



ICOC Delegates Proposal: Defining a Healthy Region September 21, 2010

The Command

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in

the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

God commanded his first century followers to make disciples of all nations. We are a fulfillment of their obedience, and by extension, we also are trying to obey that command.

After making disciples, those of us in leadership positions desire to keep them faithful and growing. We want to see all of the congregations in our collective group of churches around the world be part of a healthy and loving body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:14-16 (NLT)

14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body (or REGION) is healthy and growing and full of love.

Healthy regions don't happen overnight. They are built in stages or phases as they get healthier.

PHASE I

Getting the Fundamentals in Place

Core Leadership Team

Team that disciples each other; not just administrative but a D-group atmosphere

Lead couple or chair couple that leads the D-group

Team Leadership -- not a one man show

Leadership sets the pace. Models for the rest of the local congregation and churches.

Connected

Top D-group meets regularly in a given year
 All other small groups meet regularly in local churches
 Participation at ILCs

Shared Standards

Shared Standards of Doctrine for All Members:

- Spirituality and Holiness
- Plan of Salvation
- Small Groups
- Discipling
- Women's role
- Giving Sacrificially
- Mission

Shared Expectations

Unity on Its Implementation:

- Expectations of small groups
- Expectations for midweek and/or an expectation to submit to decisions by leadership group or elders/evangelists re meetings of the body)

Discipling

Everyone is connected in discipling relationships and their church knows who the leaders of the churches and region are, or at least who the point-man is.

All members in small groups where discipling is being practiced either in groups, one-to-one (among mature disciples) or mentoring based for young Christians, young staff or people taking new roles in the church.

Vulnerability with one another is modeled, taught and expected by leaders.

Regularity of meetings is clear and is expected.

Healthy Intervention

Soliciting help from outside when needed.

Issues are brought out into the open and have healthy closure.

Getting reconciled with local geographic regions

Reconciliation and Forgiveness expected.

Outside intervention to assess if right people in right roles according to their gifts.

Healthy relationship between board members and staff.

Women's Leadership

Top women's group meets with same regularity of men counterparts. If needed, the women meet separately at times.

Women teaching women as normal practice, not just a rarity.

(Note: Some churches may need outside intervention if there is a strong difference of opinion among decision-making group on this issue or other issues.)

In small churches where supporting women on staff is difficult, there should still be a designated woman leader or leaders for the women's ministry.

PHASE II

Healthy Forward Movement

Specialized Ministries

Specialized ministries on needs basis – teens, singles, campus, marrieds, parents.

Not imbalanced where one ministry gets all the attention. Balanced ministry leads to stability and not dissatisfaction among members.

Excellent kids kingdom programs for younger children with effective Bible teaching.

Plan to Grow

Unified plan to grow your region, starting with local churches.

Unified expectations at small group levels on people's love for God, each other and mission.

Not imbalanced where focus heavy just on mission, for example.

Healthy Measurement Tools

Healthy use of statistics might include (but not be limited to):

Measuring strengths and weaknesses of congregations through surveys, such as how they are doing in the areas of relationship with God, each other and the mission.

Annual assessment of membership growth

Annual assessment of baptisms, restorations and fallaways

Financial Sacrifice

Contributing to mission support for third world regions.

Developing ongoing relationships with third world churches that are being supported.

Yearly visits on both parts.

Frequent newsletters.

Third world regions creating self-supporting churches.

Solid Teaching

Solid teachings at mid-weeks to meet needs; singles, teens, marrieds, parents, etc.

Using lay leaders and people with gifts to accomplish this.

Use resources from other churches. Set aside budget for this yearly.

PHASE III

Ongoing Interdependence, Training and Vision

Shared Resources

Cooperating spirit and ideas

Personnel

Mission trips

Multifaceted Activities

Regional planned activities to meet the multifaceted ministry needs, e.g.

Leadership retreats

Campus ministry needs

Teen camps

Single needs

Leadership Training Plan

Have a Leadership Training Plan in place.

Sharpening skills of staff and lay leaders through courses and training programs

Raising up next generation of leaders

VISION for region, such as the 2020 Vision plan – specific long term

Powered by Vision

Short term vision and long term

Vision to reach the lost in the region

Vision to raise new leaders, next generation

Vision to empower and equip leaders and people

Awareness of vision and dreams at all levels

Roles for all members to achieve this vision

Warning Signs of a Troubled Family of Churches

Stagnant, or decline in, membership

Convictions not being passed on to the next generation seen in teens not becoming disciples

No or few young staff

No women on staff or no designated woman leader (churches that can't afford full-time.)

Unresolved fundamental differences.

Lack of consistent mission giving.

Little care for the needy and poor.

Lack of small group structure within the whole family of churches.

Too much of leadership by committee and boards.

Little or no participation at the Delegates Meetings and interchurch conferences.

High unaccounted absentees at midweek and small groups.

Little focus on reaching the lost.

“Best Practices” still needs to be discussed. (See 2010 ILC Program)

Defining a Healthy Region Summary

SIGNS OF A HEALTHY FAMILY OF CHURCHES

- *Core Leadership Team – (dgroup atmosphere)
- *Core Team meets at least three times a year
- *Women’s ministry functional
- *Regionally planned multi-faceted activities
- *Shared Standards *Plan to grow
- *Discipling *Healthy Measurement Tools
- *Financial mission focus *Healthy conflict intervention
- *Leadership Training Plan *Solid Teaching
- *Specialized ministries

WARNING SIGNS OF A TROUBLED FAMILY OF CHURCHES

- *Decline in membership *Teens not becoming disciples
- *Lack of young staff *No designated women’s leader
- *Unresolved fundamentals *Little focus on the mission
- *Lack of mission giving *Little care for the needy
- *Lack of small group structure within the whole family of churches
- *Too much of leadership by committee and boards
- *Little or no participation at the delegates meetings
- *High absentees at midweek and small groups