



Sub Models of Church Types

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Conversionist Church

- The world and the church are clearly distinguished in terms of people, i.e. there are unbelievers and believers, lost and saved.
- The church has a clear way of identifying itself, such as a main Sunday meeting that is a reasonable representation of who belongs to the church.
- The church also has additional activities that will clarify who are the committed and more spiritually mature members of the church.
- Conversion is mainly through an initial contact, maybe something like the Alpha Course, with subsequent stages to deepen the faith towards maturity.
- Its strategy is to see individuals converted. I.e. it works to change individuals to fit the church.

Generationally Sustainable Church

- The church can sustain itself over long periods purely through the physical offspring of the church members.
- Conversion is not required for survival as long as the birth rate is not less than the death rate and people do not leave.
- It is typical of church in previous generations when there was less social mobility and may also reflect situations in some non-western cultures.
- It has no strategy other than to stay intact.

Contextual Church

- It redefines the boundaries of church to fit the context of society in order to include people who are not committed to the core beliefs of the church.
- It draws people to the central core through a series of phases that could be ends in themselves, e.g. mums & toddlers -> messy church -> family service -> Eucharist. The phases act as bridges from the context of society to that of the church, or they could be regarded as a particular expression of church in their own right.
- It may not be clear to people in one phase that the purpose is to take them to the next phase.
- This includes the seeker sensitive approach typical of Willow Creek, or the entertainment programmes introduced in Victorian times.
- At its extreme the central core may itself be blurred and the phases may all be regarded as equally legitimate expressions of church, as in Emerging Church.
- Its strategy is to change church to fit the societal context with the intention that individuals are included immediately and will then gradually change.