of Budget sheet provided in the self study, the breakdown of expenses for the year 2007 was: **Operations** – 9.6% of total expenses; **Facilities** – 28.1% of total expenses; **Staffing** – 47.9% of total expenses; and **Missions and Intentional Outreach** - 14.4% of the total. Based on the way the figures were reported, of the total amount expended for Missions giving this year, you sent 91.9% of that to missions outside your local community, about 7.4% to people within your local community, and 0.7% to people within your local church body. We look at these percentages to evaluate whether there is a healthy balance in how you see your “mission” to the world.

Though Jesus told us to go into “*all* the world,” he also reminded us that we would be his witnesses in our home towns, our surrounding areas, our countries, *and* the world. There is no “or” mentioned in this command. It is concurrent and progressive. We recommend that Sycamore strive for greater balance in how you support missions locally and within your own body. We are not suggesting you give less to missions outside the community or on foreign

fields, but that as you increase missions giving overall you channel the increase toward local missions and missionaries for a time. By creating balance in the way you provide support to your “Jerusalem” and your “Judea and Samaria” missionaries, you can create opportunities to involve more individuals in personal, hands-on ministry to the real needs of real people.

### **Biblical stewardship**

Jesus had much to say in the Gospels about money and how we handle it. He spoke more about the topic of money and possessions than he did the topics of heaven and hell. His basic message was that our concept of *things* and how we handle them as stewards reflects the condition of our heart relationship with the Father. Since God owns all we have, and all we have is a gift and a trust from him, he is tremendously interested in how we manage his resources.

We challenge each of you to first examine your own motives for giving to the work and ministry of Sycamore. Do not give your resources from a sense of duty or grudgingly (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). If you approach the support of the church as just another one of the duties required for God to love you more, then our sincere, strong recommendation is that you not give. It’s not a duty issue, it’s a heart issue. You can’t give enough to make God love you any more than he already does.

God has already shown himself able to supply more than we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21; Philippians 4:19), so he doesn’t **need** what we give. He owns it all anyway. He doesn’t **need** our money—he **wants** our hearts. If, however, you are giving to support the vision of what God *has* done, *is* doing, and *wants* to do in the future through the people who are Sycamore Presbyterian Church because your heart is joyful, then you are on the right track when you give from your abundance.

We recommend you provide some form of small group or adult discipleship class that teaches the joys of biblical stewardship as a regular rhythm of church life. Biblical stewardship isn’t just about money, but also about our time and talents. It’s not just about what we give to God’s work through the church, but includes how we think and what we do with the portion we keep.

Use the solid curriculum produced by organizations like Crown Financial Ministries or Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University materials. There may be other good materials elsewhere. Keep this issue in perspective so that it does not become a barrier to the health and future of Sycamore.

### **How much does growth cost?**

It costs more to grow a church than to maintain a church. Why? Primarily because the commitment level of the new people you bring into your fellowship will not match that of folks who already embrace the ministry of the church as their own. You generally need to do more ministering to new folks than what their added giving levels will offset. It usually takes about five years for new members to fully support the work of the church at the same level as long-time members.

In working with many churches over the years, Ray Bowman developed the following guide for what it costs to grow a church, which has been fine-tuned by recent research:

- **Giving 4% to 5% of income** will maintain a non-growing church; growth can begin at this level of giving, but cannot be sustained.
- **Giving 6% to 7% of income** can sustain modest growth of about 5% a year; vigorous growth can begin at this level, but can not be sustained.
- **Giving 7% to 9% of income** can sustain vigorous growth of 10% a year or more, so long as the church is debt-free and does not have major facility needs.

If Sycamore removes the barriers to healthy growth that have been identified, you should continue to increase numerically. If Sycamore becomes intentional about reaching some of the tribes in your surrounding culture, you will need more resources in order to minister to them at their points of need. About 90% of your giving units are giving at about 3% of the average Sycamore income, and as such are only supporting Sycamore's ministry at a maintenance level. To sustain growth and prepare to meet increased budget needs and upcoming facility changes, your overall level of regular giving needs to increase.

### **Increase giving**

Like most everything else you ask people to do, commitment to increased financial support starts with the leadership group. If those most dedicated to the work of the church already are willing to learn and grow in this area, then they will have a right to expect others in the congregation to follow their leadership. If you, as leaders most committed to the mission of Sycamore, are unwilling to make that commitment, do not expect others to do it.

Most people no longer give their time, their talents, and their financial resources based solely on need. We are all inundated with good causes and overwhelming needs daily. Most significant giving commitments are based not on need, but on a clear, compelling vision. People will commit to support a vision when they believe that what they are contributing will make a difference. If the vision is clear, we are willing to support it.

One of the ways Ray Bowman has successfully worked with churches to increase the giving level is by challenging each giver, starting with the core leadership, to examine their own giving history individually to determine what percentage of their income they use to support the church. Once that is determined, the challenge is then to commit to increase that percentage by 1 percentage point for the coming year. The same 1 percentage point increase is repeated in the second and then the third years. For example, if I found that my past giving level was at 2% of my income, I would commit to increasing that to 3% starting now, for a year, then increasing it to 4% in the second year, then again to 5% in the third year. Someone starting at 8% would increase it to 9% immediately, then 10%, then 11% in the third year.

The impact of meeting this very reachable challenge can be substantial. Based on your average household income and the current number of significant giving units, you would see an **additional \$306,100** in the first year. In the second year, the additional giving would reach **\$612,200**. By the end of the third year, the amount of **additional giving**, over-and-above your 2007 budgeted giving, would amount to an **added**

*We will commit our time, talents and resources most readily when we believe that what we are supporting will make a difference in some tangible way.*

**\$918,300 annually!** That's even before you work to enfold others into the life and mission of Sycamore, teaching them to be fully devoted, joy-filled, obedient followers of Jesus Christ. If God has something significant he wants done, he is not only able to call his people to action, he is able to provide the resources needed for them to accomplish his purpose.

### **Growth fund**

We recommend that you eliminate the term "building fund" from your financial dictionary. We suggest you replace building funds with your "**Growth Fund**" that makes funds available for removing whatever barriers to growth are identified, rather than be restricted to buildings.

Part of our work together was to help you identify significant barriers to healthy growth. By concentrating on health and growth, you can use the resources in your growth fund to remove those barriers without restrictions. If that means you can remove a significant barrier by launching a new ministry, you will be free to support that launch from this fund. If it means you need to equip a new support staff member with what they need to effectively carry out their assigned tasks, you should use these funds.

We recommend that you also consider discouraging large gifts, bequests, memorials, and endowments that come with strings attached for controlling the use of those funds. When churches accumulate large designated funds or restricted endowments, there is often a real temptation to place security in the wrong things. While we understand the desire to be good stewards of the large gifts God sends, trusting in your savings account for survival is contrary to Jesus' admonitions in Luke 19, and his statements about losing one's life if all we try to do is save ourselves. It also tends to discourage regular giving to support ongoing ministry. Some see a large savings balance and think, "Why should I give more? The church already has plenty of money in the bank!" Our recommendation is that you avoid that problem consciously.

We encourage you to use the monies you have been blessed with for the purpose of tangible ministry advancements rather than saving it for some rainy day. We challenge you to try being a pipe through which his blessings flow rather than a cistern into which we pile more for ourselves, or the proverbial rainy day.

### **New or increased budget items**

Your budget needs to include several new or increased items as you deal with identified growth barriers. As your facilities and activities change, you will need to increase your maintenance and repair budgets. As your ministries change, you will need to increase your support for them through equipping or additional staffing.

We challenge you to set approximately 3% of your budget aside for equipping your staff and ministry leaders. This budget item should be used for continued training for staff, teachers, and ministry leaders. Use it for ongoing ministry coaching, for sending ministry leaders and teams to training events, and for the purchase of equipping resources. Our experience indicates a direct correlation between the amount healthy churches spend to equip their lay leaders and the percentage of their overall ministry growth. A church willing to invest its resources in equipping its people is usually a church that does a good job of understanding whole-person relationships, which is the foundation for health. Those churches tend to grow at a noticeably faster pace.

Many churches find it valuable to use equipping funds to send groups of ministry leaders or entire ministry teams away for specialized training. Rather than sending one person and hoping they come back and share the information, a group experience allows more people to catch the concepts and the excitement in a more effective way. Select a different ministry group each year and send them to one of those solid, well-known teaching churches that provides excellent learning and equipping experiences.

## FINANCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS CHECKLIST

- ✓ Continue to teach and model healthy biblical stewardship principles, starting with your leadership. Cast a vision for Sycamore Presbyterian Church that moves new folks to embrace God's work as their own and to follow Jesus gladly and obediently.
- ✓ Maintain balanced missions giving as you increase the amounts provided. Encourage and support with your finances various forms of local hands-on ministry and mission events wherever possible.
- ✓ Starting with church leadership, individually evaluate and increase your level of giving by 1 percentage point each year for the next three years to support the increases needed in your operations budget because of expanded ministries and facility needs.
- ✓ Begin giving now to an unrestricted Growth Fund that is used to remove identified barriers to health and growth. Discourage restricted donations and bequests, and avoid the establishment of new endowments.
- ✓ Increase or add budget items to reflect changes in needs:
  - Additional leadership development support and ministry training.
  - Additional support staff and equipping staff when needed.
  - Facility changes and resulting increases in facility operational budget.
  - Increasing your growth fund in preparation for major facility modifications.
  - Establish an equipping budget of 3% of total income.

## **CONCLUSION**

## Managing change

Sycamore Presbyterian Church has much to celebrate and be thankful for. You have wonderful staff members who truly desire to follow the Lord's direction. You are, however, smack-dab in the middle of a tedious and sometimes treacherous process called **CHANGE**. Few people like it. Most of us try to avoid it. But it is inevitable in our individual lives, and in the life of a church. We change, or we die.

Sycamore is going to undergo more difficult changes, but they will be changes for even better things. It is evident that God has more special things planned for the people of Sycamore Presbyterian Church to do in your community, but, in order to accomplish them, he must take you through these changes first. Like the changes in a young child's growing body, there will be times of awkwardness and confusion, and even times of pain.

The goal for your leaders is to manage the change process so it is healthy and productive. You must do the time-consuming work of learning how to work together as a team, how to create a place of safety where differences are talked about and dealt with in healthy ways. You will have to work at turning members into self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. As you do, you will see God bring you ever-expanding opportunities to share the love of Christ with the people of the Cincinnati area who long for a place to be safe, for someone to love them unconditionally, and for a life with meaning and purpose.

Part of the change process for Sycamore in the near future will include times of discovery and times of evaluation. The process of communicating a *clear, shared, compelling picture of the preferred future* of Sycamore Presbyterian Church will crystallize the vision for what God is calling you to do. As you evaluate everything you do now in light of what God says in his word and where he is calling you to go, you will rejoice to find you are doing many things well. Take time to celebrate them together. Other evaluations will bring pain as you realize that you need to prune some areas that are comfortable, but are no longer taking you in the right direction.

Change is not always easy, but it is always happening. Part of what Living Stones did while we were with you was to help you recognize that "creative tension" is what stretches us to become more like what God intended. We have become part of your change process for a time. A great resource to help your leaders manage the process of change can be found in the book, **LEADING CONGREGATIONAL CHANGE** by Herrington, Bonem and Furr. It can help you see your way through the maze of change, and assist by providing a better understanding of how the whole process works.

As you work (and it **is** work) at managing the changes you face, be of good cheer. Remember you are not alone. It will be God who leads you through it all, and he already knows the way! Be faithful to pray, and just as faithful in listening and following. Do the work of equipping and maturing, and God will be faithful to continue producing healthy, "all-by-itself" growth in his kingdom through Sycamore Presbyterian Church.

## **Ongoing coaching**

The sheer volume of information and recommendations created by an Integrated Planning Consultation seems a bit like eating an elephant. It looks like an impossible task at first, but is doable one bite at a time. Many churches have struggled with the implementation phase of this process and found themselves putting the bulk of the recommendations on the shelf.

When your consultation package was created, you opted to engage the Living Stones team for the four-month minimum level of coaching in the implementation phase. Gary Diehl will work with you through this period, interacting primarily with the Church Health Team. This includes unlimited email access for questions or updates, as well as the regularly scheduled monthly phone sessions recommended in the Ministry section. We encourage you to take advantage of the fact that Living Stones are now adjunct staff members for this portion of the journey. We can't coach you through issues we are not aware of, so be sure to provide regular updates.

You will experience road blocks and detours as you move through the implementation phase. It's inevitable. Because some of the cultural changes facing the church are significant, you should strongly consider extending the ministry coaching arrangement for the full twelve months. The extended coaching period can help you navigate those bumps in the road, and hold your teams accountable for their role in the process. Refer to your original consultation proposal for options, or talk with Gary Diehl or Eddy Hall to review the details and benefits before the end of your initial arrangement.

## **Thanks for the privilege**

It was a pleasure for your Living Stones team to have been invited into your lives for a few days. We know it is no small thing to have outsiders come in and poke around in your stuff. Like going to the doctor's office, we don't always feel comfortable having outsiders look that closely for our faults and weaknesses. But like most dedicated medical professionals, your Living Stones team counts it a privilege to have been invited to help you diagnose a few areas that need attention. We don't take that invitation lightly.

We hope you remember that we also celebrated your strengths with you as we pointed out many of the good and healthy things you already do. It will be a joy for us to watch how Sycamore Presbyterian Church grows deeper in its faith, more focused in its mission, and stronger in its witness to the Good News of the Gospel. Thank you for allowing us to share it with you in a small way!

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### General

*COLOR YOUR WORLD WITH NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT* by Christian A. Schwarz (ChurchSmart Resources 2005)

*IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE TO NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT* by Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk (ChurchSmart Resources 1998)

*NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT* by Christian A. Schwarz (ChurchSmart Resources 1996)

Natural Church Development Survey—ChurchSmart Resources

*MAKING ROOM FOR LIFE* by Randy Frazee (Zondervan 2003)

*ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL: Bringing Out the Best in Any Size Church* by Gary L. McIntosh (Revell 1999)

*ORGANIC CHURCH: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* by Neil Cole (Jossey-Bass 2005)

*RADICAL RENEWAL: The Problem of Wineskins Today* by Howard A. Snyder (Touch 1996)

*RELEASING YOUR CHURCH'S POTENTIAL: A Natural Church Development Resource Kit* by Robert Logan and Thomas Klegg (ChurchSmart Resources 1998)

*BREAKOUT CHURCHES* by Thom S. Rainer (Zondervan 2005)

*CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler (McGraw Hill 2002)

*THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM* by Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass 2002)

*SIMPLY STRATEGIC STUFF!* by Tim Stevens and Tony Morgan (Group 2004)

*SIMPLE CHURCH* by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger (B&H Publishing Group 2006)

**Empowering  
Leadership**

*SACRED COWS MAKE GOURMET BURGERS* by William M. Easum  
(Abingdon 1995)

*FAMILY-BASED YOUTH MINISTRY* by Mark DeVries (IVP 1994)

*DEATH BY MEETING* by Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass 2004)

*LEADING CONGREGATIONAL CHANGE* by Jim Herrington, Mike  
Bonem, and James H. Furr (Jossey-Bass 2000)

*THE LEADERSHIP BATON: An Intentional Strategy for Developing  
Leaders in Your Church* by Rowland Forman, Jeff Jones, and Bruce Miller  
(Zondervan 2004)

**Gift-Based  
Ministry**

*THE EQUIPPING CHURCH* by Sue Mallory (Zondervan 2001)

*Discover Your God-Given Gifts* by Don & Katie Fortune (Chosen 1987)

*WHEN THERE'S NO BURNING BUSH: Following Your Passion to  
Discover God's Call* by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch (Baker 2004)

**Effective  
Structures**

*WHEN NOT TO BUILD: An Architect's Unconventional Wisdom for the  
Growing Church* by Ray Bowman and Eddy Hall (Baker 1992, 2000)

*DEATH BY MEETING* by Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass 2004)

*HIGH IMPACT CHURCH BOARDS* by T. J. Addington (Sandbox  
Resources 2006)

*THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM* by Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-  
Bass 2002)

*OVERCOMING THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM* by Patrick  
Lencioni (Jossey-Bass 2005)

*THE SHAPING OF THINGS TO COME* by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsh  
(Hendrickson Publishers 2003)

*ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL: Bringing Out the Best in Any Size Church*  
by Gary L. McIntosh (Revell 1999)

**Inspiring Worship**

*THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN CHURCH* by Rick Warren (Zondervan 1995),  
chapters 12-16.

*HOW TO START A NEW SERVICE* by Charles Arn (Baker 1997)

*THE MULTI-SITE CHURCH REVOLUTION* by Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird (Zondervan 2006)

*FACEDOWN* by Matt Redman (Regal 2004)

### **Holistic Small Groups**

*NINE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP* by Carl F. George (Kingdom 1997)

*THE CONNECTING CHURCH: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community* by Randy Frazee (Zondervan 2001)

*CULTIVATING A LIFE FOR GOD* by Neil Cole (ChurchSmart Resources 1999)

*TRANSFORMING DISCIPLESHIP: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* by Greg Ogden (InterVarsity Press 2003)

*DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* by Greg Ogden (InterVarsity Press 1998)

Web site: [www.smallgroups.com](http://www.smallgroups.com). An online resource for equipping small group leaders and coaches with helpful hints, group ice breakers, worship suggestions, and teaching opportunities.

### **Need-Oriented Evangelism**

*EVANGELISM OUTSIDE THE BOX* by Rick Richardson (InterVarsity 2000)

*THE EMERGING CHURCH: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* by Dan Kimball (Zondervan 2003)

*THE MASTER PLAN OF EVANGELISM* by Robert Coleman (Revell 1993)

*MORE READY THAN YOU REALIZE* by Brian D. McLaren (Zondervan 2002)

*BECOMING A CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN* by Mark Mittleberg and Bill Hybels (Zondervan 1996)

*OUT OF THE SALT SHAKER AND INTO THE WORLD* by Rebecca Manley Pippert (InterVarsity 1999)

### **Loving**

*LIFE TOGETHER* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Harper 1954)

**Relationships**

*The ONE ANOTHER Commands* by Jim Van Yperen (Metanoia Ministries) A small group study designed to build community in the local church. Web site: [www.restoringthechurch.org](http://www.restoringthechurch.org)

*Your Church EXPERIENCING GOD Together* by Henry T. Blackaby & Melvin D. Blackaby (LifeWay Press 2003)

*MAKING PEACE: A Guide to OVERCOMING Church Conflict* by Jim Van Yperen (Moody 2002)

**Passionate Spirituality**

*Prayer Shield* by Peter C. Wagner (Regal 1992)

*A WORK OF HEART: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* by Reggie McNeal (Jossey-Bass 2000)

*EXPERIENCING GOD: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* by Henry Blackaby and Claude King (LifeWay Press 1990, 1998)

*THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIFE: WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?* by Rick Warren (Zondervan 2002)

**Biblical Stewardship**

Crown Financial Ministries. 601 Broad St. SE, Gainesville, GA 30501  
Phone: 1-800-722-1976. Crown provides many excellent resources to teach and equip individuals and congregations in the concepts of proper biblical stewardship, from books to seminars to a network of budget and debt counselors. Web site: [www.crown.org](http://www.crown.org).

*HOW TO INCREASE GIVING IN YOUR CHURCH* by George Barna (Regal 1997)

*FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY* by Dave Ramsey (see [www.daveramsey.com](http://www.daveramsey.com))

Many of these resources are available through the **Living Stones Associates** web site at: [www.living-stones.com](http://www.living-stones.com).

## Appendix 1

### Church Health Team Charter (Example)

#### Name

Church Health Team (CHT)

#### Membership

There are members with three-year terms to provide overall continuity to the CHT mission and members with one-year terms selected to accomplish short-term goals.

**Three-Year Members:** Peter Klammer (Leader), Bill Randall, Ellen Schmidt, Michele Spaulding

**One-Year Members:** Bill Chambers, Nevette Orth, Katy Trautman

#### *Role of the Church Health Team*

The Church Health Team acts as a strategic planning, advisory, and accountability resource to continually identify and address church health issues that are barriers to growth. This is a core ministry team of SVLC.

#### *Mission*

To develop a strategic action plan that addresses current barriers to the growth and health of SVLC including, but not limited to, the issues revealed in the Natural Church Development Survey and self-study.

**Short-term goals:** Develop a strategic plan for addressing urgent and then critical barriers to growth as presented by the LSA consultation. Evaluate the one-year follow-up survey provided by LSA.

**Long-term goals:** Continue the planning process into the future, as new barriers to growth are identified.

#### Main Communication Channels

**The CHT will communicate directly with the following entities: Lead Elder (Bill Chambers), Elders (Bill Randall), Council (Nevette Orth and Ellen Schmidt), Congregation (Michele Spaulding and Katy Trautman), and LSA – Lavern Holdeman (Peter Klammer).**

#### Responsibilities

- Spend time in prayer and active listening to God
- Identify and prioritize issues to be addressed
- Develop a strategic plan for the upcoming year that includes: (1) *What* issue is to be addressed (2) *Who* needs to address the issue (3) *When* it will be addressed
- Identify potential hurdles/risks issues and provide guidance to overcome these hurdles (e.g. identify training needs or provide facilitation for teams as they work through issues)
- Provide expertise to teams as they address issues – Assign one CHT member to each team
- Review team progress and serve as an “Accountability Partner” ensuring that plans are being carried out as planned
- Primary point of contact for Living Stones Consultants
- Work in close cooperation with Lead Elder, the elders, the council and appropriate teams
- Provide timely progress reports to church leadership and the congregation
- Receive input from church leadership and the congregation on church health issues

## Appendix 2

### Church Health Team ~~ Activity Planning Guide

**Activity Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

▪ **WHAT**

**Objective:** (What is to be accomplished?)

**Goal:** (What will the result look like? What are the specific tasks involved?)

▪ **WHO**

- 1) The team assigned to accomplish this task will be selected by: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) The team will be comprised of: (to be completed by team)
  
- 3) The team leader will be: (to be completed by team)
- 4) The Church Health Team member assigned to this team will be: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) The Church Health Team participant will report team member names to the Church Health Team

▪ **WHEN**

- 1) The activity will be completed by: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Periodic check-in dates are scheduled as follows:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) The team leader is to report to the following Church Health Team member:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3

Why one of the church's loneliest ministries doesn't have to be

#### THE MORE WE TEACH TOGETHER

by Eddy Hall

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When Delora agreed to teach third grade Sunday school at Faith Lutheran in Derby, Kansas, she said yes, but on one condition: "It's one year at a time." After a year, she quit. Why? "I had such high expectations of myself that it was exhausting to meet them."

Delora is neither underqualified (professionally she teaches fifth grade in a private school) nor is she a victim of unrealistically high expectations. In fact, today she is teaching Sunday school again and says, "I can't tell you how much fun it is!"

What's made the difference? Team teaching.

Every summer thousands of churches scramble to find enough teachers for fall Sunday school. As tempting as it is to blame this annual frustration on low commitment, the real culprit may be how we structure our classes.

Solo teaching with small classes, our most common way of conducting Sunday school, can make teaching children a lot harder--and less effective--than it needs to be. A team approach, where each ministry team works with a larger group of children, can bring out the best in children's workers and make children's ministry far more rewarding and effective. Here's why.

*\* Team teaching empowers every team member to minister out of his or her spiritual gifts.* Almost every church has a few teachers who can make the Bible come alive for children, but probably none can unearth a master teacher for every small children's class. Some people are great at leading children in worship. Others are gifted with crafts or memory work. Rarely is any one person good at all these things, yet we expect solo teachers to do them all. Should we be surprised then when teachers feel overwhelmed?

Delora's three-member team teaches 20 to 30 fourth- through sixth-graders. Phyllis is great with pencil and paper games. David comes up with creative role plays. Delora shines at physical play. "I learn so much from watching how my teammates teach," Delora says. When every member of the team is ministering out of his or her gifts, ministry is more fun and more effective.

*\* Team teaching cuts preparation time.* One approach to team teaching is for a master teacher to do all the preparation and for the other team members to assist. It's a lot easier to find people who enjoy working as care givers than it is to recruit solo teachers.

Another system is to divide preparation among team members. At Hope Mennonite in Wichita, after a large-group opening, the primary class breaks into three smaller groups. Each group goes to one of three activity centers. After ten minutes, the children rotate to different centers. Each worker leads the same activity three times with a different group of children. Each teacher needs only one-third the preparation time she needed under the old system.

*\* Team teaching builds in support.* Four years ago when Faith Lutheran collected the teacher feedback forms after its vacation Bible school, teacher after teacher wrote, "I'll never do this

again." Something had to change. The next year, the VBS directors decided to try team teaching. Several new VBS workers enjoyed it so much they volunteered to work regularly in Sunday school. In fact, since starting teaching teams in Sunday school, Faith has had almost no teacher turnover. "Phyllis thought about quitting," Delora says, "but it looks like she probably won't because of her friendships with the team."

\* *Team teaching requires fewer workers.* Consider, for example, a church that averages 24 children in grades one through three--a first grade class of four students, and second and third grade classes of ten students each. To have one teacher for every six students, this department needs five teachers (one for grade one, and two each for grades two and three), plus a primary department supervisor--a total of six workers.

With a team approach, the work can be done, and done more effectively, by four workers, still providing the needed one to six ratio. Since each ministry team has internal leadership, no separate department supervisor is needed. Stillmeadow Nazarene in York, Pennsylvania, eliminated seven department supervisor positions this way.

\* *Team teaching eliminates the substitute problem.* If one team member has to be gone one Sunday, the others may feel able to carry on without a substitute for one day. Or if a substitute is called in, he won't have any preparation.

Even more important is the impact on students. The heart of children's ministry isn't the printed curriculum, but the loving relationship between teachers and students through which a Christlike life is modeled. A team guarantees that students will be with teachers they know well even when one team member is away.

\* *Team teaching models Christian community.* As children watch adults ministering as a team, they learn more about how God designed the body of Christ to work than they can learn from any Bible lesson on body life. As they watch mature Christians love, support, and forgive each other, they learn what it means to live in Christian community.

\* *Team teaching can make discipline problems almost disappear.* Disruptive children can drive teachers away because they are so exhausting. Delora has found that team teaching has solved this problem in her class. "We take turns teaching the lesson," she explains. "When David or Phyllis is teaching, I sit in the circle on the floor with the other students. For that week, I am a student, not a teacher. Sometimes I sit beside a student who needs extra attention, but by being part of the class, I become a friend with these children. Because we're relating as friends, the disruptive behavior has practically disappeared."

\* *As a bonus, team teaching saves money on facilities.* Large-group team teaching uses space more efficiently than small-group solo teaching. Olivet Evangelical Free Church in Muskegon, Michigan, needed growing room for their children's and teen's Sunday school classes. They considered building a 3000-square-foot youth building, but discovered that even that wouldn't meet their needs.

The solution they finally came up with was to tear out all their interior basement walls to eliminate their little classrooms and create a few large open areas--one for grades 1-3, one for grades 4-6, and one for teens. They would reconfigure their small classes into larger team-taught groups meeting in flexible multi-purpose space. Each space would have multiple work stations so students could work in smaller groups as appropriate. All furnishings would be portable with a room for active storage nearby so the space could also be used at other times for larger scale activities such as recreation.

Remodeling their basement and switching to team teaching will give Olivet's children's and teens' classes room to grow by 60% to 70% for a fraction of the cost of new construction.

If team teaching is new to your church, how can you introduce it? By experimenting. Almost every teacher who gets a taste of team teaching will jump at the chance to do it regularly. Try it out in vacation Bible school or a weeknight activity program. Or introduce it in one or two classes and let everyone see how it works before suggesting the whole children's department take the plunge.

What you'll discover, I suspect, is that the more we teach together, the more rewarding and effective our ministry with children will be.

*Eddy Hall of Goessel, Kansas, is a senior consultant with the church consulting team Living Stones Associates ([www.living-stones.com](http://www.living-stones.com)). Much of this article is adapted from WHEN NOT TO BUILD: An Architect's Unconventional Wisdom for the Growing Church, expanded edition (Baker 2000), by Ray Bowman and Eddy Hall.*

## Appendix 4

### Guidelines for Church Office Layout

#### 1. Placement of reception office

The first question I usually ask when deciding how to arrange the church offices is, “Where should the reception office be?” A good location for a receptionist office:

- a. Is located just inside the office entrance.
- b. The “office entrance” can be either the main (worship) entrance or a separate entrance, so long as it is easily identifiable by weekday visitors as the office entrance and there is adjacent parking for office visitors. Of course, the office entrance should be handicap accessible.
- c. Ideally, the reception office should be located so that the receptionist can have eye contact with office visitors when they first enter the outside entrance to the office, and so the office visitors can immediately see the receptionist and know where to go. It also enhances building security if the receptionist can monitor who is entering the building. Achieving this may require cutting a large window in a wall or installing a glass door or partial glass wall.
- d. Multi-use reception space. In some churches, either because of configuration or because of the need to maximize limited office space, we are recommending converting foyer space (either the main foyer or a secondary foyer) to a multi-use space that serves as a reception office and waiting area during office hours, but that serves as a foyer at other times. Lockable office furniture, perhaps an armoire, that is attractive, yet that can protect the computer and other office records from the curious, may be helpful. When this is done, the receptionist often is not able to share an office, although if this area is large enough, more than one work station can be placed in this area.
- e. Signage. The office entrance should be clearly marked so that someone entering the church parking lot for the first time will know where to go to pull up to the office entrance. The office entrance itself should have office hours clearly posted. If the location of the reception office is not self-evident, signs should clearly direct the office visitor to the office area.
- f. Ideally, the receptionist should be located so as to serve as a gatekeeper for equipping staff. That is, office visitors should not be able to have direct access to pastors or other equipping staff without first checking it (or at least passing through) the reception office. This is least important in small churches. Once a church reaches 200, not observing this can become a significant problem. By the time a church reaches 350, this function of the secretary becomes critical. Obviously, for the receptionist to be able to perform this function for all equipping staff, all equipping staff must be in the same administrative area.

## **2. Waiting area**

A waiting area for office visitors, either inside or just outside the reception office is important for welcoming. Comfortable chairs, reading material, a relaxing environment (plants, etc.), convenient drinks, etc., should be planned for this area.

## **3. Offices for support staff**

If the church has more than one office support staff person, usually two or three will work out of the reception office. I find that if I ask office support staff members if they would rather have private offices or a shared work space, the great majority prefer shared work space. Exceptions: financial secretaries need private space so giving records can be secured and so that visitors to the office will not be able to see giving records lying on someone's desk. Also, administrative assistants who need to be able to do computer work that is best done without interruption sometimes prefer a private office. I ask. Of course, the offices should not be designed just for present staff, but also for future staff.

## **4. Work room**

An adequate, well-equipped workroom is at the heart of a functional office. This room needs cabinets for paper and office supplies, countertop space for work surfaces, and office equipment: copier, printers, scanner, fax, folding machine, paper cutter, etc. Small churches often put office machines in the secretary's office. While this may be necessary in some cases, when possible, even in small churches, it is better to have a separate workroom. Why? Because the noise caused by folding machines and some copiers is great enough that it makes phone conversation difficult. Also, even in small churches, it is good to have a work space for volunteers other than the secretary's office.

When the church reaches the size that a production secretary is needed (often the third office support staff member to be hired), this person's work station will typically be in the work room. The work room is also a prime possible location for work stations for unpaid ministry leaders. We recommend that every church have at least one such work station, equipped with phone and computer terminal, and with filing space available. In larger churches, there should be multiple work stations available for unpaid ministry workers.

The work room should connect directly to the reception office, other support staff offices, and (if applicable), the office manager or administrator. Ideally, all these offices should have direct access to the workroom (without going through a hallway).

## **5. Administrator**

The title "church administrator" is used to identify a wide range of job descriptions. In one church, the administrator was really an associate pastor who was not identified as such because he was divorced, and that was a taboo in that church. In other cases, the administrator is really a secretary. Usually, the administrator is a hybrid—part equipping staff and part office support

staff. Assuming the administrator has direct supervision of the office support staff (the most common arrangement), the administrator will probably have a private office, but, if possible, it should connect directly to the workroom. The workroom is a hub around which support staff offices are organized.

In a large church with five or more office support staff, obviously support staff will need to office next to the equipping staff members they support.

## **6. Senior pastor**

Most senior pastors we have worked with like to have a small conference area in their offices where they can meet with 3 or 4 other people around a table. When this is practical, we try to honor this. Also, pastors who do a substantial amount of counseling often like to have an outdoor exit from their office so that a distraught counselee can leave privately without having to “walk the gauntlet” through the reception room. Also, some senior pastors who are plagued with many interruptions like to have a private exit just so they can leave the office without having to stop to visit with everyone they meet on their way out of the building as they go through the office complex, waiting area, etc. Obviously, this is more of a large church issue than a small church issue.

Give attention to soundproofing for any offices where counseling will be done. Also, give attention to glass windows in the doors and to having secretaries stationed outside those doors for the protection of the reputation of the pastors who are doing counseling with members of the opposite sex. If such an arrangement is not possible for each staff member who does counseling, it may be necessary to designate a counseling room to which these pastors come to counsel where these conditions can be met.

## **7. Equipping staff**

The minimum size office for someone who works more than half-time is about 150 square feet. If possible, I try to place all equipping staff in offices with outside windows. Of course, this is ideal for support staff as well. Spaces that do not have windows can be used as workrooms, storage areas, and rest rooms.

I strongly prefer to have all the equipping staff together. Research has revealed that physical proximity is the single greatest predictor of close relationships. So, if a church wishes to develop strong teamwork among their staff, it is important that their staff all work in the same area.

There are usually some staff members who resist this. Often the youth pastor likes to have an office next to the youth activity area. Of course, this is convenient, especially if there are weekday youth activities—the youth pastor can monitor the activities from his/her office, and be available to the youth. Also, the youth pastor’s office becomes a youth hangout on youth meeting night. These are good things, but in my mind they do not supercede the value of promoting staff teamwork.

Sometimes it is possible to locate the youth pastor’s office so that it is part of the administrative complex and also adjacent to the youth activity area. That is ideal. If you must choose, you ask the senior pastor what he/she wants; you do not defer to the youth pastor.

A solution I think should be seriously considered (but I don’t think I’ve seen it done), is to

have the youth pastor's administrative office be in the staff team area, but to have a secondary office for hanging out with kids in the youth activity area. I can imagine church boards objecting to the waste of space in using two rooms for a youth pastor's office. To address this, the "secondary" office could also double as one of the activity rooms in the youth ministry area (e.g., a breakout room).

Worship pastors also often give priority to being next to the worship space over being with the rest of the team. There are legitimate reasons for a worship pastor having an office next to the stage area. For churches that have choirs, often the worship pastor (assuming he leads the choir) will have an office in the corner of the choir room. This can be an excellent arrangement. Since I like for choir rooms to be multi-use (Sunday school, etc.), you may want to design the choir room so that one end of it (the end with the office area, and possibly a work area where music is spread out) can be divided off with a folding wall when other groups use the space.

Again, sometimes it is possible to place the worship pastor's office so that it is part of the staff area and also next to the stage area. If not, like with the youth pastor, I would suggest an administrative office as part of the team area and a music workroom (which can double as a choir room) next to the stage area. Obviously, a choir or practice room has special needs for soundproofing and acoustical treatment.

## **8. Common areas**

Most church offices are designed with little thought to team-building. Since teamwork is so critical, I believe it is extremely important to design offices so that the facility itself promotes spontaneous community-building and teamwork. The space should be designed to encourage staff members to run into each other regularly and to spend time in conversation. Many of the best ministry ideas will be born in the break room over a spontaneous cup of coffee.

There are two primary common areas that should be part of a church office design. In the small church, these two can be combined in a single room.

- a. Break/snack room. This is a room equipped with a refrigerator, a coffee pot, a microwave, drinks and snacks. There must be a comfortable table(s) where 4 to 8 people can sit and visit. This can also serve as a lunch room and as a meeting room or an overflow workroom.
- b. Conference room. When possible, the office area should include a conference room that can be used for all-staff meetings, board meetings, etc. Ideally, this should be located so that it can conveniently be used as a classroom on Sunday morning (without having to walk through offices to get to it). In a small church, the workroom can be designed to double as a conference room. Even in the larger church, this conference room can be used as a secondary workroom (for example, for preparing mailings). Optional: If you wish to incorporate a small serving kitchen in this room, it becomes much more useful for refreshments and luncheons. Take care to not design this conference room so that it is a necessary hallway. (Many churches have meeting rooms or fellowship halls that serve as the only connector between other parts of the building, making it impossible to have a private meeting in the room.)

## **9. Growing room**

Since, in our facility plans, we show a church how to accommodate growth to double the present size, that means that we have to anticipate where staff offices will be added as growth occurs. If doing new construction, be sure to provide space for future offices that can be used as meeting or conference space until it is needed as office space. (At which time additional meeting space will be added.)

## **10. Facility manager**

For the church that has a facility manager, I do not consider it critical for his/her office to be with the other offices, though if that works well, that is a plus. More often, though, the facility manager prefers to have an office located at a strategic spot for caring for the building.

## **11. Counselors**

When churches have counselors on staff, they often prefer to have a separate waiting area, and sometimes even a separate entrance, for the counselees, since counselees may be distressed both when arriving and leaving. Counseling offices do not have to be in the same area as other offices, especially if the church is providing space for counselors who are not employees of the church.

## **12 . Children's ministry workroom**

We recommend that the church have a workroom for children's workers that is located in the same area as the children's classrooms. This workroom should have a copier, supply cabinets, countertop workspace, paper cutter, etc. This space can be a part of or adjacent to the office of the children's ministry director, but in most cases it is not. Again, we want to see the children's ministry director officed with the rest of the staff. This area can serve as his or her workroom to supplement his/her office area. This is a good use for a windowless room.

## **13. Storage**

Be sure to include adequate storage in the office design. A generous amount of storage in the workroom is at the heart of this. Of course, a children's ministry workroom should have plenty of storage for children's ministry supplies. Be sure to provide adequate storage for music and (if applicable) choir robes in the music practice room. Storage of musical instruments and staging is best accommodated directly adjacent to the stage area. Discourage the use of prime office space for archive storage. Attics and garages make great archive storage.

Eddy Hall  
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