



Discussion Unit

Reveal

What you hold in your hands has revolutionized the way I look at the role of the local church. It is causing me to ask new questions. It is causing me to rethink how we coach Christ-followers. It is causing me to see clearly that the church and its myriad of programs have taken on too much of the responsibility for people's spiritual growth.

Bill Hybels – Forward

For as long as anyone can remember, the only questions we knew to ask about the church was, "How many?"

Attendance numbers help you determine if people like what you are doing.

Increased attendance does not necessarily mean people growing.

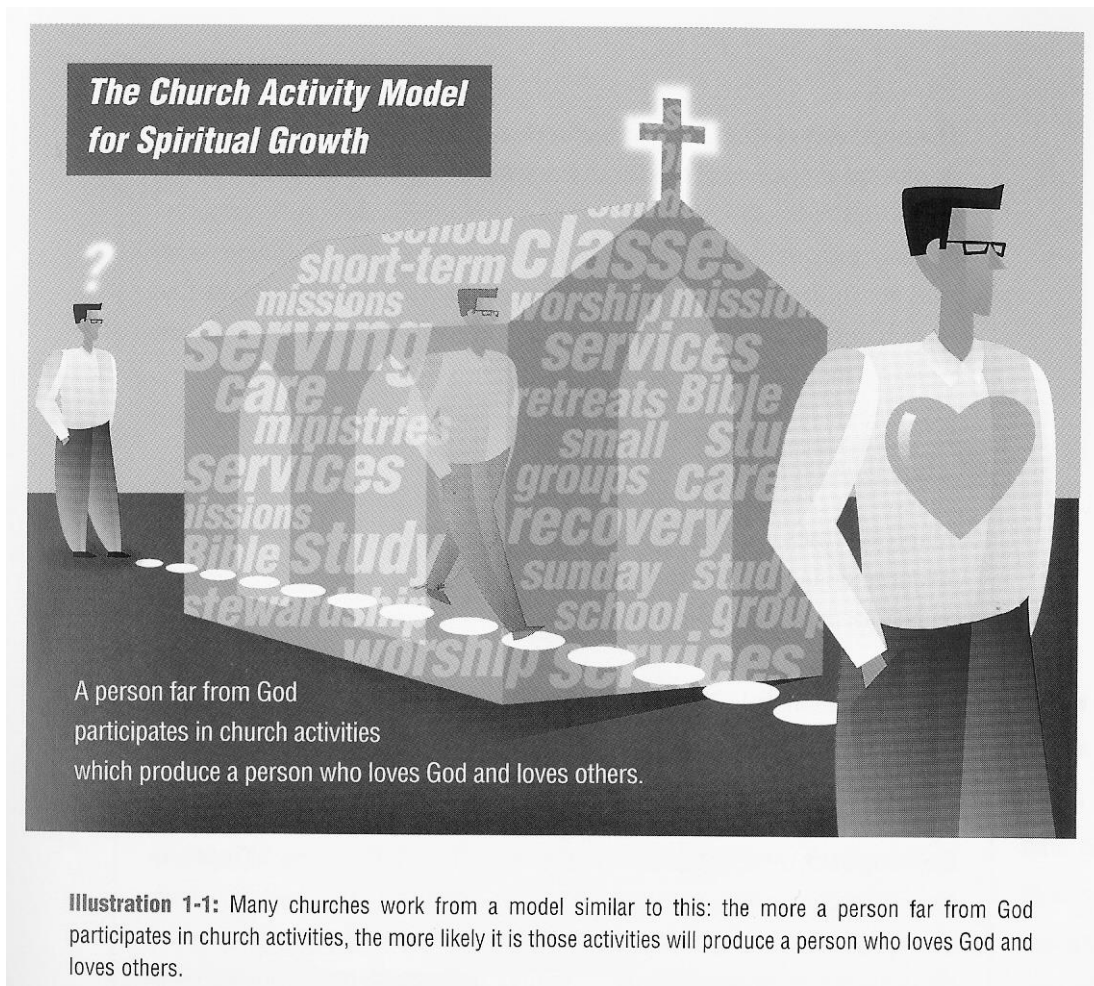
God asks: Where are you?

Are you really making a difference?

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?

Every ministry leader want to make an impact. But how do we know if the things we are doing as a church actually make a difference? 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?

The Church Activity Model for Spiritual Growth



What if we could measure the heart and ask Where are we?

“We wanted to find evidence of spiritual growth in people, and then figure out what types of activities or circumstances triggered that spiritual growth.

Spiritual Growth – An increasing love for God and for other people.

Hypothesis:

1. There is a migration path for spiritual growth based on church activities.
2. The most effective evangelism tool is a spiritual conversations
3. Spiritual relationships are a key driver of spiritual growth.

Three Observations:

1. Gender does not impact spiritual growth in any significant way.
2. Age does not appear to have a significant impact on spiritual growth.
3. The pattern of spiritual growth does not differ significantly by church.

Six Discoveries:

1. Involvement in church activities does not predict or drive long-term spiritual growth. But there is a 'spiritual continuum' that is very predictive and powerful.

Higher levels of church activity did not predict increasing love for God or increasing love for other people. Church involvement drives Christian behaviour somewhat, which means that the more people participate in church activities, the more likely they are to serve, tithe etc. But higher levels of activity do not seem to drive spiritual growth when defined as increasing love for God and others.

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

**Based on Research Results, the Connection Between
Church Activity and Spiritual Growth Appears to Be Limited**

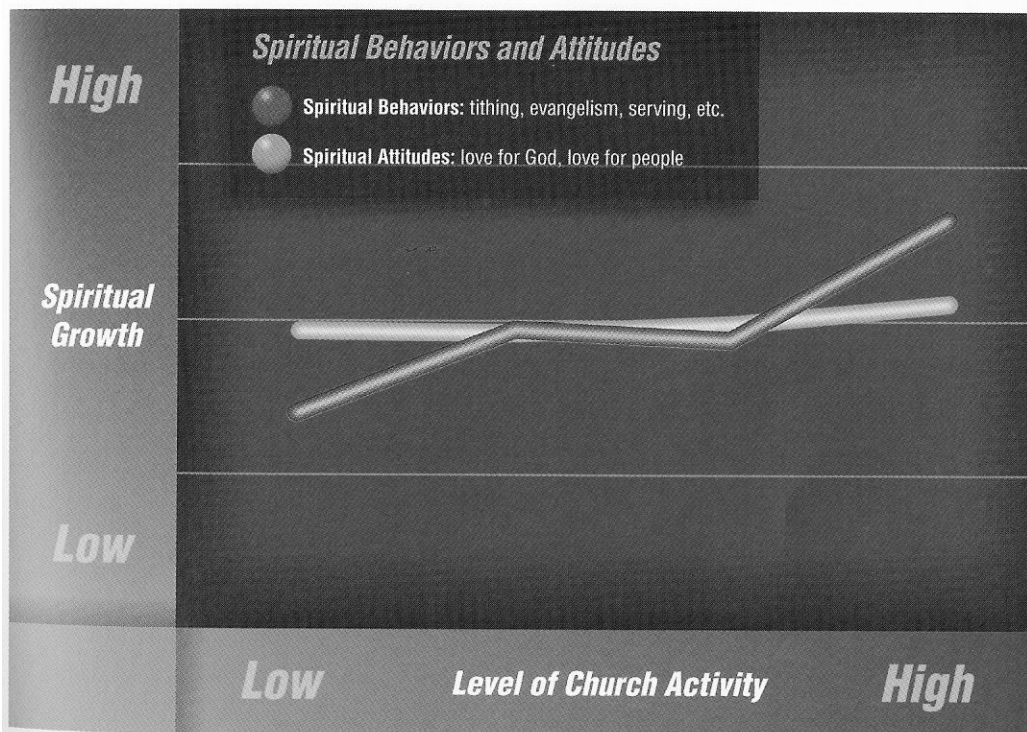
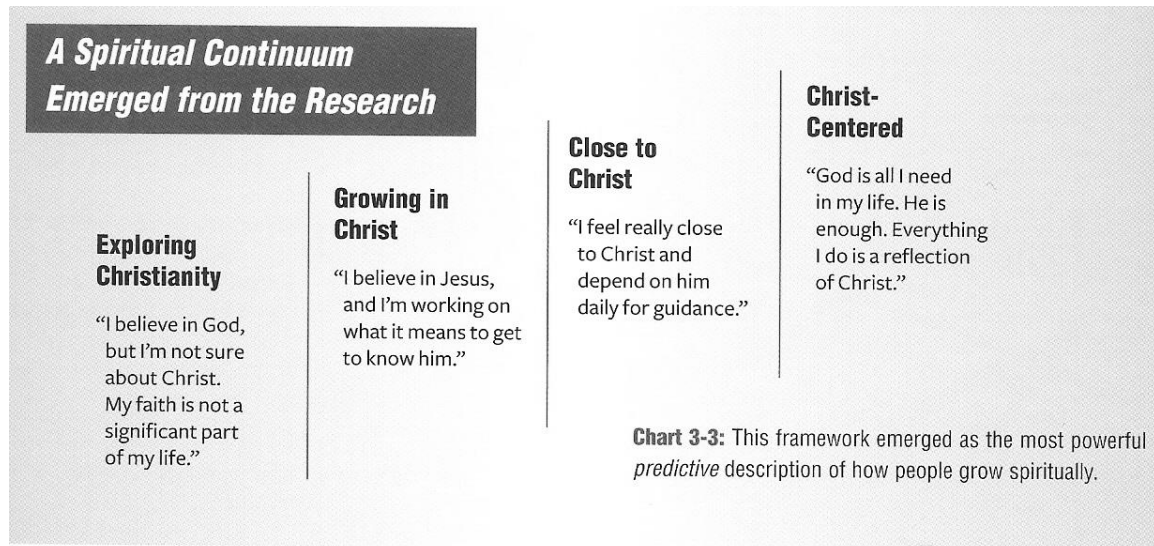


Chart 3-2: The research showed some increase in spiritual behaviors as participation in church activities increases, but very little correlation between low-medium-high levels of participation and increasing "love for God, love for people."

A Spiritual Continuum Emerged



The Spiritual Continuum Predicts Spiritual Growth

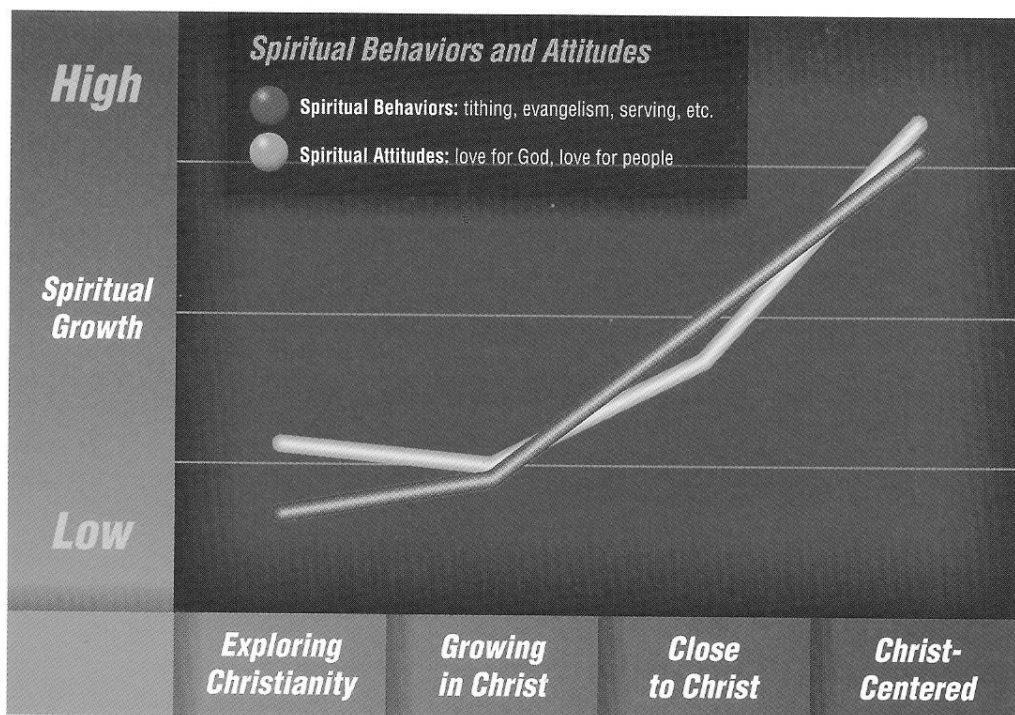
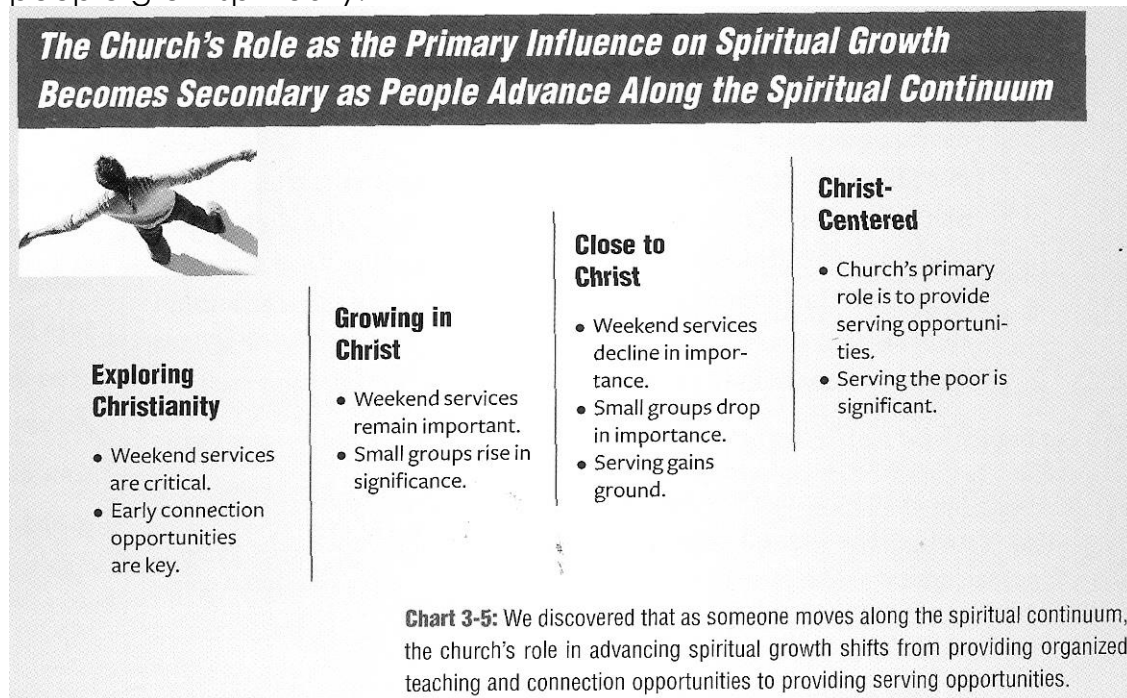


Chart 3-4: The movement of the two lines above shows high correlation between the low-medium-high levels of spiritual growth (spiritual behaviors and spiritual attitudes) and the four segments of the spiritual continuum.

2. Spiritual growth is all about increasing relational closeness to Christ.

3. The church is most important in the early stages of spiritual growth. Its role then shifts from being the primary influence to a secondary influence.

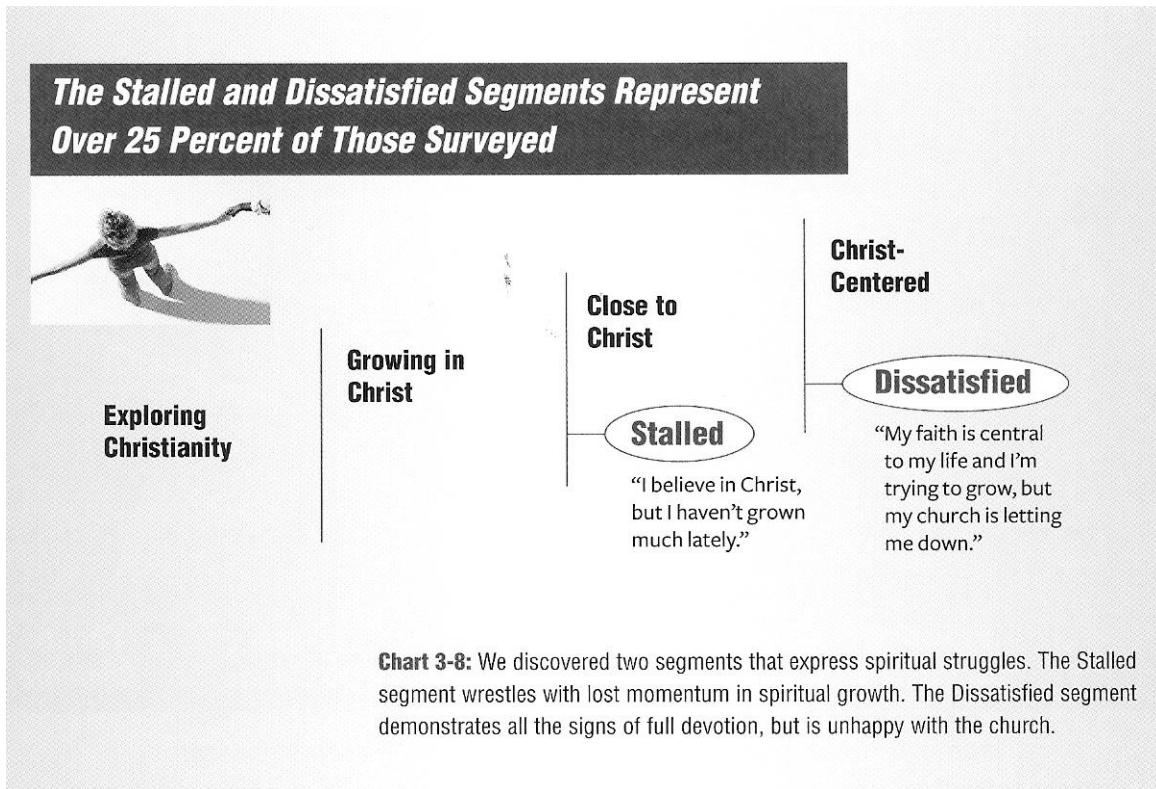
The research strongly suggests that the church declines in influence as people grow spiritually.



4. Personal spiritual practices are the building blocks for a Christ-centred life.

5. A church's most active evangelists, volunteers and donors come from the most spiritually advanced segments.

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



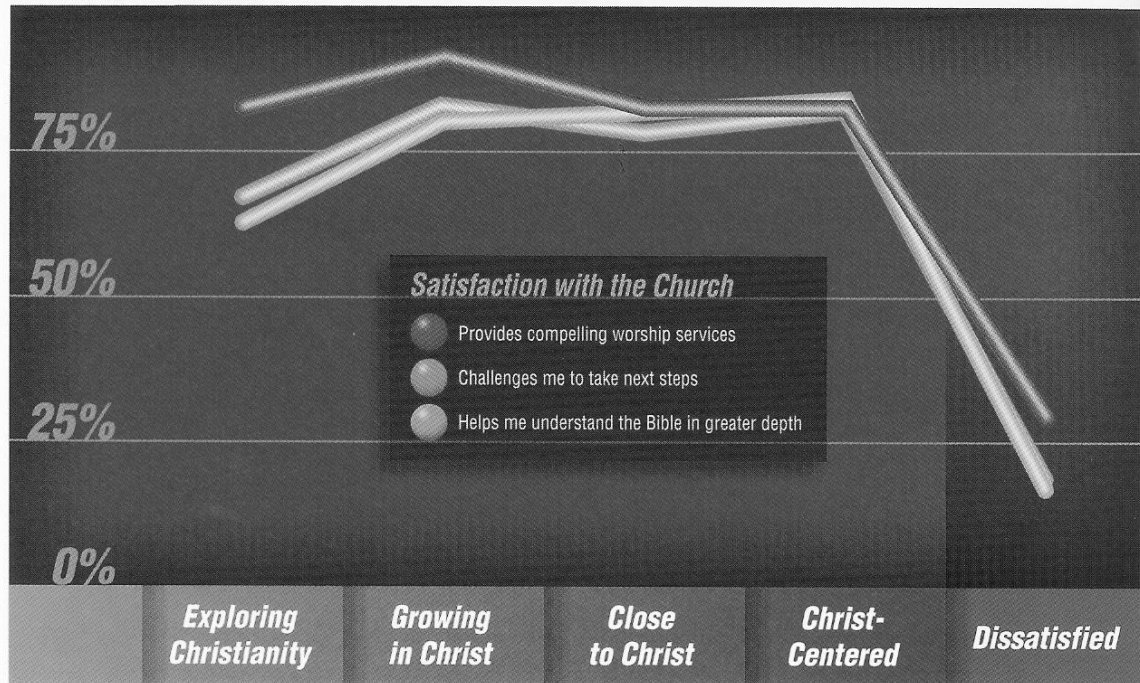
The stalled segment reports much lower levels of personal spiritual practices than other believer segments.

The dissatisfied segment reports levels of tithing, serving and evangelism comparable to the most advanced segments.

The higher the level of engagement, the more likely it is that satisfaction with the church will be lukewarm.

Percentages specify the percentage of those from each segment who responded as indicated. For example, 26 percent of all those in the Dissatisfied segment strongly agreed that their church "provides compelling worship services."

The Dissatisfied Segment's Unhappiness with the Church Is Pronounced



"Imagine the kingdom gains if the church figured out the ideal way to coach Christ-followers all along the spiritual continuum."

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.
2. We need to coach next steps.
3. We need to extend the impact of weekend services e.g Journal.

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 make 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.

www.revealnow.com

Reveal Where Are You?

Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, Willow, 2007