

Partnership Program

Southern New England Presbytery

Cultivating Congregational Transformation

First Presbyterian Church

Hartford, CT

Report Addendum

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HEARTWOOD

cultivating congregational transformation

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VI. Additional Findings

1. Initial Readiness Inventory

From “Strategic Spiritual Journey” by George Bullard.

† 14 score sheets received (newest additional scores and results are highlighted in yellow.)

Key: 1 = our church fits the description of this category perfectly;

10 our church is not like this at all.

(Descriptions of each of these categories are found on pages 7-11 in the “Strategic Spiritual Journey” workbook.)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Av	L	H
1. Visionary Leadership			1	1	† 2	5	† 2	‡ 3			5.9 6.07	3	8
2. Relationship Experiences	1	1	‡ 4	‡ 3	† 2	1	1		1		3.8 4.2	1	9
3. Programmatic Emphases		† 2	† 2	4	2	† 2		1	1		4.9 4.6	2	9
4. Accountable Management	1		4	2	‡ 5		2				4.4 4.2	‡ 1	7
5. Contextual Relevance	† 2	1	1	‡ 3	2	1	2	1	1		4.8 4.7	1	9
6. People of Passion		2	1			1	3	1	1	‡ 5	7.09 7.2	2	10
7. Pastoral Leadership	1			2	4		‡ 4	2	1		6.09 5.8	4 1	9
8. People of Position				1	† 2		3	4	2	2	7.4 7.5	4	10
9. Congregational Growth	1	‡ 4	3	1	4 5						3.4 3.3	1	5
10. Level of Conflict		1	1	2	‡ 3	2	2	2		1	5.6 5.7	2	8 10

Key:

Numbers in each column represent the number of people who put that value as their score for that element.

Av = average

L = low = lowest score

H = high = highest score

Individual Total Scores:				Average Total Score:
50	52	66	26	
58	31	69	61	
46	68		68	
71	30			
54				
				54.09
				53.57

2. ichange Results

Three more results were sent in during the fall of 08. That makes 16 total. This tally includes those results. Newest scores are highlighted in yellow.

<i>Overall</i>	<i>Emotional Response</i>	<i>Behavioral</i>
Tentative	Coping	Passive
Tentative	Energized	Passive
Engaged	Energized	Proactive
Tentative	Coping	Resistant
Engaged	Energized	Proactive
Tentative	Coping	Resistant
Tentative	Coping	Resistant
Engaged	Energized	Proactive
Engaged	Energized	Resistant
Engaged	Excited	Proactive
Engaged	Energized	Proactive
Tentative	Coping	Resistant
Engaged	Energized	Proactive

Possible Emotional Responses:

excited – energized – coping – fear – panic

Possible Behavioral Responses:

reactive – resistant – passive – proactive – hyperactive

Group Style Calculation

		A	B	C	D	E
		Derailing	Blocking	Tentative	Engaged	Reckless
Style Value	1	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Leaders by Style	2	0	0	5 6	5 7	0
Total Calculated Styles <i>(multiply Row 1 by Row 2 for each column)</i>	3	0	0	15 18	20 28	0
Total Leaders <i>(add Row 2, Columns A-E)</i>		10 13				
Sum of Product of Styles <i>(add Row 3, Columns A-E)</i>		35 46				
Total Change Style <i>(Divide Row 5, Column A by Row 4 Column A)</i>		3.5 3.53				

If Total Change Style is

- < 1: Derailing
- 1.0-1.4: Blocking
- 1.5-3.4: Tentative
- 3.5-4.4: Engaged
- 4.5 – 5: Reckless

3. iLead Results

Three more scores were sent in during the fall of 200, making a total of 16 scores. Those results are included below. Newest scores are highlighted in yellow.

Primary Lead Type	Secondary Lead Type	Engage Story as	Ministry Orientation
Pastor (moderate)	None	Moderate Realist	Moderate Inward
Pastor (strong)	Poet	Strong Realist	Strong Inward
Prophet (strong)	Apostle	Moderate Idealist	Strong Outward
Apostle (moderate)	Prophet	Strong Realist	Moderate Outward
Apostle (moderate)	Prophet	Strong Realist	Moderate Outward
Pastor (strong)	Poet	Strong Realist	Strong Inward
Poet (strong)	Pastor	Moderate Idealist	Strong Inward
Pastor (moderate)	None	Moderate Realist	Moderate Inward
Pastor (moderate)	Poet	Strong Realist	Moderate Inward
Apostle (moderate)	Prophet	Strong Realist	Moderate Outward
Pastor (strong)	Poet	Strong Realist	Strong Inward
Pastor (moderate)	Poet	Moderate Realist	Moderate Inward
Prophet (strong)	Poet	Strong Idealist	Strong Outward

Realist = action oriented
7 9

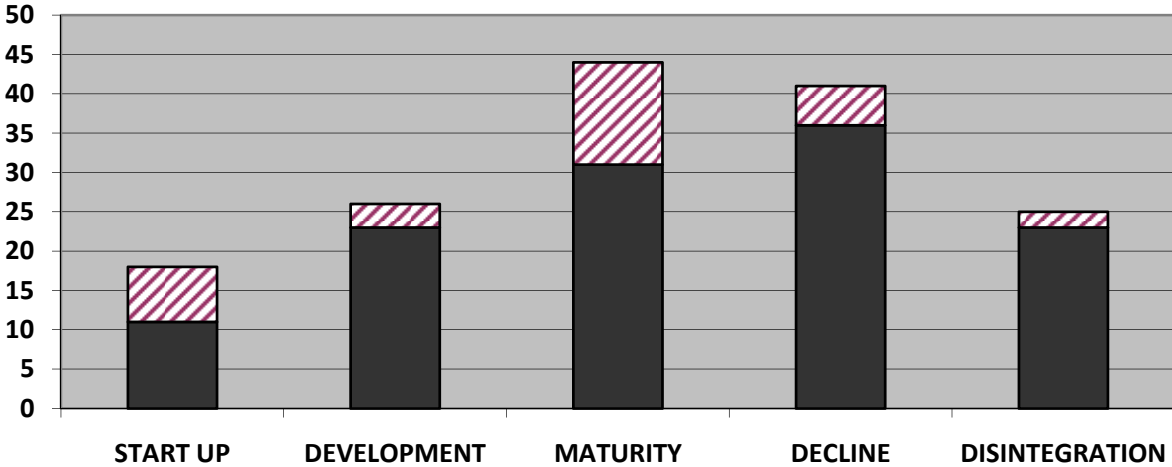
Idealist = reflection oriented
2 3

PASTOR 5 7	APOSTLE 3
POET 1	PROPHET 4 2
<i>Inward Emphasis = people oriented</i> 6 8	<i>Outward Emphasis = principle oriented</i> 4 5

4. Current Conditions

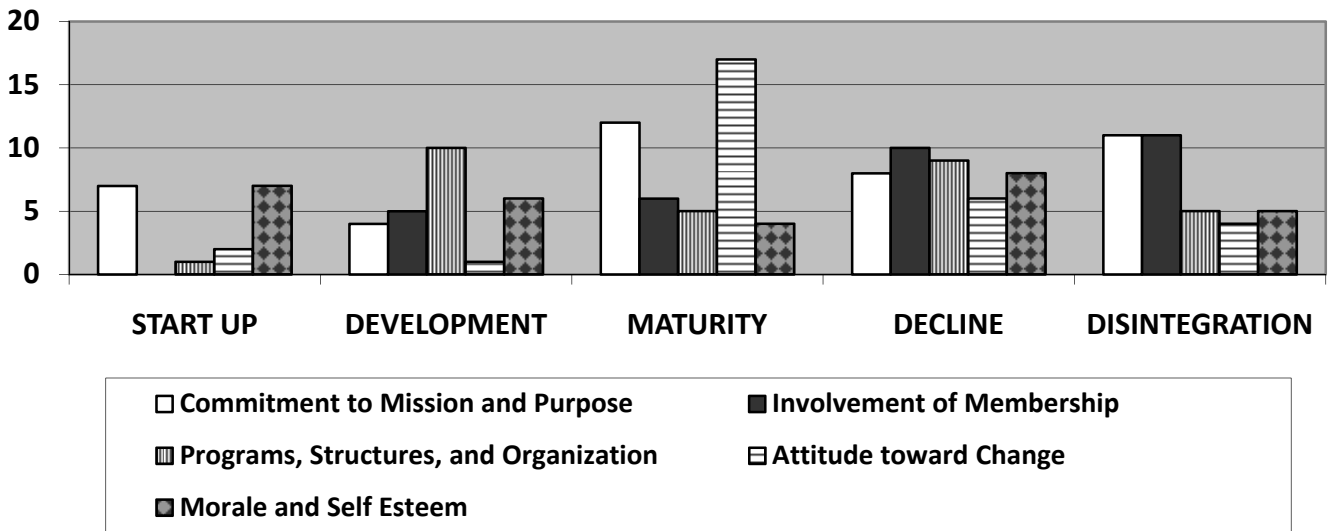
Overall Scores

3 more scoresheets were handed in. Those overall scores are seen below in the striped areas of the bars.



Scores for Individual Components

It was not possible to show the three new scores separate from the original ones, so this chart is a total tally of all the score sheets now in. You can compare it to the chart in the original report.



5. Congregational Questionnaire

The completed questionnaire was submitted. It will not be reproduced here.

6. Church Addiction Test

The Adult Forum filled this in during Ann's visit. 16 score sheets were handed in.

Directions: Score you're anxiety in response to each of the "Top 20 Shocking Truths Thriving Churches Have Learned."

No Anxiety < > High Anxiety
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	Hi	Lo	Average
1	8	7	10	10	5	6	6	4	10	4	10	10	8	8	10	8	10	4	7.7
2	6	5	8	7	1	2	6	9	8	8	6	7	8	10	5	8	10	1	6.5
3	10	5	5	5	5	3	10	7	3		10	8	6	2	5	6	10	2	6
4	3	1	4	4	5		10	3	5	2	3	8	4	8	3	6	10	1	4.6
5	2	7	1	1	3	4	1	1	3	2	3	5	5	2	3	3	7	1	2.8
6	5	2	5	6	5	8	10	10	5	6	4	8	6	10	3	8	10	2	6.3
7		8	8	9	9	5	1	2	4	2	5	5	6	8	3	8	9	1	5.5
8	10	5	2	2	5	4	10	4	7	9	10	8	6	10	10	7	10	2	6.8
9		8	9	9	10	5	10	8	9	9	9	8	6	10	10	10	10	5	8.6
10	10	10	10	10	5	4	10	10	8	9	10	8	8	8	10	10	10	4	8.7
11	9	2	10	10	10		10	10	10	3	10	9	10	10	10	8	10	2	8.7
12	8	3	8	8	5	1	10	4	8	8	5	8	6	3	5	8	10	1	6.1
13	8	8	8	8	6	8	10	8	4	5	3	7	5	8	3	4	10	3	6.4
14		8	3	4	5	5	5	2	2	2	3	3	6	10	3	4	10	2	4.3
15	8	2	2	2	5	3	10	4	6	3	2	3	6	9	5	9	10	2	4.9
16	10	2	10	10	10	6	1	7	7	8	5	6	8	10	5	8	10	1	7
17	10	1	7	7	10		10	10	10	9	5	9	10	9	10	10	10	1	8.4
18	8	5	5	5	7		10	2	7	8	8	6	5	2	7	9	10	2	6.2
19	5	1	8	8	5		1	3	10	8	2	9	8	8	8	9	10	1	6.2
20		9	10	10	10		10	1	5	2	2	8	2	2	8	10	10	1	6.3

Key: 1-20 = The Top 20 Shocking Truths

a-p = The individual score sheets

(see Appendix ___ for both the "Top 20 Shocking Truths" as well as the explanations)

Adding Up Your Group Addictions and Counting Your Group Opportunities

Higher scores indicate areas where you will find it difficult to understand or implement change.

Lower numbers indicate possible 'entry points' to initiate transformation.

Organization and Structure: Statements 7, 12, 15, 18	22.7
Worship and Spirituality: Statements 2, 5, 8, 13	22.5
Vision and Systemic Clarity: Statements 1, 11, 14, 20	27
Leadership Expectations: Statements 4, 9, 10, 19	28.1
Stewardship: Statements 6, 13, 17, 18	27.3

VII. Analysis of Additional Findings

1. Initial Readiness Inventory

There is not a lot of change here. Your highest and lowest scores remain the same.

In reviewing the initial report, however, I noticed a mistake. I said the highest group score in this inventory was ‘People of Passion.’ I see that was really ‘People of Position.’ Both constitute your 2 top highest scoring areas. That means most of you see your elected leadership (elders and deacons) as a top asset in this process. What are you doing to continue to build on that strength?

2. ichange

You added two engaged and one tentative – which put you only the slightest amount farther into the total change score for engaged. The good news is you did not slide back into more tentativeness as a group. The possible bad news is that really deep engagement might scare you as a group, so you keep choosing folks to keep the tentativeness alive.

3. iLead

The new scores did not really change the outcome on this inventory.

4. Current Conditions

This inventory was not changed substantially either. You will notice that Maturity now barely passes Decline as the highest category, but only barely. This tells me that the three new people were being optimistic in their scoring. The statistical date puts you in decline. You probably are hovering between decline and maturity.

5. Congregational Questionnaire

Before I comment on your responses here, let me say something regarding your own interpretation of all this material. A helpful thing to do would be to talk together, first of all, about anything you learned in gathering this information. You could have the session and deacons just read your responses to the questionnaire and talk together about questions like these:

- What are the key facts about our congregation?
- How does this information make us feel about our congregation?
- What in it surprised us?
- What insights does just this gathered information tell us about our congregation?
- What does it tell us about the challenges we face?

I will not comment on everything in your response document, but only those things that jump out at me.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

Brief History

Your write up offers a detailed overview of the long life of your congregation. As most traditional church histories go, it focuses mostly on building and staff. That tendency reflects one of the most difficult things from which a historic traditional church needs to break away. Truly vital churches in this day and age are not building or staff focused – they are mission and relationship focused.

This shows up in the comments about the review and discernment on whether to stay in the current location and building that happened in the 1980's in response to declining membership and deterioration of the building. While it is a good sign that the congregation knew to look at all its options, it is troubling that the only description after the decision to stay is about the building. It seems the only things the congregation really addressed were building issues. The history indicates some efforts at re-vitalizing outreach efforts in the 1990s, which is good. But again in the 2000's, there is a lot of effort put into the building.

I am very glad you are now working on transformation. I think it is going to mean to shift your focus from too much emphasis on the building to truly strengthening ministry and relationships.

Yet, the good news is that interwoven with the building and staff descriptions were helpful hints on the development of ministry and mission at your congregation. The ministry/mission events mentioned are:

- 1) controversy over remaining a Presbyterian church (1870's)
- 2) establishing the Westminster Presbyterian Church (1950's)
- 3) Couples Club established (1950's)
- 4) ministry to the Latino population (1960's)
- 5) attempt at establishing a Presbyterian church east of the river (1960's)
- 6) creation of ministries of Center City Churches (late 1960's)
- 7) commitment ceremony for same sex couple and ensuing controversy ((1990's)
- 8) Strawberry Festival (1990's)

It can be helpful in exploring future ministry efforts to look at the past ministry that captured the heart and energy of the congregation. The one I would most like to lift up for you is the multiple engagements in new church development. Healthy churches do that kind of work, and your congregation did in its healthier times. I would encourage you to look forward to doing something like that again. You might even be able to partner with the presbytery to start in congregations for populations you are not really reaching, in your own building even – then spin them out to be independent.

Staff

Your history of pastoral tenure shows that your congregation has had both long and short tenured pastors. It does show that some of the pastors after longer tenured ones don't stay very long. Rev. Davis is certainly not the longest tenured you have ever had, but it is the longest since Dr. Hoffman. You would do well to use the interim time well so you don't have an unintentional interim in your next called relationship.

Your organist/music direction is your longest tenured staff person. I have no idea how she lives out this reality, but the question for her is what is - she going to do to make sure her long tenured relationships do not eclipse the ability of the new pastor to grow in authority and relationship with the congregation? If she is pro-active in supporting the new pastor, then things will go better. You also note she is the institutional memory. What are you all doing with her to preserve and pass on that memory for the day when she retires (no matter how far in the future that is)?

The description of Terry's work responsibilities is typical of a declining church with a mission focus. I suspect it also reflects his commitments as well. While nothing listed is bad, if you truly want to transform, the next pastor will need to arrange her/his time differently. First of all, I am glad that web site and email stuff was moved out. Other than doing his/her own email, a pastor should not be doing web site maintenance. You are paying a pastor too much to be doing that. In a transforming situation, I would suggest the pastor not be on so many boards. While I do think pastors working on transformation need to be meeting new people in the community, serving on a board is a limited way to do that. It is much better that members of the congregation serve on those boards, and let the pastor focus on meeting ever more new people in the community and equipping congregational folk for ministry.

The description of stewardship chairman (for Rusty Spears) seems like too much authority and responsibility for one person – building, annual campaign, budgeting and personnel. Whew, that is a lot! What is the reason for that? This is related to the issue of 'too many hats' I brought up in my preliminary report. Of course, chair of a committee is one hat – so I guess this is more about too much work/authority in one committee (which is a structural issue first).

Congregational Structure

Your session has 12 members – probably a bit large for your congregation. Someday you might want to get that down to 9 – that frees up folks to take on management and doing of ministry, as well as gives you an easier size for team building.

The Parish Stewardship that Rusty chairs is the one that seems to be overloaded with responsibility. And more than that, I am not sure folks with expertise in money are necessarily the ones best suited to supervise personnel – and vice versa.

DEMOGRAPHY

There seems to have been a freefall in numbers of members from 1988 to 1999. That is the time immediately following Dr. Hoffman's tenure. The worship attendance declines in that same time as well, just not as precipitously. Was there an artificial inflation of membership numbers during Hoffman's time? There are two spikes in membership after 1997 – 2000 and 2005. My hunch is that you saw some new folks, but lost them and others out the 'back door' (to inactivity). Your worship stats show that you have not been any larger than around 80 in worship since the early 90's and have not even maintained that number, despite a resurgence in the early 00's. It looks like you got a taste of being a family size church (as defined by Alice Mann) and liked it. You have been hovering around the plateau between family and pastoral size since the early 1990's.

Not many adult baptisms fits with your circumstances. Yet you show some continual joining of new members by reaffirmation of faith. Why is it, however, that the new member numbers alternate between just over 10 and 1 or 2?

Your statistics on visitors are sketchy enough that is it hard to tell much. If you really have new (first time visitors) on a regular basis, you need to work on connecting with them. If you don't, then you have more need to focus on outreach and evangelism.

LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

Your average age of regular participants, while not really young, is better than many of our older congregations. That is good.

Your break out of involvement by year of membership shows a good distribution. It also shows lots of recent folks involved, which is excellent.

You have many smaller groups at work in your congregation. Many of them are structural (committees etc) or focused on a specific activity (study or ministry). What are you doing to promote prayer and sharing in those places? A good way to deepen spiritual and relational vitality is to get more intentional in using existing groups for some prayer and sharing time.

The number of folks engaged in intentional prayer is very low. I am finding more and more that successful transformation is built on a foundation of getting lots more people engaged in prayer. Your 'hands on ministry' number is very good. The amount of training your leaders engage in is negligible and needs to improve if you are going to move forward well.

FINANCIAL

Your budgets show a huge dependence on endowments and investment sources. I wonder how you all are doing now that the economy has turned so sour, especially its impact on Wall Street and stock returns. Wise management of endowments is important and useful, but a declining church can become dependent on them to the extent that they do not grow into the level of givers they really need to be to carry the full load of the cost of doing church. The break out of the top 20 contributions shows a disturbing fact. While it is wonderful you have a giver who gives that top gift (\$40,000), just what are you going to do when that giver is gone? The top ten givers give 61% of your budget! You really need to focus on growing givers if you are going to make it long term.

NEW MEMBER ANALYSIS

Your analysis tells me a few things:

- You clearly have a regional ministry in terms of who comes in to be with you (36 do not live nearby). Does any church in the area truly reach the neighborhood in terms of worship and actual membership? If not, and there are people there, you need to wrestle with whether you can or who can. If you serve the community but do not include the community in your internal life (worship etc), you run the risk of becoming paternalistic towards the community. If you cannot figure out how to become such that community folks want to be part of your membership, maybe you start another church where they would want to worship and join and become partners in serving the community.

- A good half of your members have some kind of previous tie to your congregation (family or friendship). So work on your evangelism skills through family and friendships! You mention this later in your assessment materials. That is where you are strongest! Build on your strength.
- Almost half of those new members are now inactive. You have some work to do to discover why your 'back door' is so large!

You have certainly tried a number of things to reach new people. That is good. Keep it up! Churches serious about meeting and reaching new people keep trying new ways of doing this.

COMMUNITY STUDY

Since Hartford is the poorest city in the state, you are faced with the age old problem of having a membership that is predominantly not poor trying to reach a population that is poor. This relates to my comments above about risking becoming paternalistic in relationship to the neighborhood. This is a difficult thing to overcome. Your church has clearly been serious about working in partnership with others in the city to help the poor and fight the causes of poverty. That is great. It is the becoming a multi-cultural community yourself (rich and poor, white and black and Latino etc.) that is hard. And it seems that socio-economic barriers are harder to overcome than racial.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

You have listed your core values, but nothing about basic beliefs. This is one of the problems progressive churches face. Basic beliefs are those theological convictions you hold as a congregation. Are you Trinitarian or Unitarian? Are you Christian or something else? This does not mean creating a set of your theological fundamentals to be used in a restrictive sense. But it does mean identifying key beliefs that you uphold or share with others as essential to understanding what you are all about.

FINAL QUESTIONS

Three Greatest Strengths:

One listed is your multi-racial and ethnic membership mirroring the populace of greater Hartford. Does it really? Are you 38% African American? I think you are on the way, but I would not call it one of your greatest strengths. Your commitment to that reality might be one of your strengths. You need to be realistic about how far you have to go in this area. And frankly, speaking as a white person, when we describe our group as multicultural when we are still way in the majority (and we easily do that), I think we risk generating disdain among members of the minority groups (who really are not minority any more) around us.

Three Greatest Weakness:

That make sense from what I have seen – and they are pretty essential to vitality in the future.

Three Changes:

Your theme for the changes you need to work on is Connectivity. I think seems to be a helpful way to shape the work you want to do in the immediate future. As long as you see it as helping people connect to God, to themselves (their gifts etc) and to one another, I think you will have a useful and helpful theme for your work moving forward.

6. Church Addiction Test

I used this inventory as a presentation and discussion tool in the Adult Forum class during my on site visit. I did not use this tool with the other churches. Since it was an added extra, I will let you all do your own interpretation of the results.

VIII. Further Observations

This additional material adds more detail to what you had already collected and done. You will also notice that many of the comments in the analysis section add more detail to comments I have already made. The three areas I spoke about in the initial report are:

1. Congregational Growth
2. Inspiring Worship
3. Cutting Back Before Growing
4. Discovering True Multi-Cultural Life

These are still good areas to focus on. This material and my comments give us some more nuance to pay attention to. To them I add a fifth area:

5. Stewardship

Let me highlight them here.

1. Congregational Growth

Added to the things I initially said are these:

- a. Church size theory.

It would be helpful to you at some point to learn about this together. Reading Alice Mann's book (mentioned above) together to help you do this.

- b. Time spent on reaching new people.

This will be difficult but important for you to learn to do. It is one of the most important factors, strategically speaking, in being able to stop decline.

2. Inspiring Worship

I don't have much more to say in this area really. You are working hard on this.

3. Cutting Back Before Growing

As you make plans to address the two areas above, you might very well have to cut back on some things currently happening. You need to be willing to do this. But here is where your almost 'tentative' change score will really impact you. What are you doing to do to help yourselves get ready to really do some new or different things?

I see special problems in that you have structured one committee (Parish Stewardship) to be overloaded with responsibility. What can you do to spread that out or divide that up?

4. Discovering True Multi-Cultural Life

Again, I don't have lot more to say about this, but think it is important for you to pay attention to.

5. Stewardship

The Questionnaire and other submitted materials highlight an important area for you all to grow: stewardship. You would do well to study together two books by Kennon Callahan – some of the best money-oriented books for traditional churches I have found (both published by Jossey-Bass)

Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church: A Guide for Every Member
Effective Church Finances: Fund-Raising and Budgeting for Church Leaders

APPENDIX A

Adjusted Scoring Sheet for Current Conditions

Directions were: In each row, mark exactly two statements that best describe the current conditions in your church.

Number on left next to each sentence is how many people taking this survey picked that statement.

*Three scores were sent in during the fall of 2008. Those results are included here. **New scores are highlighted in yellow.***

ROW 1: Commitment to Mission and Purpose

START UP

- 4 **3** Uncertainty of future demands visionary leader with high commitment level
- 4 Positive supportive attitude

DEVELOPMENT

- 2 Strong sense of mission and purpose among every member
- 2 High level of goal "ownership"

MATURITY

- 5 **7** High visibility and understanding of purpose and mission
- 5 Common purpose throughout ministries of the church

DECLINE

- 4 **2** Lowering of members' understanding of purpose
- 6 New members do not sense church's purpose

DISINTEGRATION

- 0 Purpose is lost
- 0 Mission not understood

ROW 2: Involvement of Membership

START UP

- 0 Mutual dependency requires everyone to be involved, or leave
- 0 All members willing to work

DEVELOPMENT

- 3 **5** High percentage of individuals' time and identity committed to the church
- 0 Volunteers easily found

MATURITY

- 1 New members quickly find a place to become involved
- 4 **5** High level of enthusiasm among membership for participation

DECLINE

- 9 **10** Members assume there are enough others to do the job
- 0 More paid staff to "enhance" ministries

DISINTEGRATION

- 2 **3** Programs eliminated for lack of participation
- 7 **8** Difficult to find volunteers

ROW 3: Programs, Structures and Organizations

START UP

0	Minimal organization
1	Spontaneity in decision making
DEVELOPMENT	
4	Function of ministry determines form
5 6	Structure created in response to needs
0	Traditions begin to form
MATURITY	
2 4	New programs created to respond to new needs
0 1	Delegation begins
0	New roles and responsibilities created
DECLINE	
6 7	Few, if any, new programs added
0 1	Forms of ministries begin to determine function
1	Structure creates needs rather than responds to to needs
DISINTEGRATION	
0	Programs deleted for lack of funds
5	Primary goal is preservation/survival

ROW 4: Attitude Toward Change

START UP

4 2	Members are receptive
0	Ownership is unanimous
0	Quickly accomplished

DEVELOPMENT

0	Changes easily adopted and integrated
1	Suggested from all levels of membership

MATURITY

6 9	New proposals given serious consideration
6 8	Church leaders responsible for initiating and implementing

DECLINE

2	Few changes proposed
4	Few changes considered that radically depart from status quo

DISINTEGRATION

2	"We've never done it that way before"
2	Rationalizations often made for why it can't be done

ROW 5: Morale and Self-esteem

START UP

4 5	Morale is high
0 2	Self-esteem is in the process of being formulated

DEVELOPMENT

2	Morale is higher
4	Self-esteem easily affected by circumstances and short -term successes/failures

MATURITY

0	Moral is highest
0	Self-esteem at its highest level

2 4 Confidence is contagious that goals can be reached
 DECLINE

6 7 Morale polarizes into groups of high and low

1 Self-esteem develops uncertainties

DISINTEGRATION

1 Few have high morale

4 Frustration and/or despair by leaders in not knowing how to stop decline

0 Self-esteem lowers