

1



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## Devotion

Rom. 8:28 ¶ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Rom. 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.

*NRSV*

◈ Plans vs purpose

◈ What is God's purpose for us?

3

## Central Tension

*How long is Evangelical viable as a church?*

4



What does a thriving/healthy church look like?

5

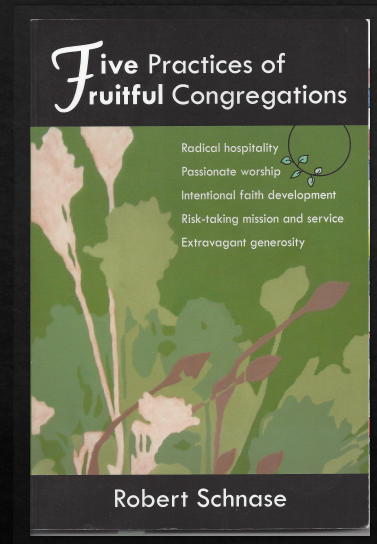
My formulation  
Rootedness +  
Mission + Vision +  
Accountability +  
Passion = Thriving  
Church



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## Bishop Schnase's Formulation

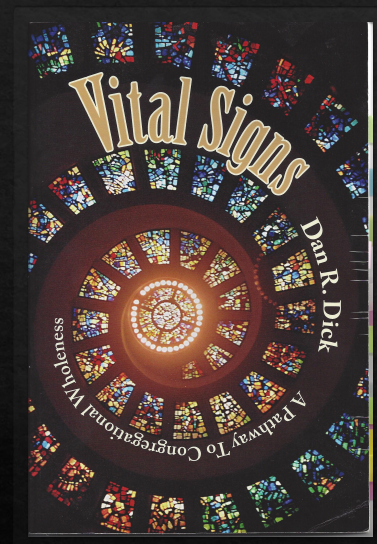
Radical Hospitality  
 Passionate Worship  
 Intentional Faith Development  
 Risk-Taking Mission and Service  
 Extravagant Generosity  
*Fruitful Fellowship* (I added this to his list)



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## Dan Dick's (chapter 4 of *Vital Signs*)

Shared sense of identity  
 Shared clarity of purpose  
 Focus of the congregation  
 Awareness and Understanding of God's vision for the church  
 Governing and guiding values



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## Dan Dick's continued

- ◆ Impact Awareness
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ The role of the appointed pastor
- ◆ Programatic Design
- ◆ Organization structure
- ◆ Money
- ◆ The role of worship in the life of the congregation
- ◆ The role of education in the life of the congregation
- ◆ The congregation's relationship to the community
- ◆ The congregation's relationship to the connectional system

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## Dan Dick's summary

“Vital churches are exciting, energizing, and enriching places. No one vital congregation in this study was doing everything perfectly, but they were making every effort to create God-focused, spiritually centered environments where every person, regardless of his or her location on the journey of faith could flourish, thrive, and grow.

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## Dan Dick's summary

“Vital churches are about God first, community second, and the individual last. Faith is a verb, not a noun. Vital churches enable people to balance the inward spiritual focus with a missional, evangelical outward practice. Complacency, laziness, and procrastination have no place in the vital church, nor does representative ministry. Never do you find the ministry done by a few in the name of the many. Everyone in a vital church lives their ministry every day.

11

## Dan Dick's summary

“Accountability is paramount in the vital church. Making sure what we say and what we do align perfectly is a high priority of the vital congregation. Vital churches are grounded in values, deep passions, and the relentless pursuit of God's will and vision for the faith community. Integrity is the best word to describe the vital church.

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## Dan Dick's summary

“Many people find the description of the vital church compelling, but unrealistic. ‘It sounds great,’ one pastor told me, ‘but it would take a hundred years of non-stop work to get there. I can just hear what some people will say if we say we’re going to hold them accountable or expect them to start doing certain things.’ Leaders in pursuit of vitality are not seeking it because it is easy, but because it is good and right.”

13

## Dan Dick's summary

“ ‘It is hard work—the hardest you will ever do—but where did we get the idea that church was supposed to be easy? We are talking about the meaning of life, eternal life, and a relationship with God, for crying out loud,’ a lay leader explained, ‘this should be easy?’ ”

14

## Dan Dick's summary

“ ‘People will put into it what they think its worth,’ offered a small group leader and spiritual mentor. ‘I think there are a lot of people who are starving for a whole different kind of life, a life with meaning, a *faith* with meaning. Sure, lots of people don’t want what we have here, but you know what? A lot do. We are a church for those who really, really serious about their faith. Too many people approach their faith as amateurs; we’re professionals.’

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## Dan Dick's summary

“Church isn’t something a person can plug into an already full and otherwise demanding life. For participants in vital churches, church and life cannot be separated, and faith is never compartmentalized. The people are the church—every minute of every day. The body of Christ is incarnate, fulfilling the will of God as a faithful steward of all God’s creation.”

pages 111-112 of *Vital Signs*

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How do we get there?

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## Defining Mission (purpose)

- ◆ Simplicity
- ◆ Everyone can remember
- ◆ Guides everything

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## Our Current Mission Statement

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## Our Current Mission Statement

The Evangelical United Methodist Church will provide a nurturing and stimulating Christian environment that challenges each of its members to reach out to people with "open hands, open hearts, open doors" and receive them in the name of Jesus Christ, to relate them to God, to nurture and strengthen them in their journey of discipleship, and to send them into the world to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

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# The United Methodist Church

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation  
of the world.”

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## The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection

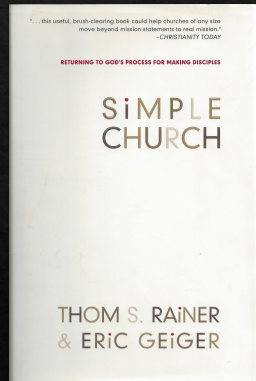
“To Build a Christian  
community where non-  
religious and nominally  
religious people are  
becoming deeply committed  
Christians”



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## Example in *Simple Church*



Loving God, loving  
people, and serving the  
world.

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## LCBC



We exist to introduce  
people to Jesus and  
together fully follow  
him.

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## North Point Community Church



Inspire people to follow  
Jesus by engaging them  
in the life and mission of  
North Point Community  
Church.

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## Young's UMC (my first appointment)



Welcome, Worship,  
Witness

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## Vision (how to live out our purpose/mission focus)



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### Possible Vision Foci

- Center of the community (meals, fellowship activities, opportunities to gather, concerts, partnerships with people and organizations in our community)
- Children
- Youth



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## Possible Vision Foci (continued)



- ◆ Single Young Adults
- ◆ Married Young Adults
- ◆ Older Adults
- ◆ One of our neighboring nursing homes
- ◆ One of our schools

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## Possible Vision Foci (continued)

- ◆ Small Groups
- ◆ Neighborhood Groups
- ◆ Acts 2 Intentional Community (neomonasticism)
- ◆ Offering alternate worship opportunities (other than Sunday)



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## Possible Vision Foci (continued)



- ◆ Partnering with addicts
- ◆ Partnering with the poor
- ◆ Creating third spaces
- ◆ Social entrepreneurship (ride sharing, laundry mat, food truck, gym/rec space)

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## How do we get visitors?



My formulation:

Happenstance + Reputation  
+ Opportunities + Invitation  
= Visitors

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## Mission and vision as a story

- ◆ Principles from the former StoryBrand Podcast
- ◆ If you confuse - you lose
- ◆ Noise is the enemy
- ◆ *Creating a clear message is the best way to grow your business*



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## Mission and vision as a story



- ◆ Some principles from the StoryBrand book
- ◆ *The customer is the hero, not your brand*
- ◆ Companies tend to sell solutions to external problems, but customers buy solutions to internal problems
- ◆ Customers aren't looking for another hero; they're looking for a guide
- ◆ Never assume people understand how your brand can change their lives. Tell them.

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1864

Abraham Lincoln	George B. McClellan
Don't change horses midstream.	An <i>H</i> onorable, <i>p</i> ermanent and happy peace

35

1872

Ulysses S. Grant	Horatio Seymour
Vote as You Shot.	Peace, Union, and constitutional government

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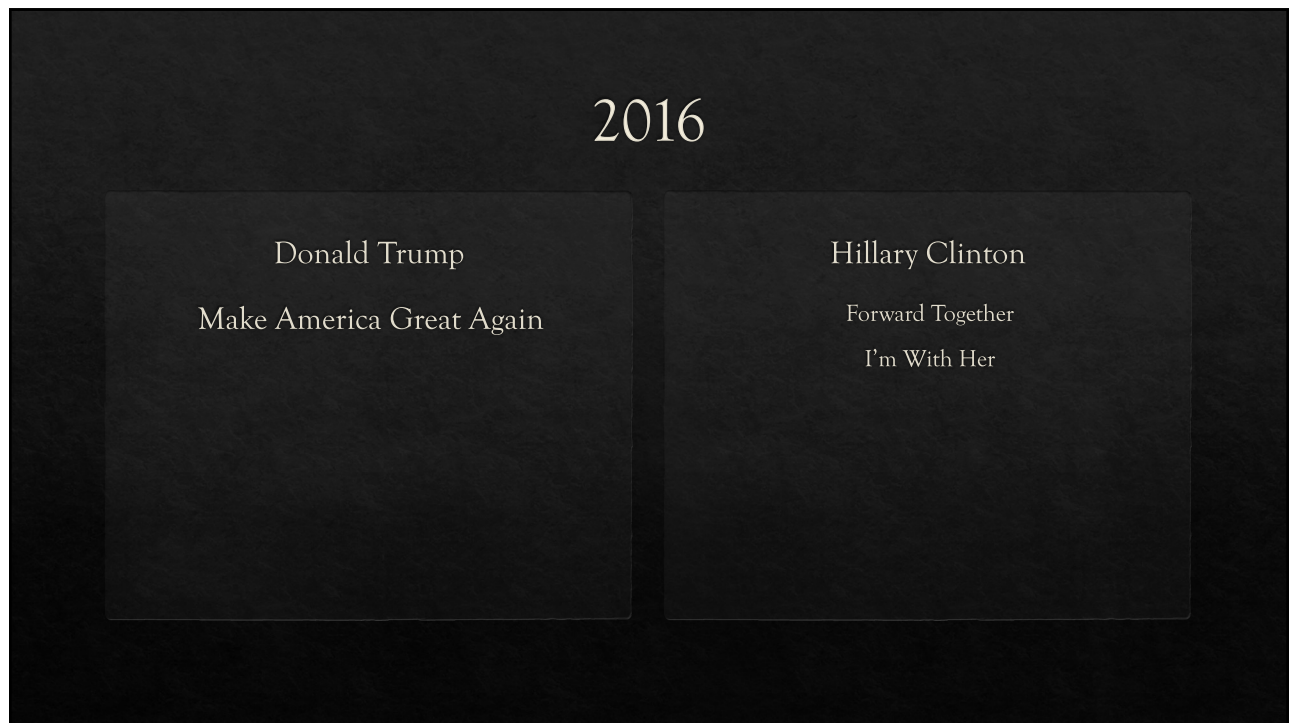


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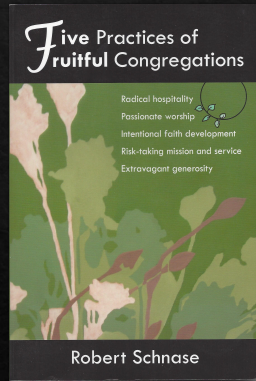


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## Evaluating Our Practices of Ministry-the fundamentals



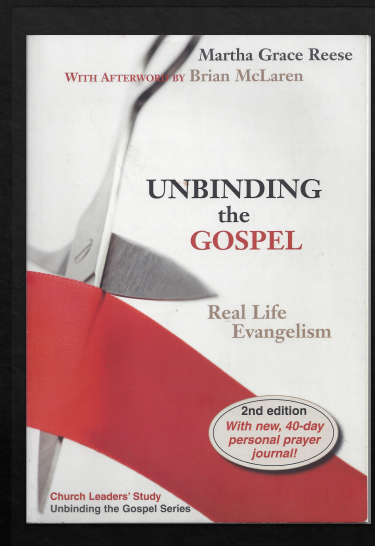
- ◆ Is our hospitality radical?
- ◆ Is our worship passionate?
- ◆ Are we intentional in our faith development?
- ◆ Is our mission and service risk-taking?
- ◆ Are we showing extravagant generosity?

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How do we move forward?

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# Prayer



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## Adam Hamilton's questions to pray over



- ◊ Why Jesus?
- ◊ Why the church?
- ◊ Why your church?

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### My questions to pray over

- What do we do well?
- Who does not have a real relationship with a church in our community?
- What is breaking God's heart in Middletown?



47

### My questions to pray over continued

- What is breaking your heart?
- When you look at Middletown, what upsets you?
- What are our gifts?
- What do I like to do?



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## My questions to pray over continued



- ◊ When was a time in our church when we were at our best? Why were we at our best?
- ◊ If money and volunteers were not issues, what do you think we should do?
- ◊ What adjectives would you use to describe the ministries of our church?

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## My questions to pray over continued

- Where would Jesus be doing ministry in our community?
- What gives us life?

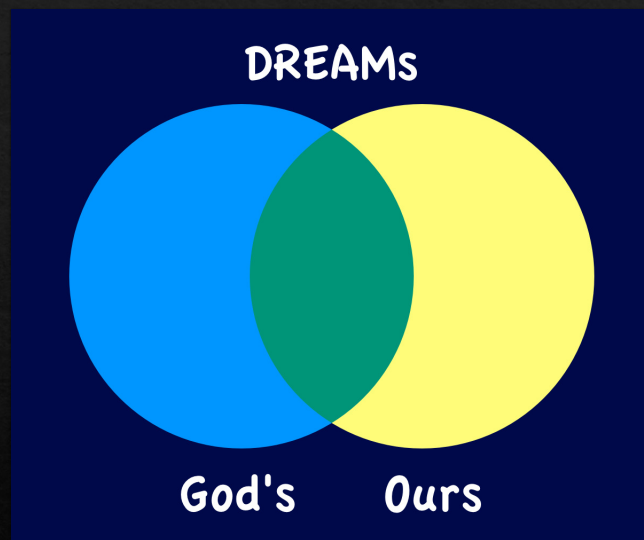


50



My questions to pray  
over continued

- What are our dreams?
- What are our passions?
- What do we think are  
God's dreams and  
passions? For us?



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Process

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## Prayer



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## Meeting or Retreat topics



- ◇ Starting at the end-what might an end result look like?
- ◇ SWAT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, assets, threats)
- ◇ Life cycle of a church
- ◇ Who is our neighbor?

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## Meeting or Retreat topics continued

- ◆ Reaching the next generation
- ◆ Our past
- ◆ If we could do anything...
- ◆ Conversations with community leaders



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## Meeting or Retreat topics continued



- ◆ Crafting a compelling message
- ◆ Mission/Vision/Next Steps

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## My Hopes



- ◊ We pray
- ◊ We meet
- ◊ We discern a mission/vision in a form of a compelling story
- ◊ We discern next steps (worship, missions, outreach, discipleship) that are low stakes (unless we discern a BHAG)

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## My Hopes Continued

- We discern a discipleship process
- We discern a leadership training process
- We thrive in God's purpose for us



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Are we willing to meet again?

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## Closing thought

**Mal. 4:1** See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

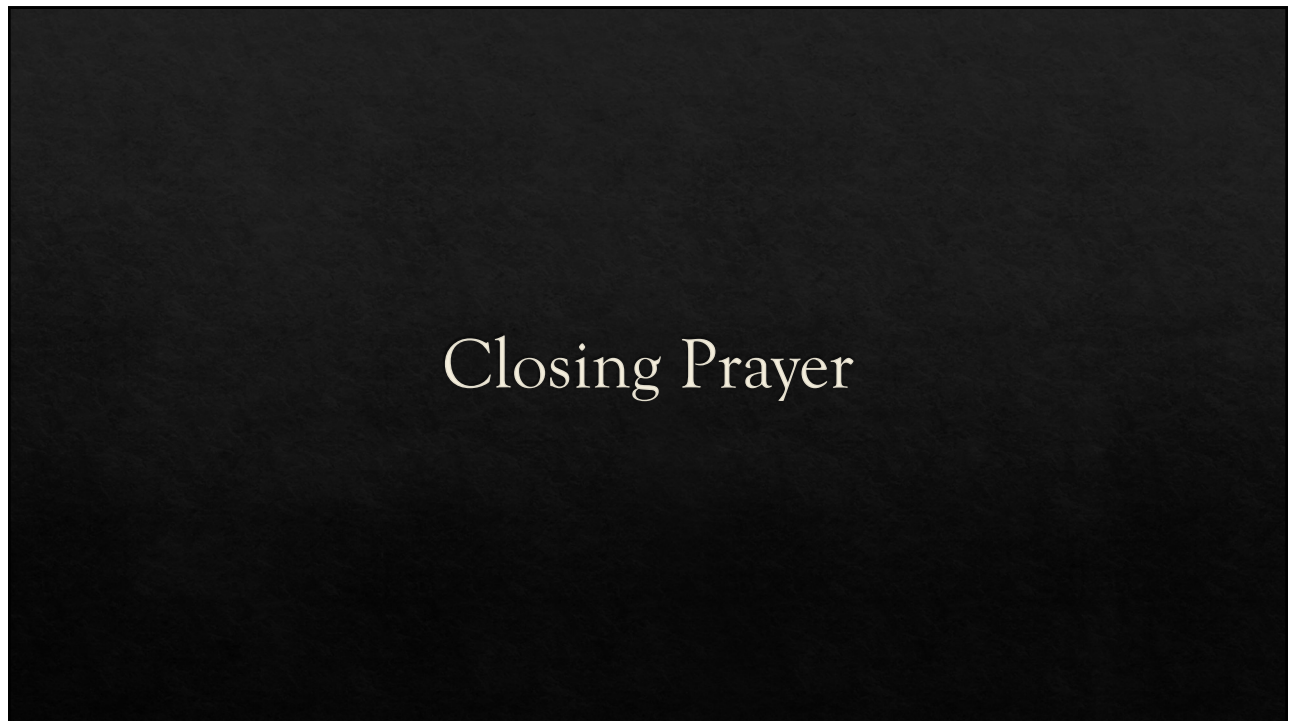
**Mal. 4:2** But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

NRSV

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