



Assessing Church Needs



CONGREGATION & VISITORS



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ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Leaders Guide

How to use “Assessing Church Needs” by BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS in your regularly scheduled meetings.

Welcome to BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS: Your Complete Guide to Leadership Training. You’ve purchased an innovative resource that will help you develop leaders who can think strategically and biblically about the church. Selected by the editors of Leadership Media Group and Christianity Today, the material comes from respected thinkers and church leaders.

BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS is not just another program. Each theme contains materials on the topic you choose—no tedious program to follow. The materials work when you want, where you want, and the way you want. It’s completely flexible and easy to use.

You probably already have regularly scheduled meetings with board members or with other committees or groups of leaders or volunteers. BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS fits easily into what you’re already doing. Here’s how to use BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS at the beginning of a board meeting or committee meeting:

1. Select a learning tool. In this download on “Assessing Church Needs,” you’ll find multiple types of handouts from which to choose:

- ♦ interview
- ♦ assessment tools
- ♦ case studies
- ♦ how-to articles

2. Select a handout. You could select one of the assessments in this theme: “Do We Have Too Many Meetings?” (p. 5) or “Signs of a Tight Ship” (p. 6). From these options, select the one that best fits what you want to accomplish.

3. Photocopy the handout. Let’s say you selected “Do We Have Too Many Meetings?” Photocopy as many copies as you need—you do not need to ask for permission to photocopy any material from BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS (as long as you are using the material in a church or educational setting and are not charging for it).

4. Prepare for the discussion. We recommend you read the Scripture passages and identify key discussion questions.

5. Lead the discussion. Each handout can be read within 5 minutes. After you have allowed time for reading, begin the discussion by asking one of the provided questions. Be ready to move the discussion to specific leadership issues your church is facing.

Each BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS handout can be discussed in 15 or 20 minutes. Your board, committee, or team will still have plenty of time to discuss its agenda.

Need more material, or something on a specific topic? See our website at www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

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ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Calling Plays the Players Can Run

How to create objectives that build on your church's strengths.

1 Peter 4:10

In this interview, veteran church consultant Kennon Callahan, author of Twelve Keys to an Effective Church, discusses how a church can begin assessing its needs and laying a track for future growth.

How can a church move ahead?

The wise coach never sends in plays the players cannot run. Churches need to match their objectives with their team.

The art of helping a church move ahead is to build the key objectives on the strengths a congregation presently has. The church that denies its strengths, denies God's gifts. The church that claims its strengths claims God's gifts.

How important is it for a church to state its priorities?

First, I use the term *objectives* more than *priorities*. Priorities can be vague. Objectives are specific and measurable, concrete and achievable.

Second, every church has objectives. The key questions are: Does the church know what its objectives are? And do these objectives help the church do what God calls it to do?

What happens when churches develop explicit objectives?

They make it easier to find the right leadership. One church I consulted had excellent leaders and an excellent pastor. The pastor's strengths lay in developing and maintaining competent programs and activities. In every church he had served, he had built strong programs.

Yet this church longed for a pastor who would be a good shepherd, practice pastoral care, and train lay people to visit. They also wanted more dynamic worship and preaching.

The pastor kept saying, "What we should be emphasizing is our church's programs."

The congregation kept saying, "We do that well enough. What we want is a good shepherd and a good preacher."

How do churches lose a clear vision?

In three primary ways. First, the pastor and key leaders get caught up in the "should syndrome." They decide the congregation should, must, ought to do this or that.

Second, pastors and key leaders are tempted to universalize programs: if an idea worked well in one church, they assume it will work in theirs.

Third, people sometimes grasp for a straw in the wind, some idea or program that will transform the church, what I call "a short-term, quick-closure, highly visible, immediate-satisfaction achievement." ➤

Calling Plays the Players Can Run *continued*

How do

you approach churches whose objectives don't match their competencies?

The temptation in working with churches is to think that someone—the pastor, the board, or the church itself—is simply incompetent. I begin with the assumption that there's no such thing as an incompetent person or church; there is sometimes a mismatch of competencies.

I hope the pastor and church will work in areas in which they're competent, and to “build forward” on these strengths.

Do most churches aim for too much or too little?

More often than not, churches have too many objectives. Ironically, such churches accomplish little.

Have you seen a church break that pattern?

The key is progress, not perfection. The three good friends are progress, pace, and prayer. It sometimes takes a church twenty years to get itself into a predicament. It may take more than two years to move beyond it!

When a church focuses on progress, not perfection, it sets a few objectives that are realistic and achievable. That creates action not postponement: “Yes, we can achieve that.”

That action creates satisfaction not depression: “Our lives do count for God's mission.” And satisfaction creates not dependency but growth and development, not in numbers in the church but in the congregation's sense that they are maturing in God's mission.

How does a church determine which goals and objectives are the most important?

First, find the objectives that build the competence and confidence of the congregation.

Second, expand strength first. Take a current strength that is, on a scale of one to ten, an eight. Advance and improve that to a nine or a ten. Build on your strengths. Do better what you do best. That means, naturally, you will want to be at peace about some weaknesses, at least for the time being.

Third, the four questions I encourage churches to give up for Lent are: What are our problems? What are our needs? What are our concerns? What are our weaknesses and shortcomings? When you begin with your weaknesses, you're in the weakest position to tackle them.

Fourth, add complementary objectives.

How should churches think of themselves as they begin the planning process?

As a mission. The purpose of planning is action in mission. The ultimate goal of planning is to help people with their lives and destinies, whether or not they ever join this particular congregation. We're not trying to grow an institution; we're trying to grow a mission, no matter our size.

What's the biggest misconception about long-range planning?

That the job is to figure out what the congregation should be doing three years from now. No. We plan long range to know what to achieve today, this week, this month.

—KENNON CALLAHAN is a former pastor and professor and author of *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*.

Discuss

1. Do we know what our objectives have been for the past year? What are they?
2. What is our biggest strength? What is one thing we do better than most other churches?
3. What is one objective for next year that can build on our biggest strength?
4. How would thinking of our church as a mission change our focus?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Do We Have Too Many Meetings?

Questions to assess our church calendar.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Many church leaders feel overwhelmed with the number of meetings, especially those at night. How can leaders gauge whether the number of meetings are healthy for them and the church? There are no easy formulas. The size of the church and staff, your geographic location, and the church's goals must all be factored into the decision. There are, however, some telling questions:

1. Are church meetings preventing us from reaching the lost? Churches that evangelize primarily through services and activities will find such a question irrelevant, but churches that reach out through members need to allow time for them to make contacts and cultivate friendships with unbelievers. A church calendar filled with meetings can interfere with the Great Commission.

In a football game, huddles are designed to call the play; without the play, the huddle is absurd. Huddles are cozy. Running the play is risky. Sometimes I picture Christ in a black-and-white striped shirt with a silver whistle in his mouth, ready to call a penalty for too much time in the huddle.

2. Are church meetings interfering with family unity? The verbs in Moses' provocative speech to Israel's families remind me that it takes large chunks of time to grow a family. Parents were commanded to teach and talk to their children "when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7). These verbs convince me God is unhappy with the absenteeism that prevails in too many homes.

Often, I confess, my home is only a stop-off place between meetings, where I grab a bite to eat, change clothes, and catch some sleep. God says, "Sit with your family; walk with your family; be there to tuck them in and be there when they get up in the morning." Meetings must become the servants to that mandate, not the other way around.

3. Are church meetings negatively affecting my physical, emotional, and spiritual health?

Every church leader can relate to being a source of refreshment or flatness. Our congregations are better refreshed by having their leaders twice a week in an enthusiastic state than five times in stagnation.

—PAUL CAMINITI is a former pastor and is currently the Vice President of Bible Engagement at Biblica.

Discuss

1. How many nights per week do we expect leaders to spend in church meetings or projects?
2. When recruiting people for service, how do we communicate the commitment required for the position: "It won't take much of your time" or "This commitment is time-consuming, so you'd better make sure it is something you feel called to do"? Which is better for us? Why?
3. How can we make sure every meeting has a clear agenda and purpose?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Signs of a Healthy Church

A checklist to measure our church's system.

Romans 12:8

There are many ways to determine if your church has healthy structures for management and administration. Here are six:

1. A clearly defined purpose. There ought to be no mystery, no guesswork, about why a particular church body exists. Is it to be a loving Christian presence in a dark corner of the city? Is it to present the claims of Christ to Nonchurched Harrys and Marys? The specific purpose of the church ought to be spelled out. The life of a church will be only as directed as its purpose, only as orderly as its philosophy and strategy.

2. A widely understood purpose. In a well-managed church, both the staff and congregation can articulate its purpose. Often the purpose statement has been reduced to a single sentence or a brief and memorable list.

3. Servants who understand their unique contribution. In a well-run church, the individual players—the pastor, staff, elders and deacons, small-group leaders, and members—know their roles in making the church's purpose a reality.

If the worship leader doesn't know how much time he's allotted in the service, or if the youth minister doesn't know what activities she's expected to plan, or if the ushers aren't informed of special events, there will be disarray. In the well-managed church, these players not only know the overall purpose, they also know exactly what they can do to contribute to the goal.

4. A strategy that works. Good management proposes, tries, refines, rethinks, scraps, and starts over—whatever it takes to hit upon a strategy that bears fruit. Unless there is objective proof that the purpose is being fulfilled, the effective church leader remains dissatisfied with any strategy.

5. Financial integrity. Since money is a major player in most church activities, the way it is raised, recorded, expended, and accounted for says much about the management of the church. But when a church runs a tight financial ship, even amid healthy challenges, I know it's well managed.

6. A well-cared-for "Main Street." Another sign of good management is a neat, clean, and attractive facility, especially those areas people pass through on Sunday morning—Main Street. Main Street is the corridor from our entrance sign on the road, through our parking area, entrance, lobby, and main hall, to our auditorium. It's the portion of our facilities everybody—and especially visitors—will traverse on Sunday. We give the same attention a host gives the front steps, living room, dining room, and bathroom prior to entertaining.

—DON COUSINS is lead pastor of Discovery Church in Orlando, Florida.

Discuss

1. Can we state our mission as a church as succinctly as possible? How well do people know it?
2. How does our mission statement shape our ministry strategy?
3. How well do our leaders understand their role in the mission of our church?
4. Which part of our facility is our "Main Street"? What is one thing we can do to make it more attractive?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Determining Ministry Needs

Maximize resources by answering these questions.

Proverbs 24:27

It seems no ministry ever has enough volunteers, gifted lay leaders, or staff. We are forced to determine priorities in light of limited financial and human resources. Four questions can help us make the most of what we have:

1. What are we doing well? Churches, like people, have a unique set of strengths and gifts to offer the kingdom. It is important, as experts stress, to focus on our strengths as a congregation rather than our weaknesses.

The natural tendency, however, is to focus on our church's weaknesses, since those are readily drawn to our attention. But a focus on weaknesses may undermine our ability to develop excellence in the areas we already do well.

Since no church can do everything well, we are wise to concentrate our limited resources on those things God has enabled us to do well.

2. What are our potentially fatal flaws? If stressing general weaknesses is counterproductive, ignoring *certain* weaknesses can be fatal.

A "fatal flaw" is a ministry deficiency that either drives people away from our church or keeps significant numbers from coming in the first place. For example, if a church has no one who can carry a tune, the poor quality of music may make people feel uncomfortable with its worship.

3. Whom are we reaching? Every church has a personality that can be seen in the profile of the average attendee. While not everyone fits into this profile, the majority do. Whatever the profile, a church will have more success reaching those closest to its profile. Those who don't fit the profile can still be reached, but, more often than not, they'll end up settling at the church down the street where they can find more people like themselves.

It's best to focus on reaching those we are best equipped to disciple over the years.

4. Who else is already doing it? If another church has a fantastic Christian school, a thriving midweek children's ministry, or a successful seniors program, why not encourage people with those needs and interests to become involved in those programs?

That frees us to do what we do best, and it strengthens, rather than undercuts, the ministry of other churches. If a ministry is not vital to our church's health, we can leave it to those God has gifted to do the job well.

—LARRY W. OSBORNE is Senior Pastor and Teaching Pastor at North Coast Church in Vista, California, and is author of *The Unity Factor: Developing a Healthy Church Leadership Team*.

To Discuss

1. What is the profile of the typical newcomer to our church?
2. Is focusing on reaching people who fit a certain profile compatible with biblical teachings? Why or why not?
3. What programs of surrounding churches are we duplicating? Do any of our programs unnecessarily compete with those of other churches?
4. What new programs can we develop to build on our strengths?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Lemons into Lemonade*Sometimes progress requires failure.*

Exodus 13:21-22

The Case “It’s only a 20-minute drive,” the board chairman said. Our building committee was crammed in a van for yet another Saturday safari in search of a new church location. With no ready options in our community, we wondered if our landlocked church should relocate to a community further away. Our church desperately needed more space.

Later, while on a retreat, our leadership agonized about relocating but decided our church needed to remain in the community. But we still had no land. Then our board chairman produced a letter from a church in the area with whom we had a close relationship. The church wanted ours to merge with it and its daughter church. The deal had the potential to create one church with almost three times our current Sunday morning attendance.

One elder said, “This seems like an answer to prayer.”

What Would You Do?

- ♦ What makes the merger so attractive?
- ♦ Would combining the churches create one with a combined attendance of the three—or would other dynamics cause attendance to drop?
- ♦ What are the downsides of a merger?
- ♦ What other options might this church discuss?

What Happened

The three churches danced together for a year and half, forming committees to study four major areas and create a proposal. Together the churches rented a gym one Sunday evening to hold a praise service and present the proposal, which covered doctrine, denomination, structure, facility, membership, and staffing. A month later, each church held a business meeting to vote on an identical motion. Each overwhelmingly defeated it.

While I thought our leaders would be discouraged, they were strangely invigorated. The 18-month process helped us discover more about ourselves as a church than we ever knew. We uncovered what was important to our church and identified our strengths. We gained a better understanding of our unique contribution to the kingdom.

As a result, over a period of about three years, we completely reorganized our structure and philosophy of ministry around a specific purpose. And we eventually found land to build. At the dedication of our building, one young leader said, “This could have never happened without that merger fiasco.”

—JOHN BEUKEMA is senior pastor at Cypress Bible Church in Houston, Texas.

Discuss

1. How do church leaders discern God’s will in assessing the church’s future?
2. How does God lead through circumstances?
3. Do we make decisions with our mission in mind? If not, on what do we base decisions?

What's Our Emphasis?

Helping a church build momentum for change.

John 15:1-8

The Case Oakwood Covenant hadn't grown for more than ten years. The church didn't have any specific crises or money problems, but a few leaders realized the church was adrift; people who seemed eager to do something often left the church for another. There had been no new ministry initiatives in years. Oakwood Covenant had also a congregational form of government, so new ministry emphases required the vote of the congregation.

When the new pastor came, he wanted to help the motivated leaders develop a vision and sense of mission but knew that wouldn't be easy. The church had gone through a series of short-term pastorates and had little tolerance for new ideas.

A few leaders wondered, *How do we create momentum for change?*

What Would You Do?

- ♦ If you were part of the church leadership, how would you begin the process?
- ♦ What's the first step in getting a church to think more strategically?
- ♦ What are the sure ways to fail?

What Happened The leaders developed a survey for selected people in the church, to find out what they believed should be the church's key emphases. Not every member was contacted—only those who were deeply involved in the various ministries of the church. Each deacon was assigned to meet with several families, to explain the questionnaire, and to wait while the family (the parents and, if any, teenagers) completed the survey.

The questionnaires began with this statement: "Select what you think should be the eight key emphases of Oakwood Covenant for the coming year." There were forty choices, which included "stronger church fellowship," "more vital worship," and "better parking facilities."

The survey results were surprising; the top choice was "a stronger witnessing program." The leaders published the results as well as an update on what the church was already doing in several areas that people thought should be emphasized. The process helped the church begin the journey of thinking in terms of mission. And the personal way the survey was conducted helped defuse unnecessary conflict.

—DANIEL PAWLEY is associate professor of Communication Studies at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, California.

Discuss

1. What forces work against change in a congregation?
2. How has our church handled change in the past? Are key leaders, official and unofficial, informed about the process?
3. What procedures do we have in place when the inevitable conflict over change results?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

The Success of Failure

How weakness can turn into strength.

Luke 22:60-62

Read *The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly (Luke 22: 60-62).*

Comprehend Among the apostles, the one absolutely stunning success was Judas, and the one thoroughly groveling failure was Peter.

Judas was a success in the ways that most impress us: he was successful both financially and politically. He cleverly arranged to control the money of the apostolic band; he skillfully manipulated the political forces of the day to accomplish his goal.

Peter was a failure in ways that we most dread: he was impotent in a crisis and socially inept. At the arrest of Jesus, he collapsed, a hapless, blustering coward; in the most critical situations of his life with Jesus, the confession on the road to Caesarea Philippi and the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration, he said the most embarrassingly inappropriate things. He was not the companion we would want with us in time of danger, and he was not the kind of person we would feel comfortable with at a social occasion.

Time, of course, has reversed our judgments on the two men. Judas is now a byword for betrayal, and Peter is one of the most honored names in church and world. Judas is a villain, Peter is a saint. Yet the world continues to chase after the successes of Judas, financial wealth and political power, and to defend itself against the failures of Peter, impotence and ineptness.

—EUGENE PETERSON is a pastor, scholar, and author of over 30 books.
From *Traveling Light* by Eugene Peterson (Helmets & Howard Publishers). Used by permission.

Discuss

1. Does our church in any way subtly reward outward success?
2. What would it mean for our church to be known as a church where it's okay to fail?
3. What role does God's grace play in failure?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Wise to the Times

The key to taking risks is understanding your local community.

1 Chronicles 12:23, 32

Read *These are the numbers of the men armed for battle who came to David at Hebron to turn Saul's kingdom over to him, as the Lord had said:....men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command (1 Chron. 12:23, 32).*

Comprehend The last 50 years have seen breathtaking change and extraordinary volatility.

Compare our generation to the Hebrew generation 1000 years before Christ. That was a time of transition, too. King Saul was on his way out, and King David was on his way in. But the changeover was painful. Their world was at war. On the home front, there was civil war between those loyal to David and those following the army of Saul. On an international scale, they were battling the neighboring nation of Philistia.

First Chronicles 12 lists those who deserted Saul and joined David. This included the “men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (12:32). They numbered only 200, but they attempted to understand the times and make a difference.

Today, there are modern men and women of Issachar. They look at both the past and the present to determine action for the future.

The danger lies in thinking we can predict the future from the past. For example, in 1950 *Fortune* magazine asked 11 distinguished Americans to predict what life would be like in 1980. In those days the United States enjoyed a trade surplus of \$3,000,000,000, so no one predicted a trade deficit 30 years later. David Sarnoff, chairman of RCA, was sure that by 1980 ships, airplanes, locomotives, and even individual automobiles would be atomically fueled. He said that homes would have atomic generators and that guided missiles would transport mail and other freight over great distances. Henry R. Luce, editor-in-chief of *Time* magazine, predicted the end of poverty by 1980. Mathematician John von Neumann expected energy to be free 30 years later.

The prognosticators were all wrong. They assumed the future would be like the present, only more so.

All of this means that we must always strike a balance between risk and reason. We must take the risk of anticipating the future by understanding the time, but we must also avoid the unfounded assumption that tomorrow will be like today.

—LEITH ANDERSON is the President of the National Association of Evangelicals and former senior pastor of Wooddale Church, in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.
From Dying for Change by Leith Anderson (Bethany, 1990). Used with permission.

- Discuss**
1. What are a few of the changes to our community in the past 15 years?
 2. How is our church responding to these changes?
 3. In what ways does our church act as if tomorrow will be like today?
 4. In what ways does our church take calculated risks?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Called to What?

Getting specific about our church's future.

Matthew 15:21-24

Every leader struggles with the questions: What should our church do? How should the biblical purposes for a church take shape in our setting?

1. Concentrate on limited-range planning. Long-range planning is appropriate in a stable environment. But the culture is changing so rapidly that ten-year planning doesn't make much sense. One church consultant said, "Churches should have a sense of where they'd like to be in ten years, but detailed plans shouldn't extend beyond three to five years."

2. Assess congregational character. People in the pew may not be able to articulate the church's goals, but they can probably describe its strengths. When working with a congregation to determine objectives, this is a good place to start: making explicit what people feel implicitly. Before setting goals, it helps to identify the church's personality—rigid or free, relaxed or energetic.

3. Deal with demographics. "You have to know the people you want to reach," said Leith Anderson, when he was pastor of Wooddale Church near Minneapolis. "We're in a metropolitan, high-tech area with lots of singles, young couples, and well-educated people. That's who attends here, and that's whom we minister to most effectively. We decided to go with our strengths."

Today denominational loyalty is much lower among people born after 1950, and for a significant number, denominational labels are a stumbling block. As a result, Wooddale Baptist, while maintaining its denominational affiliation, decided to be known simply as Wooddale Church.

4. Avoid opportunity overload. Usually spotting needs isn't the problem; the danger is opportunity overload. When so many needs emerge, there seem to be two different ways of responding: meeting whatever needs you can or strategically planning the use of resources.

The strategic-planning approach tries to coordinate church ministries to enhance one another. A church may have the resources to pursue several opportunities, but not all at once. A plan that decides to emphasize youth evangelism and a summer-camping ministry may be stronger than one that focuses on an aggressive youth program and a ministry to senior citizens.

5. Check out what others are doing. Seeing what others in the neighborhood are doing is helpful, not to play "monkey see, monkey do," but to see what's not being done. Checking out the neighborhood also lets you know where to refer people.

6. Take your statement of purpose seriously. Is a statement of purpose worth haggling over? It can be. A good statement of purpose not only clarifies what the church does, it sets boundaries. It defines what the church will not do. It helps limit expectations.

—MARSHALL SHELLEY is editor-in-chief of *Leadership Journal* and editorial vice-president of Christianity Today.

Discuss

1. What strengths and opportunities do we possess?
2. What needs and expectations are present in our church and community?
3. Based on our unique calling as a church, what is one ministry we won't do?

ASSESSING CHURCH NEEDS

Strategic Planning Made Simple

The first step toward thinking about next year.

Isaiah 32:8; Matthew 28:19-20

These four steps helped our board think about how we could better fulfill the Great Commission.

Step 1: Assessment. We had to discover where we were. Each person was given a stack of 3x5 cards and asked to evaluate our church: five strengths, five weaknesses, and five opportunities for growth or ministry. Each person shared his list with the group, and one person wrote them on the board.

Some of the strengths: nice building, family atmosphere, and committed people.

Some of the weaknesses: lack of finances, poor communication network, and a dwindling youth program.

Opportunities: an increasing number of young couples in our community, ministry to the aged, and reaching out to youth.

We then tried to set priorities in each list. Each person looked at the master list we'd created, and on a separate card listed the five top strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Each person then read his or her list, and we kept a tally of each topic. By this simple math, we determined the consensus strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Step 2: Vision. The second question: Where do we want to be? We began to dream about what we wanted to see happen in the next year. The point was to take a couple of strengths and build on them, take a couple of weaknesses and improve them, and take a couple of opportunities and seize them.

Ideas ranged from wanting to see more growth to rebuilding our youth program. Again we established priorities for these desires.

Step 3: Setting objectives. If we know where we want to go, how do we get there? It is fun and exciting to dream and come up with a shared vision; it is another thing to think specifically and practically about how to achieve that.

We tackled this step in two phases. Based on our newly stated vision, we created four major categories: finance, outreach, fellowship, and youth. Then under each category, we brainstormed specific things we could do to reach the goals in that area.

We could have just copied our ideas from other churches doing similar things. But by going through the process, the entire board decided the ideas were important based on the direction we wanted to go.

Step 4: Taking responsibility. If we really had arrived at a consensus of vision and objectives for the year, members of the board should have been ready to take oversight of the areas. They were. In a short time, each area was covered by a leader ready to see that the area goal was reached.

—MICHAEL R. BAER is the founder and Executive Director of International Micro Enterprise Development (IMED), a humanitarian aid organization that launches small businesses among the poor and disenfranchised in the developing world.

To Discuss

1. What might cause our assessment to differ from the Lord's assessment of our church?
2. In the past, have we tended to tackle too large or too small a vision?
3. Why is it difficult to set specific objectives? How can we work on those challenges?