

MINISTRY INVENTORY GUIDE:

**ASSESS YOUR CHURCH'S
MINISTRY CAPACITY AND IDENTITY**

Leading a congregation toward change is best accomplished when everyone takes seriously and appreciatively the need for a disciplined understanding of the present reality of the congregation. It is important to begin with a clear picture of where you are.
- Nancy Ammerman, Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley, and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Abingdon Press, 1998)

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2007

INTRODUCTION TO THE MINISTRY INVENTORY

Why Do a Ministry Inventory?

A ministry inventory helps your church take a careful look at how it is reaching out beyond itself with good news and good works. A ministry assessment report establishes a baseline to hold up to the vision of a church fully engaged in practical expressions of the gospel. If outreach is a new venture for your congregation, the inventory can help identify a strategy for building readiness for ministry. For churches already engaged in external ministry, an inventory can help organize, enhance and build on the church's activities.

Through this assessment, you will better understand your church's current orientation to outreach mission, and what it has done to fulfill this mission. You will gain insight into the unique gifts your church has to offer in service to your community, and the theological foundations on which your church builds its approach to ministry. You will discover barriers and bridges to a more meaningful connection with your church's community. And you will identify areas of church life that can be strengthened in order to help your church love its neighbors near and far with greater faithfulness and transformational impact.

This might be a particularly helpful exercise if your congregation:

- lacks a clear understanding of, consensus on, or commitment to external mission
- is inward-focused (focuses exclusively on the needs of the congregation) or one-sided (focuses exclusively on either evangelism or social service)
- questions whether it has assets or aptitude for external ministry
- seeks to revive an earlier tradition of mission in your church or denomination
- wants to open new doors of relationship with its community
- sponsors many scattered ministry efforts but would like to develop a more coordinated and intentional ministry strategy

A ministry inventory has several goals:

1. *To identify how God is already at work in and through your congregation.*
2. *To bring patterns of church outreach into sharper focus.*
3. *To discover and appreciate your unique ministry "style".*
4. *To identify strengths, weaknesses, and challenges for holistic ministry.*
5. *To reveal hidden assets for effective community outreach in your church.*
6. *To take the pulse of your church's commitment to externally-oriented mission.*
7. *To lay the groundwork for a strategy for mission transformation.*

Transformational community ministry is a growth process that builds on experience, learning from past struggles and celebrating successes. Current priorities and programs can offer a base for new ministry ventures. You may even be surprised at how much your church is actually already doing! An assessment can also reveal areas where your church's actual ministry practices are inconsistent with its principles, indicating potential for revitalization.

Self-assessment should thus be undertaken with a posture of sober humility and open-minded optimism. A careful, honest look at the attributes, strengths and weaknesses of your church's outreach now will help you avoid mistakes later. What is important is not whether your church has already arrived, but whether it is willing to allow God to guide its next steps on the ministry journey (Philippians 3:13-14).

Conducting the Ministry Inventory

The first step is to gather the team of people who will lead the study: either the church's leadership body (e.g., session, elders, church council), or a small group of members designated to conduct the inventory. The best candidates are people who are observant and good at description, and who care about the church but can be objective in describing it. The task group should be diverse enough to provide a balanced perspective.

The process of conducting the ministry inventory is flexible. Decide the methods that best suit your church's size, style, and situation:

➤ *Which question sets will you include in the inventory?*

The ministry inventory guide (starting on p. 5) includes ten sets of questions. Not every question set may be relevant or helpful to your context. If you need to shorten the process, we recommend using at least the first five question sets. Feel free to adapt, add or delete questions for your own purposes.

The inventory refers to a number of worksheets in the supplemental tool section (starting on p. 21) that can stimulate critical reflection on your church's ministry activities and priorities. Select the most helpful tools for your use. Recommended tools to get you started are *Assessing Benchmarks of Community Engagement*, *Directory of External Ministry Programs*, *Does Your Church Smell Like Mission?*, *Ministry Priorities and Patterns*, and the *Outreach Ministry Opportunities Worksheet*.

➤ *How will you gather the information?*

This inventory is most fruitful when a group of members are involved in answering each question, drawing in diverse perspectives. There are two main options for conducting the inventory:

- A) The team may conduct the inventory on its own, meeting together at least once to discuss the inventory questions in the selected question sets. (More than one meeting will probably be necessary.) One team member can be assigned to take notes on the discussion and write up the inventory report, or different team members can be delegated to report on different questions.
- B) The inventory process may be opened to a large group of members (or even the whole congregation, in a small church). One method is to set up a discussion table for each question set. Participants can be assigned to tables, or they can be allowed to choose the question they would like to discuss. Assign one team member or other volunteer in advance to be the facilitator and recorder at each table, writing up their notes afterwards. (It may help to entice people to stay after church for a fellowship meal just prior to working on the inventory.)

The first option is the simplest to implement; the second yields a broader range of input.

A few notes:

- Some question areas require more information, or more sensitivity, to complete than others. It may be appropriate to combine the two methods outlined above: select some questions to be discussed by a broader group, and others to be handled by the team.

- For certain questions, the team may wish to interview specific church leaders and individual members who bring a particularly valuable perspective.
- Other sources of information for the inventory may include relevant church documents (e.g., annual reports, prior surveys or assessments), and people outside the congregation with a useful perspective on the church's outreach or reputation in the community.
- Don't expect consensus in answering the questions; congregations are (and should be) internally diverse. There are no single "right answers." If there are diverging answers to inventory questions, include this in your report.
- Participants in the inventory should understand that the purpose is not to critique the church, but to enable transformational ministry to build on the church's strengths while confronting weaknesses and avoiding past mistakes.

➤ *How will you summarize and share the information?*

Drawing on all the information and insights gained from the inventory guide questions and related tools, create a report that provides a brief overview of the key points, and distribute this information to the church's leadership body. The next step is to process the inventory report using the reflection questions on p. 17 to discern its implications for ministry development.

Plan how you will share the fruits of your learnings with the congregation. Make a summary of the report available to members, and share highlights in the church bulletin or newsletter. Consider incorporating a celebration of your church's unique contributions and potential for holistic ministry into a worship service.

➤ *How will you act on the information?*

Without a plan for action, your ministry inventory report may end up gathering dust in a file folder. The information gathered in the inventory process becomes useful when it serves the process of transformation. God seeks to transform each congregation into a vessel of healing, pouring out God's love and hope in abundance into a hurtful, hurting world (Romans 15:13, 1 Thessalonians 3:12). This is the work of God's grace, but also of our faithful preparation (Colossians 1:10, 2 Timothy 2:21).

Set a plan for following up on the inventory. The guide and worksheets include many suggestions for next steps based on your findings. The action plan does not need to be ambitious – in fact, it's best to identify two or three small, achievable steps that build on past successes, correct an imbalance or weakness in the church's approach to ministry, strengthen the church's relationship with the community, build a bridge between an asset and a need, or equip the congregation to engage in outreach.

For more help, see the many excellent resources for church-based ministry on www.fastennetwork.org. Identify what best-practice models, skill training, networks or capacity-building resources will best help you sustain the momentum sparked by this self-study process – being confident that "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion" (Philippians 1:6).

MINISTRY INVENTORY GUIDE

Overview

The Ministry Inventory consists of ten areas of questions related to the congregation's outreach (including all forms of evangelism and service). The questions focus on local outreach, but do not exclude international missions. Some questions ask about *what* the church does, others focus on *how* and *why* the church engages in external ministry.

1. Ministry History
2. Ministry Activities
3. Ministry Organization
4. Ministry Assets
5. Ministry Connections and Collaborations
6. Ministry Balance
7. Ministry Involvement: Evangelism
8. Ministry Involvement: Social Action
9. Ministry Bridges and Barriers
10. Ministry Outcomes

Note that at the bottom of each page of the inventory guide are "summary reflection" questions, which invite real-time comments by participants on what they have learned through the discussion.

The ministry inventory takes stock of the overall status of ministry at your church. You may opt to follow up with a more in-depth program evaluation for each major outreach program (see the *Program Revision and Evaluation Guide* on www.fastennetwork.org).

1. Ministry History

Each church's external mission reflects its unique history and heritage. Looking at where the church has been is an important step in planning its next steps.

- a) *Ministry heritage*: Is there anything in the story of the founding of your church that relates to mission and local outreach? What do you know about a missional heritage in your denomination (if your church belongs to one)?
- b) *Ministry history*: When has your church been at its best in missional outreach? Has the congregation ever gotten "burned"? Have there been conflicts surrounding outreach, and how have they been resolved? Create a timeline of major church efforts relating to evangelism, social action or global mission over the church's history, including discontinued ministries, key partnerships, major changes in ministry funding or leadership, and new initiatives planned for the future. How does this history of ministry engagement correspond with high and low points in the overall life of your church?
- c) *Main characters*: Who has played a key role in the church's ministry development? Tell about "heroes/heroines" or "saints" in the church who have made a difference in the community or beyond.
- d) *Ministry record*: Which ministry efforts do members point to with pride, and which have not worked out so well? What has generated the most excitement, and what has been like pulling teeth? Complete this sentence: "The most successful ministry we have undertaken is ..." What factors made this a positive ministry experience?
- e) *Ministry identity*: Which of the following images best describes the character of your church's ministry over its history:
 - *Pillar* churches are a stable civic anchor in the community.
 - *Pilgrim* churches provide a shelter for minority groups and immigrant cultures.
 - *Survivor* churches take risks to stand with people on the social margins.
 - *Prophet* churches proactively challenge immorality and injustice in the world.
 - *Servant* churches quietly provide help to individuals in need, near and far.
 - *Family* churches support their members as a close-knit, caring group.
 - *Lighthouse* churches seek to shine the gospel to those who are unchurched.
 - *Entrepreneur* churches are catalysts for community development.
 - *Yeast* churches exercise influence primarily through individual members.
 - *Other* -- come up with your own image.

See Carl S. Dudley and Sally A. Johnson, *Energizing the Congregation: Images that Shape Your Congregation's Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/Knox, 1993).

Summary reflections:

- What main themes emerged in the responses to these questions?
- Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this exercise?

2. Ministry Activities

As your church considers how to expand or enhance its outreach, a good place to start is by developing an accurate portrait of the church's current involvement.

- a) *Ministry focus*: Has the church identified one or more particular ministry communities —the neighborhood around the church, another geographic location, or a specific population (e.g., college students, immigrants, people with disabilities)? What are the main social and spiritual needs represented in this community?
- b) *Ministry programs*: Use the "Directory of External Ministry Programs" worksheet to record an overview of current programs designed to serve spiritual or social needs beyond the congregation. For each major outreach program (if there are many programs, select the five that are most significant to the church), additionally provide a short profile, including:
 - a description of what the program does, noting how the ministry addresses spiritual and / or social needs;
 - the audience or area that the ministry serves;
 - the intended goals and actual outcomes (if known) of the program;
 - how the ministry draws on, partners with or strengthens assets in the community (e.g., recruiting parents as volunteers in a children's ministry, partnering with the local business council for a job training program)
 - a brief history of the program;
 - (if possible) a story illustrating the need for this ministry, or a "success" case.
- c) *Benevolence*: Over the past three years, what kinds of people have been asking the church for aid, and what have been their needs? How do they find out about your church as a place that can offer help? How has the church responded to them? Does the church have policies to guide its charitable assistance? What challenges / problems / opportunities have been associated with benevolence?
- d) *Informal outreach*: How does the church encourage members to witness to and serve others in their daily lives, and to what extent does this happen? How does the church facilitate opportunities for people in the congregation to form relationships with people who are not Christians or who are on the social margins?
- e) *Member ministry*: How are individual members or small groups involved by their own initiative in addressing particular social concerns, or ministering in an unofficial way? (For example, a member who consistently speaks out on behalf of pro-life issues, a family that takes an annual mission trip to Mexico, a cluster of members who volunteer regularly for Habitat for Humanity, or a small group that pushes the church to be more environmentally friendly)

Summary reflections:

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3. Ministry Organization

Carl Dudley notes in *Community Ministry*, "In our common concern for social ministry, the way we mobilize in each congregation is unique to the people involved and the problems they face." When it comes to outreach, how does your church get things done?

- a) *Decision-making*: What is the process for making and implementing decisions that involve the church's outreach (for example, launching a new ministry, allocating funding, assigning leadership)? What values or principles guide these decisions? What kinds of informal, "behind the scenes" activity goes into decision-making?
- b) *Planning*: Does the church have a strategic plan for ministry development, or does it develop more spontaneously? Is there a central focus or set of priorities that guides outreach, and/or are efforts scattered in various unrelated directions? Does the church have a vision statement for its community ministry? (see the worksheet, "Assessing Benchmarks of Community Engagement")
- c) *Organizational structure*: How is external mission reflected in the organizational structure of the church? Is there a place for outreach goals in staff job descriptions, the committee structure, the budget format, etc.?
- d) *Volunteer management and support*: What is the church's system for recruiting, training, placing, tracking, evaluating and recognizing volunteers? What opportunities do members have to share with one another about the ministry work they are doing outside the congregation, and ask other members to contribute (i.e. volunteer time, in-kind goods, donations, prayer support)?
- e) *Leadership*: Where do ideas, energy and initiative for outreach ministry come from — pastors, lay leaders, small groups, individual members, community leaders? Note which of these tasks represent current leadership strengths and challenges: starting new initiatives, sustaining and growing programs, mobilizing church members, ministry evaluation and accountability, networking and partnerships, cultivating resources for ministry, long-range vision

Summary reflections:

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4. Ministry Assets

What resources for ministry does your church have to work with? Inventory the major assets — tangible and intangible — available to the congregation, and note the extent to which they are currently being used for external ministry:

- a) *Financial resources*: Endowment, tithes, mission offerings, fundraisers, major donors, grants, etc. What is the church's overall financial health? How much of the budget currently goes toward external ministry? (note local vs. international)
- b) *Material resources*: Building, equipment, vehicles, educational curricula, etc. (See the "Ministry Space Use Analysis" tool.)
- c) *Human resources*:
 - List staff and volunteers from the congregation engaged in outreach.
 - Identify potential human resources from outside the congregation (e.g. consultants, interns, community volunteers).
 - Note special skills and interests that are represented in your congregation (managerial, electrical, artistic, health care, cooking, etc.).
- d) *Intangible resources*: Intangible assets (which are often overlooked) include:
 - Reputation: A positive reputation in the community, a proven ministry track record, or association with a trusted community service organization.
 - Visibility: Recognition outside the church, gained for example by consistently sending representatives to community meetings.
 - Energy: Momentum for ministry flowing from spiritual dynamism, a passion to make a difference, a positive outlook, and youthful (or young at heart) enthusiasm.
 - Time: Who in the congregation has time to share with others? Consider the volunteer potential of stay-at-home parents, college students, people with disabilities who do not work, and retirees.
 - Trust in leaders: A healthy respect for leaders that encourages the congregation to follow leaders down new paths of faith in action.
 - Ministry experiences: Motivational stories of past ministry achievements, or the encouragement of members who have led by example.
 - Connections: Access to people or institutions who could contribute to ministry — e.g. donors, banks, colleges, politicians, foundations, artists, hospitals, etc.
- e) *Spiritual resources*: What main biblical or theological foundations for outreach mission are taught at your church? What role models or sources of inspiration are important to your understanding of mission (e.g. denominational legacy, Christian authors or speakers, other churches or church leaders, etc.)?

Summary reflections:

- What main themes emerged in the responses to these questions?
- Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this exercise?

5. Ministry Connections and Collaborations

No church is — or should be — a lone ranger when it comes to outreach. Every church is embedded in relationships with the broader community, with the wider Christian fellowship, and with ministry partners. What connections does your church have with other organizations, and how does your church relate to its community?

- a) *Partners*: What outside groups does the church connect with to carry out ministry goals (e.g. the denomination, foundations, community agencies, para-church organizations, church coalitions, government, etc.)? What kinds of cooperative arrangements exist between the church and these outside entities (e.g., shared space or equipment, jointly sponsored programs, collaborative fundraising projects)? How healthy are these partnerships? (See the worksheet, "Qualities of Healthy Ministry Partnerships.")
- b) *Community relations*: What community events or programs has the church hosted or participated in? Does the church ever invite local leaders or agencies to special church events? Has the church sought out people from the community to help plan, take part in, or give feedback on church projects that affect the community (such as ministry programs, building projects or outdoor services)?
- c) *Associations*: Does the church or pastor participate in local or national associations or networks such as a pastor's prayer group, a community organizing coalition, a denominational association, Christian Community Development Association, etc.?
- d) *Representation*: Does the pastor or other church leader represent the church in some official capacity out in the community, such as on a public task force or the board of a non-profit agency?
- e) *Guidelines*: What principles (if any) guide the church's selection of partner agencies and projects — for example, whether to participate in secular or ecumenical projects, or whether to accept government funding?

Summary reflections:

- What main themes emerged in the responses to these questions?
- Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this exercise?

6. Ministry Balance

Maintaining a healthy church is a continual balancing act. Church life involves multiple, seemingly competing, dynamics: in-reach and outreach, local and global mission, evangelism and social compassion. It helps to step back and assess these dynamics with a big-picture perspective. (See the tools, "Does Your Church Smell Like Mission?", and "Ministry Priorities and Patterns.")

- a) *Nurture/outreach*: What is the balance between ministries of internal congregational nurture, and outreach ministry to those outside the church? Which is your church's priority, in terms of staff and volunteer time, resources, attention from the pulpit, etc.? How satisfied is the congregation with this balance?
- b) *Mission focus*: What is the balance between local and global mission? Which is your church's priority, in terms of staff and volunteer time, resources, attention from the pulpit, etc.? How satisfied is the congregation with this balance?
- c) *Evangelism/social ministry*: What is the balance between evangelism and social outreach? Which is your church's priority, in terms of staff and volunteer time, resources, attention from the pulpit, etc.? How satisfied is the congregation with this balance?
- d) *Integration*: How much overlap or integration is there between evangelism and social activism? Are they totally separate ministries, interconnected ministries, or integrated within the same ministries? Do compassion and evangelism ministries serve the same community, or are they focused on different groups of people? (See the tools, "Typology of Church Mission," "Ways of Blending Evangelism and Social Outreach," and "Spiritual Dynamics of Service Programs")
- e) *Top down / bottom up*: What is the balance between ministries that are initiated and organized by church leadership (top down), and ministries that grow more informally out of the interests and involvement of members (bottom up)?

Summary reflections:

- What main themes emerged in the responses to these questions?
- Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this exercise?

7. Ministry Involvement: Evangelism

The following questions can help you take a closer look at how your congregation is sharing the good news of salvation with others. See also the tool, "Reviewing Your Church's Evangelism."

- a) *Who?* Does the church primarily reach out to people who are already Christians and looking for a new church home, lapsed or "baby" Christians in need of spiritual renewal and discipleship, or people who are not yet Christians? Is there an "ideal" type of person or family whom the church has been seeking to reach?
- b) *How?* (See "Types of Evangelism Programs.") Is the church's witness to Christ:
- *Explicit* (e.g. sharing testimonies or tracts) and/or *implicit* (e.g. modeled through lifestyle and service)?
 - *Formal* (through organized church programs or campaigns) and/or *informal* (through relationships, in the course of members' daily lives)?
 - *Event-based* (e.g. reaching groups of people via revival services or concerts) and/or *one-on-one* (e.g. sharing with one person at a time, such as in door-to-door evangelism)?

Why does the church have this approach? What feedback have leaders and members provided about the way the church engages in evangelism?

- c) *How much?* How often do evangelistic events or campaigns take place? About what percentage of the congregation is involved in evangelism? What feedback have leaders and members provided about the amount of evangelism that the congregation is doing — too much emphasis, not enough, just right?
- d) *Training and recruitment:* What programs of evangelism training are in place? How are people recruited to participate? How strongly does the leadership promote evangelism?
- e) *Attitude:* How would you summarize the congregation's attitude toward evangelism — enthusiastic, eager but anxious, terrified, resistant, apathetic?

Summary reflections:

- What main themes emerged in the responses to these questions?
- Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this exercise?

8. Ministry Involvement: Social Action

The following questions can help you take a closer look at how your congregation is demonstrating God's love through ministries of compassion and justice.

- a) *How?* (See "Types of Social Ministry Programs.") Which of these areas of social action does the church emphasize:
- Meeting immediate needs by providing goods and services (relief);
 - Empowering people by teaching skills or character, or offering emotional support (personal development);
 - Renewing the economic and institutional building blocks of a healthy community (community development); and/or
 - Reforming political, economic, or cultural systems (systemic change).
- Why does the church have this approach? What feedback have leaders and members provided about the way the church engages in social ministry?
- b) *How much?* About what percentage of the congregation is involved in social ministry? What feedback have leaders and members provided about the amount of social ministry that the congregation is doing — too much emphasis, not enough, just right?
- c) *Training and recruitment:* How are members recruited and equipped to participate in social ministries? How strongly does the leadership promote social ministry?
- d) *Attitude:* How would you summarize the congregation's attitude toward social action—enthusiastic, eager but anxious, cynical, terrified, resistant, apathetic?
- e) *Holism:* Does the church seek to address the spiritual needs of the people served in social ministries (e.g. by offering prayer and sharing the gospel in non-coercive ways)? Are people served by social ministries welcomed into the church? (See the tools, "Spiritual Dynamics of Service Programs," "Typology of Church Mission," and "Ways of Blending Evangelism and Social Outreach" for more information on the connection between service and witness.)

Summary reflections:

- What main themes emerged in the responses to these questions?
- Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this exercise?

9. Ministry Bridges and Barriers

Transformational community ministry entails building bridges — both to welcome the community into the church, and to bring the church out into the community. Consider possible sources of barriers to relationship with those whom God has called your congregation to love in Christ's name. (For a more detailed inventory, see the worksheet "Barriers between Church and Community.")

- a) *Reputation*: What is your church known for in the surrounding community? How do you think someone who does not attend might describe your congregation? Are you viewed as being *for* the community, or simply *in* the community?
- b) *Preconceptions*: Do people in the congregation have prejudices, stereotypes or a history of negative interactions with people in the community that might be a barrier to authentic, caring relationships? Does the congregation tend to fear the community or think of it as a "bad neighborhood"?
- c) *Inclusivity*: How welcoming is your congregation of people who are different — in terms of economic class, race, language, appearance, physical or mental abilities, and family structure? Are members gracious toward newcomers who behave or dress in unconventional ways? How does your church help people who are spiritual seekers or new Christians feel at home, socially and spiritually?
- d) *Geography*: Where do members live in relationship to the church — are they mostly commuters, or community residents? What kinds of natural connections exist between the church and community, such as members who live, work, own businesses or go to school there? Does the church provide opportunities for members to get to know the church's neighbors?
- e) *Facilities*: Are there physical barriers that represent symbolic obstacles to newcomers (e.g., fences, walls, "no trespassing" signs, locked gates, lack of handicap accessibility)? Do the church grounds say to people, "We care about the appearance of this neighborhood and we care about you"?
- f) *Priorities*: How visible is the congregation's investment in the well-being of its neighbors? To what extent is a commitment to community outreach incorporated into "routine" aspects of church life?
 - Is the importance of outreach in word and deed affirmed in the mission statement, membership covenant, welcome brochure, website, etc?
 - Are the needs and dreams of the community present in congregational prayers, church bulletin boards, newsletters, etc.?
 - Is Christian responsibility beyond the walls of the church addressed in sermons, Sunday school classes, small group Bible studies, literature in the church library or bookstore, etc.?

Summary reflections:

- What main themes emerged in the responses to these questions?
- Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this exercise?

10. Ministry Outcomes

Holistic ministry means planting seeds of faith. Expect a harvest! (Galatians 6:9) What fruit have you seen from your kingdom work? Keep in mind that the ultimate test of ministry is faithfulness to God's calling. (See also the *Ministry Program Evaluation and Revision Guide* on www.fastennetwork.org for a more detailed assessment of individual programs.)

- a) What have been the observable outcomes of the church's outreach (whether focused on evangelism and/or and social action), on two levels:
 - *quantitative* — record of ministry goals achieved or numbers of people who share in the desired ministry benefits (advocacy goals met; conversions, rededications, or new members; GED program graduates; families in new housing; etc.). How are these numbers tracked, if at all?
 - *qualitative* — description of general positive outcomes (improvements in the overall quality of life in the community, transformation in individual lives)(Keep in mind that *more* ministry does not always mean *better quality* ministry!)
- b) Is it important to your church to evaluate its external ministries, and if so, how are outcomes evaluated? What feedback have leaders, members and beneficiaries provided about the outcomes of the church's outreach ministries? Does the church have a sense that its ministries are "working" or not, and why this is so?
- c) Which specific ministries (current and past) have been considered the most effective? What was successful about it? What factors led to the good results?
- d) What have been the outcomes of outreach ministry for the church itself, both positive and negative, in the following areas:
 - discipleship and spiritual vitality
 - member involvement with and commitment to the church
 - leadership development
 - church size and resource levels
 - conflictIf the church's outreach has had minimal impact on the congregation, explore why.
- e) Does the church have a long-range vision or broad goals for its community outreach? How will the church know if it is on track with these goals – what are the benchmarks or signs of progress?

Summary reflections:

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INTERPRETING THE MINISTRY INVENTORY

Use the following reflection questions to guide the interpretation of the information you gathered in the ministry inventory. As a team, set aside a time for discussing these questions in an atmosphere of worshipful reflection. Engage the leadership of the church in this process as appropriate.

The reflection questions help you to take stock of what your church brings to the goal of loving your community in Christ's name, as well as where it may need to grow. Each of these questions has two parts: *assess* and *act*. Drawing on the reports and worksheets, first *assess* where your church is in its missional journey, and then decide how to *act* on this information.

The reflection questions refer to various worksheets in the supplemental tool section of this guide. Use whatever tools are relevant to your church's situation. A helpful place to start is the tool, "Assessing Benchmarks of Community Engagement."

This process is important preparation for the next steps of enhancing the impact of existing outreach and planning new ministry opportunities. (See the *Ministry Program Evaluation and Revision Guide* and the *Vision Discernment Guide* on www.fastennetwork.org.)

MINISTRY INVENTORY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. *What are your strengths and assets relevant to external ministry?*

Celebrate what your church is already doing well, and take inventory of your capacity for future ministry. Most congregational characteristics could become ministry assets. For example, a large building opens up space for ministry programs. Having a close-knit congregation that cares for one another could be an asset for a mentoring ministry that adopts a struggling family. A congregation full of professionals may have the connections and skills for community organizing. A reputation for great children's ministries provides a natural bridge for outreach to at-risk youth in the community.

Assess:

- A. Consider this quote: "A congregation is more likely to move into a new area of ministry if they can see it as reasserting or claiming *something good that they have always been* than if they are asked to change into something new and different" (Phil Tom and Sally Johnson, *Handbook for Urban Church Ministries*, p. 20). Where do you find the "good that you have always been" in your history, identity, or current activities? How has God already used your church to make a difference in the world? What have you done, or could you do, with excellence? (For more detailed analysis, see "Ministry Priorities and Patterns.")
- B. Take stock of your untapped potential. Develop a list of strengths that the church can draw on for mission. Include assets that are both tangible (e.g., property, funds, people) and intangible (e.g., skill sets, reputation, experience, relationships, community connections).

Act:

- A. Brainstorm ways of capitalizing on these strengths. Use the "Outreach Ministry Opportunities Worksheet" to help you connect your church's ministry assets and interests with simple opportunities to serve the community and share good news.
- B. Plan how you can share these insights with the congregation and worshipfully celebrate your church's unique contributions and capacity for external ministry.

2. What are some weaknesses and obstacles relevant to external ministry?

What has prevented the church from developing its full capacity for outreach? Obstacles to effective transformational ministry may be found in the church's past experiences, identity, resource base, personnel, theology, or relationship with the community. Ministry impact may also be affected by external factors beyond the church's control. (See the tools "Assessing Benchmarks of Community Engagement," and "Obstacles to External Ministry.")

The ministry inventory can also help anticipate potential sources of resistance to new ministry initiatives. Change doesn't come easy to any group of people, so expect that taking steps in a new direction may provoke some tensions and conflicts. It may be impossible to avoid resistance altogether, but helps to be prepared in advance.

Assess:

- A. What are the greatest weaknesses or challenges the church faces in its current expressions of mission? What types of ministry activities should the church do more, or do better? Is the church unbalanced in any area of ministry?
- B. What are the main roadblocks to more fully embracing an external ministry paradigm and putting it into action? Identify potential sources of friction related to mission -- both internal (e.g., lack of trained ministry leaders, concerns about insurance or damage to church property, history of being "burned" by involvement with people in need), and external (e.g., the community does not see the church as a partner, language/cultural barriers to outreach).

Act:

- A. Investigate case studies of other churches or nonprofits that have overcome similar obstacles. If possible, bring a small group of church members to visit a good model.
- B. Consider ways to build momentum for change in the church's ministry and to diminish resistance. (See the tool, "Overcoming Resistance to Ministry Changes.") Who in the church or community might be recruited as an ally in supporting new ministry initiatives?

3. **What are the next steps for your church in its ministry journey?**

Assess:

Given the findings of the ministry inventory, which **two or three** of the following areas are top priorities for your church's growth toward holistic, transformational ministry?

External orientation: embrace a commitment to outreach mission as part of the church's DNA, integral to the church's organizational structure

Spiritual foundation: help the congregation deepen their grasp of the biblical calling to faith in action and renew their spiritual commitment

Expand awareness: enlarge the congregation's understanding of needs across the street and around the world, the principles of transformational development, and stories of effective ministry models

Seed ministry: motivate the congregation through first-step service projects or mission trips that expose people to needs and to the experience of serving others

Transformational approach: reorient current ministries to move beyond giving material aid to nurture relationships with people in need; beyond individual needs to community-wide dimensions of social problems; and beyond "band-aid" relief to long-term development

Community connections: research needs and assets in the community to better come alongside the church's neighbors; network and build bridges of caring and solidarity

Ministry partnerships: identify and build relationships with individuals, institutions and other churches with common kingdom goals

Ministry vision: move strategically toward practical ministry goals grounded in the desires of community stakeholders, the church's capacity and the Spirit's leading

Program development: organize plans for new outreach programs; expand knowledge and skills related to effective ministry strategies, activities and administration

Ministry resources: develop a base of funds, volunteers, and other resources needed to implement a ministry vision

Volunteer mobilization: equip and energize the congregation to participate actively in the ministry vision

Spiritual nurture: take steps to enrich the spiritual life of outreach staff and volunteers, and to provide spiritual care for those served by compassion ministries

Invitational outreach: encourage the congregation to draw in unchurched friends and neighbors through the church's community ministry

Leadership development: equip current and emerging leaders to guide the church's ministry journey and effectively manage ministry programs

Best-practice mentoring: Seek to learn from other churches more experienced in holistic, transformational ministry

Other: _____

Act:

For each growth priority identified above, consider whether it calls for a strategy of building on existing church strengths, seeking outside resources to address an area of weakness, or developing new outreach initiatives.

- Examples of building on existing church strengths:

Offer a Sunday school class on biblical compassion; provide cultural sensitivity training to service ministry volunteers; designate a percentage of foreign missions giving toward local outreach; invite children in a neighboring housing project to attend the church's annual Vacation Bible School; offer the church's building to host neighborhood association meetings; make a chaplain available to families in the church's food ministry;

- Examples of seeking new partners or external resources:

Work with a mentoring organization to recruit and train new church volunteers; join (or start) a city-wide consortium of outreach ministry leaders; develop a relationship with the principal of the local high school; send church leaders to a capacity building training conference; research grants for economic development; find outreach-oriented curriculum for small groups; hire a staff social worker to help the church reach out to single parent families

- Examples of developing new initiatives:

Plan a congregational Habitat for Humanity work day; host a "block party" for the church's neighborhood; start a transformational ministry prayer team; create a bulletin board for community events and volunteer/giving opportunities; provide budget support for a church member starting up an ESL program; form a study group to learn more about the community and explore a shared vision for ministry

What specific action steps, resources or contacts can help you take the steps you have identified? See the selection of excellent ministry resources available on the FASTEN website, www.fastennetwork.org.

SUPPLEMENTAL

TOOLS FOR MINISTRY INVENTORY

Assessing Benchmarks of Community Engagement
Barriers between Church and Community
Directory of External Ministry Programs
Does Your Church Smell Like Mission?
How Holistic is Your Church's Outreach?
Ministry Priorities and Patterns
Ministry Space Use Analysis
Obstacles to External Ministry
Outreach Ministry Opportunities Worksheet
Overcoming Resistance to Ministry Changes
Qualities of Healthy Ministry Partnerships
Reviewing Your Church's Evangelism
Spiritual Dynamics of Service Programs
Types of Evangelism Programs
Types of Social Ministry Programs
Typology of Church Mission
Ways of Blending Evangelism and Social Outreach

ASSESSING BENCHMARKS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This exercise gives you a quick overview of how your church is engaging the community. An accurate picture of the church's strengths, weaknesses, and goals for outreach is useful in helping the church enlarge its capacity to serve its neighbors.

1. We address community needs primarily ...
 - Through church-sponsored programs, using our own resources.
 - Through referrals to other agencies.
 - Through programs operated in partnership with other churches and agencies.

2. Our church is primarily engaged in the community ...
 - Informally, through interactions by individual members
 - Through occasional outreach events
 - Through various scattered ministries with little coordination
 - Through a few focused ministries with coordinated member involvement
 - Other: _____

3. Check which of the following are true of the church's community ministries:
 - The congregation understands the theological basis for what we do in the community.
 - Our programs are grounded in an assessment of the community's assets and needs.
 - We maintain a network of relationships with community residents, leaders and partners.
 - We know how to develop assistance plans and walk alongside families who request help.
 - We have a long-range vision for community transformation.
 - We have a coordinated plan for adding new ministries.
 - We have a process in place for evaluating and improving our community ministries.
 - We offer restoration and hope in Christ to all who are open to spiritual guidance.

4. Our greatest challenges are ... *(check all that apply)*
 - We don't know how to connect with people who need help or with community partners.
 - We sense our efforts to help people are often abused.
 - We can only provide short-term solutions, not real transformation.
 - We struggle to mobilize church support for helping people who are not members.
 - The people we help don't seem interested in the gospel or in our church.
 - Community needs are overwhelming; we don't know where to start.
 - We aren't equipped to plan or manage community-oriented programs.
 - We don't have enough resources to engage in substantial ministry.
 - We are uncomfortable dealing with people from a different ethnicity, culture or economic class.
 - Other: _____

5. Our church's vision for community ministry is ... *(check all that apply)*
 - To help meet the urgent needs of people seeking help.
 - To see church and community members live transformed, spiritually vital, fruitful lives.
 - To break the yoke of oppression in the form of generational poverty, addictions, and abuse.
 - To help the community become a better place to live (better jobs, improved environment, etc.).
 - To make improvements in community social life – how people interact and live together.
 - To see churches and organizations working cooperatively to make life better for everyone.
 - To help break down the racial, cultural and economic barriers that keep people divided.
 - To unleash gifts in the community, helping neighbors work together on shared goals.
 - To improve political and economic systems so that life is more fair and just for everyone.
 - Other: _____

Adapted from Jay Van Groningen, Communities First: Through God's Eyes, With God's Heart (Center on Faith in Communities, 2005), p. 4-5.

BARRIERS BETWEEN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Place a check mark beside any of the following barriers that apply to your church's relationship with the community. Then place an X in the column according to how difficult it might be to change this barrier. This exercise can help you identify key short-term and long-range steps the church can take to enhance its relationship with and reputation in the community, in order to build bridges of belonging and caring.

Type of Barrier	✓	<i>How difficult to overcome this barrier?</i>		
		Change would be challenging, but doable	Change might be possible, but not sure how	Would be very difficult to change this
<i>Religious barriers</i>				
Assumptions about the spiritual status of people who have needs				
Reluctance to work with secular agencies				
Looking down on other churches or Christians outside your denomination				
Other religious barrier:				
<i>Geographic barriers</i>				
Church members live distant from the ministry community				
Lack of contact between congregation and ministry community				
Negative attitudes about the neighborhood and its residents				
Other geographic barrier:				
<i>Demographic and cultural barriers</i>				
The church's identity and demographic patterns (e.g. age, household type) are out of synch with the community				
The goals and issues most important to the community are different from those of the congregation				
The church has not adapted its outreach methods to the culture and demographics of the community				
Other demographic/cultural barrier:				

Type of Barrier Between Church and Community	✓	How difficult to overcome this barrier?		
		Change would be challenging, but doable	Change might be possible, but not sure how	Would be very difficult to change this
Barriers of class and race				
Attitude of ministry <i>to</i> those with needs rather than ministry <i>alongside</i> poor people as equals.				
Discomfort / stereotypes in relating to people who are of a different ethnic group or social class				
The church worships, serves, and fellowships with members of a single ethnic group				
Other class / race barrier:				
Barriers of church culture				
Services are not "visitor friendly" — lingo and rituals are confusing to people who didn't grow up in the church				
Lack of intentionality and warmth about incorporating new believers into church life				
Unspoken expectations for appearance and behavior that make it hard for new people to fit in				
Other church culture barrier:				
Physical barriers				
Lack of accessibility to people with disabilities				
Symbolic lack of openness to the community (e.g. locked doors, fences, "no trespassing" signs)				
Difficulty of access to the church (e.g. no signage, lack of parking)				
Other physical barriers:				

Select two or three of the barriers for which change would be "doable." Write down potential action steps toward building bridges with the community in these areas (see some suggestions on the next page).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Building Bridges between Church and Community

How can your church cultivate a sense of belonging to the community of ministry and a deeper commitment to its well-being? Following are some ideas for helping the congregation to think about members of the community as "our people." Notice these are not service projects but rather ways of connecting with people and organizations. Brainstorm at least two new ideas to add to the list.

- Create a "community affairs" bulletin board with notices of local events, newspaper clippings relevant to the community, information about services and programs of benefit to the community, etc.
- Encourage congregational patronage of the local economy by distributing lists of restaurants and shops, and by purchasing church supplies and services from community businesses. Start a tradition of eating together after church at a local restaurant once a month or so.
- Bring a group from the congregation to attend cultural or sports events sponsored by the community.
- Plan joint events with other local churches or organizations, such as a Harvest party, softball game or Easter egg hunt.
- Form a "crisis response team" that is ready to respond compassionately when tragedy strikes in the community — for example, by bringing meals to a family that has lost a child, organizing a prayer vigil at the site of a shooting, or donating household items after a fire.
- Set aside a portion of the funds used for internal church care toward a related need in the community — for example, donate a portion of the building fund to a homeless shelter; the budget for children's ministry may include items for a local day care; a fellowship meal can be combined with a food drive.
- Offer the church building to host community meetings and events.
- Encourage church members to report job openings in their place of employment, and distribute this list to local employment offices.
- Move church events outside the church building, into the community: Sunday school class or committee meetings at a coffee shop, VBS in a local park, youth group at a rec center.
- Organize "field trips" from the congregation to points of interest in the community such as a museum, tourist attraction, historical site, or entertainment center.
- Include special events, volunteer opportunities and prayer points related to the community in the church newsletter, bulletin, and calendar.
- If your church is partnering with a local organization for a Faith in Action service project, invite a representative to a Sunday service to share a brief introduction to their organization.
- Host a "community forum" with representatives from service agencies and other community leaders (see suggestions for contacting leaders in the "Networking Interviews" tool on the CD).
- Some communities have a directory of service organizations, cultural sites, government offices, and elected officials. If your community does not have this, consider working collaboratively with local contacts to create one. Make the directory available to the congregation.
- [Your idea:] _____

Which three ideas seem most exciting, achievable, and attractive to your context?

DIRECTORY OF EXTERNAL MINISTRY PROGRAMS

You may find it helpful to take stock of the ways your church is currently engaged in outreach. A ministry directory provides an organized record of the church's efforts to reach out beyond itself with good news and good works. This information can aid in mobilizing the congregation's participation in external ministry, coordinating current ministry efforts, and expanding the church's scope of involvement.

On the form on the following page, list every ministry program operated, sponsored or supported by the church that primarily serves people outside the congregation. You can also use this form to gather information on ministry initiatives of individual members that are not formally sponsored by the church.

For each program, the inventory form asks you to identify the following:

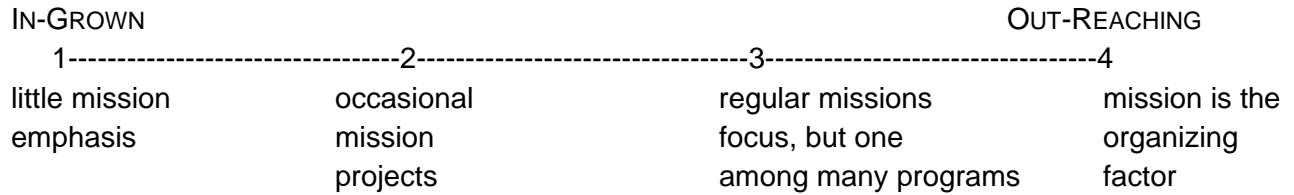
- **Focus:** Indicate briefly where the ministry is focused (e.g., local neighborhood, other community, regional, nation-wide, international), who the ministry serves (e.g., children, single moms, refugees), and/or what cause it supports (e.g., hunger advocacy, missions)
- **Space:** Does the church provide space to the program? Indicate whether the church charges rent or donates the space.
- **Funds/in-kind:** If the church gives money or in-kind donations (e.g. food, clothing) to support the program, indicate how much.
- **Volunteers:** Indicate how many volunteers from the church are involved and whether they work on a regular or as-needed basis.
- **Staff:** If the church is responsible for program administration, give the names of church staff members who work with the program.
- **Pastoral involvement:** Note if a pastor is involved by providing *oversight*, serving on the *board*, doing *hands-on* ministry, or giving time *as-needed*.
- **Ministry partners:** List all of the partners (other churches, nonprofits, denomination, etc.) involved in the ministry and outside sources of funding.
- **Year founded:** The year the ministry started; if the program is a separate nonprofit, also note the year it was incorporated.
- **Contact:** Name and phone / email of the person who leads the ministry. If the ministry is led by someone outside the church, also identify a contact person within the church if possible.

On a separate sheet, provide a short profile of key programs that describes what the ministry does, who it reaches, and what its goals are.

The completed inventory can be shared with church staff and outreach ministry leaders as an aid to ministry coordination and recruitment.

DOES YOUR CHURCH SMELL LIKE MISSION?

How central is the outreach dimension of mission to your church? Does the church "smell" like mission? Consider the diagram and descriptions of each category below.



1. Mission emphasis is so minimal that to speak of outreach feels like teaching people a foreign language. The smell of mission is a rare and rather exotic experience.

2. The church engages in sporadic and short-lived outreach projects, such as collecting food for a local shelter, holding a car wash missions fund-raiser, or inviting neighborhood children to Vacation Bible School. There is no continuity between projects, no sense of how they fit into the church's overall direction. This is mission by occasional "whiffs."

3. Missions is a regular, ongoing program of the church, often with its own committee. Mission exists independently but alongside many other church preoccupations — the choir, the youth group, the softball league. Outreach is delegated as the responsibility of a particular set of members who are specially gifted and called to minister beyond the congregation. The "aroma" of missions may be quite strong in places, but there are so many competing and intermingling smells that the particular fragrance that outreach has to offer is frequently diluted and perhaps even lost altogether.

4. Outreach mission is the central organizing factor in church life. Each person in the church sees it as their task to participate in extending Christ's kingdom to people in the neighborhood and around the globe. A missional dimension is incorporated into the various church roles (greeters, worship leaders, Christian educators). Mission education and motivation is a priority in every area of church life—worship services, the library, the budget—and a strong aroma in the general atmosphere.

Questions for reflection:

- Which number in the continuum (fractions are allowed!) best represents the commitment to outreach mission in your church?
- Has the church's rating changed over its history? What direction is it moving?
- How satisfied are you with this rating? Where would you like the church to be?
- If the congregation seems stuck, what are the most likely reasons for this? (See the tool, "Obstacles to External Ministry.")

Adapted from James R. Krabill, "Does Your Church 'Smell' Like Mission?" *Reflections on Becoming a Missional Church*, MissioDei no. 2. (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Mission Network, 2003), pp. 2-4.

HOW HOLISTIC IS YOUR CHURCH'S OUTREACH?

Holistic ministry means reaching out with the whole gospel to restore whole persons in the context of whole communities (for a more complete definition, see the book *Churches That Make a Difference* by Ron Sider, Phil Olson and Heidi Unruh). Consider the extent to which the following components of holistic mission are in place in your church, and assess the level of commitment for strengthening each component. How might your answers suggest areas for change and growth in your church's outreach?

1. *Program content* that effectively integrates the best insights of social work, community development, education or medicine with opportunities for spiritual transformation and discipleship, including biblical guidance, worship, Christian counseling, and prayer.

a. This characteristic describes our church's outreach ministry ... (circle a number from 1 to 5)

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

b. Developing this characteristic is important to our church ... (circle a number from 1 to 5)

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

2. The teaching of a *holistic worldview* that understands that personal and societal brokenness results from a complex interplay of both sinful personal choices and unjust social structures, and thus seeks wholeness at the spiritual and material / personal and societal levels.

a. This characteristic describes our church's outreach ministry ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

b. Developing this characteristic is important to our church ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

3. *Ministry volunteers* with passion for spiritual and social transformation, love for the congregation and the community, and a desire to represent Christ's love to those they serve.

a. This characteristic describes our church's outreach ministry ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

b. Developing this characteristic is important to our church ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

4. *Ministry staff* who are selected on the basis of character and spiritual maturity as well as professional skills, with a commitment to excellence and to the church's broader mission.

a. This characteristic describes our church's outreach ministry ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

b. Developing this characteristic is important to our church ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

5. *Evangelism training* that prepares staff and volunteers to integrate word and deed in ways that are sensitive, relational, clear, contextually appropriate, and winsome.

a. This characteristic describes our church's outreach ministry ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

b. Developing this characteristic is important to our church ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

6. An emphasis on *prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit*, leading staff and volunteers to pray regularly for the healing of those they serve in every dimension of their lives—spiritual, physical, relational, financial, and psychological.

a. This characteristic describes our church's outreach ministry ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

b. Developing this characteristic is important to our church ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

7. Opportunities for building *relationships* of caring and trust with the people served, as a basis for faith-sharing, mentoring, holistic support services and referrals, and invitations to join a Christian community (whether your own or another church).

a. This characteristic describes our church's outreach ministry ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

b. Developing this characteristic is important to our church ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 119-120.

MINISTRY PRIORITIES AND PATTERNS

The following chart lists possible areas of outreach ministry that a church could emphasize. For each item listed below, there are two questions to answer. First, identify how high a priority this ministry is for your church (what your church thinks it *should* be doing). Then assess the effectiveness (quality and impact) of your church's work in this area, according to what the church is actually doing.

MINISTRY AREA	How MUCH does my church emphasize doing this? This ministry is a ...			How WELL is my church doing this? My church's involvement in his ministry is ...		
	<i>High priority</i>	<i>Medium priority</i>	<i>Low priority</i>	<i>Very Effective</i>	<i>Sort of effective</i>	<i>Not effective</i>
1. Organizing members of the congregation to participate in short-term mission trips.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Helping transform lives through education, support groups, counseling, or spiritual renewal ministries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Promoting social or political change through community organizing or advocacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Modeling an alternative way of life that attracts people to Jesus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Promoting community / economic development programs in the church's neighborhood of ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Welcoming people into the church who are diverse in age, family situation, ethnicity, disability, and/or income.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Sponsoring social service ministries to provide aid to persons in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Taking the gospel to the community through an organized evangelism program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Encouraging members to care for others in their daily lives and in charitable giving.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Forming one-on-one mentoring relationships with people in need of guidance or personal development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Making the church inviting to people who are not yet committed followers of Christ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Cultivating relationship and reconciliation among people from different racial groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Addressing the emergency needs of persons in crisis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Hosting revivals, concerts, or other special events that invite people to salvation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ministry Priorities and Patterns (continued)

15. Partnering with local nonprofits, civic groups and other churches for the betterment of the neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Taking a stand and speaking out on social, political and economic injustices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Coming together to pray regularly for people to experience salvation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Training members to share their faith with friends, neighbors and strangers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Financially supporting mission or aid programs of the denomination or other parachurch agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Incorporating a gospel message into service activities (such as a devotional at a soup kitchen).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Interpreting the tool to learn about your church

Examine the "flavor" and intensity of your church's outreach in these areas: ministry patterns, outreach methodology, and involvement in evangelism.

A. Your church's ministry patterns

Churches express a commitment to external mission in diverse ways. Six key patterns of ministry are listed below, with corresponding item numbers from the chart. If you checked one or both items in any area as high priorities, your church strongly identifies with this ministry theme. If one or both items for a ministry pattern is checked as a low priority, your church might resist moving into this area of ministry. If you do not identify a high priority in any of the ministry areas, this suggests that your church has not developed a commitment to outreach.

1. *Focus on ministries of personal development.* The church emphasizes reforming society by transforming individuals, "one by one from the inside out." Ministries help people overcome barriers to wholeness by developing skills, nurturing behavioral change, or offering relational support.
#2, #10
2. *Focus on ministries of compassion.* The church models God's love through ministries of mercy. Providing goods or services to meet needs—financial, physical, or emotional—helps people to live with dignity and makes the gospel tangible.
#7, #13
3. *Focus on community development.* Social and economic development ministries improve quality of life in the community, nurturing an environment that affirms human dignity. The church helps to break cycles of dependency by creating opportunities for people to become self-sufficient, offering access to assets such as housing or capital, and renewing institutions such as schools.
#5, #15

Ministry Priorities and Patterns (continued)

4. *Focus on justice ministries.* Through advocacy ministries, churches grapple with cultural or structural evils. Churches may work within channels of power, organize to exert pressure for social change, or raise a prophetic voice of protest, witness, and solidarity.
#3, #16
5. *Focus on ministries of reconciliation.* Through the church, God's redemptive power flows to the root of the divisions of race and class in our society, healing scars and creating new patterns. Reconciliation ministries bear fruit in multicultural worship, cross-cultural personal relationships, cross-cultural ministry partnerships, and challenges to entrenched racism in the wider society.
#6, #12
6. *Focus on modeling the gospel.* With a spirit of Christ-like servanthood, the church challenges the community's often cynical perception of Christianity and models a meaningful alternative to our materialistic, me-first, anything-goes culture. The church seeks to become a home to spiritual seekers hungry for authentic justice, compassion, integrity, and love.
#4, #11

Which of these six ministry patterns are the highest priority for your church? Look next at how you assessed your church's effectiveness in each of these areas. Is your church effectively doing what it says is important to its mission? If there a discrepancy between priorities and practice, this may indicate a need for capacity building steps such as training or consulting, program evaluation, community networking, resource development, and member mobilization.

B. Your church's mission methodology

Whatever a church's priorities for outreach, there are three complementary ways the church can promote this mission: 1) by encouraging individual members to care for others and share their faith through their daily lives, in informal, relational ways; 2) by organizing church-sponsored ministry programs; and 3) by taking a collaborative approach, working alongside other organizations to accomplish ministry aims. These three strategies are listed below with corresponding item numbers from the chart.

1. *"Daily life" ministry:* If two or more of these items are a high priority and are effectively practiced in your church, this indicates that your church is strong in encouraging individual members to engage in ministry through their daily lives, in informal, relational ways.
#4, #6, #9, #18
2. *Organized ministry:* If two or more of these items are a high priority and are effectively practiced, this indicates that your church is strong in conducting ministry through organized, church-sponsored programs.
#2, #5, #7, #8
3. *Ministry partnerships:* If two or more of these items are a high priority and are effectively practiced, this indicates that your church is strong in forming partnerships with other entities, with a collaborative approach to ministry.
#3, #12, #15, #19

If your church is strong in only one method, this may indicate that your approach to ministry lacks balance. If none of these strategies is a clear strength, this suggests a weak overall commitment to outreach.

Ministry Priorities and Patterns (continued)

C. Your church's involvement in evangelism

While all of the items in the chart have evangelistic implications, several items relate to overt, explicit evangelism. Consider how you rated the church's priorities and impact for the following six items:

#1, # 8, #14, #17, #18, #20

If three or more of these items are a high priority and are considered effective, your church has a strong commitment to explicit evangelism. If none of the items are considered a high priority, this may indicate that evangelism is not seen as part of your church's mission, and perhaps even meets some resistance.

Using the tool for ministry planning

This tool can also be used to spark ideas for new directions in ministry. For maximum helpfulness as a planning tool, have a representative group of members fill it out, and compare their responses. Ministry items that are assigned a high priority but moderate effectiveness present possible avenues for new initiatives, because the church already agrees that they are important. Conversely, low-priority items reflect areas where you are likely to encounter resistance.

Discuss the results of this survey with a focus group of lay members and church leaders. First, probe agreement on which ministries are having the greatest impact, and what factors account for the church's effectiveness in these areas. How can these success factors be applied to outreach efforts that are less effective?

Additionally, discern which prospective ministry items on the list generate the most energy, and explore what these might look like in the context of your church and community. Drawing on what you have learned about your church's preferred ministry patterns (personal development, compassion, community development, justice, reconciliation, and modeling the gospel) and methods (informal, organized, or partnerships), brainstorm ways to implement these new ideas that are a good fit with existing approaches.

The discussion group can also seek clarity around the priority assigned to different areas of ministry. Is there general agreement on which items are the highest and lowest priority, or is this a matter of tension within the church? On what grounds -- theology, tradition, culture, pragmatism, etc. -- do people draw conclusions about which forms of outreach are most central to the church? Prayerfully consider ways to promote greater consensus around how the church believes it should best serve the community, and how to put this conviction into practice.

MINISTRY SPACE USE ANALYSIS

The following exercise will give you a quick check on how your church property is used and what actions you might take to maximize its effectiveness.

I. Draw a rough diagram of your building — don't worry about measurements or proportions. Indicate all spaces on all floors and don't forget the outdoor space.

II. For each space, fill in a row in the following space usage chart (make copies as needed), indicating:

- Who uses it (e.g., whole congregation, adult Sunday school, AA group, youth group)
- How often (daily, weekly, monthly, or only occasionally)
- Condition — excellent, good, fair, or poor

Space	Who uses?	How often?	Condition

III. Assess your church's use of its space:

- Note who benefits from church space — whether space is used only by members of the congregation, or whether it is also accessible to outside groups.
- Do you have current space limitations — spaces that are overbooked, too small, or not right for their current use? Where?
- Do you have space that is not being used or could be used more? Why is it underutilized? Is the under-use due to a structural or organizational problem that could be addressed?
- What uses could these spaces have if repaired, expanded, made accessible, etc?
- List the specific renovations or improvements that could result in better space usage, particularly to make space available for ministry programs.

Adapted from *Establishing Public Value: A Tool Kit*, a resource for churches seeking to show the value of their buildings and structures as community assets and to identify potential partners and supporters. Available from Partners for Sacred Places, 1700 Sansom Street, 10th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103, 215-567-3234, www.sacredplaces.org.

For a more detailed space inventory chart, see the Church Facilities Assessment Form (Exhibit C.4) in the *Leading Congregational Change Workbook* by James Furr, Mike Bonem, and Jim Herrington (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000)

OBSTACLES TO EXTERNAL MINISTRY

Reflect on what might hold your church back from deepening its commitment to holistic, transformational ministry. Which of the following sound familiar? (Check as many as apply)

- Over-commitment:** "Everyone's already too busy. There's no way we could do more."
- Leadership:** "It's not a high priority on our pastor's 'to-do' list."
- Conflicts:** "Every time someone brings up community outreach, it stirs up trouble in the congregation. We just can't agree on what to do or how to do it."
- Internal needs:** "We've got lots of problems in our congregation that need attention before we can even begin to think about reaching others."
- External resistance:** "The neighborhood will complain if we use the building for service ministry."
- Timidity:** "Most people in our church don't feel comfortable sharing their faith."
- Theology:** "Frankly, we don't believe it's the church's job to do social work."
- Immaturity:** "Our people aren't ready to do ministry — they're still learning the spiritual basics."
- Finances:** "Within two years we will have paid off our debts on the new facility we've built. Then we're going to get serious about outreach ministry."
- Doubt:** "Our congregation is so small, our budget so limited. How could we possibly make a difference?"
- Familiarity:** "We don't really want the church to change. We like everything cozy and comfortable."
- Security:** "Too risky! What if people damage our property, disrupt services, take advantage of us?"
- Far-sightedness:** "We're great at supporting missions overseas, but we ignore our own backyard."
- Ill-Equipped:** "Our members aren't educated about social concerns or trained to share the gospel."
- Isolation:** "Our congregation is so different from the people in the community. We don't know how to build bridges from our church to the neighborhood."
- No Vision:** "We don't have a plan. We just respond to crises or opportunities as they come up."
- Dysfunction:** "We *do* have a missions committee, but it's not very active right now."
- Standards:** "We have an annual food drive, and we invite new people to church. Isn't that enough?"
- Fear:** "We're anxious about getting involved. We'd rather let a few gifted people do the ministry for us."
- Bureaucracy:** "We had a ministry plan in the works—but it was never approved by church council."
- Prejudice:** "Why should we put ourselves out for *those* people? They'll probably never change."
- Discouragement:** "We've already tried and failed. Nothing seems to work for us."

Adapted in part from James R. Krabill, "*Does Your Church 'Smell' Like Mission?*" *Reflections on Becoming a Missional Church*, MissioDei no. 2. (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Mission Network, 2003), pp. 4-5.

OUTREACH MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHEET

This exercise will help your church take inventory of what it has to offer the Lord to use in ministry with the community. The point of this exercise is not to come up with new projects or programs — but rather, to think about ways of building onto what the church already has and does to embrace those beyond the congregation who need Good News. Whether or not your church is currently active in the community, you already have the building blocks for ministry!

I. What does the church have to offer? *(Give two responses for each category)*

1. Material resources of the church that could be used to bless others (e.g. classrooms, van, kitchen)

2. Activities of the church (besides Sunday services) to which unchurched people could be invited (e.g. youth group, women's Bible study, sacred music concert):

3. Skills represented in the congregation that could be used in service to a person or a community (e.g. cooking, accounting, construction, music):

4. Connections the church has with people or institutions who have special influence, skills or resources to offer people in need (e.g. Christian colleges, businesses, hospital chaplains)

II. Who is your church's neighbor? *(Give two responses for each category)*

1. People who need Jesus in their life in a new or deeper way, who might be open to an invitation to participate in a church activity (e.g. neighborhood children, co-workers):

2. People who do not attend the church whom the congregation has helped out in some way over the past year (e.g. with food, emergency funds, hospital visitation, counseling):

3. Service or mission organizations that the church has or could have a connection with (e.g. Habitat for Humanity, World Hope, the local elementary school, crisis pregnancy center):

4. Social concerns that are of deep interest to one or more church members (e.g. affordable housing, education, immigration policy, drug abuse, gambling):

Outreach Ministry Opportunities Worksheet (continued)

III. Ideas for ministry opportunities

1. What are two specific ways that your congregation could use the time, talents or treasures that it already has to bless others (e.g. holding a benefit concert for World Vision, extending counseling services to women at the crisis pregnancy center, going as a Sunday school class to visit an AIDS hospice or clean a local park, youth group sponsorship of a child through Compassion)

2. What are two specific ways that your congregation could include people outside the church who need Good News in the regular activities of church life (e.g. inviting families served by the food pantry to join in your monthly fellowship meal, offering babysitting so that a single mom can join the Women's Bible Study, providing transportation for children at a homeless shelter to attend Vacation Bible School)?

3. What are two specific social concerns that your congregation can learn more about and keep in prayerful awareness (e.g. welfare, domestic abuse, refugees, the environment, at-risk youth)

Choose one or two of these ideas, and decide the best way for your congregation to follow up!

QUALITIES OF HEALTHY MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS

If your church has ministry partnerships (for example, if the church shares its space with a nonprofit agency, participates in a community development coalition, collaborates with the welfare department on a job training program, or works with the local school), assess the extent that they have the following characteristics of healthy partnerships. How could you strengthen your collaborations?

1. *Healthy partnerships share a compatible vision.* While each partner retains its distinct identity, decisions made in the partnership are consistent with the church's ministry vision, and the church is not swayed to do things beyond the scope of its mission.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ... (circle a number from 1 to 5)

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

2. *Healthy partnerships set achievable goals.* Successful partnerships focus on the accomplishment of specific objectives. Celebrating small steps builds motivation to continue taking risks together.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ... (circle a number from 1 to 5)

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

3. *Healthy partnerships are founded on relationships of mutual trust and respect.* Neither partner feels intimidated or overpowered; neither is always on the "receiving" end.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

4. *Healthy partnerships have a sense of ownership on both sides.* The congregation feels connected to the aims of the ministry, takes an interest in the outcomes, upholds the importance of the shared mission, and recognizes that the church's participation matters.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

Qualities of Healthy Ministry Partnerships (continued)

5. *Healthy partnerships have clear communication and accountability.* The partners have an explicit agreement about goals, roles, and standards, and communicate regularly. Maintaining an effective partnership generally requires the efforts of a dedicated coordinator.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

6. *Healthy partnerships do not substitute for the gifts and resources of the congregation.* The partnership is an investment that expands the church's resources for mission, not a crutch for its inadequacies or an excuse for the inactivity of its members. The church continues equipping and mobilizing its people for ministry.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

7. *Healthy partnerships do not hinder the faith or witness of the church.* The partnership does not lead the church to contradict biblical teachings, compromise its values, hide its Christian identity, or secularize its programs outside the collaborative project. The church and its partner agree on guidelines for appropriate religious expression within the scope of partnership activities.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 229-232.

REVIEWING YOUR CHURCH'S EVANGELISM

Are any of the following true of your church's evangelism ministries?

- All your church's evangelism eggs are in one basket (for example, the only targets of witness are people in members' relational networks).
- Your evangelism is either wholly explicit (all words) or wholly implicit (all deeds).
- The church does not practice evangelism that brings members in contact with hurting people (such as service evangelism, or evangelistic events targeted at at-risk youth).
- The church does not practice evangelism that encourages the formation of deeper relationships of witness (e.g., church members distribute flyers in the neighborhood and pray for people, but never get to know any non-Christians personally).
- Evangelism is happening only in official church programs (not in members' daily lives), or else evangelism is happening only individually and spontaneously (not in an organized, planned way).
- A small group of people are responsible for most of the church's evangelism.
- Your church's evangelism methods have not changed in the last ten years.

If two or more boxes are checked, this probably means your church's evangelistic strategy needs to be revised.

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 73-74.

SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS OF SERVICE PROGRAMS

God created people as mind-body-spirit wholes, and thus churches seek to minister to the whole person. Faith-based community service programs can provide spiritual care to beneficiaries in a variety of ways:

Implicit: Faith is largely modeled, rather than expressed verbally; evangelistic materials or religious counseling are available to beneficiaries who seek it out.

Example: Religious literature is placed in the program waiting area; clients are told that the pastor is available to discuss faith issues with them.

Invitational: Beneficiaries are invited to attend optional church services or events at which an evangelistic message is presented.

Example: Women in a welfare-to-work program are invited to join the church's Bible study for single parents; a soup kitchen holds an optional devotional service after a meal.

Relational: Through relationships formed with beneficiaries beyond the structured program activities, staff/volunteers share their faith and provide spiritual care informally, one-on-one.

Example: A server at a soup kitchen offers to pray with a woman who appears distressed; a tutor talks to a student in an after-school program about why he believes in God.

Integrated: The program has an inherently religious character, and staff/volunteers may invite beneficiaries to faith. However, beneficiaries may opt out of explicitly religious activities.

Example: A transitional housing program bases its life skills training on biblical principles, but residents may choose not to attend the morning Bible study and prayer circle.

Mandatory: Spiritual development is at the heart of the program, and full participation is considered essential to the desired social benefit.

Example: A drug rehab program requires daily prayer, Bible study, and corporate worship as integral to the recovery process.

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 104-107.

Questions for reflection:

- Which of these type(s) best characterize the spiritual dynamics of your church's community ministries? Why does the church approach ministry this way?
- Is your current strategy the best fit for your church's mission, or do these types point to other options your church should consider in caring for people's spiritual needs?

TYPES OF EVANGELISM PROGRAMS

Evangelism Type	Nature of relationship with recipient	Nature of evangelistic activity (Examples)		Ministries fitting this type in your church
		Verbal (explicit)	Modeled (implicit)	
Network Evangelism	Natural relational network (friends, family, co-workers, etc.)	<i>share your testimony with a colleague, invite your cousin to church, offer to pray with a neighbor</i>	<i>"lifestyle evangelism": live in such a way that the people who know you will see you are different</i>	
Contact Evangelism	Intentional personal contact for the purpose of evangelism with little or no prior relationship	<i>tract distribution, street witnessing, door-to-door visits</i>	<i>"kindness evangelism": giving out cold water at fairs, free car wash (associated with the church, but no explicit gospel message)</i>	
Service Evangelism	Contact in context of service provision or community development	<i>sermon at a soup kitchen, devotional at youth basketball practice, prayer with a GED student</i>	<i>"service evangelism": Habitat work project, holiday food baskets (associated with the church, but no explicit gospel message)</i>	
Sanctuary Evangelism	Contact in context of regular church activities	<i>evangelistic sermons, altar calls in worship services, gospel presentation at a youth group meeting</i>	<i>"seeker sensitive services": create a church environment that draws people to God, e.g. exuberant worship</i>	
Special Event Evangelism	Contact via a special event to which non-Christians are invited	<i>evangelistic crusade, open-air worship service, drama or concert with a spiritual message</i>	<i>"pre-evangelism": church-sponsored marriage seminar or health fair (associated with the church, but no explicit gospel message)</i>	
Media Evangelism	Contact via broadcast media	<i>sharing the gospel via television, radio, newspaper, or Internet</i>	<i>"pre-evangelism": parenting film series based on a biblical worldview without an explicit call to faith</i>	
Prayer Evangelism	Prayer (with or without recipients' knowledge)	<i>intercessory prayer on behalf of non-Christians</i>	<i>silent prayer-walking through neighborhoods</i>	

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 69-70.

TYPES OF SOCIAL MINISTRY PROGRAMS

Social Ministry Type	Examples		Ministries fitting this type in your church
	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Family</i>	
Relief Services (giving a person a fish)	<i>homeless shelter, emergency housing</i>	<i>family crisis hotline, family services information and referral clearinghouse</i>	
Personal Development (teaching a person to fish)	<i>home ownership seminar, credit counseling</i>	<i>parenting classes, family counseling, divorce recovery support group</i>	
Community Development (giving people fishing equipment)	<i>affordable housing construction and rehabilitation, first-time homeowner program</i>	<i>legal aid clinic that offers family services, partnership with family mediation court</i>	
Systemic Change (helping everyone get fair access to the fish pond)	<i>lobbying for housing subsidies for low-income families, suing slum lords to improve housing conditions</i>	<i>encouraging employers to adopt "family friendly" policies, promoting pro-marriage legislation</i>	

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 87.

TYPOLOGY OF CHURCH MISSION

Good deeds (Gal. 2:10) – Demonstration	External Focus	I Goal: Serving the least Belief: Transforming the community leads to transforming individuals Focus: Grace Actions: Showing	III Goal: Saving the lost <i>and</i> serving the least Belief: We are most effective when we transform individuals <i>and</i> communities Focus: Truth and grace Actions: Showing <i>and</i> telling
	Internal Focus	II Goal: Building up the saints Belief: Good teaching and worship will change and heal people Focus: Teaching truth Actions: Caring for their own	IV Goal: Saving the lost Belief: Transformed people will lead to a transformed society Focus: Truth Actions: Telling
		Internal Focus	External Focus

Good News (Romans 1:15) - Proclamation

I. *Internally focused churches:* These churches are good at preaching and teaching, worship, and serving the needs of those *inside* the church. They excel in pastoral care and building up the saints. People who come to the church hear biblical truth and the message of salvation, and experience healing – but only if they come. The church does not go to them.

II. *Serving churches:* These churches are good at demonstrating love to their communities. They celebrate seeing change in people's lives when the church addresses problems in their life circumstances and social environment. They have been at the forefront of compassion ministry and systemic change, but are weak in proclaiming the gospel.

III. *Externally focused churches:* These churches are effective in proclaiming good news *and* showing love to their communities. They do not see these expressions of faith as an "either/or." The gospel for these churches is both show and tell. They point to Jesus, who was full of both grace and truth. They have a hopeful expectation that this "both" outreach is changing the world.

IV. *Evangelistic churches:* These churches focus on proclaiming good news. They celebrate seeing change in people's lives when people come to Christ. They may reach out by going door to door or sponsoring evangelistic crusades, but they do little or nothing to serve their communities apart from evangelism. For these churches the only way to change communities is by going after the lost.

Questions for reflection:

- Which type best describes your church now? Why does the church approach ministry this way?
- Which type represents your goal for the church, and why?

Adapted from Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson, *The Externally Focused Church* (Loveland, Colo.: Group, 2004), 125-127.

WAYS OF BLENDING EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL OUTREACH

When it comes to how and why churches integrate sharing faith and meeting social needs, there are five basic types of churches.

1. Explicit evangelism is not a part of the church's outreach mission.

"Evangelism is showing God's love through example. We show our faith in God through our kindness to others." (Baptist pastor)

This type of church is committed to serving those in need and advocating for justice in Christ's name, without making an explicit attempt to bring those they serve to Christ. Faith motivates and shapes their outreach, but the focus of their ministry is meeting social needs, not nurturing faith in others. In some cases, their programs may have religious overtones (staff may refer to spirituality or God's love in a general way) without being specifically Christ-centered.

2. Evangelism is valued and practiced, but not in the context of social ministry.

"Social action is a partner of evangelism. As partners the two belong to each other and yet are independent of each other. . . . Each is an end in itself." (John Stott)

This type of church has a dual mission focus, with evangelism and social ministry taking place along separate, parallel tracks. Individual programs focus primarily on one or the other. Social ministries normally do not include overt faith sharing with beneficiaries; evangelism ministries do not meet material needs. Ministries may target different populations: for example, a suburban church may support social ministries in an inner-city neighborhood, while evangelism is focused locally.

3. Evangelism and social ministry are integrated.

"The church has done evangelism and the church has done social ministry--but not always together. We must get excited about the whole gospel to minister to whole persons." (Presbyterian pastor)

In this type, evangelism and social action are inseparable, like the two sides of a coin. Spiritual counseling and faith commitments are encouraged in the context of social ministries. Some ministries have a built-in spiritual dimension (like a tutoring program that begins with a devotional); other programs take a less direct, more informal approach, in which staff/volunteers look for opportunities to initiate a spiritual dialogue with beneficiaries, or invite them to church services where they can hear a religious message. Religious activities may be either required or optional.

4. Little conventional social ministry is present.

"Evangelism starts at the core. Once you change a person's life you can also change their social position." (Church of God, Anderson small group leader)

This type of church expresses its caring for the world's ills through evangelism and discipleship. They seek to transform society by reaching one soul at a time with the gospel, getting at the root of social problems through a process of conversion and discipleship that bears fruit in fundamental life changes. They may provide charitable relief, particularly in conjunction with evangelism, but do not typically engage in ministries of community development or structural change.

5. No significant social action or evangelism is practiced.

This type of church has no active community outreach. The church might sponsor an occasional evangelistic or compassionate ministry activity, but it is not oriented toward the community outside the church. The central focus is internal ministries of worship, fellowship, and discipleship.

Questions for reflection:

- Which type best describes your church now? Why does the church approach ministry this way?
- Which type represents your goal for the church, and why?

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 109-113.