



Healthy Congregations & Common Church Diseases

It is only natural that in an organic body there will be sickness and health and health will influence growth.

The Positive Side

Marks of a healthy church

Stephen Macchia, *Becoming A Healthy Church*, Baker Books, 1999

10 Characteristics

- God's Empowering Presence
- God Exalting Worship
- Spiritual Disciplines
- Learning and Growing in Community
- A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships
- Servant-Leadership Development
- An Outward Focus
- Wise Administration and Accountability
- Networking
- Stewardship and Generosity

C Peter Wagner *'The Healthy Church'* Regal, 1996

- A Positive Pastor
- A Well-Mobilized Laity
- Has a philosophy of ministry that meets needs of the unchurched
- Has its 'internal organs' balanced (systems)
- Biblical Priorities

Four church health axioms

1 – The pastor must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price

2 – The congregation must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price.

3 – The church must agree that the goal of evangelism is to make disciples.

4 – The church must not have a terminal illness.

Christian Schwarz – Natural Church Development

Diseases

1 - Disconnected Head and Spiritual Leukaemia

Have forgotten that Christ is the head of the church
Little regard for spiritual growth
Have become human organisations rather than a spiritual community
Complacency is overcoming the body

Solutions:

2 – Poor DNA

Unhealthy self-concept in how the church thinks about itself.
Poor understanding of what the church is to 'Be' and 'Do'

Solutions:

2 - Stunted Development of Building Blocks:

Not thinking of an evangelism/discipleship process.
Not thinking of outcomes in terms of people development
Lack of intentionality regarding spiritual transformation

Solutions:

3 - Ethnikitis:

The church has become an island in a community it no longer relates to.

Solutions:

Related problem is a church in a dying town

Solutions:

Rethink the definition of success and what it means to be a living community in a dying town.

Think of sending capacity in terms of the young people leaving the town.

4 - In Grown (Koinonitis)

Have drifted toward an inward focus with little regard to outward priorities in terms of church life, finances, time and most importantly the burden on our hearts.

Spiritual naval gazers

Sanctification gap

Solutions:

5 - Sociological Strangulation: Outgrowing The Facilities

Two particular areas:

Parking Space

Worship space

Solutions:

6 - Too Much Fat

Large parts of the body are not serving and become a weight on those parts of the body that are working.

Solutions:

7 - Over The Hill

Life-cycle issues:

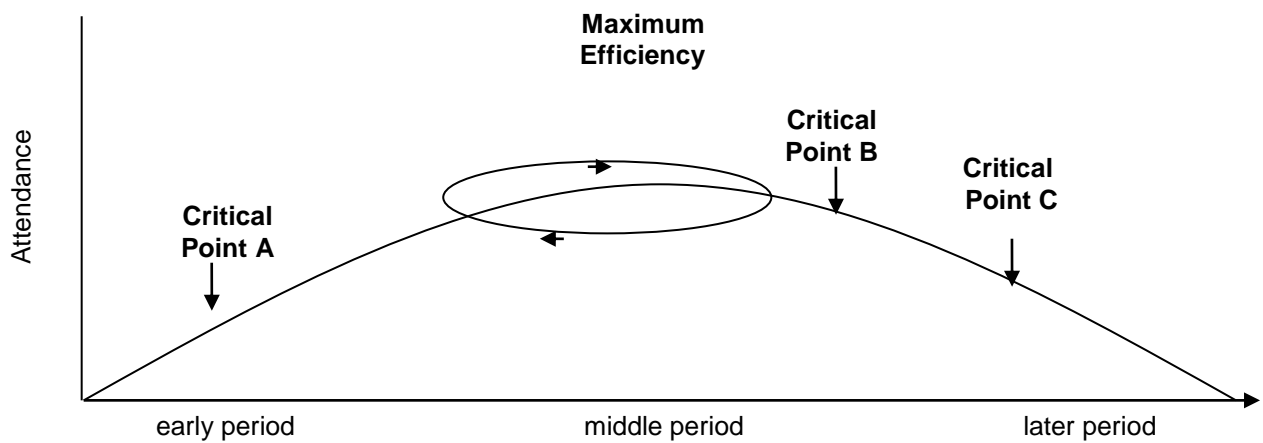
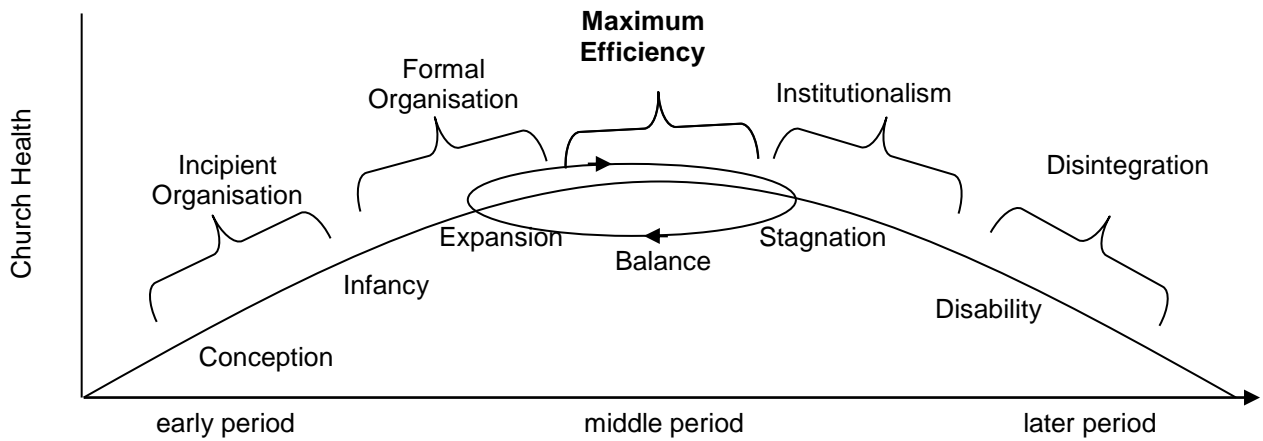
All Living Organisms Have a Life Cycle

90% of all churches reach a plateau by their 15th birthday

The average life-cycle of a church is 70 years

Churches Can Be Renewed

Churches Can Live At The Maximum Efficiency Point



VRPM:

- Vision
- Relationships
- Programs
- Management

Solutions:

8 - Systemic Strangulation

Not addressing church size/system relationships

Treating a large church as if it is small or a small church as if it is large.

Solutions:

McINTOSH'S TYPOLOGY OF CHURCH SIZE

Factors	Small Churches	Medium Churches	Large Churches
Size	15 – 200 worshipers	201 – 400 worshipers	401+ worshipers
Orientation	Relational	Programmatical	Organisational
Structure	Single cell	Stretched cell	Multiple cell
Leadership	Resides in key families	Resides in committees	Resides in select leaders
Pastor	Lover	Administrator	Leader
Decisions	Made by congregation. Driven by history	Made by committees. Driven by changing needs	Made by staff and leaders. Driven by vision
Staff	Bivocational or single pastor	Pastor and small staff	Multiple staff
Change	Bottom up through key people	Middle out through key committees	Top down through key leaders
Growth Patterns	Attraction model through relationships	Program model through key ministry	Proclamation model through word of mouth
Growth Obstacles	Small-church image Ineffective evangelism Inadequate programming Downward momentum Ingrown fellowship	Inadequate facilities Inadequate staff Inadequate finances Poor administration Increasing complexity	Poor assimilation Increased bureaucracy Poor communication Loss of vision Lack of member care
Growth Strategies	Renew a sense of purpose Begin new ministries Cultivate evangelism Celebrate victories Start new groups/classes Involve new people	Develop distinct identity Add additional staff Use facilities multiple times Offer multiple worship services Write a long-range plan Improve quality of ministry.	Renew the vision Design assimilation plan Streamline procedures Offer need-based events Adjust leadership roles Increase the number of small groups.

Gary McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999)

What Is The Church To Do?

Our Five Purposes

The church must be structured in such a way that the following five purposes are facilitated:

- (1), **Community**- genuine fellowship must be facilitated among believers (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25; Philemon 2:1-4; 1 John 1:3.)
- (2), **Worship** – The church must facilitate worship (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42)
- (3), **Discipleship** – Instruction, reproof and spiritual growth must happen in an intentional way. (Acts 20:28-32; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 4:12-13)
- (4), **Evangelism** - A continuous effort to find lost people must be made. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:28.)
- (5), **Service** – Each member is to be glorifying God and edifying one another through ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:6-11)

Seventh-day Adventists Believe...

The church is the **community** of believers who confess **Jesus Christ** as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for **worship**, for **fellowship**, for **instruction** in the Word, for the **celebration** of the Lord's Supper, for **service** to all mankind, and for the worldwide **proclamation** of the gospel. The church derives its authority from **Christ**, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures which are the written Word. The church is **God's family**; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the **body of Christ**, a **community** of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the **bride** for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a **glorious church**, the faithful of all the ages, the **purchase of His blood**, not having spot or wrinkle, but **holy** and without blemish –

Fundamental Belief, 12 (was no 11 before introduction of new fundamental at 2005 General Conference Session)