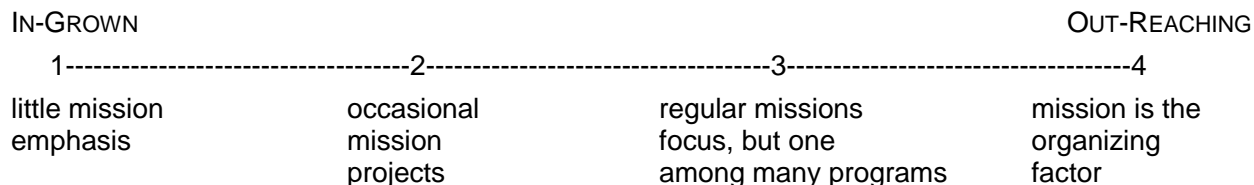


Tool #22: Does Your Church Smell Like Mission?

How committed is your church to reaching across the street and around the world with Good News in word and deed? Does your church "smell" like mission? Consider the scale 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 a 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:

- a. Which number in the continuum (fractions are allowed!) best represents the commitment to outreach mission in your church?
- b. Has the church's rating changed over its history? What direction is it moving?
- c. How satisfied are you with this rating? Where would you like the church to be?
- d. If the congregation seems stuck, what are the most likely reasons for this? (See tool #23, "Obstacles to Holistic Ministry Development.")

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