



Greater Sydney Conference

Implications of Reveal & Follow Me

How People Grow in Discipleship

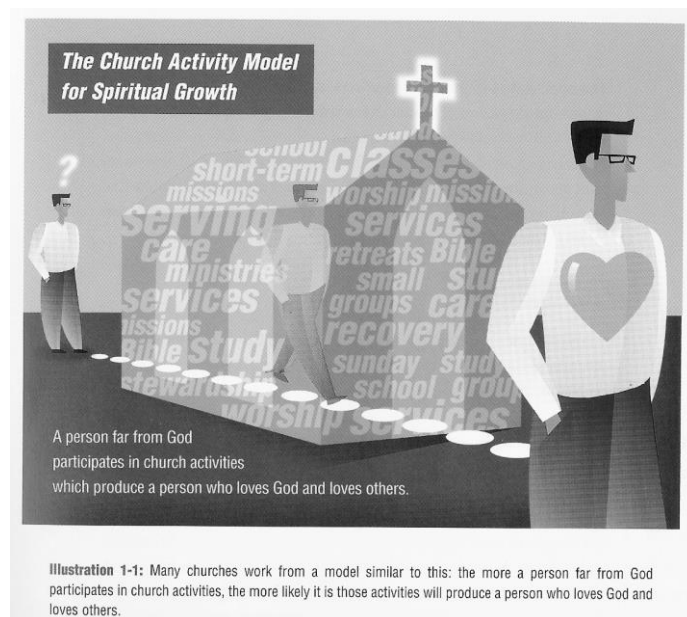
(Implications of the Reveal study)

We can measure things like membership and attendance, but do these measures really tell us whether or not someone is becoming more like Christ? How do we measure the human heart?

Imagine a new member of your church says “My wife and I want to donate one million dollars. The only thing we ask is that you put the money toward what you know will result in the greatest kingdom impact.” What would you spend the money on?

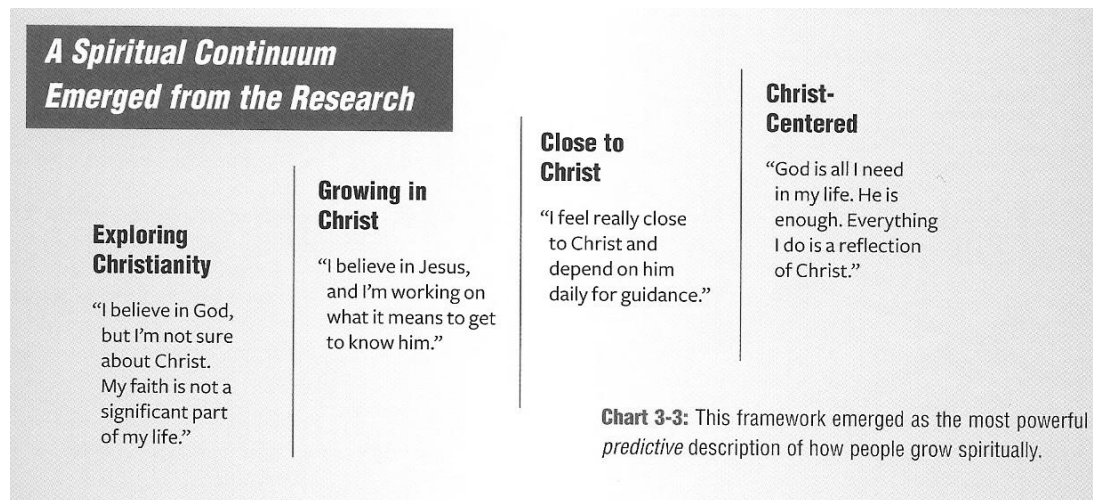
Reveal Study: 80 000 people in various church contexts were asked about their spiritual growth.

The Church Activity Model for Spiritual Growth – we have often used this model without assessing are people actually growing.



Church activity alone made no direct impact on growing the heart.

The Spiritual Continuum



Spiritual growth is all about increasing relational closeness to Christ.
'Personal spiritual practices are the central building blocks for a Christ-centred life.'

Catalysts to Spiritual Growth Along The Continuum.

Exploring Christ
1
Growing in Christ
2
Close to Christ
3
Christ-Centred

Summary of findings from the Reveal study:

- A desire for 'Jesus to be first in my life' is a significant catalyst across the three movements.
- Belief in salvation by grace is a catalytic factor that influences the movement of people from the first to the second segment. Spiritual growth in Movement 1 is characterised by wrestling with foundational Christian beliefs and understanding their application to life.
- Spiritual community is a critical catalyst for spiritual growth at all points but especially early on.
- Serving is overall the most catalytic experience offered by the church especially in the later movements.
- 'Reflection on Scripture' is more influential than any other personal spiritual practice.
- The most dominant force driving spiritual engagement is a routine practise of spiritual disciplines.

- Evangelism is the most catalytic factor for Movements 2 and 3. It is both a cause and effect. It emerges from a believer's heart as an output, so it is an effect; but it is also a cause of spiritual growth as it reenergizes and reinforces a believer's faith.
- People grow spiritually through multiple inputs – from teaching and study, to spiritual coaching and everyday experiences. It is a highly individualised process. There is no clear pattern of stepping stones that guarantees spiritual maturity.

"It is hard to over-estimate the importance of establishing a daily rhythm and routine of spiritual practices."

Stalled:

More than 25% of those surveyed described themselves as spiritually 'stalled' or 'dissatisfied' with the role of the church in their spiritual growth.

What factors do you think stall people in their spiritual growth?

- The core Christian beliefs of those who are stalled are similar to those who are not stalled. The difference is in the application of them.
- Those who are stalled report much lower levels of personal spiritual practices than those who are not stalled.
- People 'uninstall' by reengaging in spiritual practices.

The stalled segment reports much lower levels of personal spiritual practices than other believer segments.

So What?

1. Our message to the congregation has to change. We need to transition the role of the church from spiritual parent to spiritual coach.

Ask more than "How many?"

Go beyond "How are you?"

How is your relationship with God?

What's helping you grow spiritually these days?

What ministry is making a difference in your life? How?

What could the church do differently that would help you grow more?

Ask "How does that help someone grow?"

Evaluate your ministries based on the level of impact you think they have on the spiritual growth of people in each segment.

The people in your church really want to grow closer to Christ. They are just unsure what the next step is.

Create Steps

- The Creative Tension Gap – For change to occur, we need to come up with a workable plan to close the gap.
- As leaders we must establish the right amount of tension in order to catalyse change.
- Help people realise where they are now spiritually
- Paint a 'vision' of where God wants them to be
What does a follower of Christ look like?
How does my spiritual life connect to the rest of my life?
- What's Next for Me
- If the gap seems too insignificant, people won't think the changes are worth the effort. If the gap seems too enormous, people will find the challenge too overwhelming and give up before they try. People need to know next steps that they can take.

Personalise The Steps

- Our challenge as spiritual coaches is to personalize these steps for the people in our congregations – designing the first or next steps someone needs to take, keeping in mind that not everyone needs to take the same next steps. It takes a lot of discernment to help figure out where to go next.
- Because this personalizing can be so difficult, our churches often default to creating lots of ministries, and we tell people to do all of them. While most, or all, of these programs and ministries might be sound and biblically based, we really haven't succeeded in helping people determine the gaps they need to close as individuals.

Changes

- A 'one-size-fits-all' process is not what people needed. We have been telling our congregation for years 'We know what your spiritual needs are, and we believe we know the program or activity that can best meet those needs for you.'
- Extend the impact of our weekend services
- We need to be very intentional about equipping believers to live Christ-Centred lives as well as reaching non-believers
- We need to provide a variety of 'next step' learning opportunities.

- We have to offer experiences and resources to catalyse spiritual movement. Experiences to build community and experiences to encourage Christlike service.
- Real Change Begins With You.

www.revealnow.com

Reveal Where Are You? (2007) & Follow Me (2008)
Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, Willow,