Speaking Life To A Church In The Process Of Healing And Growth

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Abstract
Problem

Over the past several years, there has been a marked decline in almost every area of the Niles Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church life. Members have reported feeling overwhelmed with discouragement, and overall commitment has dwindled significantly. This poor morale is reflected by the low numbers at prayer meetings, Sabbath services and other church functions. Furthermore, there is difficulty in filling church offices and even when individuals volunteer to serve in specific offices they often later resign or lose their motivation to serve. Church members often appear to look for excuses to leave. There is a deep sense of discontentment.

Method

The Natural Church Development Survey (Schwarz, 2012) was administered to a convenience sample of 30 volunteers who were either members or regular visitors at Niles Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church. Following data collection, a survey response committee was formulated to craft a plan for addressing the minimum factor revealed by the survey data. The survey response committee operated according to the principles of the functional group communication theory and developed a plan which was
presented to the Niles Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church board for acceptance and implementation.

Results

The Natural Church Development Survey identifies eight quality characteristics, as prevalent in every healthy church, with an average score of 50. These characteristics emerged in the Niles Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church sample in the following descending order, based on each score. The highest scoring characteristic was passionate spirituality, with a score of 46. This was followed by gift-based ministry, with a score of 35, inspiring worship service with a score of 27, effective structures, with a score of 24, need-oriented evangelism, with a score of 21, empowering leadership, with a score of 20, holistic small groups, with a score of 16, and loving relationships was the minimum factor with a score of 15.

Overall the church has a lot of room for growth. The survey response committee developed recommendations to address this minimum factor. Already members are becoming hopeful and are encouraged to use their gifts to make our church a place where loving relationships can be experienced regularly.

Conclusions

The eight quality characteristics are scored highly in every growing church and score lowly in dying churches. Administering the Natural Church Development Survey was a good starting point. Momentum is being built in a positive direction and members are seeing that they are the church, therefore solutions must come from the church members. As members interact to improve the minimum factor of loving relationships, a common passion is being fostered and members are developing more faith in God, edifying each other in the process. Members are beginning to open up to each other because in this process they have discovered how much they have in common.

Subject Area

Pastoral theology; Church renewal; Niles Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church (Niles, Mich.)

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Life Church in Newton Aycliffe, UK is the home of Christians Against Poverty, a creative social ministry that started when local Christians came together because they wanted to help people who were struggling to get out of financial debt. They very quickly had a church of over 100 as the people they were helping and building relationships with started asking them about their Christian faith. The Jubilee Church in London has seen a period of rapid growth to more than 1,000 in attendance at the multiplex cinema it takes over on Sunday mornings.

But the senior pastor, Tope Koleoso, says there were years of prayer before the church ever grew. “The first key in our transition to growth was a renewed emphasis on prayer,” he says. Not trusting the process of life. Getting stuck in childhood. Fear of taking in life fully. You will be pleased to hear that it takes far less time for your body to heal and repair the appendix inflammation or appendicitis, than it took for this condition to begin in the first places. Chances are you had been feeling negative emotions for a long time before being diagnosed? Sometimes we numb ourselves from feeling emotions, to the point where we get comfortable with feeling bad.