

third edition

ADVANCED STRATEGIC PLANNING

A 21st-CENTURY MODEL
FOR CHURCH AND MINISTRY LEADERS

AUBREY
MALPHURS



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Introduction

I spotted the creature sitting off in the distance almost by itself. With long arms that looked like a tangle of dark blue steel tentacles, it reminded me of a large octopus that had crawled out of the ocean nearby. It was nothing of the sort. It was one of several rides operated by a small, traveling carnival that happened to pass through our town close to where my family and I lived. I was alone with my daughter, Jennifer, who at the time was around the impressionable age of four or five. I decided to live a little and have a good time that would make a lasting impression on my little girl. She would discover that Dad wasn't afraid to try something new.

We boarded the monster, and soon it was spinning around at breakneck speed while the tentacles frantically lashed up and down. It was frightening. I began to worry that one of the tentacles—the one that held us—could possibly tear loose with all the contortions it was going through. We would not survive if it did. I silently prayed and made a vow to God as I held Jennifer tightly against my chest. It went something like this: *God, if you get us off this ride alive and in one piece, I promise never to get on another ride for the rest of my life!* God answered my prayer, the octopus let go, and I have kept that vow.

More than at any other time in history, North America, along with much of the world, is exploding with change—fast, frightening change. I refer to it as megachange. It has affected every institution—business, government, the schools, and the church—and it is occurring at a number of levels: national, corporate, and individual. The result is a revolution taking place all around us that is likely to be as profound as any in the past. Some wrongly advise us just to be patient, that in time it will all pass. The reality is, however, that there is no end in sight. We have climbed on board the octopus only to discover that it will not let go.

What is the explanation for this megachange? What is happening? Peter Drucker sums it up best:

Every few hundred years throughout Western history, a sharp transformation has occurred. In a matter of decades, society altogether rearranges itself—its world view, its

basic values, its social and political structures, its arts, its key institutions. Fifty years later a new world exists. And the people born into that world cannot even imagine the world in which grandparents lived and into which their own parents were born.¹

Drucker's point is that we are living at one of those rare points in time when an old worldview (modernism) and many of its trappings are dying and another (postmodernism) has been born. The consequence is a massive shift in our culture, science, society, and institutions. This change is enormously greater than the world has ever experienced, and we are caught in the middle of it. We are living at a frightening point of absolute, chaotic discontinuity, watching the old die off and the new rush in to fill the vacuum.

Where is the church in all this? How is it doing?

The Problem

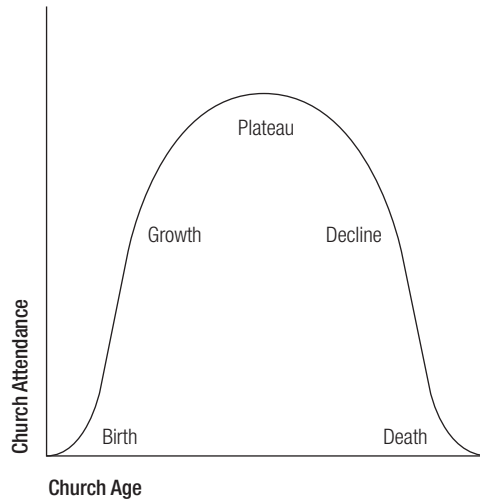
The answer is, not well. In an earlier book, I noted that in 1988 between 80 and 85 percent of churches in North America had either plateaued or were in decline (dying).² Now in the twenty-first century, that figure has not changed appreciably despite a valiant surge in church planting. The number of unchurched people across America continues to be high, possibly as high as 70 to 80 percent. Penny Marler comments that if the Gallup surveys over the past thirty years that estimate the unchurched to be only 57 percent of the population were accurate, then people would be flocking to our churches. But this is not happening.³

Based on my research and consulting ministry with churches, I am convinced that the typical church does not understand the full implications of megachange. Even when a church has some understanding of the implications, it doesn't know how to respond in effective ministry to those becoming immersed in the post-modern paradigm. I believe that the majority of seminaries that prepare people for ministry sit in the same boat with the churches. They are still preparing future pastors for ministry to a modern—not a postmodern—world. Most training equips pastors for one hour on Sunday morning but ignores the other forty-plus hours of the week that demand such things as leadership gifts and abilities, people skills, and strategic thinking and doing. My research, pastoral experience, and church consulting indicate that pastoring a church is a leadership-intensive enterprise. It is imperative that a pastor be able not only to preach to a congregation but also to lead and relate well to that congregation.⁴

The Explanation

The information above indicates that the North American church is not on a plateau but in decline. It is facing a major growth challenge. It is over the life-cycle hump and moving downward. Before venturing to offer a solution to the problem,

The Life Cycle of a Church



I want to look at an explanation for the problem. I believe an understanding of the reason the problem exists is a major step toward solving it. As someone once said, a problem well defined is a problem half solved.

Experts have put forth numerous explanations for why the North American church is struggling. Many lay blame. Based on the information above, you could blame the church for not doing a better job of evangelism and edification. If 65 percent of the people in the churches are either plateaued or declining in their spiritual growth, it is no wonder that so many churches are struggling.

You might also blame the seminaries and colleges that train the church's leaders. A scan of the typical seminary curriculum would reveal that far too many are not aware of what is taking place in North American culture and its impact on the typical church. Though many seminaries and Christian colleges have begun to use the new technology, they are typically business as usual when it comes to the curriculum.

My view is that the problem is not what evangelical seminaries teach but what they do not teach. Many evangelical seminaries teach the Bible and theology, and it is imperative that they do so. However, they often do not provide strong training in leadership, people skills, and strategic thinking skills, and this is poor preparation for ministry in today's shrinking world, which is undergoing intense, convoluted change.

The Sigmoid Curve

It is easy to lay blame, and many need to wake up or pull their heads out of the sand. However, a bigger, more fundamental explanation of the problem is represented by the sigmoid curve. We can better understand much of what is taking

place in North American Christianity in general and churches in particular if we understand the concept of the sigmoid curve.

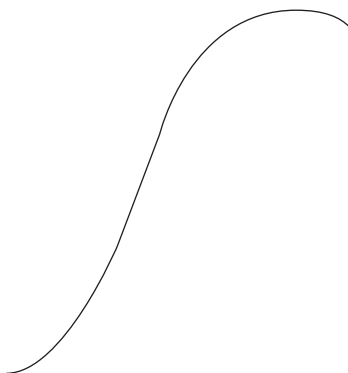
The term *sigmoid* simply means “S-shaped.” The S-shaped curve represents the natural development of one’s personal life and relationships. It also represents the natural development of biological systems, institutions, worldviews, civilizations, and organizations including the church.

The S-curve depicts how virtually everything in life begins, grows, plateaus, and then ultimately dies. It is true of human beings. It also may be true of relationships such as marriage. It is true of one’s leadership and it is true of civilizations, as proved by the Greek and Roman empires in the past and the Russian empire today. The Fortune 500 companies demonstrate that it is true of businesses, as a number of companies who made the list one, two, or more years ago are not on that list today. In physics it is the second law of thermodynamics. In biology it is extinction. In terms of worldview it is the shift from theism to deism and then to naturalism or modernism. And today it is the shift from modernism to postmodernism. Not even the church is an exception to the pattern. In short, the world and everything in it are all somewhere on the S-curve.

As it relates to the church, the S-curve represents essentially its life-cycle pattern. Like people, churches have a life cycle. In general, a church is born and over time it grows. Eventually it reaches a plateau, and if nothing is done to move it off that plateau, it begins to decline. If nothing interrupts the decline, it will die. Each stage represents a growth challenge for the church. Growing, plateaued, and declining churches all face growth challenges. Some are alike, but most are unique to the church’s particular situation and where it is on the S-curve.

The Message

The message or lesson of the sigmoid curve is that all good things (and even some bad things) end. In a world of constant, turbulent change, many relationships



S-shaped Curve

and most organizations do not last. The pattern is that they wax and eventually wane. Even brand-new institutions and organizations such as a church will, in time, plateau and then die. No matter what institution it is, organizational “dry rot” sets in. The institution becomes brittle, ceases to function, and expires.

This concept has been true since the fall of mankind as recorded in Genesis 3. The bad news for the twenty-first century is that today decline is happening faster than ever before. In the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, for example, decline was a relatively slow process. It took time for things to change and eventually die. You had some advance warning and time to address the changes. However, writing in 1994, Charles Handy warns, “Those units of time are also getting depressingly small. They used to be decades, perhaps even generations. Now they are years, sometimes months. The accelerating pace of change shrinks every sigmoid curve.”⁵ I would add that it has shrunk not only to years and months but in some cases also to days.

While it does prove helpful to examine specific reasons for the decline of churches, the lesson is that it will happen anyway. We can learn from this information and try to discover what to do as well as what not to do. Regardless, in time the end is inevitable. This was true of the spiritually strong and not so strong churches of the first century. Those ministries live on today in the churches of the twenty-first century. However, the original churches are no longer. If you travel to the Middle East, you will not find any of them.

The Solution

The concept of the sigmoid curve raises a critical question for the North American church. Is there anything a church can do to circumvent or at least put off eventual decline and death? The answer is yes, and it is twofold. First, gifted leaders of churches and denominations must start new S-curves. They need to launch out in new directions. Second, they need a strategic planning process that helps them start new sigmoid curves. They need to know how to think and act in the twenty-first century.

Starting New S-Curves

The answer to the problem of church decline is to start new S-curves. This should occur in several contexts: church planting, church growth, and church revitalization. You would be wise to pay close attention to the context that describes your ministry situation.

CHURCH PLANTING

The first context in which to start new S-curves is new church starts. Birthing new churches was the early church’s response to Christ’s Great Commission. The church’s three missionary journeys found in Acts 13:1–21:26 involved church planting.

A number of organizations and denominations have caught a vision to parent Great Commission churches all across North America. They refuse to bury their heads in the sand and ignore all that is taking place around them. The Assemblies of God and the Southern Baptists launched bold church-planting programs at the end of the twentieth century. A number of smaller denominations such as the Missionary Church, Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, Evangelical Covenant Church, Church of the Nazarene, and others have followed suit.

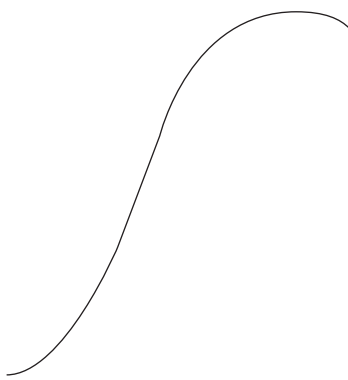
Church planting involves starting a new or first S-curve. The new church has no prior history. It is at the very beginning of the church life cycle. While this can be a very disorganized time in the church's history, it is also a time of great excitement and anticipation. The core group is asking, What is God going to do? To what extent will God use us to make a difference in our world in the twenty-first century? Typically, churches at this early stage are very evangelistic and reach out to people in the community and beyond.

The concept of the S-curve teaches us that for the universal church to survive, it must plant churches. Since every church in time will wane and die, it is imperative that we start new churches, or the church as a whole will cease to exist.

CHURCH GROWTH

The second context for new S-curves is the growing church. The key to continued growth and renewal is not only to start new first-curve churches (church planting) but also to start a new second curve in the existing church before it plateaus.

A proactive response. Like church planting, this is a proactive response. The church starts the second curve while it is still virile and growing. It is at this stage that the ministry has the time, resources (people and finances), energy, spirit, and drive to launch the new curve. Many in the church, however, will view this response as foolish if not insane (they have not learned from companies like IBM that made the exact same mistake and as a result don't have the market share they



Church Planting

once had).⁶ The problem and number one enemy is complacency. Why start a new course when the present course is so successful? Someone will quip, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" This calls for a strong leap of faith, as the need for and evidence in support of a new direction will not be obvious. This is a paradox. Leaders must push ahead in spite of the seeming evidence that the current ministry is doing well. This move is tantamount to letting go of the trapeze with no net in sight. It takes leaders of strong faith and vision to pull it off.

A reactive response. Most leaders wait until the church has plateaued or is in decline before they seek renewal. This is the crisis or reactive mode. But people do not lead and respond well in a crisis context for several reasons. One is that the leaders are discredited. They are the very ones who led the organization into its state of decline, so they are not considered competent as leaders or worthy of trust.

People will also respond poorly because of lack of resources. Declining ministries are like sinking ships. Some people are quick to abandon them and take their money with them. There will also be poor esprit de corps. People are down emotionally, which drains them of the energy needed to be involved in renewal.

Knowing where we are. At this point two important questions for growing churches are, How can we know where our church is on the first curve, and When is it time to start the second curve? The answer to both questions is that you cannot know for sure. However, the following hints may prove helpful. First, it is always safe to assume that you are close to a plateau. If you are not close, you can be sure that one is lurking somewhere off in the distance. Handy points out candidly that an organization needs a new direction every two to three years.⁷ This is because not only is there more change today, but also it happens in a shorter amount of time.

It may be helpful to ask an outsider (another pastor or consultant) for his evaluation of where the church is, because he will be more objective than people within the ministry. Younger people in the church and younger leaders will often be more aware of where the church is than older members. The older and established leaders may hold assumptions, views, or paradigms that blind them to the real situation. This is why I along with others advise older leaders and retiring pastors not to stay in the church. It is imperative that those who cannot embrace the new curve step aside and, usually, leave the church. This may seem harsh, but the church as a whole is more important than a handful of former leaders. These older leaders could move to other churches where they would be able to serve with less influence as lay leaders or as ministers in small group communities.

Some second-curve issues. Not only is it difficult to convince people in a growing church of the need to start a second curve, but it is also difficult to accomplish the new direction. For a time, various currents will be pulling in different directions. The old and new curves will coexist, causing much confusion. Conflict will surface between leaders and their followers invested in the first curve and those invested in the second curve. In addition, as the second curve starts up, it may wane before it takes over. The result will be even more criticism of the leaders of change, making it easy for them to lose heart, give up on the new curve, and return to the old

or resign. The answer for leaders of change is to exercise great patience with the process. Do not be too quick to decide it's not working.

Some second-curve events. How do growing churches launch new S-curves? What are some second-curve events? One is a church relocation. Lakepointe Baptist Church was a growing Southern Baptist church located in Rowlett, Texas (a suburb of Dallas), with an average of two to three thousand attenders. They relocated to a larger facility that is located four or five miles away, facing a four-lane interstate highway, and attendance has jumped to around seven thousand.

Another way to initiate a second curve is to implement some or all of the concepts in this book—discovering your core values; developing a mission, a vision, and a strategy; and so forth. For those who have already discovered and developed these concepts, begin a second curve by revisiting and updating or rethinking them.

Other second-curve events are the addition of a more contemporary worship service, transitioning the traditional church service to a contemporary service, adding a service to attract and win seekers, redesigning the traditional Christian education program, launching a vibrant small group ministry, and challenging all the people to go through a process of discovering their divine design and then investing their lives in some aspect of church ministry.⁸

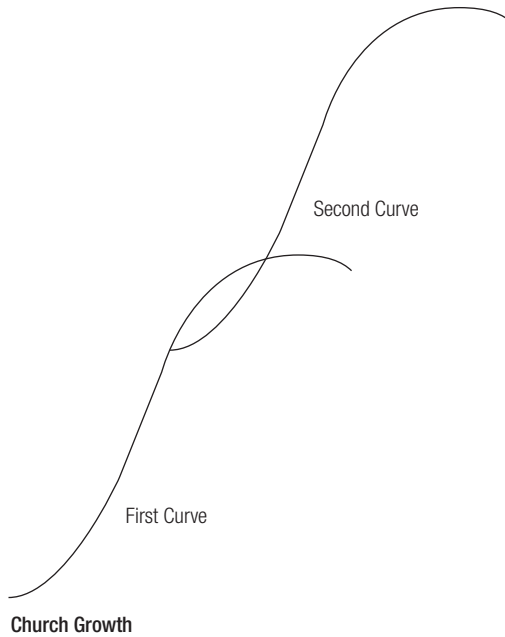
Warning. Every church is unique. Consequently, what works for one church may not work for another. Relocation worked well for Lakepointe—a healthy church. It could prove disastrous for you. The same is true for transitioning from a traditional to a more contemporary format, adding a service, and so on.

Some events result in deeper changes than others. A relocation or transition in style may bring changes only at the church's edges. This depends on the church and its particular culture, needs, and problems. Usually the kinds of events that launch new S-curves result in substantial changes at the organization's heart and not just around its edges. Often they involve a change in paradigm. While a church relocation or transition from one style to another is optional, discovering core values and developing a mission, vision, and strategy are not. When an entire church concurs and decides to pursue these, the result, most likely, will be a new S-curve.

CHURCH REVITALIZATION

The third context for starting a new sigmoid curve is the revitalization of plateaued or dying churches. The hope is that it is not too late for the church to be revived. A plateaued church can move in a new direction, starting the new S-curve while on the plateau. New problems may arise, however. When enough new people are coming into the ministry to offset those who are exiting, the leaders may find themselves dealing with some of the same challenges as those of growing churches.

If a church waits until it is dying to make changes, it finds itself in a reactive not a proactive mode. At this point it may be too late to start a new sigmoid curve. The church may have used up most of its resources in trying to keep the sinking ship afloat. Some people are willing to invest in a ship that is listing badly, but many head for the lifeboats. Those who decide to stay with the ship find themselves constantly

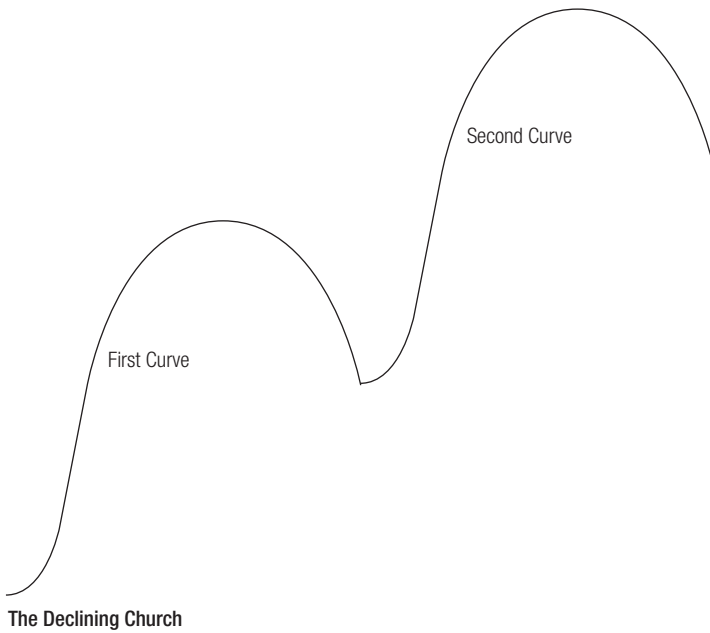
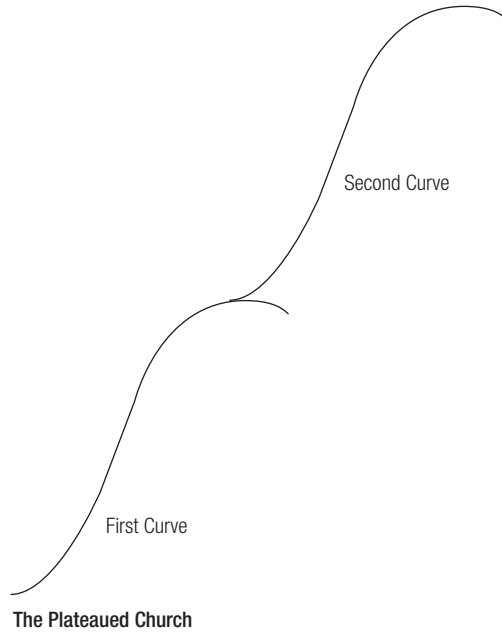


wrestling with discouragement. As difficult as church planting and starting a new curve in a growing church are, revitalization of a declining ministry is more difficult and less likely to succeed.⁹ However, if a plateaued church is to survive, it must start a new S-curve as soon as possible and trust God to chart a new course.

Strategic Planning

The answer to the problem of church decline is to start new S-curves. This necessitates a strategic planning process along with leaders or navigators who can effectively lead their churches through the process. It is imperative that strategic planning be at the heart of starting new S-curves. The following provides an overview or a synthesis of the strategic planning process, which is developed in this book. It will help you see where each part fits and how all the parts work together to accomplish congregational development. You may find it helpful to consult the table of contents as you read the following. The strategic envisioning process or navigational compass is made up of three distinct parts, each of which has several elements that work to envision the church's future.

The process begins in part 1—the ministry's preparation for envisioning the future. Remember that preparation precedes process. It consists of three elements that prepare the ministry for what is to come. The first addresses the preparation of the lead navigator. It presents the rationale for strategic planning (chap. 1). It challenges leaders to address such vital issues as their definition of strategic



planning and what they believe is its importance, the need for it, and its purpose. Most important, it asks if the navigator is the kind of leader who can lead the church through change. In addition, these issues are in a twelve-item checklist to aid navigators in deciding on and developing their rationale. The second element addresses the ministry's preparation of the crew (chap. 2). It helps navigators prepare their team for the process. The third focuses on the boat or development of the strategy as the team works through the process (chap. 3).

Part 2 provides the process phase when the team begins to chart out their future. They will discover who they are, where they are going, and how they will get there. This part consists of four elements that guide leaders and their teams through the process of envisioning the ministry's future: developing a mission, developing a vision, discovering core values, and developing a five-part strategy that accomplishes the mission-vision (chaps. 4–12).

Part 3 provides the practice phase when the navigational team continues the journey. It is made up of two elements (chaps. 13–14) that accomplish the results of the process phase. The first is launching the boat, which involves the implementation of the developed strategy. The second element is evaluation, which changes and fine-tunes the results of the process.

Strategic Leadership

The key to strategic planning is competent strategic leadership. You may develop the finest strategic plan in the history of the church. It may be featured in the major journals on leadership. You might publish it in a book that sells thousands of copies. However, it will not happen without competent, gifted leadership. In a way, this is a disclaimer. I have designed this book to help you develop a plan that “touches all the bases” and makes a significant difference in your church. However, it will not likely come to fruition without good leadership, especially at the senior pastor level.

Regardless of how new S-curves in a church are started—through church planting, growth, or revitalization—two interrelated pieces must always be present. One is a congregation that is ready to grow or be revitalized. The other is a competent pastor who is able to lead the ministry through change. So who are these pastors and what does this kind of leadership look like? What are the characteristics of pastor-leaders who can lead their churches to grow or be revitalized? Because of the critical nature of these questions and the importance of leadership to the entire process, I will address them at the beginning of chapter 1, “Preparing the Navigator.”

Some Final Comments on the Process

First, the problem that I have experienced with this process as with all processes is that things do not necessarily unfold as neatly and orderly as it suggests. On some occasions, a strategic leadership team or a leader will come up with the vision at the beginning of the process or even some of the strategy, and that will not necessarily

sink the ministry ship. However, I begin the process with the development of the mission and the vision, followed by the core values because they are foundational to the process. I cover the strategy after them because it accomplishes the mission and vision, but the planning does not have to follow this pattern strictly.

Second, I cover this process for the church as a whole. However, I would challenge the church's various ministries to go through the process also. For example, I ask you to discover and develop core values for the church. You would be wise to discover and develop the values for the adult, youth, and children's ministries, or life-stage ministries, as well. If one of the church's values is that lost people matter to God, then that could be reflected at the adult level with the statement that lost adults matter to God. At the youth level it would read that lost youth matter to God and so on. The same goes for the mission and vision statements.

	Values	Mission	Vision	Strategy
Church	Lost people matter to God			
Adults	Lost adults matter to God			
Youth	Lost youth matter to God			
Children	Lost children matter to God			

Third, there is a General Ministry Troubleshooting Guide below for your use, especially when you feel stuck. Its purpose is to serve as a quick reference to some general ministry problems and to show which chapters of this book address these problems.

Fourth, I must warn leaders before they attempt the strategic planning process that this can be a soul-searching and potentially painful experience. I know because I once took a church that I pastored through this process. Many who dare to pursue strategic planning will find that somewhere the ministry has gotten stuck. Also, some will struggle as they attempt to implement the changes necessary to align their church with God's directives in the Scriptures. Primarily this struggle involves their emotions (theirs and those of the people they lead), and most often it is emotional issues that derail any good process and leave leaders feeling frustrated. Nevertheless, those who stick to the process will find a fresh taste for ministry that they have not had for a long time. The strategic planning process has a way of breathing hope into many who have lost their hope due to the struggles of ministry.

Finally, I have included reflection, discussion, and application questions at the end of each chapter. They will not only help you think through the material in each section but also aid you in the application of the strategic thinking and acting process. To get the most out of this book, I suggest that first you scan the book quickly, catching its drift and general message. Then read back through it carefully with your ministry leadership team, answering the questions and doing

what each chapter asks of you and your ministry as you go through the strategic planning process.

Note that in referring to the pastor I use the masculine pronoun throughout this book. This is not because I don't recognize women pastors but simply to avoid using the cumbersome "his or her."

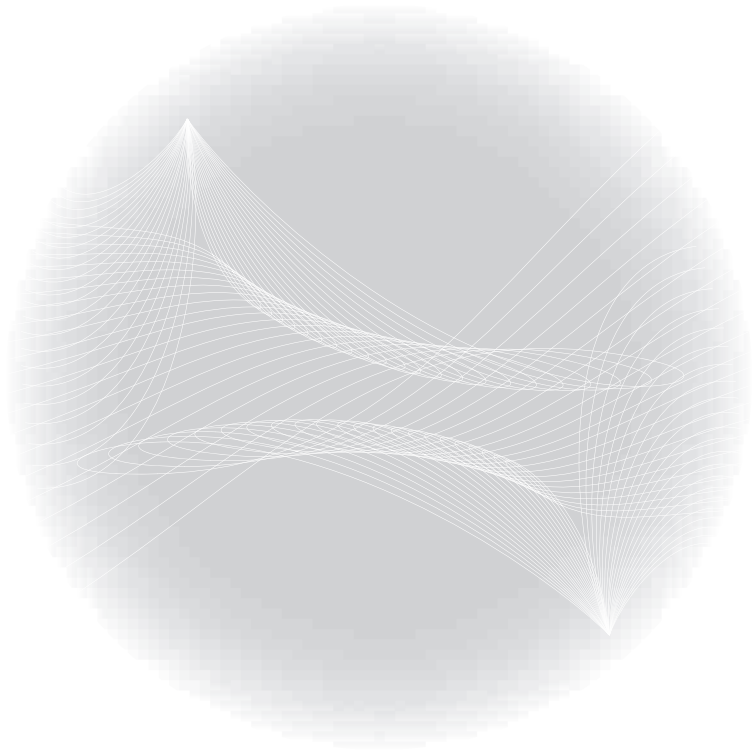
General Ministry Troubleshooting Guide

Problems	Solutions
Spiritual problems (complaining, negativity, grudges)	Preparing the Crew—chapter 2
Ministry balance/identity problems (wrong direction)	Discovering Core Values—chapter 6
Direction problems (unclear or lack of direction)	Developing a Biblical Mission—chapter 4
Direction problems (little passion for direction)	Developing a Compelling Vision—chapter 5
Community problems (culturally irrelevant to the community)	Reaching the Church's Community—chapter 8
Disciple-making problems (few if any disciples)	Making Mature Disciples—chapter 9
Board problems (power issues and need for clear policies)	Building a Ministry Team—chapter 10
Staff problems (general pastor and staff issues)	Building a Ministry Team—chapter 10
Congregational problems (few people mobilized for ministry)	Building a Ministry Team—chapter 10
Leadership problems (lack of developed leaders)	Building a Ministry Team—chapter 10
Location problems (questionable ministry location)	Assessing the Ministry Setting—chapter 11
Facilities problems (inadequate facilities and grounds)	Assessing the Ministry Setting—chapter 11
Financial problems (barely meeting or not meeting the budget)	Raising and Managing Finances—chapter 12
Implementation problems (failure to accomplish strategy)	Launching the Boat—chapter 13
Evaluation problems (resistance to change and need for improvement)	Evaluating the Course—chapter 14

part one

Prepare to Sail!

The Preparation for Strategic Planning



1

Preparing the Navigator

A Prelaunch Checklist

To alleviate our fear of flying, the various airlines assure us that traveling in one of their aircraft is safer than driving to the airport in your car. As a ministry consultant and trainer, I find that information comforting since I spend much time on airplanes flying to different places in North America and abroad. One of the reasons for the safety record of airlines is that pilots and mechanics carefully work through a preflight checklist. I have watched the captain walk around the plane, examining the engines and the flaps. On occasion I have even seen the captain kick the tires. When the flight personnel leave the cabin door open, you can watch them as they busily flip switches, check gauges, examine various digital and modular instruments, and review their charts and flight plans. I have also observed mechanics running test programs to make sure that the plane's electronics are working properly. To do otherwise could prove disastrous.

In the same way, good navigators prepare carefully before launching their boats. They have to get ready and prepare to sail. They use a prelaunch checklist to check out their boats to make sure that they are shipshape and safe. For example, they check every piece of equipment on board—especially safety equipment—to make sure that it is in good working order. They never know what is ahead and often face storms and other problems that are survived only because of their preplanning.

Leaders, like airline pilots, mechanics, and navigators, must also do some prelaunch work before attempting the strategic planning process. It will save the team

countless hours and money that could make the difference between success and failure, and it will make the process much smoother and faster. Part 1 of this book is designed to help leaders prepare for strategic planning, which will launch their ministry ships into the future.

This chapter serves as the leader-navigator's twelve-item prelaunch checklist. The problem is that some leaders struggle with taking the time to work through checklists. They do not like to dabble in the details. They prefer to get on with the job. Thus they skip what they believe to be the appetizer to get on to the entrée. However, I would argue that it is vital for all leader-navigators to know what they are doing (definition) and why they are doing it (purposes) along with a number of important issues that could make the difference between success and failure. For example, if the leader does not establish the reason the team is doing strategic planning, some will fail to see the need for it, which will adversely affect the total effort. So it is imperative, at the beginning of this journey, that the leaders discipline themselves, if necessary, to work through these critical issues with their team so they are all prepared to launch the ship together.

Strategic Planning

Part 1. Preparation for strategic planning

Part 2. Process of strategic planning

Part 3. Practice of strategic planning

1. Determining If One Is a Lead Navigator

First, sailors need to determine if they are lead navigators. They could be much better at something else. Thus this determination comes at the top of the prelaunch checklist—it is the most important item on the list. If the senior or lead pastor is not the kind of leader whose leadership results in seeing a plateaued or declining church begin to grow numerically, then you need go no further.

Strategic planning, as I am presenting it in this book, will bring about a church turnaround or revitalization. (The term *strategic planning* includes the idea of church revitalization.)

Near the end of the introduction to this book, I mentioned under strategic leadership that there are two necessary elements in successful strategic planning that result in a church's revitalization. One is a church that is ready to be revitalized, and the other is a gifted, competent leader who can take the church through the process. Here in chapter 1, I will focus on the kind of leader who is competent to lead a church through strategic planning. This information is most important to those who believe that God wants them to pastor a church and to those who are looking for a pastor for their church. The rest of this book will focus attention on strategic planning that brings about a revitalization of the church.

The Characteristics of Turnaround Pastors

First, how can a pastor know if he will be competent at leading a church through the revitalization process? How can he know if he is a turnaround pastor-leader? What are the characteristics of such a person? Pastor Gordon Penfold has researched the topic of turnaround pastors and discovered the following.¹ First, at a time when most churches are plateaued or declining, turnaround pastors are men whose current ministries demonstrate in worship attendance at least a 2.5 percent average annual growth per year for five years, regardless of the size of the church. Second, he discovered that, as a group, these pastor-leaders evidenced the following common characteristics. They scored a 4 or higher on either the D or I or both on the Personal Profile or DiSC temperament tool. They are clear, passionate vision casters. Not only are they visionaries but they also cast vision for their churches with both clarity and passion. Their congregations clearly see and feel the church's vision. The majority have had coaches or mentors for much of their ministries. They have seen the wisdom in seeking out people who are ahead of them in ministry and can help them fill in any gaps in their leadership. They have a distinctive leadership style. They are self-starters who are more outgoing, innovative, and energetic than other pastors who aren't turnaround leaders. They are team players who are good at delegation and training new leaders. In addition, they are focused, directive (not domineering) leaders who relate well with people. Finally, they are better than average communicators with above-average conflict resolution skills.

Are You a Turnaround Pastor?

So the question is, Are you or is your pastor-leader a turnaround pastor? Do the characteristics above describe you or the pastor of your church? The Turnaround Pastors Audit at the end of this chapter will help you answer these questions.

What if you discover through all this that you are not a turnaround pastor? What does this mean? In most cases it means that if you are a senior or lead pastor your church most likely will plateau or be in decline. Do you find this to be the case in your situation? Yes, there are exceptions, but these are truly exceptions, not the norm. God can use anyone to revitalize a church, but most often he uses those whom he has wired to be turnaround leaders.

Can You Become a Turnaround Pastor?

Can a pastor who does not naturally have the characteristics of a turnaround pastor become one? This is difficult to answer and takes us back to the old nature versus nurture debate in leadership circles. Does a person have to be born a leader, or can he or she learn to be a leader? My intuitive read on this is that it is not one or the other but that both are true. A person can be born with a unique leadership gift, and the spiritual gift of leadership is one that is given to Christians

(Rom. 12:6–8). However, a person without this gift can also grow and develop as a leader. This is the reason we attempt to develop leaders in our churches and seminaries. I have mentioned a number of characteristics above that are skills associated with the leadership styles of turnaround pastors, and skills by their very nature can be learned.

The problem is more with temperament. Temperament is God-given, and I do believe that while one cannot change his temperament, he can adapt to another temperament with varying results. It is a bigger adjustment for some than for others. Some can adapt to the temperament that is expected of them in a ministry situation, but since it is not natural, it can prove somewhat difficult and uncomfortable for other leaders. Also, in a pressure or stressful situation, the natural response is to default to your God-given temperament. Thus the answer to the question if a leader can become a turnaround pastor is, it depends. It depends on the person and how comfortable he is adapting to another, different temperament. Some can do it, and some cannot.

2. Understanding the Importance of Strategic Planning

The second item on the leader's preplanning list is understanding the importance of having a strategic planning process for ministry. The following four reasons should catch the ministry navigator's attention.

Strategic Planning Makes a Difference

One reason for strategic planning is that it really makes a difference in a church's effectiveness. Researcher Kirk Hadaway writes, "Does a planning process which involves evaluation and a long-range plan correlate with church growth? The answer is yes. Survey results show that 85 percent of churches which have grown off the plateau have reevaluated their programs and priorities during the past five years, as compared to 59 percent of churches which have remained on the plateau. Similarly, 40 percent of 'breakout churches' have developed a long-range plan, as compared to only 18 percent of continued plateau churches."²

My experience as well has been that many if not most churches that are making a difference for the Savior are led by or at least staffed with strategic thinkers who, if they don't have a plan in hand (articulated on paper), have one in their heads. A case in point is my pastor, Steve Stroope. He is the pastor of Lake Pointe Church in Rockwall, Texas. We served on the board together and I was able to observe him up close. He was called to pastor the church when it consisted of only seventeen people, and he has remained to navigate the church through several strategic relocations and numerous capital funds projects in the context of a clearly articulated mission and vision. Today the church has several thousand attenders, and its strategy includes a multicampus approach.

Strategic Planning Addresses Three Organizational Questions

Another reason for strategic planning is that it enables leaders to answer three basic organizational questions. The first is the identity question, Who are we? This gets at the church's core values, or DNA. The second is the direction question, Where are we going? This identifies the church's mission and vision. A third is the ministry strategy question, How will we get there? This addresses how the church will accomplish its mission and vision. Clearly weighing and articulating answers to these questions will have a more profound impact on your ministry's future than attempting any long-range plan.

Strategic Planning Affects the Long-Term Life of the Church

A third reason for strategic planning is that it is the key to the long-term survival of the church, where ministry circumstances are constantly changing. To survive, churches must change and adapt their ministry methods, using strategic planning as their vehicle. Two metaphors will help us to understand this.

The church is a ship that attempts to cross a body of water, destined for some port. Just as a ship encounters numerous navigational hazards along the way (tides, currents, wind, flotsam, low water levels, false buoys, and so on), so a church encounters its own navigational hazards (difficult people, a changing community, lack of leadership, poor congregational mobilization, and so on). Church leaders, like a ship's navigators, must have a process (compass) to plan strategically (chart a course) to reach the church's destination (port). Though a limited few can do this intuitively (they are natural born navigators), most cannot. They need training to be navigators.

Leaders need a map to find the way for the church. If you are trying to drive to a particular location in your town or city and you do not know the way, you need an up-to-date map or you may get hopelessly lost. Lots of leaders in our churches are navigating their terrain with outdated maps (those drawn up in the 1940s and 1950s), and they are totally lost. Some of the people in their churches advise that they simply need to redouble their efforts—to work harder. The result, however, is that they get hopelessly lost faster. Others advise that they simply need to sit back and give it a little time because eventually everything will return to the way it was. The result is that things change even more and waiting merely increases the odds against survival. Strategic planning is the map that directs the church into the future.

Strategic Planning Addresses Alignment Issues

Strategic planning addresses a number of concepts that require alignment. You will discover in this book that strategic planning is a process that involves the critical alignment of a number of elements, such as a church's values, mission, vision, and so forth. I have observed many churches that have failed to make proper alignments and have suffered diminished returns as a result. For example, churches

engage in capital funds projects to raise monies for a new facility or for adding on to an existing facility. Without knowing it, many of these churches are following what I refer to as a “Kevin Costner theology”—build it and they will come (the theme of the actor’s 1989 movie *Field of Dreams*).

They do not realize that understanding and articulating strategic planning concepts is the critical first step to funding and building. Before taking out their wallets, people need to know who they are, where they are going, why they are going there, and what that looks like. To ignore this often results in falling short of funding goals and erecting facilities that become nonfunctional and obsolete in just a few years. I should note that those in the construction phase (the design-build side) are increasingly becoming aware of their need to help churches do strategic planning before building. I suspect that churches will see strategic planners working closely with architects and contractors in the future as they attempt to translate vision and mission into facilities.

3. Defining Strategic Planning

What is strategic planning? I have argued that it is important but I have not defined the concept. *Strategic planning is the fourfold process that a point leader, such as a pastor, works through regularly with a team of leaders to envision or reenvision and revitalize his church by developing a biblical mission and a compelling vision, discovering its core values, and crafting a strategy that implements a unique, authentic church model.* The following addresses several of the key ingredients that make up this definition.

A Process

First, strategic planning is a process. It is not an event that a team works through and finishes. Instead, it is ongoing. (That is why I use the term *regularly* in the definition.) The team will come up with an initial model that will forever be critiqued throughout the life of the church if it is to stay relevant to and have an impact on its culture. Note that it is a fourfold process the pastor leads his team through that involves *developing a biblical mission and a compelling vision, discovering its core values, and crafting a strategy that implements a unique, authentic church model.*

The Point Leader

Strategic planning requires a strategic point leader, a lead navigator. Someone has to take charge, to captain the ship. This does not mean that the captain attempts to do all the work or tells everyone what to do. He works closely with and through a team. However, someone has to be in charge and responsible for the process, its day-to-day implementation, and the ultimate outcome. A group of people cannot do this. Should the ship hit an iceberg, the captain does not have time to make a conference call or have a meeting to debate the issues and decide what to do. There

will be times when this person must act quickly and wisely on behalf of all, making the critical decisions that result in survival. This person will challenge the team to dream and contribute to what could be, as well as to what is. He will influence them, not attempt to control or dominate them.

The Leadership Team

Vital to strategic planning is the leadership team. I refer to them as the strategic leadership team (SLT). The new leadership paradigm is the same as the old leadership paradigm, but it accomplishes ministry through a team approach. Gone are the days when everyone expected the pastor to come up with all the good ideas and then pass them on to the congregation for implementation. Excellent leaders understand that they can accomplish far more through the wisdom of a gifted and committed strategic team of staff and lay leaders.

Moses certainly understood this as he wisely followed the counsel of Jethro and formed a team to work with him in his wilderness ministry (Exod. 18:24–26). Jesus understood this as he recruited a team of disciples to be with and minister alongside him (Mark 3:13–14). And Paul understood the significance of a team as he led and ministered through numerous teams (Acts 11:22–30; 13:2–3, 5; 15:40; 16:1–3). I will say more about the concept of a strategic leadership team in chapter 10.

An Envisioning Process

Strategic planning is an envisioning process that results in the revitalization of plateaued and dying churches. Rather than start with the present and work forward incrementally toward a mission and vision, you start with a clearly articulated, compelling mission and vision and work backward to where you are (see the introduction to chapter 7). You envision the future and then ask, How will we get there?

This is what makes it so different from conventional strategic planning or a long-range planning exercise. Long-range planning is too incremental and simply doesn't work anymore. You cannot edge forward when things around you are changing quickly. You plan for five years out, and all has changed in six months, requiring a new plan.

God uses a strategic envisioning process that does more than plan a hoped-for future; it helps you begin to create that future now. You are making strategic decisions today that affect tomorrow, which in fact begins today. The old is conventional strategic planning. The new is visionary strategic planning or strategic envisioning. And there is a huge difference between the two that I will explore later in this chapter. (Also, see the chart at the end of this chapter that compares the two.)

In the definition, I use the two terms *envision* and *reenvision*. The first addresses envisioning the future from the perspective of church planting. The second addresses the same from the viewpoint of church revitalization. The question here

is which are you? Regardless, both are the key to the future of the church in North America and both involve the envisioning process.

Four Core Concepts

Just as a navigator cannot guide a ship from port to port without a compass, so strategic leaders cannot guide their ministry ships toward their desired destination without a ministry compass. This compass consists of four core concepts: the ministry's mission, vision, values, and strategy that make up the strategic planning process, resulting in a revitalized church. *The Savior determined the church's mission more than two thousand years ago. It is found in the Bible in Matthew 28:19 and other places, where he commands his church to "make disciples!"*

The church's vision is what the church will look like in the next five to ten years of its life as it accomplishes the mission. It should excite and attract people to want to be a part of the church as it pursues this vision.

The church's core values function much like the engine and rudder of a boat. They empower and guide the church as it pursues its mission and vision.

The strategy accomplishes the church's mission and vision and includes five key elements or steps: reaching out to the community, making mature disciples, building a ministry team (congregation, staff, and possibly a board), assessing the ministry's setting (location and facilities), and raising the necessary finances to carry out the mission and vision. All of these together make up the process that the pastor leads his church through.

Churches in general and leader-navigators in particular will regularly use these core concepts throughout the life of the ministry. All they do should be viewed through the lens of these concepts. In time using them should become second nature.

For the sake of clarity and direction, I have included the following outline with chapters of the four concepts as they make up the strategic planning process:

- I. Development of the Mission (4)
- II. Development of the Vision (5)
- III. Discovery of the Core Values (6)
- IV. Design of the Strategy (7–12)
 - A. Outreach into the Community (8)
 - B. Making Disciples (9)
 - C. Building the Team (10)
 - D. Assessing the Setting (11)
 - E. Raising Finances (12)

A Unique, Authentic Ministry Model

The strategic planning process produces a product—a unique ministry model. It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people. When leaders ask and

answer the proper process questions, they will come up with a product or model that aligns with who they are and reaches the people in their particular ministry community. As leaders continue to apply the process, they will continually redesign the model to reach their community as it changes. Thus over time they are designing and redesigning how they do church.

Strategic planning produces a unique ministry model and it leads to the church's own authentic ministry model. Far too many well-intentioned pastors find a ministry that God is blessing somewhere, attend its pastors' conference, and attempt to replicate the model back home. "After all, if it worked for them, it will work for me!" These pastors are trying to franchise someone else's model. And the problem with franchising church models is that what works in one part of the country does not necessarily work in another part of the country. Snyder, Texas, is different from Southern California or Chicago. Rather than adopt or copy some other church's model, this fourfold process aids leaders in discovering and developing their own authentic model that is true to who they are (identity—DNA), when they are (the twenty-first century), and where they are (location). I will say more about this later.

The Definition of Strategic Planning

1. Strategic planning is a process.
2. Strategic planning involves a point leader.
3. Strategic planning involves a leadership team.
4. Strategic planning is an envisioning process.
5. Strategic planning involves four core concepts.
6. Strategic planning produces a unique, authentic ministry model.

4. Understanding That Strategic Planning Is Biblical

Though not exactly a part of the definition, I must point out that strategic thinking and acting or strategic planning can be found in the Bible; it is biblical. References to and examples of it are generously sprinkled throughout the Old and New Testaments. Numerous leaders in the Old Testament thought and acted strategically. Moses in response to God's mission to lead Israel out of Egypt led them strategically through the wilderness, as recorded in the Pentateuch. In Exodus 18 Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, challenges him to think and act strategically in his counseling of individual Israelites. The leadership of Moses's successor, Joshua, was most strategic (Josh. 6:1–7; 8:3–23; 10:6–9). The writer of 1 Chronicles notes that the men of Issachar "understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (12:32). Nehemiah thought and acted strategically as he led God's revitalization project in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3–6). Proverbs presents God's wisdom and role in planning (14:15, 22; 15:22; 16:3–4, 9; 19:21; 20:18; 21:30).

In the Gospels Christ informs the church of its mission—the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15). In Acts 1:8 he gives the church its geographical strategy and direction. The book of Acts records how the Holy Spirit used the church strategically to implement this mission, especially through the missionary

journeys (13:1–21:26). Paul did not wander aimlessly but appears to have carefully and strategically selected the cities he visited for ministry while on his missionary journeys. For example, he located in Ephesus because it was the gateway to Asia Minor (compare Acts 19:1 with 19:10). According to Luke, the Godhead thinks and acts strategically (see Acts 2:23; 4:28). In Ephesians 5:15–16 Paul encourages the Ephesian church to live strategically.

It becomes obvious, then, that God has sovereignly chosen to work through strategic thinking and acting to accomplish his divine will on earth. Accordingly, churches must be careful of those who advise them to ignore any planning and simply “let go and let God.” On the other hand, we must not trust our strategies and ignore the role of the Holy Spirit in the process. Proverbs 19:21 is clear that God’s purpose will prevail regardless of our plans. And Proverbs 21:31 reminds us that, while it seems like we are the ones doing the planning, it is God who is working behind the scenes to grant us success. John 15:5 warns that without Christ we can accomplish absolutely nothing. In Zechariah 4:6 the prophet reminds us as well as Zerubbabel, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty.” Letting go and letting God must work in conjunction with strategic thinking and acting. I tell my seminary students and my readers to hold their plans in an open hand before the sovereign God of the universe.

5. Understanding the Need for Strategic Planning

I have compared the typical church in North America to a ship without a compass, drifting aimlessly on the ocean. It doesn’t know where it is or where it’s going. And if that is not bad enough, the winds of change and the currents of postmodernism are relentlessly blowing and pulling the church even farther off course. I have argued that the compass the church is missing is a good visionary strategic planning or envisioning process. Without it, the typical sailor—today’s pastor—will find it difficult to navigate in any situation.

I came to this conclusion as a result of my own pastoral and consulting experience and after writing books on the concepts of vision, mission, core values, and strategy.³ Early in the process of writing these books, I began to ask myself how each concept related to the other concepts and, if I put them all together, what the resulting product would be. The answer quickly became evident. I would have a visionary strategic process that would help church leaders think through the core issues of ministry and then implement their conclusions.

Too Few Church Leaders Understand Strategic Planning

Not enough church leaders understand and practice visionary strategic planning. According to an article in *American Demographics*, Gary McIntosh of the American Society for Church Growth estimates that only 20 percent of America’s 367,000 congregations actively pursue strategic planning. In the same article,

George Hunter, professor of evangelism and church growth at Asbury Theological Seminary, warns that churches without plans for growth invariably stagnate.⁴

Some churches have pursued strategic planning with the help of godly Christians who have been trained and have consulted mostly in the corporate world. The problem is that strategic planning pursued correctly is deeply theological, as I will show in part 2. Thus a vital tool in any consultant's toolbox should be theological preparation.

Some Church Leaders Do Not Value Strategic Planning

In some circles, strategic planning is not held in high regard. A number of business writers and consultants play down the importance of and even the need for strategic planning.⁵ Karl Albrecht, for example, writes, "In the Western business world most *conventional* thinking about 'strategic planning,' that is, setting goals and making plans to achieve them, is misguided and obsolete."⁶

In his book *Thriving on Chaos*, Tom Peters presents a more balanced position that touches the heart of the problem: "Sound strategic direction has never been more important—which is why the strategic planning process must be truly decentralized. Yet strategic planning, as we conventionally conceive of it, has become irrelevant, or worse, damaging. What is a good strategic *plan*? There is none. But there is a good strategic planning process."⁷

The conventional or traditional concept of strategic planning, as practiced up to the present, has become somewhat obsolete and irrelevant. The problem is not with "strategy" but with the particular concept of strategy that predominates in most companies and churches that attempt it. A growing number of critics are rejecting strategy that is a pedantic, incremental planning ritual that assumes tomorrow is just a long-term extension of today. Peters is correct. It is not about a strategic plan; it is about a strategic process, an envisioning process. Ritualistic planning fails to provoke the deeper fundamental questions and debates about why the organization is, what it is, what drives it, where it is going, and how it will get there. Answering these questions is vital to an organization's health. Most often an organization's strategy begins with discussing what is and never gets around to asking what could be. It does not find room for dreaming dreams—God's dreams of what could be. For too many, a strategic plan means going through the motions of an annual planning event or slavishly following a long-range plan while ignoring the profound, cataclysmic transformation of the world outside.

Early in the twenty-first century, we at The Malphurs Group (my consulting ministry) believe that strategic planning isn't all about pedantic, incremental, long-range planning rituals. After all, in a world that is exploding with change, who can plan long-range anymore and who has time to be obsessively pedantic? I'm aware of one organization that plans no farther out than ninety days. You don't have to know or control the future to prepare for it and be successful as Christ's

church and to accomplish his purpose. The key is to know who you are and what you are about. These are the kinds of ships that are weathering the storms of the early twenty-first century.

6. Addressing the Purpose of Strategic Planning

What is the purpose of strategic planning? What is the potential “payoff” for your ministry? Following are twenty-six purposes for strategic planning. I know that twenty-six is a lot, but they are really important to your church and worth the read. As you read them, check those that you feel are particularly important to your ministry. Circle those that are critical and demand immediate attention.

1. *To discover the church’s strengths, limitations, and weaknesses.* Every organization, whether Christian or not necessarily Christian, has strengths, limitations, and weaknesses. Out of all that it needs to accomplish for effective ministry, its strengths are what it accomplishes well and its weaknesses are what it does not accomplish well. Its limitations are those areas of ministry that it is not qualified to do and likely should not even attempt. The process of planning in this book asks the church’s strategic leadership team to take some kind of ministry analysis (The Malphurs Group has designed and uses an online Church Ministry Analysis) in the preparation stage so that it will know what its limitations are.

2. *To build on a ministry’s strengths and minimize its weaknesses.* Some believe that leaders should seek to improve or at least minimize their ministry’s weaknesses to become strong. This is not correct. To become strong, you must maximize those areas where you are strong and either work around or hire others to address the weaknesses.

3. *To facilitate congregational communication and build the congregation’s trust.* One of my oft-repeated statements to leaders and strategic planning teams about a congregation is, “If they do not trust you, you cannot lead them!” And one of the most important ways to win that trust is through truthful communication. When you fail to communicate what you are planning, people become suspicious. I will address this area in the preparation for planning stage.

4. *To understand and implement spiritually healthy, Christ-honoring change.* To do this involves a theology of change. We must know what the Bible says about change so that we can know what must change and what must never change.

5. *To get your people—leadership team and congregation—on the same page.* While this is impossible on every issue, it is possible on the major issues that really matter, such as who you are, where you are going, and how you will get there. As people agree on these issues, many others will fall into place as well, promoting church unity.

6. *To encourage and promote spiritual revival.* While all churches need to experience spiritual revival, those that are tired, discouraged, and struggling needed to address it yesterday. Regardless, this is a vital step in assessing your ministry’s

readiness for strategic planning. This establishes a spiritual foundation for the rest of the process.

7. *To discover and articulate your ministry core values.* This gets at your core identity, your DNA, or who you are as a church. The importance of core values is that you act on the basis of who you are. All the decisions you make are values-driven. Values are the key to knowing why you do what you do or do not do what you should do.

8. *To develop and communicate your God-given mission.* In addition to knowing who you are—your identity as a church—you need to know where you are going. This is a directional issue. Navigators use their compasses to get them to a port. Do you know your Christ-given direction? Do you have a ministry port?

9. *To develop and articulate an inspiring, compelling vision.* A dream—like a mission—addresses a ministry’s direction and paints a picture of that destination. The result of a powerful dream is that people get excited about the church’s future. Vision fuels a passion in your people to want to be a part of the future.

10. *To understand and relate more effectively to the community.* Every church is located in a community and is responsible to minister to that community. Acts 1:8 has geographical and ethnological implications. Where is your neighborhood? Who lives in your neighborhood? Who is unchurched and without Christ? To minister effectively to the community, you must know and understand your community and its culture, especially those who are unchurched.

11. *To develop a disciple-making process for the entire church.* The mission of the church is to “make disciples” (Matt. 28:19–20). The question is, How will your church accomplish this? The answer is to design a unique disciple-making process, using the maturity matrix in chapter 9 developed by The Malphurs Group (TMG) especially for churches.

12. *To assess, recruit, and develop a strong staff team.* Whether your staff consists of one person or one hundred, you must help them know who they are—their DNA (core values), their divine design (gifting, passion, and temperament), and where they fit best in ministry. You must constantly encourage them and put in place a leadership development process to help them grow deeply as leaders.

13. *To mobilize the congregation to serve and do the work of the ministry.* According to Ephesians 4:11–13, the congregation, not the pastor or staff, is to accomplish the church’s ministry. This entails a three-step process of discovery, consultation, and involvement that launches the believer on a lifetime of ministry fruitfulness.

14. *To make wise decisions about the facilities and their location.* Churches must meet somewhere, and we have discovered that their care and the location of their facilities are strategically important to ministry to the community. Churches must determine if they are best positioned to reach their community or if they need to relocate for maximum effectiveness.

15. *To inventory and assess current giving.* What does the congregation think about giving? Do they understand what the Bible says about stewardship? Do they feel that the pastor preaches too much on giving or not enough? Are they willing to

give more or less? Church leadership needs to know what their people know and think about these core financial issues.

16. *To explore new streams of giving to increase current income.* Most churches are ministry-limited due to a lack of financial resources. The problem is that they depend on only one or at the most two sources of income when God provides others as well. Does your church know what these other sources are? How can you discover and explore these other sources?

17. *To design a stewardship strategy to help people be good stewards of their finances.* Churches must build good stewardship into their very fabric. People do not give what they should because most churches do not have in place a good strategy of stewardship that touches every ministry in a Christ-honoring way.

18. *To analyze and evaluate the church's budget, looking for ways to best handle congregational finances.* Simply because a church has a budget does not mean that it handles its funds wisely and biblically. Churches need to know how much money to direct toward personnel, programming, missions, and facilities. They need to discern whether the budget is outreach or in-reach oriented and where there is unnecessary waste.

19. *To raise additional funds and direct capital funding projects.* In addition to their normal giving, every church needs an occasional “kick in the pants.” Churches need to explore ways and means of encouraging people to give sacrificially.

20. *To know how to implement the entire strategic plan.* A church can design the finest, most biblically oriented plan that never happens. Doing must follow thinking, and doing involves ministry implementation.

21. *To regularly evaluate and improve the church's ministries.* How does a church keep from growing stale and becoming brittle? How does a church improve what it does? The answer is ministry evaluation. Churches that constantly evaluate all phases of their ministries not only improve those ministries but also innovate well.

22. *To discover the ways God is blessing churches across America and abroad and why.* Most churches realize that it is not “worldly” to know what is going on in society and churches across America and the world. This helps them understand people as well as observe what God is doing.

23. *To know and work with the latest technology (internet, website, and other).* Churches must keep up with and employ technology in their ministries to best serve the Savior. Otherwise, they lag behind in needed technological development.

24. *To empower the governing board and pastor to lead with excellence.* It is imperative that pastors and their governing boards work together for effective ministry. This involves a policies approach that provides role guidelines and proper distribution of power.

25. *To build a lay and staff leadership development process.* All churches must develop their lay and staff leadership if they are to minister with impact. Many are talking about it, but few are doing it.

26. *To develop a marketing strategy that will best position the church in the community to glorify God.* The purpose of the church is to glorify God, especially among the unchurched, unbelieving people who make up the church's community.

7. Determining the Number of People Involved in Strategic Planning

I used to argue that the fewer people involved in the strategic planning process the better. It was the “too many cooks spoil the broth” mentality. And many would agree. However, I have changed my mind about this, based on my consulting ministry experience. When I help a church through the envisioning process, I ask that they select fifteen to twenty-five leaders if possible to work on the process. Smaller churches may have fewer people, depending on how many of their congregation are leaders.

Here are some of the reasons I like to work with a larger strategic leadership team:

- I have discovered that leaders miss meetings occasionally due to travel, vacations, family matters, children’s involvement in sports, and so forth. On a larger team you will miss them, but you will still have enough people so that you can proceed without canceling or rescheduling the meeting.
- The more people you have, the better will be the representation of various church viewpoints.
- With a larger group there is less chance that the team will be made up of those holding to extreme or minority viewpoints that fail to represent the entire church.

In addition, there will be times when you will involve the entire congregation in the process. One such time is when you conduct various online surveys that we use, for example, in The Malphurs Group to discover what the church thinks about a particular issue, such as congregational giving.

8. Considering the Time for Strategic Planning

The two most frequently asked questions regarding the strategic process concern time commitment and cost. A characteristic of most people in the twenty-first century, especially in urban North America and urban centers abroad, is busyness and limited discretionary time. Consequently, people’s time is a major factor that leaders and pastors must consider in attempting the strategic planning process.

How Long Will It Take?

The question on many people’s minds is, How long will it take? I would allow from six months to a year to work through the initial envisioning process. (The use of a good consultant will speed this process so it may take only six to nine months.) During this time, the team meets every third to fourth week. To wait longer than this between meetings diminishes the team’s momentum, which is most difficult

to regain. People tend to forget what they have accomplished and the excitement rubs off. This is the reason I ask for a strong commitment up front, which I will say more about at the end of this chapter.

The SLTs that I work with often like to meet on Friday evenings—from around 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.—and Saturday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to noon. There are three benefits to these times. First, it breaks up an eight-hour, intensive, exhausting session into two sessions with time to rest and recuperate between. Second, these are the times of the day when people are at their best and can give their best mentally (though some struggle with the Friday evening session). Finally, not only do the team members not give up their weekends, but they also have much of their Saturdays left for families or other personal matters. The only conflict I have experienced is with children's or adults' sporting events that take place on Saturday mornings.

Here is what is generally covered during the first six monthly meetings:

First meeting: preparation for strategic envisioning, including the results of the online church analysis (chaps. 1 and 2) as well as implementation (chap. 3)

Second meeting: mission and vision (chaps. 4 and 5)

Third meeting: values, introduction to the ministry strategy, and reaching the church's community (chap. 6)

Fourth meeting: a strategy for disciple making (chap. 9) and building a ministry team (chap. 10)

Fifth meeting: ministry setting (chap. 11)

Sixth meeting: raising finances (chap. 12)

Keep in mind that I am a professional consultant who uses various time-saving tools that speed up the process. So be sure to give yourself some room and add a few more weeks to your schedule.

You are not finished when you have completed the initial process and begin implementing the results. The process will continue for the life of the church. When the leadership of a ministry ceases to think and act strategically, the ministry will not survive times of chaotic and overwhelming cultural change. After completing the initial process, however, the leadership may or may not continue to use the SLT. My advice is to continue to use the team but not meet as frequently and address only major ministry issues.

Other Time Factors

Some other factors that affect planning time are the degree of initial agreement on core issues such as values and mission, the availability of data, and the use of creative, time-saving techniques such as storyboarding. I will say more about the latter at the end of this chapter.

9. Weighing the Cost of Strategic Planning

Another concern for most ministries as they consider strategic planning is cost. Can we afford to do strategic planning? It is a legitimate concern because several cost commitments may be involved. However, they are not exorbitant.

There may be an expense for the personnel who are responsible for doing the primary crafting of the process, unless the staff are already on the payroll. Should the church decide that it is best for the strategists to get away periodically for their planning sessions, their travel, meals, and lodging would be additional expenses.

If a church follows my advice and uses a consultant, this will, of course, entail a fee. But the difference a good, qualified consultant makes to the process may be the difference between success and failure. A few denominations have consultants on staff and provide their services at little cost to the church. Independent consultants charge from five hundred to several thousand dollars a day. Usually, the better consultants charge the higher fee. But it is critical for you to consider the value of a consultant who can serve your needs. What is it worth, not only in terms of money but also in terms of saving people's time? Churches that use a good consultant usually see their giving increase to the point that it more than covers the consultant's remuneration. This happens because the consultant helps them understand and implement good financial stewardship programs. Also, as the consultant guides the church toward good spiritual health, people tend to give more. An example would be the church's application of the information in chapter 12 of this book on raising finances. In some churches that I have consulted with, a congregant has stepped up and covered my costs. (Perhaps pastors should approach such gifted people in their churches and ask them to cover the expense.)

There may also be some cost for good research. Those who do strategic planning must do some research—especially in the community phase—and possibly an environmental analysis. This research looks at trends in both the secular world and evangelical churches by using demographic and psychographic materials. However, those who provide these research materials charge nominal fees for the information. I will say more about this in chapter 8.

If your ministry is on the plateaued or downward side of the organizational growth cycle (see the figure in the introduction), then the question likely is not, Can we afford to do strategic planning? The better question is, Can we afford not to?

Strategizing Cost Factors

- Cost of ministry personnel
- Cost of any travel, meals, and lodging
- Cost of a qualified consultant
- Cost of research (demographics and psychographics)

10. Deciding on the Location for Strategic Planning

The strategic planning team will need a place to do its work, a place that allows for the best thinking and acting.

The Church Facility

As long as it has all the items that a team needs to do planning, such as a whiteboard with markers or at least a chalkboard, the church facility will be a good place to accomplish much of the work. In fact that is where I do most of the work with my teams. I like to arrange the tables in a U shape, with chairs around the outside (see the diagram under storyboarding later in this chapter). Hopefully the church can provide a light breakfast, lunch, or supper, and coffee, water, and snacks between sessions.

The Team Center

Taking a cue from the people at Disney World, innovative companies are developing team centers where their people gather to do some of their most creative work. Team centers are resource-rich rooms where people work together, using creative thinking and planning techniques.

A church could create a team center within its own facility. The ideal is a room with the most current technologies, such as internet access and video equipment, and ample wall space for visualization techniques, whiteboards, and proper projection for computer presentations. If such a center is not available, a classroom will suffice. What a team needs is sufficient room for a group of about fifteen to twenty-five people to meet comfortably around a table. I do some of my most creative church work in a classroom with an LPC projector, dry erase markers, and spacious whiteboards.

Other Facilities

Though the team will accomplish much of its work at the church, it would be wise to get away periodically and use other facilities for longer planning sessions. Often these meetings prove to be highly creative with few interruptions. Teams have used such places as a large private house, a conference center, a private club, a lake house or mountain cabin, a hotel or motel meeting room, and the boardroom of a bank or other professional organization. Some teams accomplish more by spending the night at a conference center or motel. However, I prefer not to travel too far because sleeping in one's own bed and seeing one's family makes for more productive work the next day.

11. Using Creative Tools for Strategic Planning

I divide the creative tools needed for strategic planning into two categories: functional tools and process tools.

Functional Tools

Functional tools are those items that a leader needs simply to function well and accomplish the process. I have already mentioned most of these above. They consist of the following: a whiteboard and dry erase markers or a chalkboard, a large paper pad and an easel, an LPC or similar quality projector for PowerPoint presentations plus a screen, and possibly an overhead projector.

Process Tools

In my consulting and training ministry and at my church, I use several helpful creative tools that save time and enhance the planning process as well as other leadership activities. I refer to them as process tools.

I discovered some of these tools in Mike Vance and Diane Deacon's book *Think Out of the Box*.⁸ They have created them or collected them from others, and Vance popularized them at the Disney Company. However, I have personalized and altered the tools so that they match my style and best facilitate the particular activity I happen to be conducting. I want to focus on four process tools: brainstorming, storyboarding, scale of 1 to 10, and consensus.

BRAINSTORMING

Use: I use brainstorming when a group needs to generate as many ideas as possible over a short period of time. It works well anytime during a session except at the end, for it does not bring closure.

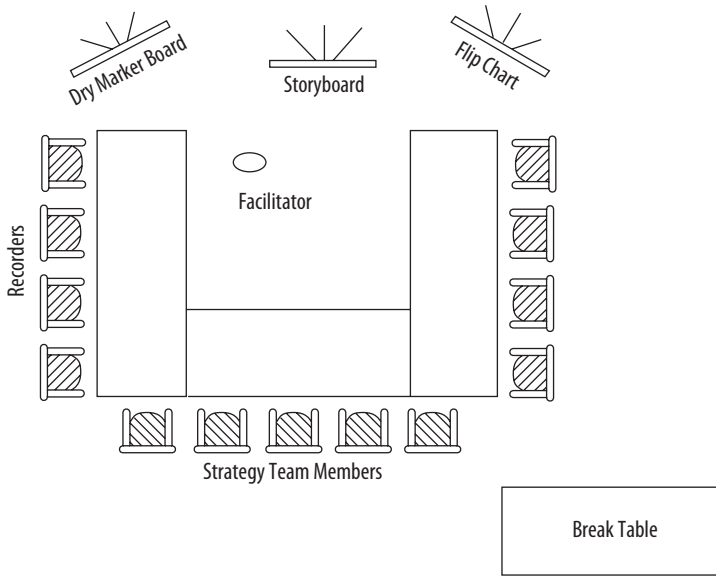
Participants: The participants are usually teams, such as a board, planning group, or church-planting core group.

Setting: Brainstorming takes place best in a semiformal environment where there will be no interruptions.

Purposes: Brainstorming accomplishes several purposes. It stimulates a quick, free flow of numerous ideas. It generates and often captures important preliminary concepts. And it gives ownership of these concepts to the participants.

Characteristics: Brainstorming is fast paced, positive, smooth running, and nonconfrontational. The leader will need to establish and enforce the following ground rules: no confrontation or criticism of ideas (defer any negative thoughts or feelings), no speeches, and quantity is more important than quality. For later thought and use, the various concepts should be recorded.

Process: I conduct brainstorming sessions by gathering the group together, explaining the purpose for the session, and announcing the topic, often in the form of a question. Examples of topics are: How can we find more space for our crowded children's ministry? What could we do to reach out to some of the ethnic groups in our community? Then I announce the ground rules given above. As people voice their ideas, I ask one member of the group to write them down. When people run out of ideas, it is time to stop the exercise.



Storyboarding Room Arrangement

STORYBOARDING

I have used storyboarding more than any other tool in my leadership toolkit, and more leaders have asked me to teach them the storyboard process than any other tool. I always use it when discovering core values. Some refer to it as compression planning because it condenses planning processes into a short period of time.

Use: Storyboarding helps teams accomplish a number of different tasks but is especially helpful in planning. Unlike other tools that are used as part of a bigger process, storyboarding is a complete process in itself.

Participants: As few as five people or as many as twenty-five to thirty people may be involved in storyboarding. The figure above shows you how to arrange the tables where the participants sit in relation to the storyboard and the facilitator. The facilitator is responsible for guiding the process, encouraging participation and idea development, and keeping the group on track. I suggest that a group have at least two recorders, depending on the number of people who will write down words and ideas on the 8-by-6-inch Post-it notes as the participants call them out.

Setting: Storyboarding should take place in a location where there will be no interruptions.

Purposes: Storyboarding helps teams do planning in a shorter period of time than by using other methods. It also accomplishes problem solving. A third purpose is to help a ministry discover its core values.

Characteristics: Storyboarding involves creative thinking (brainstorming) and critical thinking (a workout, described below).

Process: First, you will need to purchase the proper supplies—four 8-by-6-inch Post-it notepads, a package of one-quarter-inch red dots (Avery products are excellent), and three to four blue, felt tip, dry erase markers.

I begin storyboarding by explaining the four rules, presented on a PowerPoint slide or Post-it notes. The four rules that apply to only the brainstorming part of storyboarding are the following:

1. Suspend all judgment
2. Quantity, not quality
3. Please, no speeches
4. No killer phrases

Examples of killer phrases are: *We have never done it that way before. That's not in the budget. It cannot be done.* You may want to give each participant three small foam balls to be thrown at people who violate the rules. This serves to break tension and facilitate fun. (If you are a very serious person, and the thought of throwing foam balls at one another is appalling, then don't do it.)

I explain what we hope to accomplish in the storyboarding session. I have written this on a Post-it note that is placed below the four rules. One example could be “to discover our core values.” Another is “to develop a mission or a vision statement.”

The first part of the exercise is a brainstorming or creative thinking session. If the group is discovering the church's core values, for example, the participants call out what they believe are the church's values—strong leadership, evangelism, celebrative worship, and others. The recorders write the responses on Post-it notes, and a volunteer places them on a 4-by-8-foot whiteboard. This part may go on for fifteen to twenty minutes.

When the facilitator senses that the group has exhausted their ideas, then it is time to shift to part two. This is the workout, or critical thinking, process. During this time the group will prioritize ideas, look for trends and recurring themes, remove any duplicates or false concepts, refine and collate concepts, and tie up any loose ends. If the group is discovering core values, they will debate and eliminate values that are not true of the ministry, toss duplicate values, and identify items that are not actually values.

I have found it helpful in prioritizing ideas to give each participant a limited number of one-quarter-inch red dots. Then I ask them to come up during the break and stick the red dots on the Post-it notes with the most important ideas. If we are discovering core values, they would place the dots on the statements they believe are the actual values of the organization. Then we can quickly eliminate any ideas without dots.

A wonderful feature of the storyboarding process is that no one has to take notes. When you are finished, you merely collect the Post-it notes and give them to a secretary who will compile and record them for future use.

Do not allow all the detail to discourage you from using this tool. Once I learned how to do it, I began to use it all the time. And the only way to learn how is to practice it until you become proficient. It is a very visual and creative process that will save you much time in strategic thinking and acting and any other work you may attempt for the Savior. If you wish to know more about storyboarding, check out the website of the McNellis Company (www.mcnellis.co.com).

SCALE OF 1 TO 10

A quick way to discover where people are on a particular decision or issue is to use the scale of 1 to 10 (see the scales in the preplanning checklist at the end of this chapter). If the leader of a group such as a board wants to know where people stand on an issue, he or she can ask each one for a number between 1 and 10. A 1 says the person is strongly against the issue, and a 10 indicates that he or she is adamantly for it. A 5 or 6 means not sure.

If all those in a group give a 10 to a particular issue, such as a change of worship style from traditional to contemporary or hiring a new staff person, then the leader can move forward without unnecessary discussion. The leader knows that the group is convinced of or behind the proposal or decision. If most of them give a 1, this signals that they do not support the issue. Since it is obvious that the group is decidedly opposed, the leader will not want to spend time discussing the issue any further. When most members of the group give a 5 or 6, it shows that they are undecided and need to spend some time in discussion.

CONSENSUS

Some argue that church boards and committees should not take action unless they are unanimous in their decision. However, a unanimous decision is a rare occurrence in the real world of church boards and committees. Often church people do not see issues the same way. This is one of the reasons for working in teams—to get other people’s viewpoints. But to come to a decision, two options are available: compromise and consensus.

Some leaders pursue compromise when a unanimous decision is needed. They encourage everyone to give a little or a lot for the sake of the entire church. This prevents gridlock and supposedly promotes unity. However, my experience is that when people have to compromise their views, no one is happy or supportive, regardless of the decision.

A second and much better option is consensus. To best understand consensus decision making, we will first probe what it is and then what it is not.

What consensus is: Team or board members approach a decision with the attitude that they will attempt to support the decision of the team—even if they disagree with it—because their view has received a fair hearing. If they feel that for the sake of conscience they cannot agree with the majority decision, then they agree to disagree and to not cause a disturbance or talk about it with others in the

congregation. The point is that they have had their “day in court” and were not able to convince the jury (the rest of the team).

What consensus is not: Consensus decision making, as I am using it here, must not be confused with majority rule as practiced by the typical church. Many churches practice majority rule by asking the congregation to vote on various matters, from the color of the new carpet to a new pastor. Sometimes you want the majority to rule, for example, when you want to know if people will financially support a new building proposal. If you begin a building program and your people are against it, the church will incur an insurmountable debt from which it might never recover. The problem with majority rule is that most churches have more immature believers than mature believers. Thus the spiritually immature could control the direction or lack thereof in the church. This happened with the majority and minority reports from the twelve spies that Moses sent in to spy out the Promised Land (Numbers 13). Contrary to God’s direction, the majority (ten leaders) voted not to enter the land (Deut. 1:26).

The difference between consensus, as I am using it, and majority vote is the people involved. The people who make up the ministry teams, leadership boards, and staffs of many congregations are usually a group of spiritually mature people and are able to make decisions by consensus. Much effective ministry in the New Testament was accomplished by such teams. The history of the church in Acts is replete with the names of various Pauline teams consisting of godly people. How might a group of mature leaders come to a decision when disagreement exists? The answer is consensus or a majority vote on the part of the spiritual leaders who make up the team. This approach will save you countless hours of fruitless discussion. Often only one person will hold a differing position, but no one knows it until someone (usually the team leader) calls for the question and people vote. I give such a person one to two or three minutes at the most to speak and then I call for a vote.

12. Using an Outside Consultant for Strategic Planning

I believe that, if possible, a church is wise to employ the services of an outside consultant for strategic planning. A consultant can make a significant difference in several ways.

A good church consultant has the experience, expertise, and time that your leadership staff simply doesn’t have. The advent of ministry learning organizations, the explosion of knowledge, and the fast pace of communication make it nearly impossible for a senior pastor or an executive leadership team to remain knowledgeable of new methods and ministry paradigms that God is blessing. In addition, projects that require new skills and lots of time bombard leaders almost daily. In today’s fast-paced, ever-changing world, churches have difficulty hiring enough knowledgeable people just to keep up with normal, ongoing ministries. Strategic minded churches

and other ministry organizations are increasingly turning to ministry consultants to help them fill the knowledge and time gap for the many special situations that arise. These consultants bring to bear their expertise and years of ministry experience gained from other projects and other ministry organizations.

Good church consultants provide flexibility for their client churches. The typical church can bring them in for short-term knowledge acquisition, skills development, strategic planning, and other ministry projects. Much as Jethro in Exodus 18:24–27, they’re there when you need them and gone when you don’t. They come on the scene, serve your purpose, and then disappear. That way they do not get underfoot. Many also offer coaching on the phone or over the internet, which provides the time flexibility that busy leaders need.

A good church consultant provides a fresh, objective point of view. Most consultants have other projects under their belts, providing valuable experience in dealing with an array of ministry situations and leadership personalities. Through these they develop fresh, unbiased approaches to ministry. This “cross-pollination” of ideas and experiences from other similar ministries allows a church to tap into the brain power and strategies of those ministries. Often the pastor or leadership staff are too close to their situation to see the problems and potential solutions that a good, objective consultant recognizes almost immediately. In addition, the consultant doesn’t have to tolerate but can address any internal politics or power plays that some use to short-circuit healthy, biblical change.

A good church consultant provides maximum ministry efficiency for the following reasons.

- They bring experience with similar situations or problems so that they don’t need to take valuable time to get “up to speed.”
- Senior pastors, other leadership staff, or volunteer leaders have to accomplish their “normal” assignments in addition to any special projects. To become knowledgeable and give attention to a special project on top of many other responsibilities is nearly impossible. Consultants, however, have the luxury of focusing all their expertise on the special projects and assignments for which you’ve retained them.
- They don’t have to deal with the church’s necessary, daily tasks, such as attending staff meetings, returning phone calls or answering emails from congregants, putting out fires, and dealing with other policies and procedures. Armed with ministry tools, such as the storyboarding process, they complete their assignments in one-half to one-fourth the time.

When it comes to the bottom line, a good church consultant is more cost effective for the ministry organization. The question is which is more cost effective, using a consultant or hiring a new staff person? Hired staff require a regular paycheck along with other benefits, such as a health package, retirement, and possibly a

severance package. However, consultants serve you much as another staff person without the additional overhead. They work with you on an as-needed basis. The ministry has the benefit of an additional, specialized staff person without all the added financial overhead that comes with new staff.

A second vital question is whether a church can afford *not* to use a specialist where a specialist's expertise is needed, especially if the ministry is "stuck" and its future is hanging in the balance. If the project fails due to the use of someone in-house, some people in the church may not give the leadership a second chance.

A good church consultant brings a solid grounding in the Bible and theology to the ministry situation. Ministry with and to churches is deeply theological. It's critical that a consultant have a thorough grounding in theology that he or she brings to the ministry situation. We have discovered that good biblical, theological preparation is vital to the consulting equation. That is the reason The Malphurs Group uses only consultants who have biblical-theological training in a church or seminary context.

Finally, various leaders, ministries, and churches used consultants in the Bible. They simply didn't call them consultants. For example, in Exodus 18 Moses was at a ministry sticking point, and God brought Jethro (possibly an unbeliever) into the picture to help him get unstuck and move forward. The same holds true for Paul, Timothy, and Titus. Paul consulted with and advised both Timothy and Titus as well as numerous churches. Some mistakenly believe that Timothy and Titus were pastors. However, Paul used Timothy and Titus to go from church to church to consult with pastors and congregations. Today's consultants have a similar ministry.⁹

The Commitment to Strategic Planning

The Church Must Commit to the Process

If a church is not ready to commit strongly to strategic planning, it must not commence the process. Conventional wisdom affirms that all meaningful action flows out of a commitment. Where commitment exists, one finds an environment that is open to engaging the challenges presented by congregational development today. Where it does not exist, there is little heart to drive such an effort.

But what do I mean by a strong commitment? Two actual illustrations from my experience should help. I worked with one church that believed it was a good idea to pursue planning strategically but was not ready to commit strongly to it. Thus if it had a choice between meeting for planning purposes or pursuing some ministry in the church, the latter won out every time. When I contacted them and urged them to set up a meeting, I was met with silence. Eventually they followed through, but the meeting times became so far apart that people lost their initial enthusiasm and knowledge of what we were about, and they stopped showing up. Eventually, due to lack of interest, the whole thing died.

By way of contrast, another church informed me right from the start that they normally put on a major Easter pageant that they are known for in the community

at the time when they wished to pursue the strategic planning process. However, the latter was so important that they wanted to know if it was okay to cancel the pageant so that they could give their maximum time and attention to the strategic planning process. That is the kind of commitment that churches in general and leaders in particular (especially the pastor) must make if they are to be successful. It cannot be business as usual.

The Pastor Must Commit to the Church

There is a second commitment. Not only must the church be committed to the process, but the pastor must commit to the church as it works through the process. The average pastoral tenure in America is three to four years, which has proved devastating to many churches. Before I begin to lead a church through the strategic envisioning process, I ask for a commitment from the senior pastor to the church as well as to the process. Should he leave during the process or soon after completing the process, not only would the impact on the church be traumatic, but it would also negate much of the church's strategic planning work.

On one occasion, I was visiting with a church that was considering using me as a consultant to take them through the process. The pastor picked me up at the airport. During our one-hour drive to the church, I asked him how his ministry was progressing, and he told me that things were not going well. I explained to him that he must commit to be with the church after completing the strategic planning process if the church was to benefit from it. After that visit I did not hear from him again and later learned that he was no longer at the church. He did the right thing; he did what was best for the church by leaving before beginning the process rather than during or soon after its completion.

Comparison of Conventional and Visionary Strategic Planning

Strategic Elements	Conventional Strategic Planning	Visionary Strategic Planning
1. Learning	Learns from past sources. Tends to preserve and rearrange established categories.	Learns from all sources (one's own and others' experiences plus research). Creates new categories.
2. Thinking	Analysis—breaks goals down into steps and formalizes and follows them relentlessly. It's very "neat."	Synthesis—uses intuition and creativity as well as analysis, constantly pulling things together in new ways and combinations. It's very "messy."
3. Questions	What was or what is?	What could be?
4. Time	Past orientation. It works forward from the past. It is long-term and brings the past forward with it.	Future orientation. It works backward from the future. It's more short-term and tends to break with the past.
5. Change	Assumes little change will take place.	Assumes much change will take place.
6. Future	More of the same—we can anticipate the future.	Little of the same—we can create the future.

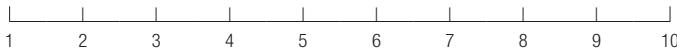
Strategic Elements	Conventional Strategic Planning	Visionary Strategic Planning
7. Relationship	May impede visionary strategic planning.	May include some conventional elements.
8. Control	Centralized—stick to the plan.	Decentralized—add to and adjust the plan.
9. Team	Less team involvement.	More team involvement.
10. Decision making	Compromise.	Consensus.
11. Planning	Long-range.	Short-range.
12. Process	Formal (by the book).	Less formal (more open).

Preplanning Checklist

By any chance, did you fail to read the introduction to this book? If so, please go back and read it before proceeding to the next chapter. It has a lot of important information that will help you plan for strategic planning. After reading the introduction and chapter 1, you are ready to respond to the preplanning checklist that follows.

Using the scale of 1 to 10, rate how well you believe your ministry is prepared to think and act strategically. Circle the appropriate number under questions one through four (1 indicates strongly against, 10 strongly for, and 5 or 6 not sure).

1. Is the lead pastor a turnaround pastor?



Comments:

2. Is this ministry willing to take the necessary time to do strategic planning?



Comments:

3. Is the church willing to spend the necessary funds to think and act strategically?



Comments:

4. Is this organization willing to meet in the best possible place to accomplish its planning?



Comments:

5. Which of the strategic thinking process tools would help you in your ministry? Which ones will you try? Which will you not attempt? Why?
6. Do you believe that you would be wise to enlist the help of a consultant in the planning process? Why or why not? If your answer is no and the reason is that you cannot afford one, do you believe that you can afford not to use one?
7. If you desire to begin the strategic planning process, what kind of commitment are you willing to make to the process? What are you willing to do or set aside to see it done well?

Turnaround Pastors Audit

Gordon E. Penfold, DMin and Aubrey Malphurs, PhD

Directions: Circle the answer that best describes you. Then add the numbers of your answers for your score.

1. My score on the DiSC profile is a 4 or higher on either the D or I or both.

1. True	2. More true than false	3. More false than true	4. False
2. I'm a passionate visionary who attracts followers.

1. True	2. More true than false	3. More false than true	4. False
3. I've had in the past and have now a mentor or coach in my life.

1. True	2. More true than false	3. More false than true	4. False
4. I'm more innovative than traditional.

1. True	2. More true than false	3. More false than true	4. False
5. I'm outgoing and have above average people skills.

1. True	2. More true than false	3. More false than true	4. False
6. I'm very energetic.

1. True	2. More true than false	3. More false than true	4. False

7. When it comes to ministry, I think like a young person regardless my age.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

8. I prefer to work with a team as opposed to working alone.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

9. I'm a delegator.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

10. I'm good at training leaders.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

11. I'm focused and determined in ministry.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

12. I'm quick to embrace change.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

13. I'm good at resolving conflicts.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

14. I'm good at solving problems.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

15. People say that I am an able communicator.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

16. People view me as a more directive, not a passive, leader.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

17. I believe that it's important to have both a mission and a vision.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

18. I passionately communicate our mission and vision.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

19. I don't believe that the age of the pastor is a factor in revitalizing churches.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

20. I empower people to use their giftedness in ministry.
 1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False

21. I'm a self-starter.

1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False
-

22. Strong relationships are important to me.

1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False
-

23. I believe that it's important to make the gospel relevant in the community.

1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False
-

24. I'm effective at ministering to all generations.

1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False
-

25. My wife and I are prepared to pay the price to lead change.

1. True 2. More true than false 3. More false than true 4. False
-

Total your score: _____

If your score is:

25–43: You definitely have what it takes to be a turnaround pastor/leader. God seems to have wired you to revitalize struggling churches.

44–62: You may be a turnaround pastor/leader. Chances increase the lower your score. Chances decrease the higher your score. Note areas with high scores and attempt to improve them if possible.

63–81: Chances are that you may not be a turnaround pastor/leader. The higher your score the less likely you are a revitalization pastor. Note areas with high scores and attempt to improve them if possible. Perhaps you're wired for another ministry position.

82–100: You're not likely a turnaround pastor/leader. And that's okay. God seems to have wired you to do some other ministry.

Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Application

1. Based on the characteristics of a turnaround pastor and the Turnaround Pastors Audit, are you a turnaround or a non-turnaround pastor? How might this knowledge be helpful to you as a leader?
2. Do you believe that strategic planning is important? Why or why not?

3. Is the author's definition of strategic planning helpful? What about this definition impacted you most?
4. Do you believe that strategic planning is biblical? Why or why not? If so, does any particular biblical reference stand out?
5. The author covers several reasons why strategic planning or envisioning is needed. Do any apply to you? If so, which?
6. The author cites twenty-six purposes for strategic planning. Which ones seem most important to you and your church?
7. How many people do you plan to involve in your strategic planning?
8. How long do you think it will take you to work through the strategic planning process?
9. Do you believe that you can afford to do strategic planning? Why or why not? Do you plan to use a consultant or do it yourself?
10. Where do you plan to meet to work through strategic planning?
11. Which strategic planning tools are or will be most important to you?
12. The author makes a case for using a consultant. Did he convince you? If so, what was it that persuaded you? If not, why not?
13. Is the pastor of the church committed to the process? Why or why not? Is the church committed to the process? Why or why not?