



Church Jumpstart:

A 10-Week Journey Towards Reviving Our Church

Session 3: Look Up

New Wine

In the crushing in the pressing
You are making new wine
In the soil I now surrender
You are breaking new ground
(You are breaking new ground)
So I yield to You and to Your careful hand
When I trust You I don't need to understand

*(So) Make me Your vessel
Make me an offering
Make me whatever You want me to be
(God) I came here with nothing
But all You have given me
Jesus bring new wine out of me*

Jesus bring new wine out of me
Jesus bring new wine out of me

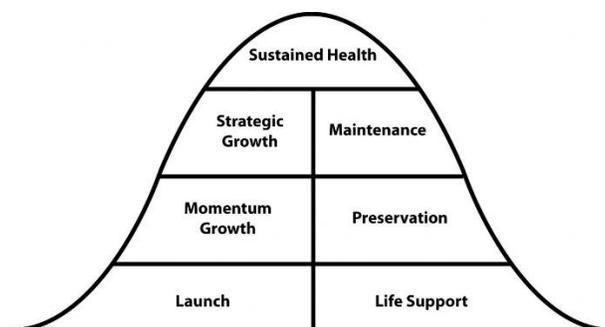
'Cause where there is new wine
There is new power
There is new freedom
And the kingdom is here
I lay down my old flames
To carry Your new fire today

Brooke Ligertwood © 2017 Hillsong Music Publishing (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

In a sentence, what is this song about?

Discussion of *The Unstuck Church*

Chapter 5: Maintenance – It's Time To Embrace A New Vision



1. At the count of three, everyone say, “Oh-oh.” What’s just happened when a church topples over into the “Maintenance” segment of the church life-cycle?

2. According to Tony Morgan, what are some characteristics of this phase?

Attendance growth **plateaus** or **declines**.

The church becomes **inwardly** - focused.

The vision **stales**.

Ministry **silos** begin to form.

The church becomes **overstaffed**.

Yet, interestingly enough, churches at this stage are still financially healthy. Morgan writes:

“As the church matures, there is often a higher percentage of people who are mature in their faith. Because of this dynamic, attendance may be in decline, but giving is still very strong. Since giving is still strong it's not unusual for churches to live in denial. There's no pain.”

As we will learn soon in “looking back”, twice in the church’s recent past (1986 and 1993), alarm bells were sounded by people concerned about decline in our attendance, and a lack of growth in new disciples. Interestingly – and sadly – though a number of practical recommendations were offered, no real changes were made, and the church continued lurching downwards on the lifecycle. Why do you think this was?

Why is pain usually the best motivator is compelling us to change?

4. For churches that don't want to wait till the pain kicks in, Morgan offers a number of suggestions for what to do to return to health.

Renew the Vision: Embrace The Change Before The Emergency Forces The Change

"I've noticed that sometimes leaders get confused about mission and vision. They are not the same thing. I've also seen churches hold on to these pseudo-vision statements for way too long. Without specifics, you can't paint the picture of the future. Without that clear picture, it's impossible to rally people to the cause. The vision needs to be refreshed every few years or so."

Just as a reminder, let's take our quiz again. Connect the following to their best definition:

<i>Mission</i>	<i>What the church is to become</i>
<i>Vision</i>	<i>Day-to-Day methods for carrying out the strategy</i>
<i>Core Values</i>	<i>The specific plan of what the church will do</i>
<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Why the church exists</i>
<i>Systems</i>	<i>Description of the Leadership Culture</i>

Here are some quotes from earlier in the book you may find helpful:

"The mission statement should express...what your church is all about. The vision statement, on the other hand, describes where you picture the church to be heading in the future."



"That simple mission statement is the foundation for everything else...Typically, in twelve words or less, [the mission statement] answers the question: Why do we exist?"

"In addition to mission buy-in, though, everyone needs to clearly know where they are going. That's the vision. The vision has to be specific and measurable. It will probably be reflected in several statements that paint a clear picture of where God is taking your church in the future. If you have a solid vision, it will both rally and repel people."

What happens to us when we lose vision for our lives?

When renewing a vision for the church, what tips does Morgan give (pp.125-126).

Prioritize Reaching New People: Reconfirm The Primary Person You're Trying To Reach Who Is Outside The Church

This quote from Morgan is critical to reflect on:

"If I had to identify only one key factor distinguishing churches on the left side of the life cycle and those on the right side, it would be this one. Churches that are moving up the lifecycle towards sustained health maintain a focus on reaching people outside the faith and outside the church. The further down the life cycle they go, the more inward-focused they are.

The key question that leaders need to address is, what are we willing to do to reach people outside the church and outside the faith? The churches on the upswing will do just about anything short of sin to reach new people. If what they're doing today doesn't accomplish that goal, they'll embrace changes as they move forward toward accomplishing that goal."

If you're an underlining kind of guy or gal, what sentences did you underline in the above passage? Why?

How does Morgan distinguish between outward-focused churches and inward-focused churches? (pp.127-130)

Outward-Focused

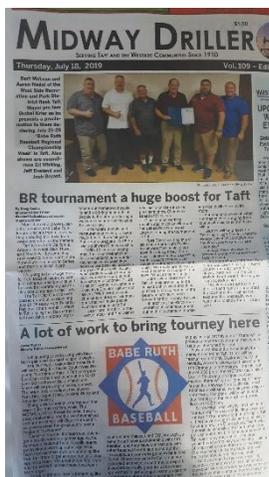
Inward-Focused

What are we?

One person we'd recommend reading a lot from on the web (if you're concerned with church-health issues) is Dr. Thom Rainer. His website, thomrainer.com, is filled with very useful articles and podcasts. Here's a segment from an article he wrote this summer. Pay close attention to the suggestions he makes for how to reach new people.

THE HEALTHY CHURCH IN 2029: TEN MAJOR CHANGES IN TEN YEARS

1. **There will be a high intentionality of evangelism and gospel presence.** We passed through the phase of programmatic evangelism without much impact. We are presently in the stage of non-intentionality, and our low-conversion churches reflect that reality. Healthy churches will be highly intentional about evangelism without it being program-driven.
2. **These churches will be favored in the community.** Someone recently asked me if most churches had a negative reputation in their communities. I told her no, that most churches have no reputation in their communities. The healthy church in 2029 will seek see the community as a place to serve and minister, rather than a pool of prospects to increase attendance. Look also for neighborhood churches to increase their impact in communities.
3. **Healthy churches will not have members holding the congregation back for sacred cows and traditions.** The members of the healthy churches will embrace change rather than fight it. They will be more concerned about the gospel in the community rather than the style of music in the sanctuary. Change-resistant members will move to unhealthy and dying churches where they will exacerbate the sickness and speed the process of dying.
4. **Healthy churches in 2029 will become more innovative in how they utilize their facilities.** Most congregations don't come close to utilizing their facilities effectively today. The lack of usage throughout the week is terrible stewardship. Many healthy churches will figure out ways to partner with community businesses and organizations with their facilities.



So I saw this article Friday when I came into town. If we're thinking as Tony Morgan and Thom Rainer are urging us to think, what should pop into our minds and hearts when we see something like this?

Let's now **LOOK BACK** and listen to some voices from our past.

Let's read the short report, "Report Of The Church Growth Committee", written back in 1986 by a small team of FBC leaders, commissioned to study a serious decade-long decline in church attendance.

After reading the report, let's share our thoughts and observations, based on what we've discussed in this session. Jot some reflections down in the space below.

For next week:

- Continue your work on your "I Love Jesus Because..." and 30-Second Testimony projects.
- Read or review chapter 5, "*Maintenance*" in "The Unstuck Church".
- Go to the church website, fbctaft.com, and under the Resources / Church Jumpstart tabs, click on the 1993 paper *An Accurate Picture of the First Baptist Church*. You can read it or print it straight from your computer. We'll discuss this next week.