

MSM1-1 Our Focus

Committing ourselves to growth

Opening prayer



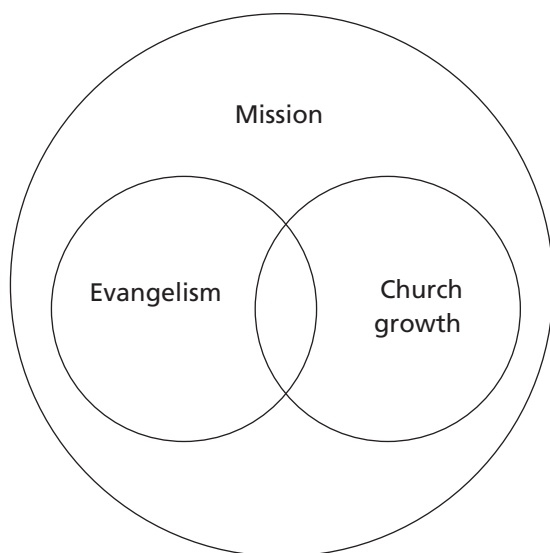
God of mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible



³¹ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

Matthew 13:31-32 (NIV)



Defining the terms

Mission – the big overall vision

- Social and community projects
- Environmental and poverty issues
- Outreach generally

Evangelism – a key part of mission

- Sharing the Good News
- Helping people to become Christians
- Encouraging Christians to do evangelism

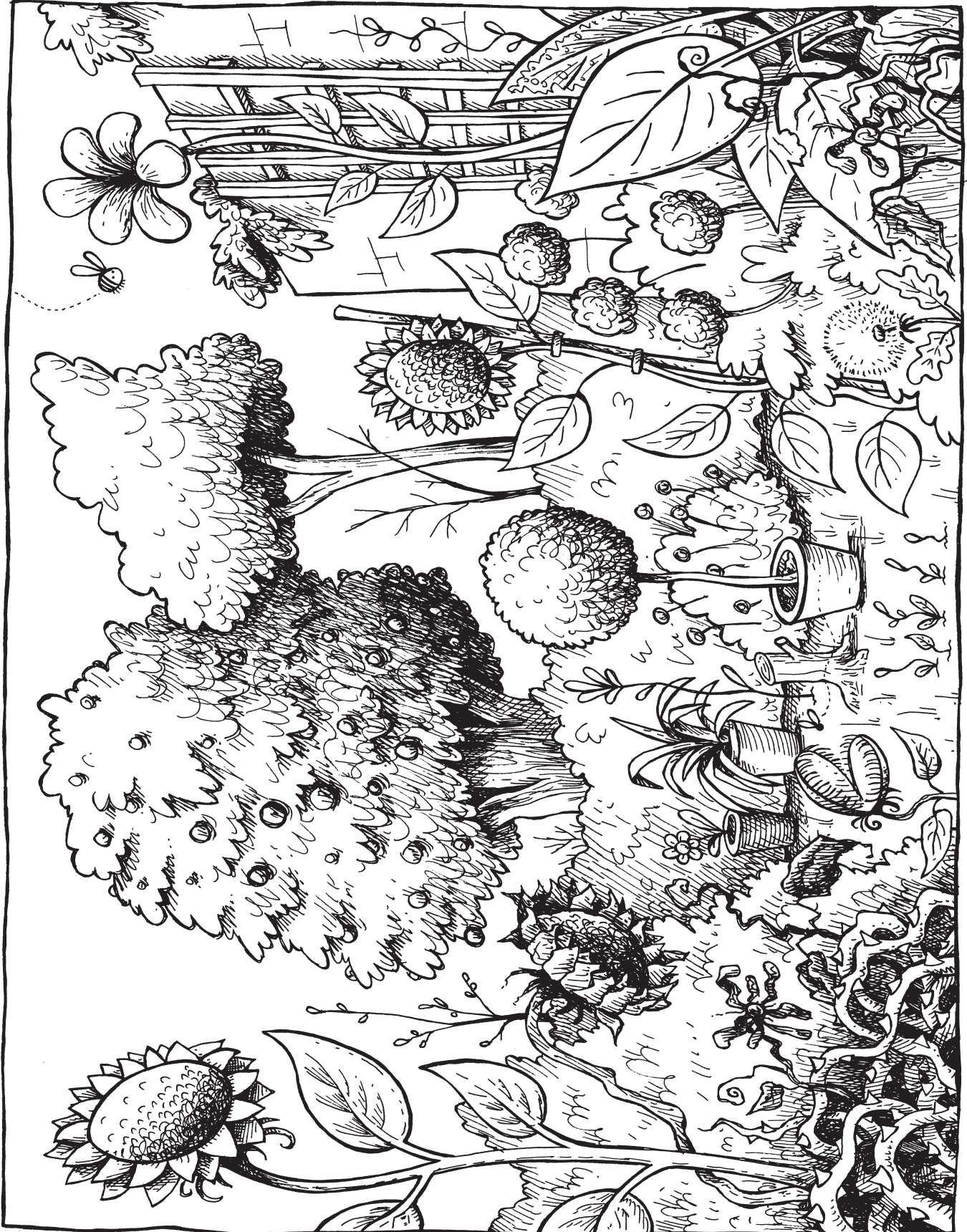
Church growth – seeing signs of the Kingdom

- Spiritual growth
- Numerical growth
- Growth in service

Exercise: Growing healthy churches



On the picture of the garden below pick plants that best represent the 'health' of your church in each of the following categories: mission, evangelism and church growth.

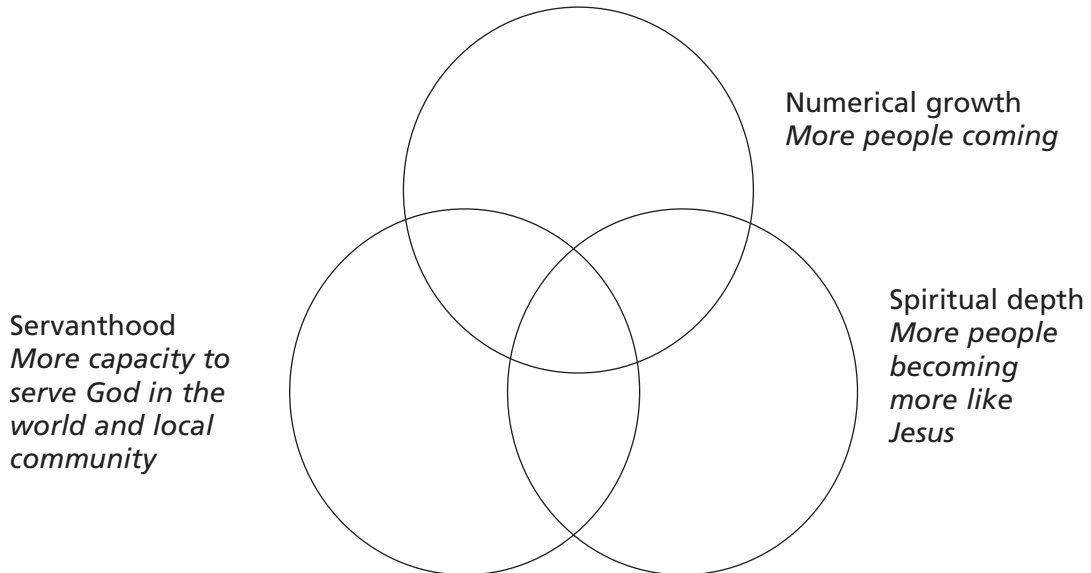


MSM1-3

Exercise: Three circles



- What could you do as a church, and as an individual, to improve the health of your church in these three areas? You could write some ideas in each of the circles.
- Which is the key circle for your church over the next 12 months?



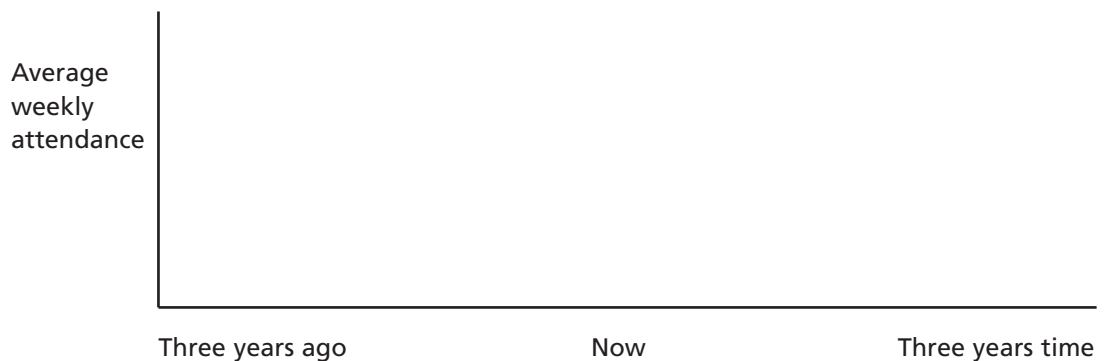
'Leading your Church into Growth – local' is a course with a strong emphasis on numerical growth but which also addresses the challenge of spiritual growth and growth in service.

MSM1-4

Exercise: The three year graph



Look at the church growth graph which your leaders drew up.



If you haven't got a copy of this graph you might like to draw your own. Imagine your currently weekly attendance and put a point on the graph. Thinking back three years – was your average weekly attendance higher, lower or the same? Put a point on the graph to show this. Finally put a point to indicate where you think your church attendance might be in three years' time. Then join up the points that you have marked.

Talk in small groups (4 or 5 people)

How do you react to the graph?

How do you think your church should respond over the next three years?

What could you do?

Exercise: Maintenance and mission



Maintenance Church

Key question: How do we keep going?

- Main focus on pastoral activities
- Worship based on a tradition of what we like/have always done
- Church life based on what we have done in the past
- An institution
- Disappearing

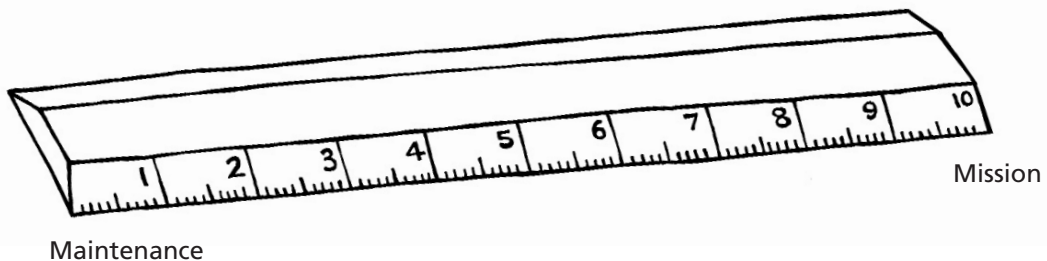
Mission Church

Key question: How do we keep growing?

- Focus on pastoral and mission activities
- Worship based on a tradition of helping the congregation and visitors experience encounter God (user-friendly)
- Church life and strategy based on 'What do we need to do now?'
- A movement
- Appearing

There are a good number of churches that do lots of maintenance, but who are doing maintenance in the service of mission. There are also many churches who only seem to do maintenance, and mission never seems to be part of their thinking.

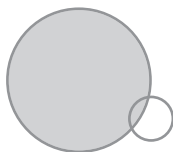
Do you think you are primarily a maintenance or a mission church? Place a mark on the scale to show where you think your church is.



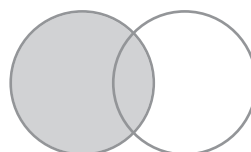
MSM1-5

Exercise: maintenance and mission (Alternative)

Which picture best illustrates the balance of maintenance and mission in your church?



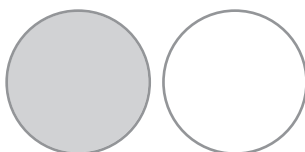
Maintenance Mission



Maintenance Mission



Maintenance Mission



Maintenance Mission



Maintenance Mission



Maintenance Mission

You may wish to draw your own picture to represent the balance of maintenance and mission in your church.

Discuss your response as a group.

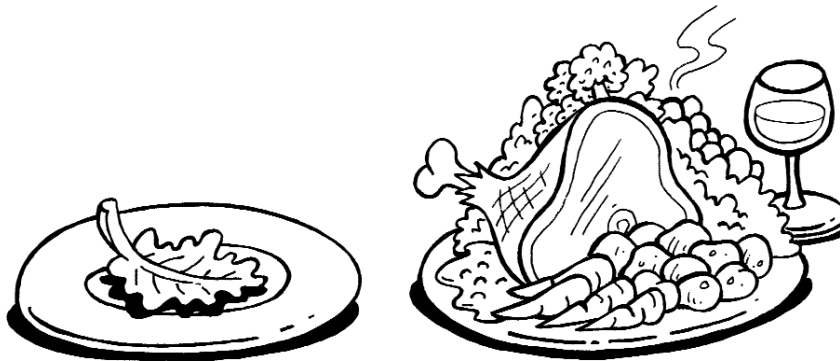
MSM1-6

Exercise: DNA of church growth

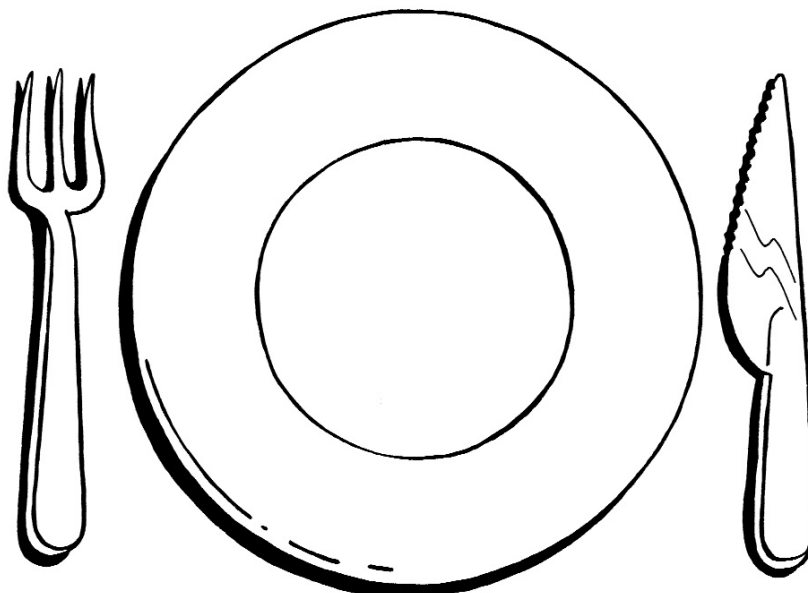


The image above illustrates the DNA of church growth. Churches need to act in order to grow. Rather than just doing lots of things it is good to have a clear plan. Before acting on the plan it's important to have the desire to grow the church. Without 'desire', DNA of Church Growth becomes NA (slang for No) or N/A (Not Applicable).

How much desire for church growth do you have? How hungry are you (for growth)? Use the pictures below to express this.



On the dinner plate below draw a meal that shows how hungry you are for your church to grow. The size and type of meal can help to illustrate your 'appetite' or desire for growth.



MSM1-7

Response boxes

What things have struck you during this session?

In order to help our church grow

- What should you be doing as an individual?

- What should we be doing as a church?

- Is there anything else that has struck you during the session?

You might want to record your responses in the boxes above.

Your group leader may ask to collect responses from you so that some anonymous feedback can be given to your church leadership team.

Reflection and prayer



¹⁵ *“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”*

¹⁶ *Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”*

¹⁷ *Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.*

¹⁸ *And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

Matthew 16:15-19 (NIV)