




Consultant's Report

**New Hope Church
Operational Audit:
Interviews with
22 Ministry Leaders**



By Monte Sahlin
May 12, 2010

Individual interviews were conducted with 21 lay leaders and one associate pastor in July and December 2009. The lay leaders to be interviewed were selected by the New Hope Church staff and the follow-up interview with one of the associate pastors was arranged to fill in some areas of ministry which could not be covered in those interviews. Detailed information was collected on the following ministries:

Adult Sabbath School — page 2

Discipleship/Small Groups Ministry — page 3

First Impact Ministries — page 4

Lay Pastors — page 5

Middle School Ministries — page 7

Music Ministry — page 8

Pathfinder Club — page 9

Prayer Ministry — page 10

Sharing Our Strength (SOS) — page 11

Finance Committee and Treasurer — page 12

Worship Media Ministries — page 13

Table 1 provides a summary of statistical and financial data. It is included at the end of the narrative report. The final section includes a number of general observations and recommendations.

Adult Sabbath School — Kofi Schulerbrandt & Norma McKellip

There are two classes that meet at 9:30 a.m. each Sabbath prior to the early worship service. There once was a class that met prior to the second worship service, which seems to have ceased to function. These groups use the regular adult Sabbath School curriculum published by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are at least three classes that use various other books and study guides. So it appears that there are a total of five or six adult Sabbath School groups all together at present.

Kofi estimates that 70 percent of the regular attenders at New Hope Church do not participate in any adult Sabbath School group. He once led a young adult Sabbath School class which died in 2008. He feels that this an area of need because the adult Sabbath School groups provide a way for church members to connect at a personal level, as well as grow in their faith.

Norma leads one of the classes that uses the denomination's Bible Study Guide ("the quarterly"). It meets in Room 110 each Sabbath at 9:30 a.m. Attendance ranges from eight to 20, with about a dozen regular members (mostly long-term Adventists) and "lots of visitors." She says, "we have a good discussion" and indicates that the goal is to help people mature in their faith. The members look up the Bible texts and read them. The class has a missionary project during the winter holidays and participates in the summer food drive for the community food pantry. The mission story DVD is shared with the group. She also serves as liaison for New Hope Church to the Laurel Pregnancy Center which is dedicated to providing alternatives to abortion and helps organize an annual dinner to raise funds for the Baby Battle Campaign. At the time of the interviews she was the only leader and said she really needed one or two others who could lead the class on some Sabbaths.

Neither Kofi nor Norma were aware of any budget for Adult Sabbath School, although Norma stated that the church provides a supply of Bible Study Guides and Teacher's Quarterlies for her class. Norma feels that her group is out-growing Room 110 and might need a larger classroom in the future.

Asked what she needed from the church, Norma stated that her class needs fellowship outside of the weekly class meetings. She also sees a need for more Adult Sabbath School classes. "Sabbath School is not promoted here."

Discipleship/Small Groups Ministry — Jose Hernandez & Grace Brown

The Discipleship/Small Groups Ministry has three target groups: (1) church members in their 20s and early 30s from the Millennial generation; (2) church members in their late 30s and early 40s with children from Gen X; and (3) friends of church members who have no Adventist background. Jose estimates that there are about 150 people in the first group, about 20 percent of worship attenders; about 75 people in the second group; and potentially 100 people in third group. Together with about 60 other church members who do not fall into these target groups, but are interested in small groups, the total potential participation could be more than 385 people. The goal is to have 400 adult participants, half of the adults who regularly attend New Hope Church.

Most small groups meet on Sabbath at 9:30 a.m. Small group ministries are typically linked to a sermon series. An example is the “Love Dare” series during which 10 new groups started and continued for the eight weeks of the series. Two of the groups have continued beyond that original time frame. There were a total of 160 participants at the beginning, an average of two leaders and six additional couples in each group. There is a longer-term group that meets on Thursday nights, another on Tuesday nights and two on Friday nights. A Celebration of Recovery is planned.

Grace leads the Thursday-night group. It meets at her home and is made up largely of single adults and young couples who do not (yet) have children. It has been functioning since February of 2005 and 90 percent of the participants are church members. Attendance averages eight to 10, with about 30 individuals who have participated at some point in the last year. There are four co-leaders involved. The group alternates periods of study of a book of the Bible with periods reading and discussing a book by a Christian author. There are breaks of two or three weeks between each series. There is no budget for this group; participants purchase the books on their own.

Overall, about 25 people currently serve as group facilitators, but at least 55 more are needed. Training for small group leaders is being developed.

The budget for Discipleship/Small Group Ministries should be about \$12,000 for purchase of study guides, books and other materials and supplies, Jose estimates. About \$30 per person times 400 individuals. There is also a need for materials for one traditional Sabbath School class of about two dozen people. There is also a need for more meeting rooms for groups on Sabbath mornings.

Asked about resources that he needs from the church or denomination, Jose mentioned the need for more tested small-group materials and resources. Grace pointed out the need for more meeting rooms at the church. Her group used to meet in Room 206 at the church, but she has moved it to her home.

First Impact Ministries — Minnie Raju

The mission of First Impact Ministries is to serve the people who attend worship on Sabbath mornings at New Hope Church. It includes greeters, ushers, staff for the Ask Me desk, presenters for the Seven Minutes or Less gatherings following each worship service, as well as helpers with parking, hospitality, etc. It serves about 600 to 1,000 people each Sabbath, functioning weekly from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is an important part of the overall mission of New Hope Church, because “we are trying to bring in the community and first impressions and customer service are crucial.”

Currently some 23 volunteers assist with First Impact Ministries, but there is a need for a total of 88 people to be fully staffed. That would provide for 4 teams for each ministry serving one Sabbath a month: 32 ushers, eight per Sabbath; 24 greeters, six per Sabbath; 24 staff for the Ask Me desk, six per Sabbath; eight presenters for Seven Minutes or Less, two per Sabbath. Additional volunteers could be used in hospitality and parking ministries, and a social committee.

Perhaps more important, none of these functional areas currently have a coordinator or leader. Minnie sees the need to find four leaders for the four current operating functions. At the time of the interview, she had no one who she could place in charge when she cannot be present.

Training is needed for all of these ministries. The job description for ushers is out-dated. Job descriptions are needed for the Ask Me desk and Seven Minutes of Less sessions. A plan needs to be developed for the role of the greeters.

Minnie said she was not aware of the budget for First Impact Ministries, although about \$2,000 was spent on a recent picnic for 800 people. She has spent a nominal amount out of her own pocket for some supplies and materials. This ministry has no storage or office space, and it would be very helpful to have locked storage space for supplies, food items, etc.

Asked what she needs from the church or denomination, Minnie told about being burned out when she helped with Sligo PM. She needs personnel, volunteers and structure, organization; help in motivating people to get involved and be accountable for the commitments they make to give time. It would be great to have a picture directory since there are so many people at New Hope Church that do not have a long history with each other.

Lay Pastors — Ruthie Vasconcellos, Kofi Schulerbrandt, Timothy Atolagbe

There are eight Lay Pastors (or maybe 11), each responsible for extending pastoral care to a cluster of 10 to 15 families within the New Hope congregation, as well as serving as a greeter on Sabbath once a month. They also provide a monthly New Members Class. About half are veteran lay elders or ordained/commissioned ministers. The Senior Pastor meets with the Lay Pastors on the first Monday of each month. Ruthie Vasconcellos is the head of the Lay Pastors. The Lay Pastors are not church board members and their role does not include any administrative responsibilities. The Lay Pastor ministry is essential to the life and health of the congregation, helping people become grounded as Christians and helping church members deal with life events such as illness, grief, marriage preparation, divorce recovery, etc. It is especially important at New Hope Church because so many of the people who come here are transient.

The Lay Pastors are not assigned a group of members, but left to their own devices to identify the cluster for the focus of their ministry. The “parish cluster” model was used initially, but New Hope is growing too fast for that model to keep up with the need. Kofi says that he focuses on the 25 to 35 age group and feels the need for activities of some kind in order to get people together and help them get acquainted. Timothy meets with a group of new members every other month. Many of the people who attend New Hope Church do not know many others at church. The schedule of multiple worship services makes it difficult for people to get acquainted with everyone.

There should be a total of 25 to 30 Lay Pastors to cover the need, estimate Ruthie and Timothy. That means recruiting 14 to 19 more. A recruitment plan is being developed. At the time of the interviews, there was no training plan for Lay Pastors, although Prepare-Enrich (marriage preparation) training is provided twice a year from the American Association of Christian Counselors. Five years ago New Hope Church started classes modeled after Rick Warren’s approach at Saddleback Church, but they are no longer functioning. Timothy has taught a 12-week class on spiritual disciplines. Ruthie plans to set up regular training events for the Lay Pastors such as the Care series seminars, etc.

Ruthie also intends to “set up processes that are more effective in keeping the congregation, new members and community in touch with what the Lay Pastor ministry is all about and how [it] can be of help to them on their spiritual walk ... the Lay Pastor team to be more intentional in being the eyes and ears of the congregation so as to give the church administration effective feedback ... head and assistant head of Lay Pastors to work closely with church administration to ensure details of goals, plans don’t fall through the cracks.”

The Lay Pastor ministry currently has no office or storage space assigned to it. Timothy suggests that the Lay Pastor ministry really needs an office where the Lay Pastors can meet with people in a confidential setting, etc. A budget is “needed for supplies, name

tags, business cards, seminar materials, social outings for the Lay Pastor team and their families,” states Ruthie.

Asked what she needs from the church or denomination, Ruthie says there are lots of ideas and the church administration needs to be more intentional about planning, implementation and follow through. “They keep adding more expectations and that will result in burnout.”

Middle School Ministries — Angie Bernard

The mission of this ministry is to provide religious education for children from church families in Grades 6, 7 and 8, “to lead kids to Jesus and lay a foundation to help them stay close to the Lord.” Angie estimates that there are 50 to 100 children in this age group at New Hope Church, although attendance averages only about a dozen or less with another half dozen who stand in the hallway and do not participate. About 50 children have participated at some point in the last year.

Middle School Ministries operates for one hour each week, starting at 9:30 a.m. on Sabbaths. It currently has 12 adult volunteers who staff the ministry. They each serve one Sabbath a month. Angie does not feel that she needs additional help at this time and says that she trusts all of these individuals to take charge if she is not present to provide leadership.

This ministry uses the *Real Time Faith* curriculum published for the Adventist Church in North America, as well as supplementary materials from various Evangelical publishers. Pastor Roda reports that the budget for Middle School Ministries is \$2,500 a year. Middle School Ministries has an assigned room, which is occasionally used by other ministries and events. If the attendance were doubled, this space would be too small.

Asked what she needs from the Church or denomination, Angie says, “consistency.” She says that she already gets “anything I ask for” in terms of resource materials and training.

Music Ministry — Lauri Preston & Jeff Dunn

Rick Anderson had been selected to be the new Minister of Music at the time of the interview, but had not yet arrived. Lauri is one of the four praise team leaders and also has worked with planning of special Sabbaths. Jeff leads the praise team for Week Four. Each praise team functions once a month for both worship services on their Sabbath. The Minister of Music is the overall coordinator. Each team should have six singers and three to eight musicians in the band. There is always a need for additional vocalists and musicians, and a particular need for an Assistant Minister of Music. Burnout is a real problem; at the time of the interview the same drummer had served every Sabbath for six months.

Music is a very central part of worship at New Hope Church. In the last year, New Hope organized the Reveal Worship Conference and has published a worship manual. Jeff's dream is to get the Music Ministry participants into small group activities too.

The new construction in the worship area provides storage for the Music Ministry and a "green room" for preparation, etc. The ministry had been working without even a locked closet to safely store instruments, etc. Lauri said that, to her knowledge, there is no budget for the Music Ministry and estimates that she spent \$500 to \$1,000 a year out of her own pocket for unreimbursed expenses. New Hope has sent Music Ministry leaders to Christian arts conferences at Willow Creek and Saddleback megachurches and provided subscriptions to *Worship Leader*, as well as copies of books such as *The Heart of the Artist* and *Thriving as an Artist*. It provides the CCLI license for use of music and access to an online worship planning center. New Hope has also helped some to get music lessons and sponsored trips to see the music ministry at other churches. Jeff is an example of the investment that New Hope has made in human resources. He grew up in the congregation and the church paid for piano lessons for a while.

Asked what she needs from the church or denomination, Lauri said the Chesapeake Conference could be more inclusive and the Adventist Church should "embrace the changing tide of music ... broaden perspectives, not stay in the box." Jeff answered the same question by mentioning the need for a new sound system and Avioms—headphones and individual sound controls—for praise team members.

Pathfinder Club — Felix Nieto & Lynne Ekelof

The Pathfinder Club is for children ages 10 through 15. There is also the Teen Leadership Training (TLT) program for ages 16 and 17. This ministry teaches adolescents to love your neighbor, leads them to Christ and sends them out for service. It comes at a point in the child's development which is most critical to their staying in the church. There are 156 children in this age group at New Hope Church.

The New Hope Pathfinder Club meets from 7 to 9 p.m. one Wednesday each month, plus one Sabbath afternoon a month from 2 to 7 p.m. for community service projects. In the last year there has been a Pathfinder Club membership of 50, with 46 of these from church-related families, two from other Adventist congregations and two from families with no Adventist connection. A total of 22 adult volunteers help staff the activities of the Pathfinder Club, out of which at least three have the experience and training to be in charge if the director is absent. There is a need for at least four additional volunteers, five women to work with girls units and seven or eight men to work with boys units. There is a monthly staff meeting.

In 2009, there were five camping trips locally, as well as the big trip to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, for the North American Camporee. The big camporee cost about \$500 per person and the club raised the money for everyone to go. This year there will be more local camping trips, which are less expensive.

The church budgets \$5,000 a year for the Pathfinder Club, according to Pastor Roda. The dues paid by the kids (\$80 per year) bring in another \$4,000, Felix estimates. And there are yearly fund raising activities that provide another \$5,000, Lynne estimates. That is a total of about \$14,000 a year plus the adult leaders each end up spending \$100 to \$300 a year out of their own pockets for various items for which they are not reimbursed. In addition, Lynne estimates that about \$10,500 is spent on camping costs by the families involved (\$300 for the year times 35 children). During 2009, the club raised another \$40,000 for the Oshkosh trip and received donations to purchase a bus. All together, the Pathfinder Club cost more than \$75,000 to operate in 2009, but most years it is much less.

The Chesapeake Conference youth department provides a yearly training weekend for the adult volunteers. Five of them are working on achieving the Master Guide award. The Pathfinder Club currently meets in space it shares with other ministries, although it does have a trailer of its own for storage. There is a need for a room or clubhouse that the Pathfinder Club can have as its own, dedicated space.

Asked what the Pathfinder ministry needs from the church or denomination, Felix said "for the church to take us seriously." Lynne mentioned the need for the curriculum to be updated so it is relevant to today's young people, including helping Adventist children become more sensitive to non-Christian kids.

Prayer Ministry — Debbie Howell

Prayer Ministry is foundational at New Hope Church. Its target audience includes every church member and all those who attend. At the time of the interviews, Debbie had just become the leader of the Prayer Ministry. The previous Sabbath some 50 to 75 individuals had come forward to join the ministry. In addition to Prayer Meeting on Wednesday nights with a sharing time and prayer groups, this ministry includes being available after worship on Sabbath mornings to pray with anyone who has a need and monthly women's prayer breakfasts. Annual events include a week-long Prayer Journey and a 24-hour prayer vigil. About 20 to 25 people participate in the Wednesday nights Prayer Meeting. There are eight prayer warriors who staff the Prayer Ministry on Sabbaths, but Debbie sees a need for at least 20 more.

Debbie wants to plan a weekend of orientation for Prayer Ministry workers. She will connect with people who God has gifted/called to prayer ministry, give them books to read and organize visits to other churches to get ideas.

Debbie said she had no idea if there was a budget for the Prayer Ministry. She did know that the ministry had made use of meeting rooms that it shares with other ministries, but would like a permanent, dedicated prayer room. She would also like a place for spiritual retreats and training events, a retreat center.

Sharing Our Strength (SOS) — Dave Wooster

SOS is the humanitarian agency of New Hope Church which was formed about three years ago. Its mission is found in Matthew 25 where Christ instructs His followers to be involved in helping the poor and oppressed. SOS sponsors one or two international mission trips each year and is developing a ministry with the homeless in Howard County. It is working closely with Eden Garden Orphanage in Haiti. In a mission trip last year, about 40 volunteers saw more than 900 patients in a clinic over four days and drilled two wells. A container was shipped with 36,000 feet of pipe, enough to drill 150 wells. Following up the mission trip to Mozambique, SOS is providing scholarships for 200 children to go to school there. There are more than 100 volunteers involved in the homeless project here in the local community.

The core group for SOS is about five people. Dave's wife does all the marketing and communications. SOS really needs about 35 to 60 additional volunteers for both overseas and local community operations.

The budget for SOS during 2009 included about \$120,000 for the Mozambique trip, another \$25,000 for the Haiti trip and another \$125,000 for scholarships and project costs. None of this is in the church budget; it all must be raised from outside sources and the donations of individuals going on the trips. Two churches in California, one in Virginia and one in New England are partnering with New Hope on SOS projects.

Asked what SOS needs, Dave mentioned the need for a basic orientation session for volunteers prior to each overseas trip and possible prior to their involvement with the local homeless ministry. This ministry has tremendous opportunities. Gary Krause, director of the Adventist Missions office at the General Conference, serves on the board, as does Monty Jacobs, a New Hope member who is an attorney with international experience. Dave has had a conversation with Chuck Sandefur, the president of ADRA International, about the possibility of SOS partnering with ADRA.

I understand that since the interviews were conducted last year, there has been a decision to separate the international and local community operations of SOS into two separate agencies. This will necessitate the development of a parallel organization for the local community projects. Dave stated the Pastor Kumar Dixit is the coordinator for the local activities.

Finance Committee/Treasurer — Scott Reifsnnyder & Eunice DeJesus

The Finance Committee meets once a week and oversees the financial management of New Hope Church. It has nine active members, which is sufficient. The majority of the members could serve as chair, in Scott's opinion. One is a lawyer, two are CFOs and two work in the Treasury office at the General Conference.

The Treasurer's Office works closely with the Finance Committee and leadership staff, as well as meeting the needs of potentially all 650 members who give Tithe and offerings. Eunice works two or three times a week, including from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Sabbath, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays and the monthly meetings of the Finance Committee and church board. She has two or three volunteer assistants and there are about 200 to 250 giving units. There is a need for three or four additional volunteers in the Treasurer's Office; an immediate need for at least one person to help count the offerings.

The annual budget includes six cost centers—administration and support, member care, evangelism and outreach, youth ministries, children's ministries and family ministries—each with eight to 25 line items. The budget process begins with the chair of the Finance Committee creating the first draft. A budget subcommittee reviews and revises this draft and passes on a recommended second draft to the full Finance Committee. This may be revised again with the third draft going to the church board and a final draft being voted at a church business meeting. The largest item in the budget is \$79,000 to subsidize Adventist schools.

The Treasury shares space with Collier Rowe's AV sound team. The church provides a laptop, office supplies and a monthly stipend of \$500 for the treasurer. New Hope Church uses Peach Tree accounting software; the Jewell software is used only for receipting.

Asked what she needs for the work of the Treasurer's Office, Eunice stressed the need for stewardship education. There is no stewardship committee or leader. Only a third of the households in the church are tithing regularly; about 25 percent turn in tithe consistently and another 10 percent irregularly. Scott also sees a need for an active stewardship committee. In addition he makes three points about the management of operations at New Hope Church: (1) Ministries go in a lot of directions and there should be a steering committee to set goals for the year. It is difficult to focus the budget without clear goals. (2) Procedures and policies can be too informal. People need a way to following a pathway to build ministries. (3) The church board is probably too large. It has 23 members and spends two-and-half to three hours in each monthly meeting.

Worship Media Ministries — Steve Malcolm, Brian Wright, Collier Rowe, Paul Kirkpatrick

These are task ministries that support worship and special events. These ministries do not have a particular target group. Although these are essential functions, it is not a relational ministry in the usual sense of the word. The video and web site activities do have the potential to become fully-developed ministries. They “take the Word of God outside the walls of the church into the world,” Paul points out. He reports that during the summer of 2008, “people watched and listened to our sermons from our web site over 3,178 times” and listed sign-ons from 41 nations outside the U.S.

These ministries function on Thursday nights for worship rehearsal, the Friday night youth ministry events and start by 8 a.m. each Sabbath, continuing through much of the day. There is a team of five individuals under Anthony Pringle who provide computer support, a team of six under Paul Kirkpatrick who produce video and a team of seven under Collier Rowe who operate the sound system. In addition, two people serve (on rotation) as the technical director for worship services. Video of worship is streaming on the church web site and MP3 audio files can be downloaded. Also, Paul is president of Laurel Cable TV and has arranged for the New Hope worship services to be on cable TV at 8 a.m., noon and 8 p.m. each Sunday. *It Is Written* is released at 9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., next to the New Hope programming.

Currently there are 21 individuals functioning in this area, but the real need is for 40 individuals, four teams of about 10 individuals each. This would make it possible for each person to serve just one week a month.

Collier reports that two people are needed to staff each event. Currently seven people work about one Sabbath a month, although nine are needed for a fully-staffed team. Nine people signed up for the sound ministry at the Ministry Fair and have not responded to Collier’s email contacts. Collier trusts any one of the current seven individuals to be in charge when he is not available. He has not been told if there is a budget for the AV Sound Ministry: the only regular expense is that of repairs from time to time. Paul reports that ten people signed up at the Ministry Fair for the video team and none of these have actually become involved.

In addition to on-the-job training, there are quarterly meetings for coordination and problem-solving. (Only about a third of the total group shows up.) Once or twice a year a seminar is presented by a professional in some related area of technology.

The sound group has a closet assigned to it and the video team has two rooms which they share with the Spanish translators, but Media Ministries really needs a production area that can be locked and is not shared with other ministries. Currently it has nothing but a mailbox in the office. Brian reports that the current budget for Media Ministries is \$500 a year. He has contributed considerable time plus a small amount of cash out of his own pocket for un-reimbursed items. Paul reports that there is \$10,000 “on hold” for

some new equipment. A new switcher was recently purchased for \$1,200. About \$1,700 a year in income is generated from the purchase of CDs and DVDs. He has spent about \$1,000 a year in unreimbursed expenses for the church web site.

Asked what this ministry needs from the Church and/or denomination, Brian reported that there is a real need to upgrade the equipment. That would cost \$100,000 to \$400,000 to do. Steve stated "there is a lot we could do with television and video, but there is no budget. The equipment is outdated." Paul also stated the need for better video equipment. "It would take \$100,000 to \$150,000 to do it right, but it could cost half that." There was funding to rework the AV sound system, then the HVAC went out and had to be replaced unexpectedly. He is also concerned that there is too little organization and the structure of the Worship Media Ministries is too loose. Too much planning is done at the last minute.

General Observations

1. Many of the activities at New Hope Church are events and not true ministries with long-term networks of relational ministries. In practice, ministry at New Hope Church seems to be defined more as task than as relationship or process. Several of the people interviewed expressed a need for a clear process of defining and developing ministries.
2. A number of the people interviewed are leaders in general sense, but not clearly in charge of a specific ministry with a clear target audience and method of building outreach and nurture.
3. Some church leaders do not seem to have much sense of the real size of New Hope Church. Some of the estimates of potential numbers in the target groups of various ministries are significantly smaller than the real potential.
4. One of the Lay Pastors observed that those who attend the early service are more consistent in attendance, while those who attend the later service are variable. There are people who arrive around 1:15 p.m. who have already been to church elsewhere. "There is a need for a survey of the second service attenders over a three-month period of time."
5. No more than 125 families are linked to a Lay Pastor at the ratio of one to 15 and with only eight Lay Pastors. This means the majority of New Hope Church families are not involved in this kind of pastoral care.
6. A Lay Pastor estimates that out of 650 active members at New Hope Church, only about 220 are involved in some kind of volunteer ministry. "There is a need for a person to find people with specific gifts and invite them to take specific volunteer roles. Skilled leaders will take initiative and should be assigned responsible positions. Don't use a Rolls Royce to deliver pizza." Several ministry leaders mentioned the need to have another Ministry Fair so as to recruit additional volunteers. Many of the ministries at New Hope Church are significantly under-staffed at present.
7. The Pathfinder Club and SOS are large, financially complex ministries. Is the accounting and financial planning sufficiently well-developed to support these ministries? Both the chair of the Finance Committee and the treasurer express some concerns about the planning, budgeting and reporting procedures.
8. Evidently ministry leaders are not asked to give input in the budget planning process. No one was aware of a time each year when they could submit to the Finance Committee their financial needs or plans for the coming year.
9. A number of ministry leaders mentioned that communication needs to be improved at New Hope Church. One suggested the need for an Email listserv. Others expressed

more general concerns about how information is shared and the planning and coordination process at New Hope Church.

10. There are areas of ministry that were evidently not covered in the interviews. No information about Youth Ministries (the teenage or secondary school age group) was included, other than the fact supplied by Pastor Roda that the budget includes \$14,000 a year for youth ministries.

Specific Recommendations

I am not going to attempt to respond to every item raised in these interviews or even all of the observations listed above. There are some immediate recommendations that need rapid attention due to the dynamic situation at New Hope Church, which can be both a blessing and a hindrance to the growth of the congregation.

1. An Annual Planning Council should be conducted each year. This should begin on Sabbath afternoon and conclude on Sunday morning with a brunch. It should be a “must-attend” appointment for all ministry leaders. I have included an attachment with full details. This would provide the material that the budget process needs, as requested by the chairman of the Finance Committee. It would also provide a time and place to coordinate the goals and ministries of New Hope Church, get everyone “singing off the same page.”

2. A number of coordinating committees are needed to network the various ministries at New Hope Church and provide supervision/support for ministry development. Initially, I recommend the following:

A. **Discipleship Council** to include the leaders of the Lay Pastors, Small Group Ministry, Adult Sabbath School and Prayer Ministry

B. **Worship Council** to include the leaders of the Music Ministry, First Impact Ministries and Worship Media Ministries

C. **Youth & Children’s Ministries Council** which might *not* include the director of the Pathfinder Club since it is such a large ministry

Each of these should be chaired by a pastor and meet monthly for the first six months and then consider shifting to a schedule of four or six meetings a year. The membership of each of these councils should be kept relatively small, with just one key person from each of the named ministry areas.

3. There is a need for a humanitarian ministry focused on the local community. The weakest aspect of New Hope Church is its lack of substantive impact on the local

community. The local community could be defined as the Baltimore-Washington Metro area or Howard County, but it does not appear feasible to define it as the immediate neighborhood both because of the sparse housing around the church and the wide area from which the congregation comes. A full process of community assessment, planning and ministry development is needed. A director needs to be added to the paid staff of New Hope Church. Perhaps an immediate step that can be taken is to negotiate an arrangement with Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington in which New Hope Church becomes a constituent church of the agency and it opens a branch office in a shopping center near New Hope and hires an assistant director who will spend half of his or her time working with the development of a community ministry in collaboration with New Hope Church.

4. Several leaders requested another Ministry Fair at New Hope Church. Considering that about two thirds of those who attend the church regularly do not appear to be involved in any ministry, I recommend that a Sabbath be devoted to a Ministry Fair twice a year, in September or early October and again in February. New Hope Church needs to clearly communicate the message that Jesus expects His followers to feed the hungry, serve the poor, minister to the sick, uplift the oppressed and announce the good news that “the Kingdom has come near unto you.” This requires a staff person and volunteer team to coordinate the placement of individuals in ministry roles.

I can assist the church staff in the implementation of Recommendation 1 above and train a team to continue to implement it in future years. I can also provide direct consultation and support on the other recommendations.

Table 1 -- Statistical Summary of New Hope Church Ministry Operations

Ministry Name	Average Attendance	Total Attendance	Not Members	Staff Now	Staff Needed	Estimated Expenses	Volunteer Hours	When Ministry Functions
Adult Sabbath School	150	200	50	6	18		6w	Sabbath mornings
Children's Church	80			50	50	\$3,900	60m	Sabbaths, 10:30 am
Discipleship/Small Groups		385	40	25	80	\$12,000	75w	Sabbath & throughout the w
Family Life Series		650	70			\$3,050		Annual event with small grou
Family Vision	60		30					Two weekends per year
First Impact	650	1,000	200	23	88		75w	Sabbath mornings
Kids to Kids				0	0			Quarterly event
Lay Pastors				10	30		50w	Sabbaths & by appointment
Middle School Ministries	7	50	0	12	12	\$2,500	4m	Sabbaths, 9:30 to 10:30 am
Mission Trip for Teens								Annual event
Music Ministry	650	1,000	200	35	50		40w	Sabbath mornings
Pathfinder Club	50	50	4	22	30	\$24,500	220m	Monthly: Wednesday evening
Pathfinder TLT	8	8						
Prayer Ministry	100	250	25	8	30		24w	Sabbath morning, Wednesda
Saved 2.8						\$1,050		2nd Friday evening of each m
Sharing Our Strength (SOS)	140	150	15	10		\$270,000		Monthly plus two trips per ye
SS Baby & Me				6	6	\$500	2w	Sabbath mornings
SS Toddlers	20			6	6	\$500	2w	Sabbath mornings
SS Preschool	15			6	6	\$500	2w	Sabbath mornings
SS Kindergarten	13			6	6	\$750	2w	Sabbath mornings
SS Grade 2 & 3	12			4	6	\$750	2w	Sabbath mornings
SS Grade 4 & 5	15			6	6	\$750	2w	Sabbath mornings
AV Sound Ministry				7	8			Two or three times a week
Teen Talk	30							Wednesday evenings
Vacation Bible School				75	75		300a	Annual event for one week
Workshops for Parents	10							Sabbath morning once a qual
Worship Media Ministries				21	40	\$2,200	75w	Sabbath mornings

See notes on the next page.

Average attendance = approximate participation at each event

Total attendance = every person involved in this ministry for the past year, subtracting duplication

Not members = persons from the total attendance who participate in this ministry but are not New Hope members

Staff now = any person doing anything for this ministry other than spectating; some paid, most are volunteers

Staff needed = if a full team were in place

Estimated Expenses = church budget + other donated funds + cash from the pockets of leaders

Volunteer Hours = Estimated total hours associated with this ministry, plus the leader's planning time
presented in weekly (w), monthly (m), quarterly (q), yearly (a) time frames

Blank spaces = people interviewed did not know or it does not apply

Strategic Planning Process & Tools

*by Monte Sahlin**

Over the years I have helped hundreds of volunteer and staff groups through a strategic planning process—grass-roots organizations, congregations, associations, non-profit agencies, denominational entities and institutions. I have also read hundreds of books, looked at samples of the manuals and procedures used in many organizations and tried a lot of new ideas.

It can all be very confusing. There are fundamental differences in the definition of terms as simple as "goal" and "objective." If professional planners cannot get clear on even basic terminology, do you have any chance at all in the wonderful world of "planning"?

Yet there are a handful of key tools and a simple road-map that I keep coming back to time and time again. No matter how unsophisticated the group, they seem to be able to use these tools to come together on some outcomes they want to achieve and agree on a way to get to those outcomes. That is what "planning" is all about.

The road-map or process flow-chart is displayed in Figure 1. The tools are described in a simple, generic way in the rest of this document. The descriptions are designed for a "facilitator" or "consultant" or a group leader to use in guiding a group through the process.

The result of this process will be a document that says for the group "This is what we are going to do for the next period of time and why we are going to do it." That document is a "strategic plan."

This paper is about group planning, not individual planning. For an individual to sit down and create a plan is one level of difficulty. For a group to develop a plan together and buy into it so there is shared ownership, is a higher level of difficulty. The main reason for all of the process and tools is to assure an orderly, non-manipulative process of pooling ideas, negotiating different viewpoints and coming to a shared vision of what "we" will do.

There are two important statements you must understand before you start reading the rest of this material. Otherwise, it may not make much sense to you.

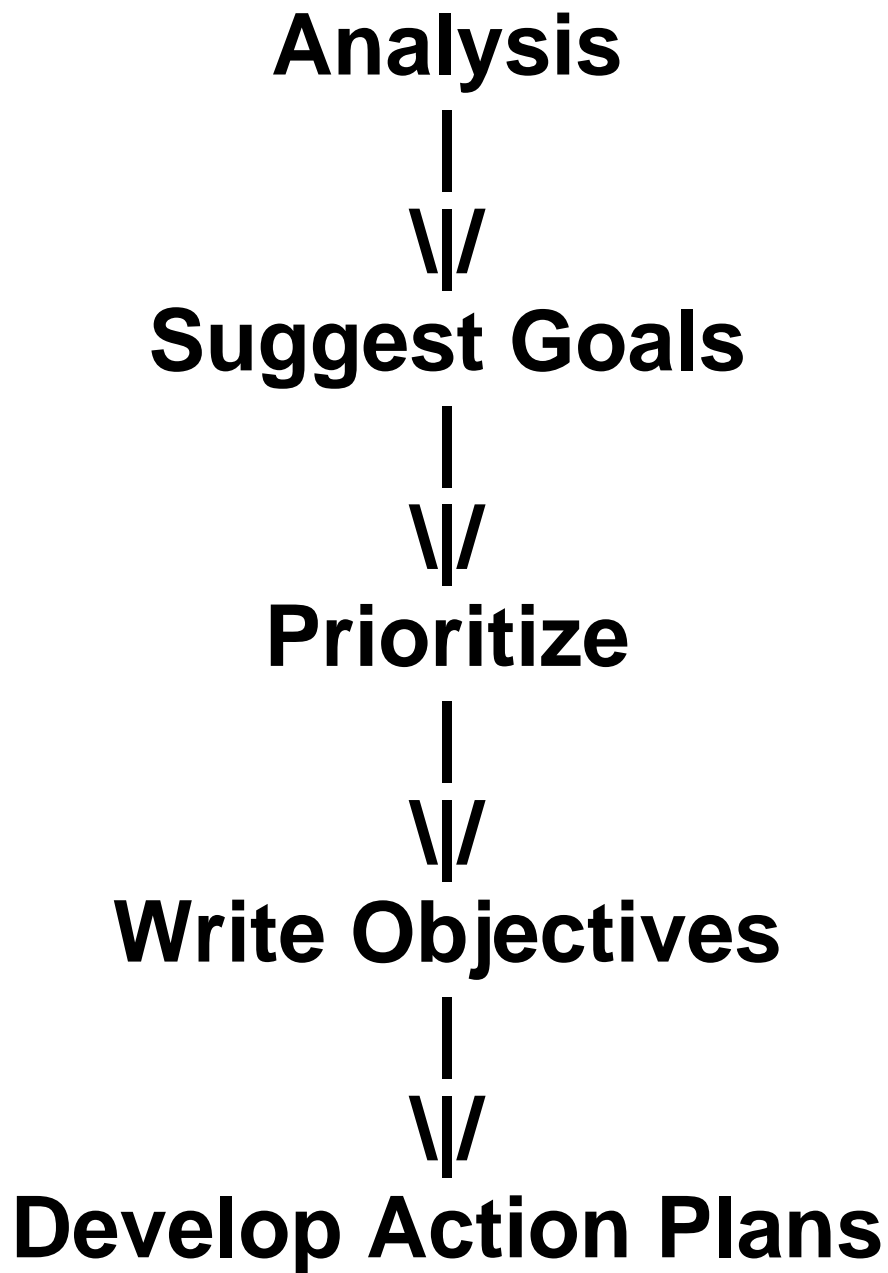
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Number one, I assume that before you begin this process a basic purpose or mission statement for the organization already exists. It is my experience that the mission of any organization comes from a few visionary leaders who convene the first meeting of a new group, or who have been elevated to key roles in an established group. If people do not agree with that fundamental purpose, they do not come to the meeting and do not participate in the planning process.

[A side trip is in order here: What about the organization that has been around for some time and does not have a mission statement that a significant number of group members agree to? Maybe the purpose of the organization has been lost from memory, or times have changed to the point that the mission statement of the organization no longer seems adequate. That is a different sort of problem than this set of tools addresses. That is a process called "renewal" through which an organization re-discovers or re-invents its basic purpose. If your organization is in need of renewal, then it is a bad time to do strategic planning. An organization that lacks a strong consensus about its mission statement will have a very difficult time in moving into any effective action plan.]

Number two, I assume that the group will work through this process from a mindset called "appreciative inquiry." That is, the focus will be on the values and assets of the organization; what we can achieve based on what we've demonstrated in our history and the resources we know we can mobilize, rather than on problem-solving and a negative, judgmental evaluation process. There are times when problem-solving is necessary, but the basic plan for any enterprise must be built from strength, not from a negative analysis.

FIGURE 1



Session One

Time Required -- 90 minutes

Purpose of This Meeting -- To gather facts about the organization and to evaluate those facts so that the group can list the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the enterprise. This provide an "information base" for the whole planning process. Sometimes it is called a "self-study" or "assessment."

Advance Preparations

1. Make copies of the SWOT Analysis worksheet
2. Gather statistical information about the organization and the context in which it works—neighborhood, city or county—or the kind of issues you want to focus on; an ethnic group or a particular set of needs
3. Make a fact sheet to hand out summarizing key statistical information; use graphics if possible
4. Make a display of photos and clippings from the history of the organization or parent organization or partner organizations involved or a "history sheet" with key dates of major events and names of key players over the years

Agenda

1. A briefing on the information in the fact sheet presented by the facilitator or some other "expert" (20 minutes)
2. A history-giving exercise of some kind (20 minutes)

Option A - *If this is an organization with some history*, go around the circle and ask group members to list some of the most important things that they remember (post this list on a flip-chart or some other visual). Then, go around a second time and list the important values or assets visible in the first list.

Option B - *If this is a new project, just getting started*, go around the circle and ask group members to list some of the values and assets they bring as individuals or the potential partner organizations and activities that can be allied with the new effort.

3. Work through the SWOT worksheet (50 minutes)
4. Close with a season of prayer -- Ask that the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of the group and help them see Christ's purpose for the organization.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Session Two

Time Required -- 2 hours

Purpose of This Meeting -- To gather all of the possibilities from which the group can choose its objectives for the future and then to establish priorities.

Advance Preparations

1. Make copies of the Forced Pairing Score Sheet
2. Make copies of the mission statement or statement of purpose for the organization
3. Type up the results of the SWOT analysis and make copies of the four lists (or make four posters to put up in the room)
4. Have a supply of 5-by-8-inch cards for the group, and enough flip-chart pages or pieces of poster board equal to 33% of the total number of people in the group. You will also need three marker pens, a role of masking tape, and a room in which you can tape large sheets of paper or poster board up on the wall. You may also need 3-by-5 cards or small slips of paper.

Agenda

1. The mission statement for the organization is passed out and a key leader reads it over with the group and asks about readiness to move ahead (10 minutes)
2. Facilitator quickly reviews the four lists from the SWOT analysis (15 minutes)
3. Pass out blank 5-by-8-inch cards and ask each person to jot down some things he or she would like to see the organization do during the next year (or years). The participants should work silently by themselves. (10 minutes)
4. Ask the people to find partners and work in two's next. Once they are paired off, have them exchange cards and interview each other. Each person is to look over the other person's list and then ask him or her questions that will make the items more specific and concrete. Ask them to explain what they mean and what they really want to achieve by the suggestions they have jotted down. Each person is to write the new and expanded ideas on the card. (20 minutes)
5. Bring everyone back together and collect all the cards. Then have the group divide themselves into three groups, each to work at a different table. (Each table should be supplied with sheets of flip-chart paper or posterboard and a felt-tip marker pen.) Give each group about a third of the stack of cards, and ask them to read quickly through the cards and make a summary of the ideas suggested on the large sheet(s) of

paper. They are to weed out duplications and combine ideas that are quite similar. Tell them how much time they have to work. (30 minutes)

6. As the working groups complete their summary sheets, post them in the front of the room. When all three summary sheets are up, quickly go through them in front of the whole group and eliminate duplications, combine ideas that are similar, and renumber the whole list from beginning to end.

7. *If there are more than about a dozen items on the final list, you will need to weed it down before you go to step 8.* Pass out 3-by-5-inch cards or small slips of paper and ask people to jot down the numbers of several items on the list that seem least important to them. This is an elimination round. Ask somebody to help you and quickly count the cards as they come back in and eliminate enough items to get down to twelve or fifteen items on the final list.

8. Pass out the Forced Pairing score sheets and explain how to score them and how the final list will be placed in priority order. Explain that the report will be given at the next meeting, or they can wait after the meeting until you get the calculations done and posted.

9. Make sure you collect a score sheet from each person before he or she leaves, and have a time of prayer for God's continue guidance in the development of the plan for your organization.

Score Sheet for Priorities

Compare each set of two of the listed items, and circle the item you believe to be of higher priority.

1/2 1/3 1/4 1/5 1/6 1/7 1/8 1/9 1/10 1/11 1/12 1/13 1/14

2/3 2/4 2/5 2/6 2/7 2/8 2/9 2/10 2/11 2/12 2/13 2/14

3/4 3/5 3/6 3/7 3/8 3/9 3/10 3/11 3/12 3/13 3/14

4/5 4/6 4/7 4/8 4/9 4/10 4/11 4/12 4/13 4/14

5/6 5/7 5/8 5/9 5/10 5/11 5/12 5/13 5/14

6/7 6/8 6/9 6/10 6/11 6/12 6/13 6/14

7/8 7/9 7/10 7/11 7/12 7/13 7/14

8/9 8/10 8/11 8/12 8/13 8/14

9/10 9/11 9/12 9/13 9/14

10/11 10/12 10/13 10/14

11/12 11/13 11/14

12/13 12/14

13/14

Session Three

Time Required -- 90 minutes

Purpose of This Meeting -- To write a few specific, measurable objectives that describe in concrete form the results or outcomes that the group wants to accomplish by the end of the year (or years).

Advance Preparation

1. Collate the results of the Forced Pairing exercise and type a reorganized list of possibilities, placing each item in priority order and showing the number of votes that each item received. Make copies of this report to hand out.
2. Make copies of the worksheet for writing objectives.

Agenda

1. Facilitator presents the results of the last session, asks for any discussion, and then takes a consensus vote to adopt the list as the areas in which objectives will be developed for the next year or years. (15 minutes)

[At this stage in the process there may need to be a discussion of "How many things can we do in one year?" A small group, just getting started, may not be able to attain ten or a dozen objectives in one year. The group needs to come to consensus about where to draw the line -- the top three, the top five, whatever.]

2. Divide the group into teams of two or three people each. Each team is assigned (or can select) one of the items on the list. Each team is given a worksheet and asked to write an objective for that item.

3. Teams work separately and each writes an objective. (45 minutes)

4. At the end of the meeting, collect the finished worksheets and select someone to edit them for grammar, measurability, etc., and put them into the form of a report for the next session. (If you have time, you might also have each team read the objective they have written to the entire group.)

5. End with a season of prayer that the Holy Spirit will give energy and power as the organization gets down to the most difficult part -- implementation of the plans are being developed.

Worksheet for Writing Objectives

Goal: *A goal sets direction, but it is never completely attained. Write a sentence or two that describes the future outcome you want to achieve.*

--

Observable Indicators: *Each observable indicator provides a significant step toward your goal above. Write three observable indicators, making them concrete, measurable and observable. Examples: a major event, a document, a plan, a program, a statistical change, a policy, a number of clients/patients/students served/enrolled.*

#1
#2
#3

Session Four

Time Required -- 90 minutes

Purpose of This Meeting -- To set aside specific time, personnel, money and other resources for each of the proposed objectives so that there is a clear and specific way to implement what is planned. The results will be a budget for the project, a calendar or time-line for the activities, and specific assignments so that the leaders and others involved will know for what they are to be held accountable. This is sometimes called a "work program" or "action plan."

Preparations

1. The objectives should be taken from the worksheets used at the last session and typed up in paragraph format. The resulting document should be copied to hand out at this meeting.
2. Copies will be needed of the Action Plan Worksheet.

Agenda

1. Facilitator presents the handout sheet of objectives written at the last meeting and opens the floor to discussion before taking a consensus vote. (15 minutes)
2. Divide the group into teams of two or three people each and give each team one of the objectives and a worksheet to complete. (45 minutes)
3. Collect the worksheets and hear a brief report from each of the teams.
4. *If relevant*, discuss where the plan must go to be given final approval. Must it be presented to a constituency meeting or board to be officially voted? How often will progress be reviewed and by what group?
5. Close with prayer, thanking God for His leadership during the planning process and placing the plan in His hands for Him to bless and use to achieve His mission on earth.

Writing Objectives: Verbs are Key

When you write objectives, remember that verbs control the language. The following five principles will help you to select verbs which will move you into action.

1. **Avoid** verbs which point to an outcome beyond the ability of your group to achieve.

Some of these verbs are:

- request
- invite
- persuade
- offer

Recommendation: Don't use these verbs.

2. **Avoid** verbs which describe a process but *not* the outcome for which the process is undertaken. Some of these verbs are:

- seek
- try to
- survey
- discuss
- review
- continue
- grow
- advance
- serve
- encourage
- influence

Recommendation: Press for the verb which gives the reason *why* behind the process verb. Example: "Try to recruit three persons ..." becomes, "Enlist three persons ..."

3. **Avoid** verbs which express results so vague that people cannot agree on what is meant. Some of these verbs are:

- appreciate
- understand
- know

Recommendation: Don't use these verbs.

4. **Avoid** verbs which are limited to thinking rather than acting. Some of these verbs are:

- investigate
- study
- examine
- think about
- consider

Recommendation: Save these verbs for first steps in your detailed action plans.

5. **Avoid** verbs which express change *unless* you clearly state your starting point, the time period to be used, *and* the amount of change you want. Such as:

- increase
- deepen
- enhance
- preserve
- support
- maintain
- decrease
- reduce

Recommendation: Be sure you specify your starting point, the time period needed, and the amount of change you want. Example: "Increase your outreach teams," becomes, "Increase our outreach teams from two teams to four teams in six months."

Why Plans Fail

Central to improving how you plan is finding out why some plans fail. It is simple enough; discover what contributes to failure and what must be done to reduce the possibility of failure. If you do not work hard, failure is a certainty. But hard work alone is not enough to avoid failure. It is more important to work smarter. You work smarter by learning from seven basic reasons why plans fail.

1. No Real Goals

If there are no goals, then there is no real plan. Oddly enough many leaders do not actually know what a real goal is. They may point to some ideal mission statement that uses words such as “improve” or “grow” or “increase ministry,” but these are vague words and result in fantasy instead of goals. If your goal statement does not describe a condition or an end-state you want, it is not a goal.

2. No Measurable Objectives

If you do not know just what you intend to do, you will never know if you did it. Objectives are the guides to action. They must contain action verbs or “doables.” Without such action there will be little movement toward the accomplishment of goals. Objectives must be stated so they are measurable.

3. Failure to Anticipate Obstacles

No one can think of every contingency. Rash enthusiasm hampers a sensible effort to take account of possible obstacles and pitfalls. Every plan, no matter how carefully prepared, has limitations and built-in conflicts over priorities and resources. Planners who identify possible obstacles and ways to overcome them have good results more often than those who do not. Effective planners take what at first they perceive to be large obstacles and break them down into small hurdles. They then develop ways to overcome each of the smaller difficulties. A plan should be flexible enough to handle obstacles, whether anticipated or not.

4. Lack of Milestones or Progress Reviews

Plans that fail often have no concrete milestones or dates to review progress. Or the milestones are allowed to skip by unnoticed. Famous last words in planning include, “It can wait.” Or, “I can remember that.” Or, “I know how I am doing.” Periodic reviews of progress can alert you to the need for adjusting your plans or even revising your objectives. Milestones reached provide an important sense of accomplishment and desire to succeed further. Effective progress reviews provide a test of direction and pace. They also provide a check on the reality of the plan as you move along.

5. Lack of Commitment

Personal commitment is critical to the success of any plan. Church members may be hindered in long-range planning without a personal commitment from the pastor to support the process. The reverse is also true. Commitment means the willingness to see a plan through to its completion. Commitment is stimulated by taking part in the creation of the plan, especially setting goals and writing objectives. Involve as many persons as possible in the planning process.

6. Failure to Revise Objectives

A sure way to torpedo the best plan is the failure to restudy and reset objectives when indicated by new facts. Failure results when plans are not flexible enough to respond to changes in circumstances. It is important to rewrite plans when necessary.

7. Failure to Learn from Experience

This happens when leaders are unwilling to change the way the organization does things. Many take comfort in the thought, "It has worked before, therefore it must produce results." This attitude, however, will prevent you from ever finding out if it is the best plan for this time and situation.

Summary

Learning how to plan is easier than learning how to prevent plan from failing. The seven basic reasons why plans fail listed in this report come from careful research in a large number of organizations. (See source below.) The chart below lists these seven reasons why plans fail and gives the symptoms which signal their presence and some of the best cures now available.

Jeffrey A. Timmons, Leonard E. Smollen, and Alexander L. M. Dingee, Jr. (1977). *New Venture Creation*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc.

Reasons for Failure	Symptoms	Cures
No real goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Do not reflect the church's purpose statement -Talk about program plans -Are vague—sound good, say little -Completely beyond the reach of the church -Not “owned” by membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relate goals to purpose statement -Rewrite goals so they describe end-states you want to reach or conditions you want to bring about -Involve more members in goal writing
No measurable objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are not related to a goal -Are not measurable, specific or time-phased -Do not contain action verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build each objective from a goal -Answer in objectives such questions as: Who? How many? Where? When? -Identify short term and long term objectives -Use action verbs in the statement
Failure to anticipate obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Excessive optimism -Closing your eyes to conflicts -Completion dates not met -“I forgot about it.” -Did not get support when needed -Crises are common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take time to list possible obstacles -Prepare ways to overcome the obstacles -Be realistic in setting dates -Check details in the plan -Talk to the leader who manages the plan -Revise the plan
Lack of commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Putting things off -Just doing daily, routine activities -“I don't care what happens.” -Have not set priorities -Key leaders skip meetings -No reports submitted -Pastor or church members do not “own” the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Involve others in the planning process -Share proposed plans early so new ideas can influence their development -Give opportunity for the small groups in your congregation to discuss the plan -Talk with each team member to find out the level of his or her commitment -Recruit replacements as necessary -Celebrate successes

Reasons for Failure	Symptoms	Cures
Lack of milestones and progress reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Completion dates not set -“It can wait ... I can remember that” -“Let’s play this by ear” -Don’t really know how you are doing; lack of assessment data as base-line indicators -Everything is short-term; no long-term aspects -Don’t remember when the last review took place -No plans revised recently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Set specific task milestones; stick to them -See that a program manager is on the job -Review your progress on the dates set -Ask the question: Are we making enough progress toward the objective?
Failure to revise objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plans never change -Being inflexible, refusing to face new facts that call for change -No sense of movement toward objectives -Help not sought when needed -Waste time on programs that do not work -Programs do not fit your priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Deliberately seek feedback -Compare feedback with your standards for achieving the objective -Change emphasis and approach when it is appropriate -Encourage leaders to re-convene the planning group when revision is needed -Review progress more often
Failure to learn from experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lose sight of goals -Repeat mistakes -Feedback is ignored -No program evaluations -Face the same crisis again and again -Unwillingness to change ways of doing things -Never asking, “What did we learn this time?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use milestones to review progress -Have program units meet with the planning group -Keep a record of changes made as a result of evaluation -Concentrate on results, not on giving reports for their own sake