

# Vision 2020

Southwood's bold vision for the next decade

Annual Congregational Meeting  
March 20, 2011

Southwood  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**JOIN US FOR COMMUNITY Q & A  
IN THE SANCTUARY**

**Sunday - March 20 from 5-7pm**

**Wednesday - March 23 from 6-8pm**

*Nursery will be provided*

# Vision 2020

## SOUTHWOOD'S BOLD VISION FOR THE NEXT DECADE

### 10,000 FOOT VIEW: F-O-C-U-S

As the Session recently gathered to look forward toward the future of Southwood, we began by looking back. We considered our first decade together and saw 'discipleship' as a theme under Barney's leadership. Looking back at the most recent ten years, we saw how Mike had challenged us to become more 'missional'. We then considered the future. We had spent the 18 months prior to Jean's arrival (July 2010) praying, planning and dreaming of what the future might hold and the many opportunities that lay before us. In September of 2010, we gathered with about 50 people including members of the pastoral search committee, the Diaconate, staff and congregation at large to dream together about how God might continue to use Southwood with her particular gifts. That meeting provided insights, but a shared vision for the future was not determined.

Our annual Session retreat was held at the end of this February. In the months that led up to that meeting we prayed, planned and considered what that shared vision might be. As you will remember, many of you encouraged us during the interim period to hold any future plans in an open hand in order that God might allow us to dream together with our new Senior Pastor when God provided him. We did just that and God has answered our prayers for unity and for vision. We are of one accord and see clearly where God is calling us. Before going any further please know how excited we are to tell you that we are unanimous in our resolve!

We see our church poised before a monumental opportunity: to advance the Kingdom of God by serving as a Gospel-resource for Huntsville and beyond. We believe that in order to get there we will need unwavering F-O-C-U-S. We must focus on our strengths, focus on the development of our unique resources and ultimately focus on God who can do more than we could even dream. The Session has unanimously endorsed a bold vision for the next decade and beyond. We will focus on who we are as a large resource church and focus on the core competencies with which God has blessed us. That may not seem very bold or visionary at first glance, but as you read through the implications of this vision we hope you will be encouraged. We believe that this is precisely who we are and this is what we need at this season in the life of Southwood.

Defining terms is helpful here. You will hear the words **large**, **resource** and **church** used to describe Southwood as we move forward. They mean precisely what you would imagine. We are a large church. Southwood is in the largest 2% of all churches

in the Presbyterian Church in America. We believe that church size is morally neutral. Every church, regardless of size, will have strengths and weaknesses associated with that size. **We are a large**, growing church and we are acknowledging and embracing that reality. We are a **resource church**. We provide leadership and strategic partnerships at the present time in many local, regional and national arenas. We see ourselves poised to do much more in the future by way of curriculum development, leadership training, internships and benevolent giving. We are a **church**. Southwood is the Bride of Jesus, rescued by and resting in the grace of God. Southwood, the church, is not a building. It is the grace-gathered group of sinners who meet at a building whose address happens to be on Carl T. Jones Drive in Huntsville, Alabama.

### GROWING PAINS

One of the resources that the Session has found most helpful in understanding our identity as a large church is the pastoral paper written by Dr. Tim Keller of Redeemer (PCA) in New York City called, "Leadership and Church Size Dynamics". The Session is inviting all members to download and read Dr. Keller's paper from our Senior Pastor's blog [www.southwood.org/knots](http://www.southwood.org/knots). The general principles in this paper have been considered for years by our leadership, were endorsed by the Session during the pastoral search process and most recently re-affirmed at our retreat in February. This paper is an excellent resource that helps to make sense of the different dynamics between smaller and larger churches.

One of the primary differences that comes with large church dynamics has to do with the expectations congregation members may have for the roles and responsibilities of leaders. For instance, leadership decisions in a small church can often be driven by the consensus of the whole. In a larger church however, decisions must be made by the governing body for the whole. In this paradigm congregation members must more consciously embrace their membership vows to 'submit to the government and discipline of the church' and more intentionally and actively work toward its 'purity and peace.' This shift can be somewhat unsettling for individuals who may be accustomed to seeing their personal preferences endorsed as corporate policy. In many ways Southwood has and may continue to have some 'growing pains' in this area. As one elder described it, "Southwood has been a large 'small' church for quite some time." Even our acknowledgment of this reality is a sign of

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health and growth, but we should also be aware that we may have some growing still to do in this area.

These growing pains are also felt when we look at the expectations we may have for our Senior Pastor. The gifts needed to lead a large church are quite specific. Leadership and preaching were the two core competencies that we were continually encouraged to look for. Consequently, our search committee prayed for and sought after a man whose greatest strengths were in preaching and leadership, not necessarily in pastoral care. They actively pursued a man who could preach and lead in a pastoral way, but they were not looking for one who would serve as a congregational chaplain. We believe that God has provided precisely what we prayed for in Jean Larroux! As such, by giftedness and by design, we have directed Jean that his primary calling and service to us at Southwood is to pastor us corporately and congregationally through leadership, preaching and teaching, not through individual and personal pastoral care. The Session, having wrestled with and resolved this issue, now stands firmly committed to helping ensure that Jean is supported and affirmed in this regard.



## THE “NEW” VISION AND MISSION IS ACTUALLY OLD

For years Southwood has longed to advance the Kingdom of God by turning everyone we meet into fully devoted followers of Christ. After examining what it means to “turn everyone we meet into fully devoted followers of Christ,” we decided to make our Mission clearer. Based on our gifts, abilities and callings, what we do to advance the Kingdom of God is to personally experience grace and then express that grace to others.

### Why does the church exist?

Our Vision is to *Advance the Kingdom of God*

→ **What do we do to advance the Kingdom of God?**

Our Mission is to *Experience and Express Grace!*

→ **Where will we Experience and Express Grace?**

In 3 Environments: *Sunday, Small Groups and Serving*

→ **How will we Serve as Southwood ‘gathered’?**

*Student Ministries, Shepherding, Community Development*

## GROW AND GO!

So, as a large resource church who is seeking to be self-aware of her size dynamics, focused on her grace-driven theological sensibilities and convinced that God has placed her in this community for this community, what do you do next? You GROW and you GO! We are pursuing a strategic plan that will embrace a complete build-out of the existing Carl T. Jones property with facilities adequate for a congregation of up to 4,500 members. This will include new sanctuary space (seating for approximately 1,500 people per service), parking, ministry & teaching spaces as well as expansion of the Lodge. This will require a multi-million dollar capital campaign, unwavering focus, potential property acquisition and the continued blessing of God. We are convinced that wherever God calls He will provide. This is an exciting time! While our vision and sense of calling are clear, the exact plan to accomplish the vision will require circumspect planning and due diligence. Speculation on the pace, exact cost or other particulars would not be helpful or accurate at this juncture.

As part of previous strategic planning we had considered a future strategy that was more ‘church planting’ oriented. Will we still plant churches? Yes, that’s the GO part! It would be fair to say that our participation in church planting in the near future will be primarily as a resource church and a major donor, not as a mother church. Candidly, our health, our mission and our leadership resources must be cultivated more deeply prior to considering ourselves to be a church that could duplicate itself in a way beneficial to either a daughter church or Southwood.

## WHAT TYPE OF CHANGE DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME TODAY?

Wheels have been put in motion for our long-range planning committee to crystalize this long-range vision into a specific long-range plan. We do however have some specifics regarding our very near-term future (goals for September 2011). We will be adding an additional Sunday morning service and an additional hour of Christian Education. The new worship/Christian Education times will be as follows:

- 8:00 - 9:00am** . . . . . Worship
- 9:30 - 10:30am** . . . . . Worship w/ Christian Education
- 11:00 - Noon** . . . . . Worship w/ Christian Education

## SUNDAY MORNING HIGHLIGHTS

Christian Education excellence is a priority for Southwood moving forward. Adult classes will be topically arranged in 5 ‘Sunday Seminars’:

- 100 Series** . . . . . Essentials (New members, Communicants, Southwood 101, etc.)
- 200 Series** . . . . . Biblical Theology (O.T./N.T. Survey, Books of the Bible, Character studies)
- 300 Series** . . . . . Systematic Theology (Election, Westminster Confession, Theological topics)
- 400 Series** . . . . . Practical Theology (Prayer, Marriage, Parenting, Community Development)
- 500 Series** . . . . . Leadership Level (special training, teacher training, officer training)

All class rolls will be populated based on attendee preference by topic. Affinity-based classes will no longer be offered. Our sincere desire is to see adults of all ages learning together of the grace that was expressed to us from our Father so that we can in turn express it to those we encounter. Our goal is that we would continue to be a ‘missional’, ‘outward-facing’ church that looks beyond ourselves to a broader participation of members and guests in our programs. Affinity-based small groups will be encouraged and facilitated through our Small Group Ministry. We are also developing technology changes to the Southwood Tower to allow specific groups to stay connected electronically. As you can see from the above chart, Sunday Morning Adult Education classes will be referred to as ‘Sunday Seminars’ to reflect the reality of their structure. Children’s Sunday School will continue as usual with the addition of the second hour of parallel teaching material.

All the details of this transition (classroom locations, potential suspension of classes for a season to allow for construction, new demands placed on teachers, etc.) have not been ironed out yet, but the Long Range Planning Committee with the staff, Session and Diaconate are working diligently to smooth out the ‘rough spots’ and then clearly communicate to everyone the final plan once it is developed.



## CONGREGATIONAL, CONNECTING & CLASSROOM SPACE EXPANSION

As you will recall, last spring when the proposal for the Phase I build-out was made, there was talk of a Phase II and Phase III in the future. Included in our near-term plans is the commencement of some elements from Phase II as well as some additions made to reflect our growth and direction. There will be some aesthetic and technology upgrades made to the sanctuary and a repurposing of fellowship halls A, B and C. This will provide additional office and connecting space similar to the Phase I expansion just completed. These spaces will connect the new guest center with the atrium area. As Southwood continues to grow, it is a joy to see how God is filling our 'connecting' spaces with new faces and families with whom we can truly connect!

There will be some shuffling of space between Children's Sunday School and Sunday Seminars to create new adult space on the ground floor and remodeled, secure space on the second floor for the children (final plans have not been made, so all details are not complete at this time).



## FOCUS ON 'GATHERED' NOT 'SCATTERED' MINISTRIES

Gathered? Scattered? Is this a new Waffle House ministry? Is this about breakfast? No, it's about F-O-C-U-S. When we refer to Southwood 'gathered' we mean the endorsed programs, ministries and staff-led elements of the corporate body of Southwood. When we say Southwood 'scattered' we mean the passions and ministries of Southwood members individually.

As Southwood 'gathered' we have chosen to focus on three areas of service: Student Ministries (cradle to college), Shepherding (pastoral care) and Community Development (mercy ministry). Practically this means that our buildings, budget and staff resources will focus in these three areas alone. There are many good ideas that compete for these resources in a large church. As we seek to become the standard-setter on the face of the planet in these three focus areas, we must say 'no' to the cultivation or continuation of many other heartfelt good ideas.

What does that mean practically? As individual Christians you should be equipped through Southwood to serve in the kingdom of God (Ephesians 4:12). We would therefore expect that many people will have personal passions for ministries outside of one of these three areas of 'gathered' service. That is thrilling and by design! You are encouraged to embrace your passions! How will

the church specifically help you with your ministry? Your friends at Southwood can pray for you and encourage you. You will be equipped from the pulpit and through Sunday Seminars by the teaching of God's word. Church meeting space can be made available for you if there are no other conflicts, and the Southwood Tower is available to all members to help you share your passion with others! That is what 'scattered' ministry or 'scattered' event support will look like.

Event support for 'gathered' events will look different by design. Let's say we are serving together for a 'gathered' ministry like High-Life. And let's take for example an endorsed event

like the Winter Retreat. For such an event there will be large amounts of staff time, budget dollars, promotional materials, public communication and corporate focus which will all converge to ensure that this 'gathered' ministry event is executed with excellence as one of our areas of primary service F-O-C-U-S.

You should know that we see no 'tension' or 'competition' between 'scattered' ministries and 'gathered' ones. In fact, one of our 'gathered' goals is to make sure we all get 'scattered' into places of personal passion across Huntsville and the entire Kingdom of God!

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## FOCUSING ON SMALL GROUPS & LARGE GATHERINGS

As one of our 3 environments and our primary venue for shepherding and connection, our small groups are getting an overhaul as well—big changes? Not really. Big additions? Definitely. All gender-specific ministry at Southwood will be done under the Small Group umbrella. So that there is no misperception of ‘smoke and mirrors’ on this, we are clearly intending that all men’s and women’s ministry done by Southwood will be done through small groups. Karen Parks, who is in full support of this change, will take on a new role in Assimilation with Will Spink through our Shepherding Department. Bill Nash has committed to taking ownership of all gender-specific groups and helping leaders and lay people alike work through any transitional details. Ideas or elements of any existing ministry that may not fit into the small group structure will be either integrated into another area or recategorized as a Southwood ‘scattered’ event.

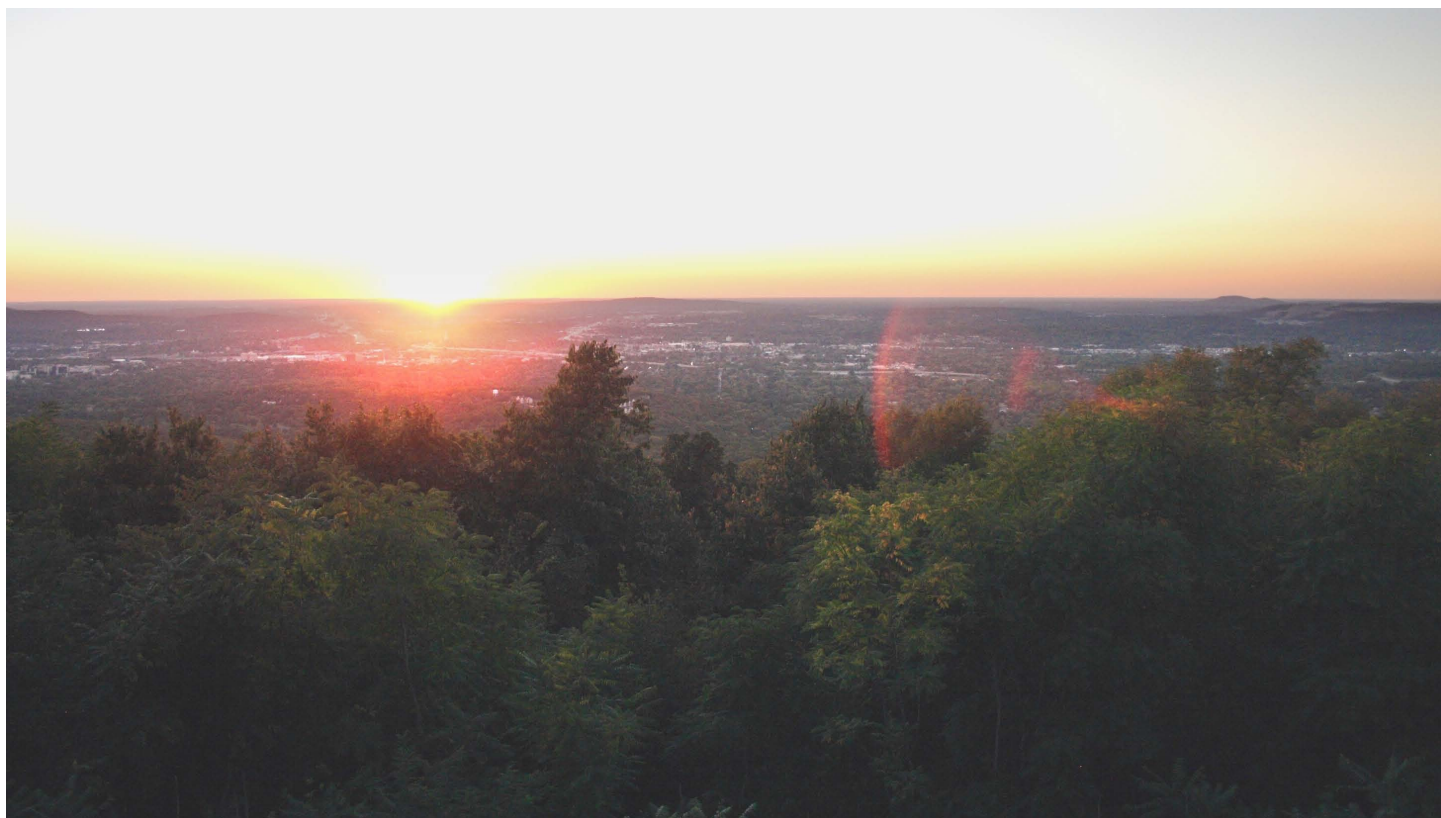
One of the ‘big picture’ strategies under assimilation will be large gatherings of the Southwood family together for fellowship and feasting. As we celebrate life together, events like ‘Harvest HeyDay’ will be expanded for the entire Southwood family. This will allow us to not only worship as a church, but to enjoy each other at a few large fellowship events. Again, the goal is focus and the health of all ministries and members at Southwood.

## A BETTER TOMORROW...

Someone once said, “You have to envision a better tomorrow in order to be willing to risk the comfort of today.” The better tomorrow is a focused Southwood, a Southwood who is self-aware about her gifts, her opportunities and her challenges. We, as elders, are ready to talk with you about these changes. We are excited and available! Additionally, several Q&A times are planned to help answer your questions.

Southwood is focused on being a resource for others—others whom God is bringing to our door. We expect thousands more to come. Why will they come? Because of buildings? Programs? Promotional materials? Couches and coffee? NO. They will come because they will be fed. It’s our mission—to EXPERIENCE and EXPRESS Grace. Huntsville is thirsty for Grace. We have been gifted, called and providentially placed in Jones Valley to be a fountain of living water.

You should be asking, but what about those who can’t or won’t come to Southwood? What about them? This is the beauty of grace—to them we go! Grace cannot be contained. Once it’s experienced it must be expressed. As a large resource church, we firmly believe that. Grace is about people. It’s about the hurting soul, the weak person, the bruised reed and the one who feels very small. We are large and we will strive to be a resource. But to that hurting soul who feels so very small, it won’t matter how large or resourceful we are; they will only care to know that we still are what we have always been, a church where you can experience and express grace.



# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## Income & Expense

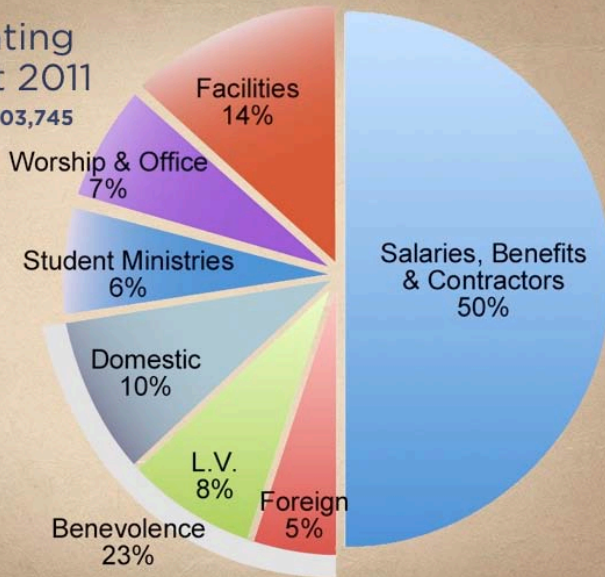
2010 Actual		2011 Plan	
Tithe .....	\$ 2,975,000	Tithe .....	\$ 3,425,000
Operations ...	\$ 2,948,444	Operations ...	\$ 3,203,745
Sub-Total .....	\$ 26,556	Sub-Total.....	\$ 221,255
Phase 1 .....	\$ 147,000	Phase 1 & 2.....	\$ 600,000
Net Cash .....	\$ (120,444)*	Net Cash .....	\$ (378,745)*

\*Debt Service ..... \$ (499,189)

- Operations expense remains below tithe income in both 2010 actual and 2011 plan, creating positive cash flow from operations.
- Debt is being incurred to partially offset the total cost of construction in Phase 1 and 2.

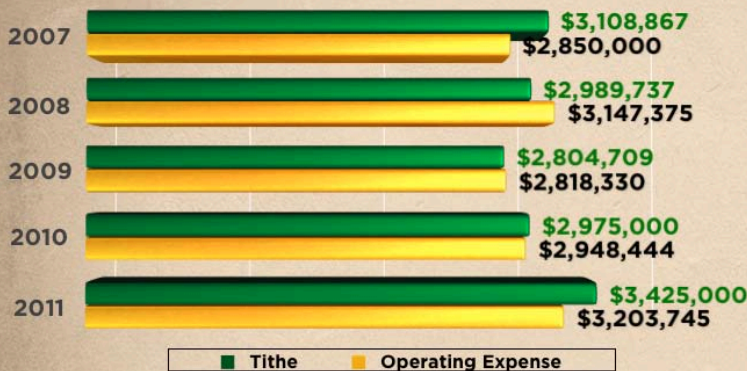
## Operating Budget 2011

Total: \$3,203,745



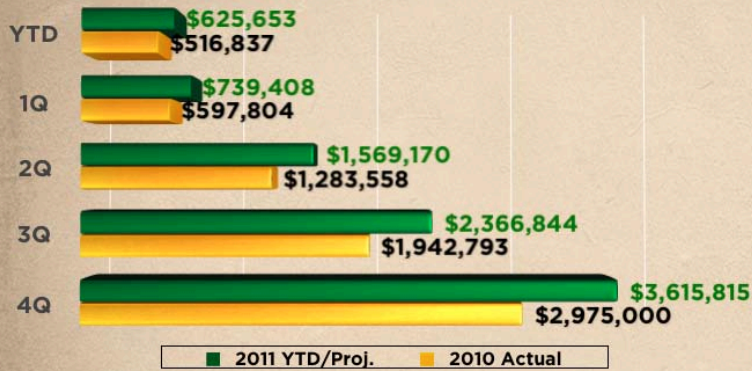
- Salaries/Benefits/Contractors at 50% of total operational expense remains in the lowest range of other large church benchmarks. Large church ranges are: 50% - 60% of total operations.
- While the entire budget is considered missions spending, the classical way of defining missions or what we are calling “Benevolence” is 23% of total expense; or approximately \$730,000 annually.
- Student Ministries is defined as “Cradle to College” which includes what we traditionally have called Children’s and Youth Ministries.

## Income vs. Expense



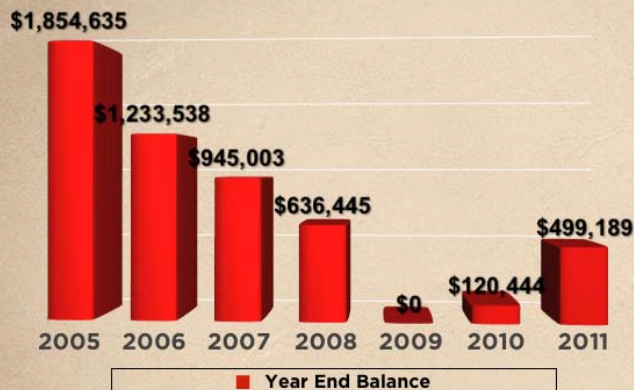
- Expenses over the past 5 years have mirrored tithe income, creating a 5 year positive cash flow of approximately \$350,000 between 2007-2011.

## Tithe



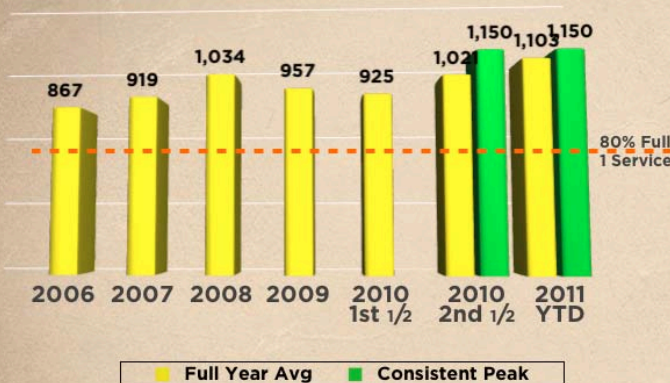
- YTD 2011 we are up 21% over the same time in 2010. Historically our first quarter performance is indicative of our full year results. This trend portends a positive cash flow in 2011 of approximately \$650,000.

## Debt Service



- Southwood Presbyterian Church was able, by the grace of God and the faithfulness of its congregation, to retire almost 2 million in debt in a 4 year time period. Phase 1 and 2 construction is being partially paid for by drawing on our line of credit in 2010 and 2011.

## Worship Attendance



- The orange dotted line shows an 80% capacity for one service. We went to two Sunday Worship Services in 2007 due to over capacity. The 80% capacity rule is well known in churches as an indicator for the need to add additional seating to allow your church to continue to grow.
- YTD 2011 attendance levels indicate a need to add a third Sunday Worship Service.

# LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH SIZE DYNAMICS

(A compend by Bob Bradshaw)

By: Dr. Timothy Keller, Redeemer PCA, NY, NY

One of the most common reasons for pastoral mistakes and missteps is blindness to the significance of church size. Size has an enormous impact on how a church functions. There is a 'size culture' that profoundly affects how decisions are made, how relationships flow, how effectiveness is evaluated, what its ministers, staff, and lay leaders do. The difference between how two Presbyterian churches of 100 and 2000 function may be greater than the difference between a Presbyterian and a Pentecostal church of the same size.

Put simply, 'every church has a 'size culture' that goes with its size that has to be accepted. Most people have a size-culture that they prefer. However, many people 'moralize' their favorite size culture and treat other size-categories as spiritual and morally inferior. I don't believe there is a 'best size' for a church. Each size presents great difficulties and yet opportunities for ministry that churches of other sizes can't realize (or, at least, not as well.) If you think there really is an 'ideal' size it is probably because of your gifts you tend to emotionally value some Biblical aspects of the church more than others (e.g. prophetic, priestly, kingly.) If you think one size of church is the ideal one—it's because you are unbalanced in your own concept of what Christ calls for from the church.

Larger churches are disproportionately more complex than their smaller counter-parts. They have multiple services, multiple classes, multiple groups, multiple tracks, and eventually they really are multiple congregations. Also, the larger the church the more staff per capita needs to be added. The larger the church the more decision-making falls to the staff rather than to the whole membership or even to the lay leaders. The bigger the church the more items have to be given to the staff to determine or execute on their own. The elders or board must increasingly deal only with top level, big-picture issues. So the larger the church, the more decision-making is pushed 'up' toward the staff and away from the congregation and the lay leaders. (Needless to say, many lay people are extremely uncomfortable with this.) On the other hand, the larger the church the more the basic pastoral ministry (hospital visits, discipling, oversight of Christian growth, counsel) is done by lay leaders rather than by the professional ministers. So the larger the church, the more shepherding, teaching, and discipling is pushed 'down' toward the lay leaders and people away from the staff. Pastors must pastor and teach lay shepherd/pastors/teachers. In summary: in small churches, policy is decided by many and ministry is done by few. In the large church, ministry is done by many and policy is decided by a few.

The larger the church, the harder it is to recruit volunteers. Why? First, it is much easier to say 'no' to someone who you do not know than to someone you know well. Second, it is easier to feel less personally responsible for the ministries of a larger church

and think 'they have lots of people here – they don't need me.' You know you've crossed into a higher size category when you get constant complaints that people feel left out or uninformed.

## The larger the church:

- The more the church is subject to constant and sudden changes.
- The more it loses members because of changes.
- The less available the main preacher is to do pastoral work.
- The smaller the basic pastoral span of care.
- The more the church tends to concentrate on doing fewer things – well.
- The more distinctive vision becomes important to the members.
- The more lay leaders need to be screened for agreement on vision and philosophy of ministry, not simply for doctrinal and moral standards.

## Church size:

- House-church 0 – 40 attendance
- Small church 40 – 200 attendance
- Medium church 200 – 400 attendance
- Large church 400 – 800 attendance
- Very large church: 1) 800 – 1,800 attendance  
2) 1,800 + attendance

In the large church the primary 'circle-of-belonging' becomes the small group fellowship. This is different than the affinity-class (usually 10-40) or ministry in that:

- It is usually smaller – often as small as 4 and no bigger than 15
- It is more of a 'miniature church' than the affinity-class or ministry

Up to the '800 attendance barrier' churches can still get away with having a mediocre or poor small group system. But to break the 800 barrier you must have the majority of your members and adherents in small groups which are run very well and which do pastoral care, not only Bible study.

## VERY LARGE CHURCH

- **Missional Focus** – the more a church is staff-driven, the more likely it will be able to concentrate on factors which reach non-members and which don't directly benefit its own constituents – i.e. church planting, mercy/justice ministries, constant adding new services and programs.
- **Seeker and Younger Adult Attraction:** A disproportionate percent of 1) persons on a self-identified religious pilgrimage, 2) persons born after 1965 are found in very large churches. Why? a) Excellence. Those with no obligation to go to church (from kinship, tradition, ethnicity, local history) are more likely to attend where the quality of arts, teaching, children's programs is very high.
- **Change the Senior Pastor's Role:** In a very large church, the preacher cannot be the people's pastor. The senior pastor must move from an emphasis on doing the work of ministry (teaching, pastoring, administering) and give it away and concentrate on vision-casting and general preaching. Many churches and /or ministers will not allow this to happen, indeed believing it is wrong to make such a shift. While the senior pastor must not become the CEO and stop doing traditional ministry, he must not try to do pastoral care or even oversight for the church at large. That must go to others. One major problem is the senior pastor can live with guilt all the time. It's a cost that has to be paid by the senior pastor—but with the gospel. Otherwise the pressures lead to burn out, etc. Both the senior pastor and the leaders and the people must allow this change to happen.
- **Trust:** The Very Large church is more accessible and capable of reaching younger persons, single persons, the unchurched and seekers. The key to the very large church culture is trust. In smaller churches, suspicious people are much happier. Everything that happens comes through a consensus-driven center accessible to any member. Any minority that is unhappy with something can block it. The larger the church gets, however, the more and more the congregation has to trust the staff, and especially the Senior Pastor. Though the staff (and the SP) must do everything to be as open as possible (especially to criticism), and to be as relationally available as possible, and to work extremely hard on communication so people feel included and informed—ultimately the very large church runs on trust and comes crashing down when suspicion begins to grow.

**Reference Point: Southwood Presbyterian Church, according to this paradigm, is a Very Large Church—we currently enjoy a membership in excess of 1,800 members and a regular Sunday Worship attendance in excess of 1,100.**



Southwood  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH