

NCD PATHWAY 6 – Effective Structures 1

Our last three topics, Passionate Spirituality, Holistic Small Groups and Loving Relationships, are to a high degree reliant on the individual and their relationships with God and others. The characteristic of Effective Structures, while it has to have “buy in” by individuals, the planning behind it can be changed by the leadership of the church.

As a Conference-wide movement, this characteristic currently scores the lowest.

The questions in the survey related to Effective Structures are defined as “the degree to which the organisational structure of the church actively contributes to the healthy growth of the church”. The higher the question’s result, the greater its contribution to the effectiveness of the structures.

As we look at the questions related to Effective Structures in the survey, the questions can be grouped into 4 main themes and we will look at the first two this month.

1. Effectiveness of existing organisational structure
2. Planning
3. “Are we heading somewhere?”
4. Empowering individuals to play their part

1. Effectiveness of existing organisational structure

Q 57 – I understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together

Q 60 – It is my impression that the organisational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it (neg)

Ask the question (you may be surprised at the answer) – “Does everyone know how the church functions?” and if they do, “why it functions that way”. Do the members know who is responsible for what; who makes decisions and how; who they approach to get questions answered; and how the different parts fit together as a whole? How clearly is this communicated? Most importantly, for people to feel part of the church, they need to know where they fit into the picture.

Those of us die hard Adventists may know all the ins and outs of the church structure from top to bottom – but consider not just new comers, but the next generation. They look on at what happens, or in some cases doesn’t happen, and ask “Why?” Even as a long time Adventist, I look at some things we do and ask why . . .

Structures can hinder growth by being chaotic and disorganised at one extreme or totally unadventurous and inflexible at the other. The vital issue is whether people perceive the organisational structures as clear, dynamic and flexible enough to actually support growth, much like the skeleton grows and adapts as the body grows.

2. Planning

Q 91 – The activities of our church are well planned and organised

Q 18 – The leaders of the ministries of our church meet regularly for planning

Are the church leaders proactive or reactive?

Do they approach everything in an organised way or are people always scrambling to get things done, jumping from one thing to the next and putting out spot fires. Is there a sense that energy is wasted for no good reason?

Have you experienced a scenario in your church where the leaders in the church come up with a brilliant idea and then announce to the church that “we are all going to do it”, “we have two weeks to get it done” and you need to “love it and feel passionate” about it.

There are three groups that make up a church, the thinkers or dreamers (head), the doers (or hands and feet) and the lovers (or heart). We need all of us to make something happen, but often the head takes charge and forgets to ask the rest. For all of us to take part, we all need to feel or see the reason for the exercise. If we continue to give on something we have not been a part of (planning or believing in), it becomes an “irrational sacrifice”.

Planning is giving opportunities for regular decision making; people the authority to make those decisions and being accountable for them; setting priorities; assessing the fruitfulness of ministries and activities; allocating precious resources and communicating all that to the congregation in a coherent way.

He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13