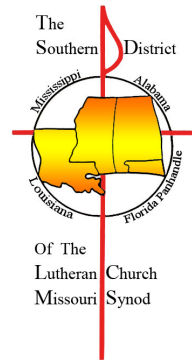




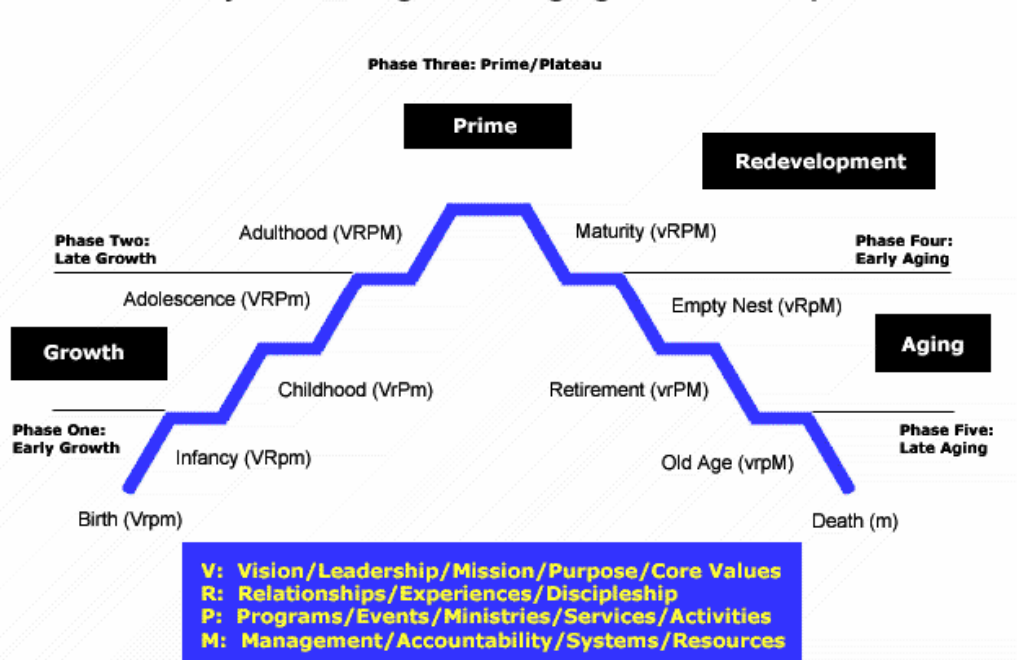
Transforming Churches Network (TCN) Specifics for Our District



The *Abaze!* Movement in the LCMS involves a goal of revitalizing 2,000 congregations by the year 2017. Revitalization may give the impression that we need only to ‘feed and water the plant’ **more** in order for the ‘harvest’ to increase. Or we may accept the deep-rooted tradition in many of our congregations where ministry is focused solely around member care or serving the membership. Revitalization involves a radical change from that, a transformation. Once that transformation has occurred, the congregation regularly and consistently “makes new disciples who make new disciples.” This translates into real spiritual and numerical growth!

Why the need for transformation in the Southern District? Consider the following:

The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



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Many of our congregations are on the backside of the life cycle and need a jump-start! The graphs on page 7 indicate a downward trend in membership, attendance, adult confirmations, baptized infants, and profession of faith! Indeed, the ten-year trends are indicative of decline and the need to effect a turnaround. These graphs point to the significant challenge that is before us.

We live in a post-modern, relativistic culture. We no longer live in a ‘churched’ culture where a significant number of people readily come to church. Thus, the church today must intentionally build relationships, make connections, and network with those in the community in order to faithfully follow the Great Commission in Matthew 28. **Transforming Churches Network (TCN)** helps congregations do so effectively.

TCN offers three primary components:

- **Church Consultation** –This is a vital component in the transformation process. The church consultant is trained and certified by TCN. Consultants are trained by the Southern District to handle the consultation process.

The philosophy of the church consultation

- provides an intervention designed to result in systemic change
- seeks to catalyze hope and courage to tackle major dysfunctions or impediments to health.
- provides valuable feedback from experts with a variety of skills & training
- guides congregations through the transformation process.

The purpose of the consultation is to provide an opportunity for the congregation to:

- start over as an outward focused church
- allow the congregation leaders to operate in as streamlined fashion promoting ministry and outreach. (similar to a large congregation)
- empower the pastor to practice new leadership behaviors.

Note: Gene Menzel has participated in the consultation process in other Districts. Once he is certified, he will be able to train other consultants in the Southern District. The District will seek to train at least three or more consultants.

- **Learning Communities** – Learning communities give the pastor the opportunity to meet with other pastors and learn new skills and methods in facilitating change and transformation. Personal change is essential for organizational (ministry) change to occur. The pastor is required to participate in a Learning Community — 20 sessions over a two-year period (generally one session per month). Each learning community session is about 4-5 hours in length (about three hours of training and about two hours of spiritual development). The group can determine the frequency so long as 20 sessions are covered in the two-year period. The learning community is guided by an appointed facilitator who leads the sessions, keeping the group on task. Learning communities consist of leadership training, accountability, encouragement, and spiritual development. In addition, Learning communities provide an environment for mutual sharing and support as pastors work through the transformation process. Each Learning Community session generally includes:
 - **Personal Check-In** with Scripture reflection
 - **Case Studies** - involves 10-15 minutes for each of the pastors to speak about his congregation, with other participants offering feedback.
 - **Structured Learning Activity** - relates to the current subject.
 - **Review of Homework Assignments** Homework consists of reading an assigned book along with answering guided book review questions.
 - **Evaluation of the session** – suggestions to improve the process
 - **Focus on Me and the Harvest** - specific activities the pastor is involved with to promote a outreach focus.

The Learning Community has some flexibility in terms of content to meet the needs of the group. A Learning Community can be formed in any given geographical area of the District, provided there are least four pastors interested in learning more through the Transformation process. Participating pastors are asked to form a church leadership learning community at the congregation level.

- **Coaching** - Once a congregation has undergone the consultation weekend, and has received and agreed to the recommended prescriptions, a coach is assigned to the pastor/congregation. The coach generally assists with the consultation process as an advisory team member. The coach is trained by TCN. He visits the congregation at least once a quarter and makes contact with the pastor bi-weekly via phone or email. The visit each quarter to the congregation lasts no more than a day.

The purpose of coaching is to:

- provide support for the pastor and congregation
- provide updates on tools and resources
- ensure accountability of the pastor and congregation

The primary focus of the coaching is to help the pastor as leader/coach but there is also a goal to help the congregation:

- Break old habits and create new ones
- Help the pastor cast vision in everything he says and does
- Help the pastor create urgency for the Great Commission in every aspect of the church's life

Growth of the TCN Process in the Southern District

In order for the TCN process to grow in the Southern District, several things need to occur:

- TCN Pastor's Learning Communities will be formed in circuits showing a high interest in the TCN process. We depend on pastors seeing the need and wanting to participate. Where we cannot gather a sufficient number of pastors to form a cluster, the pastor may need to join an online TCN Learning Community group.
- A minimum of five congregations in the district will be recruited to participate in the TCN consultation weekend process. (Priority has been given to North Alabama, Alabama/Florida Gulf Coast, and the New Orleans area)
 - Most likely candidates are congregations open to change with sufficient resources to effect that change.
 - Target congregations for the initial phase that most likely will be successful in the process and help serve as models and/or inspiration for others.
- Consultants will be selected and trained. Candidates include:
 - District Executives
 - Experienced pastors who have led significant growth in their congregations. (i.e. broken the 200 barrier)

Congregations interested in entering the process:

- The pastor completes a four-page survey,
- Leaders of the congregation complete a three-page survey.

The survey results are used to qualify congregations for the Transformation process. The District Facilitator selects the congregations based on the following:

- Review of the survey information
- Interview with the pastor and/or leadership

Consultation Process:

The following are the steps leading up to the weekend consultation:

1. Presentation of the Transformation process to congregational leaders (60-90 minutes)
2. Preparation of congregational self-study (pastor and leadership)
 - Self-study usually takes 1-2 months to complete
 - Self-study is assigned to the consultant at least three weeks prior to consultation weekend.
3. Prayer (2-4 weeks) seeking God's guidance on entering the consultation process
4. Approval of the process (by congregation/leadership)
5. Date set for consultation weekend (Friday-Sunday)

The consultation team generally consists of at least three members and the coach who will be assigned to work with the pastor/congregation. If the congregation's average worship attendance is more than 200, a fourth member may be added. The weekend consultation is designed to assist the congregation in identifying those things that help the congregation become more mission/outreach focused and to guide them in a specific course of action for the future. The consultation team concludes the weekend by providing a written report with five prescriptive objectives that the congregation will be encouraged to achieve within the next twelve to eighteen months.

Consultation Weekend

The consultation weekend generally begins on Friday afternoon unless it is a multiple staff congregation that necessitates the consultation be started on Friday morning. The consultation team spends time interviewing the pastor and staff (paid or volunteer). The team looks at background and history along with asking the following questions:

- What are the best things about this church?
- What needs to be changed?
- What is your dream for this church?
- Any questions we have not asked but should ask?

The team hosts the pastor and his spouse to dinner primarily to gain feedback from the spouse about the congregation (health, mission/ministry focus, etc.)

On Friday evening, the team meets with a focus group with 20-25 non-leaders in the congregation, who attend worship regularly but are not involved in the leadership. They are asked the same questions the pastor and leadership are asked. The team looks for patterns, inconsistencies, and trends, etc.

On Saturday, the leadership (all those involved as members of boards/committees, etc.) attends a special leadership training meeting from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. The consultation team reviews the Transformation process with them and asks them the same questions as the pastor/staff and the focus group. They are taught characteristics of healthy congregations. The team also listens to the group's expectations for the weekend. The team then provides an initial analysis of the results along with some tentative prescriptions for change.

Following this session, late Saturday afternoon, the consultation team prepares a written report (generally no longer than three pages in length) which includes the following:

- Five strengths of the congregation
- Five concerns or issues to be addressed
- Five prescriptions with deadlines for accountability

The report is e-mailed to the pastor on Saturday evening for his review. The consultation team meets with the pastor on Sunday morning to review the report and to clarify any its content. On Sunday morning, the team members participate in worship and bible study. The consultant usually preaches a message on vision during the morning worship service(s). A town hall type congregational is held after the worship service(s). The following is presented:

- A summary of the Saturday training with leaders
- An analysis of the congregation in written is report distributed to participants
- The report includes the strengths, concerns/issues, and prescriptions
- An opportunity for participants to voice any questions or concerns

The congregation is then given four to six weeks after the consultation weekend to prayerfully consider whether to accept the prescriptions (recommendations) and pursue the process. This is a congregational decision. A majority vote determines the final decision. The congregation must either accept all the prescriptions included in the report or reject them in their entirety. Once the congregation decides to affirm the prescriptions and enter the Transformation process, a coach is provided and the pastor is required to join a learning community cluster for two years.

Congregational Fees for Participation

Since the congregation benefits from increased congregational health, learns to be more outreach/mission focused, and receives tools and insight in order to achieve its goals, there are some fees associated with the TCN process. The Revitalization process should be viewed as an investment of time and finance.

Consultation Weekend:

A fee is due and payable to the Southern District upon the congregation's decision to enter into the Transforming Churches process. The fee is:

- \$ 500.00 – churches with average weekly attendance worships 100 or less
- \$1,000.00 – churches with average weekly attendance more than 100

This fee is used to defray the costs of the consultant and related travel expenses of the consultation team. **Note:** This fee is required even if the congregation elects NOT to accept the prescriptions and continue with the process.

Coaching Fee:

A coaching fee of \$1,000 is to be paid by the congregation to the Southern District to cover the stipend paid to the coach to help cover travel expenses. Should the congregation desire to retain the coach past the one-year period, the congregation will be required to pay additional fees based on the extended term.

Learning Community Expenses:

There is no fee for the Learning community participation. However, there are travel costs and books will need to be purchased. The congregation should pay these costs when they are

incurred. A congregation should allocate \$500 (250/year) for learning community resources and books.

Note: Every effort will be made to minimize travel expenses by locating clusters near the congregations involved.

Southern District:

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TCN information is posted at the Southern District website www.southernlcms.org Click on the **Resources** tab on the opening page and scroll down to click on **Transforming Churches Network**.

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For more information about **Transforming Churches Network**, go to:

<http://www.transformingchurchesnetwork.org/>

Southern District Trends (per LCMS Annual Statistics Report Form)

