

# BUILDING A STRATEGIC MINISTRY PLAN



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[www.timeforcrossroads.com](http://www.timeforcrossroads.com)

# My Ministry Planning Story

- ◎ Youthful church analysis
- ◎ Church plant + district mission board
- ◎ Established church – the challenge/dream
- ◎ District Parish Services chairman
- ◎ Experiences with Parish Assistance
- ◎ Crossroads Consulting Ministry
- ◎ Turnaround Churches in the WELS

All of this has convinced me...

# Strategic ministry planning matters because it ...

- ◎ demonstrates faithfulness to Christ's call to *"go and make disciples..."* (Matt. 28:19-20).
- ◎ engenders needed conversations about how best to invest available resources.
- ◎ helps leaders overcome challenges and identify current ministry opportunities.
- ◎ encourages informed decision-making that supports long-range strategic direction.

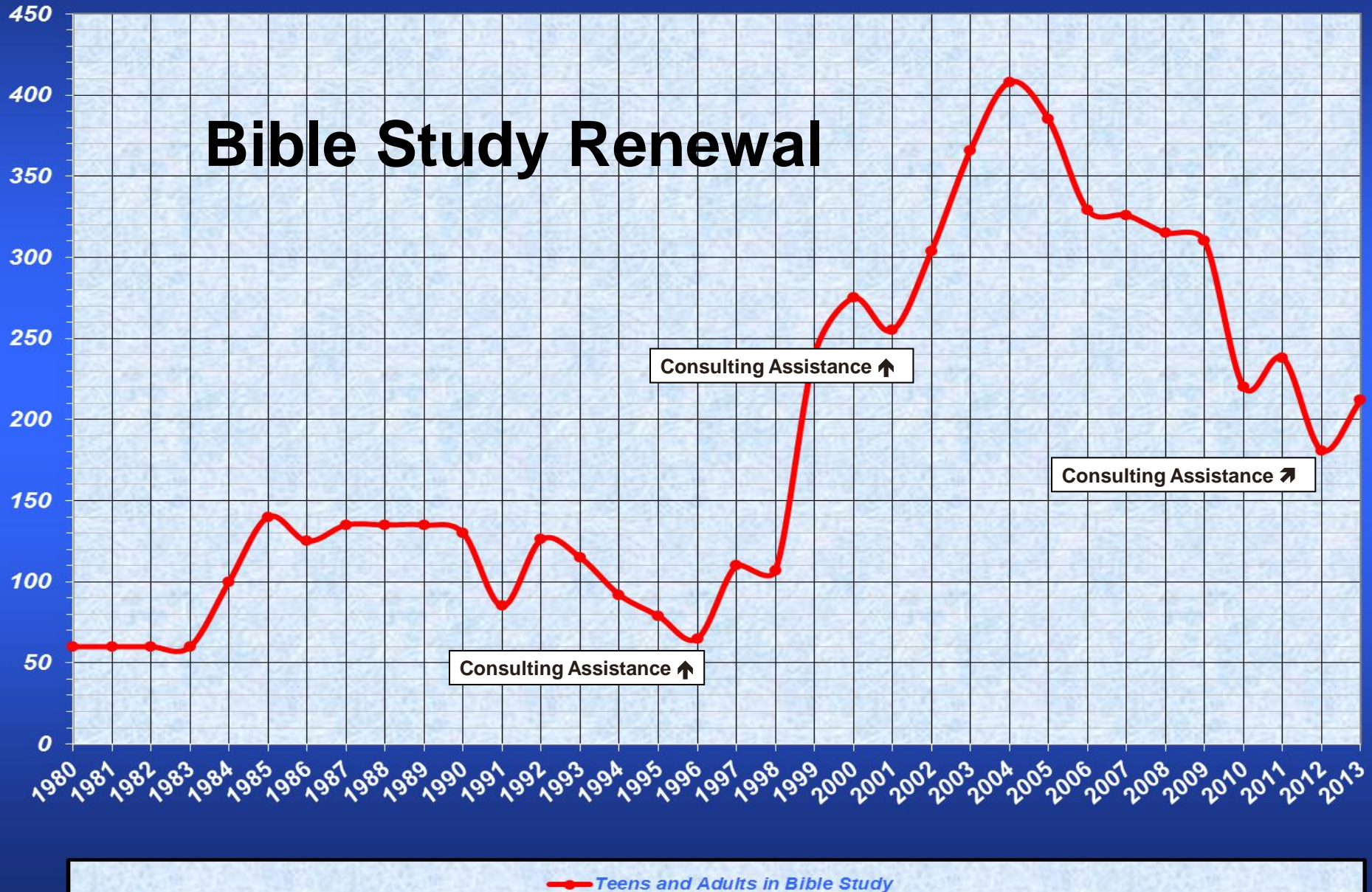
[more "Benefits of Strategic Planning" – Crossroads website]

# Positive results of ministry planning (i.e. visible blessings)



# Communicant Bible Study

## Bible Study Renewal





# What are the most significant blessings you see at this point in the implementation process?

- ◎ People owning the vision and strategic plan
- ◎ New Bible class offerings are attracting attention with an increase in Bible class attendance
- ◎ 2.1% increase in worship (over last year, same time)
- ◎ 22 members willing to contact local inactives
- ◎ Guiding coalition, staff, and leaders collaborating to communicate well with congregation
- ◎ Added a third pastor and now plan to call another teacher and add a member ministry coordinator
- ◎ Offerings \$30,000 beyond budget goals
- ◎ \$1.8 million bequest for Endowment Fund

# Worship Renewal



# This congregation reported...

*“We have exciting news to share! In September 2014 our average weekly worship attendance was 457 (52% of our current membership). That’s only 3% away from our average weekly goal of 55% and a big improvement from previous years!”*

*“Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise...” (Ps 48:1).*



# Planning is biblical... and often blessed by the Lord (couple examples)



↙ Rebuilding walls in Jerusalem

Paul sharing the gospel ↗



# By Grace God Chose Nehemiah

- ✱ Analysis of and response to the situation
- ✱ Turned to God ("mourned and fasted and prayed...")
- ✱ Exhortation to rebuild
- ✱ Strategic plans
- ✱ Purposefully positioned people to serve
- ✱ Completion of the wall despite opposition
- ✱ Outbreak of revival
- ✱ Confession of sins
- ✱ Reorganization and reforms

"Our enemies lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God" (Nehemiah 6:15).

# Apostle Paul's Missionary Journeys





# God's redemptive plan/history



His self-appointed role...

Our assigned role...

# Our confessional Lutheran context



- ◎ God's role (through his Means of Grace)
  - Change hearts
  - Transform lives
- ◎ Our role (in God's worldwide redemptive plan)
  - Grow audiences for the Gospel
  - Deliver the Means of Grace

# We are confident...

*“Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel...”*

(Concordia Triglotta 1921, Augsburg Confession V)

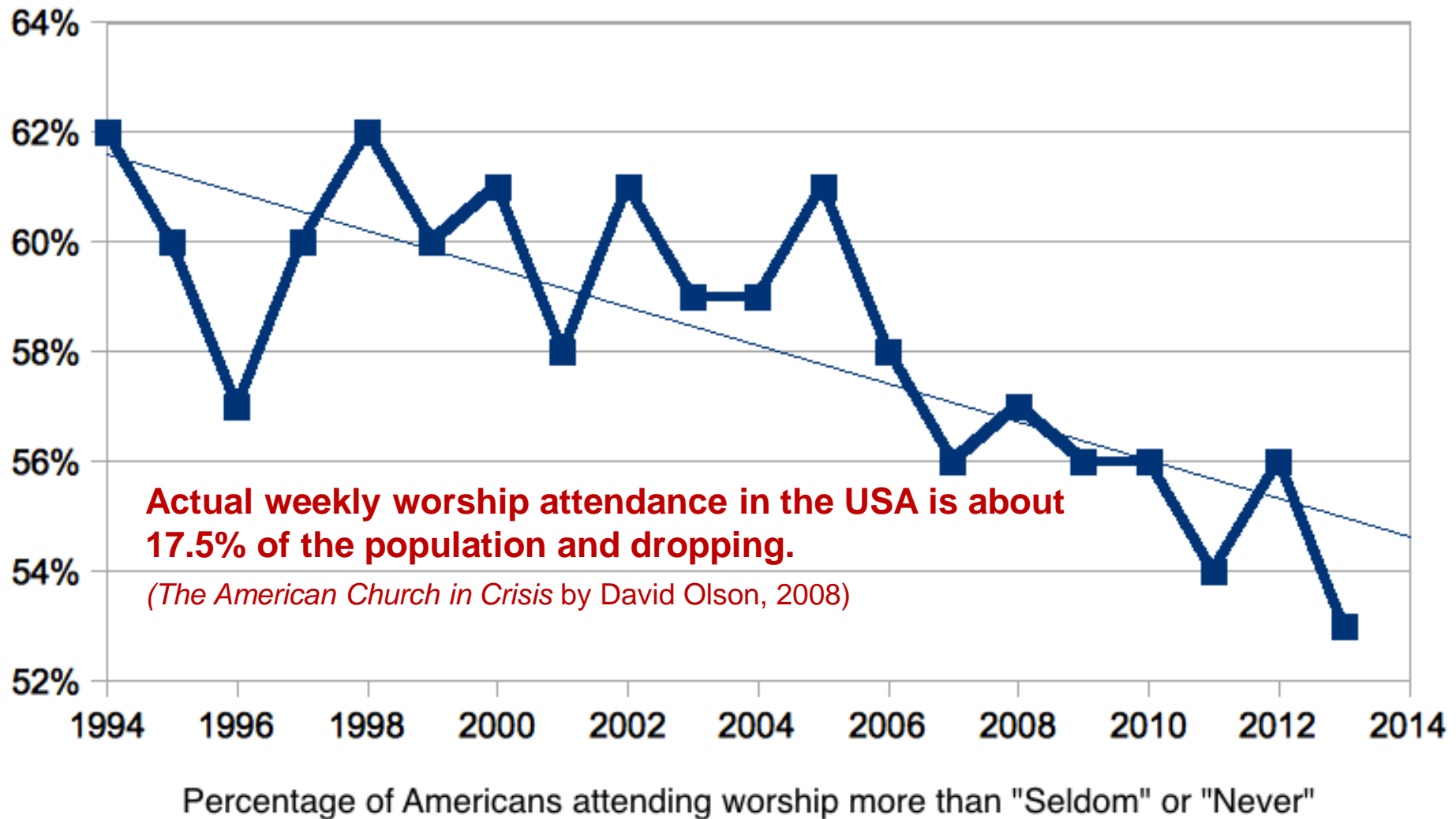


Ministry planning is *especially* needed when ministry context changes.





# Decline of Church Attendance



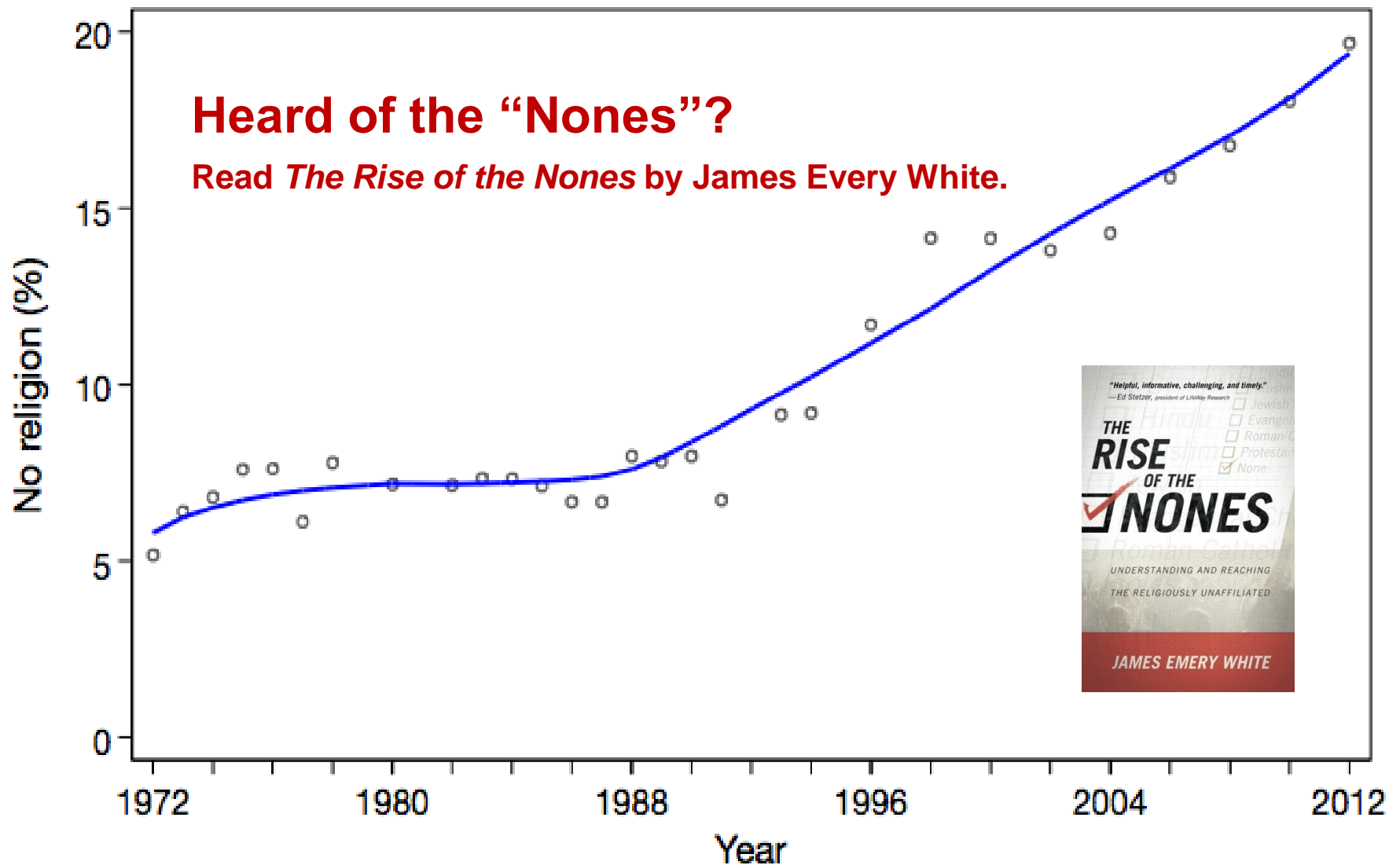


Figure 1. Percentage Preferring No Religion by Year, 1972-2012

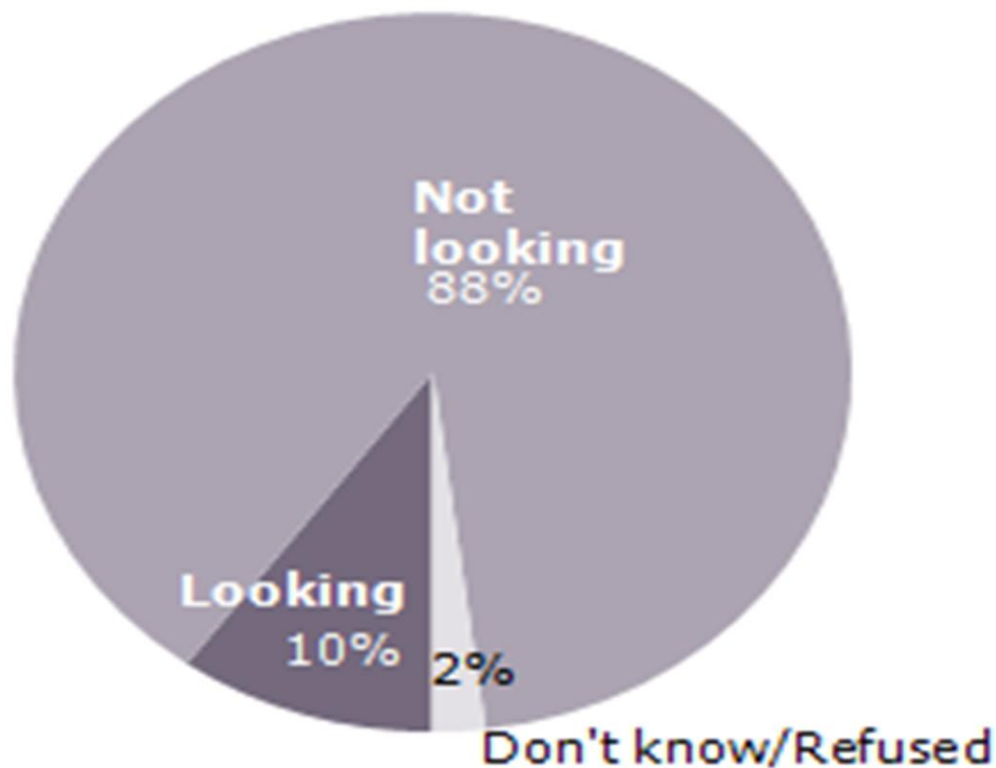
Note: Data smoothed using locally estimated regression (loess); trend line shown in blue. Circles show raw data.

Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2012.

[http://www.unseminary.com/wp-content/uploads/nones\\_large.png](http://www.unseminary.com/wp-content/uploads/nones_large.png)

# Are You Looking For a Religion that Would be Right for You?

*Among those who identify their religion as “nothing in particular,” % who say they are ...*



Source: Pew Research Center survey, June 28-July 9, 2012. Q72. Based on those who say their religion is "nothing in particular."

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Typically, the  
“nones” are...

not looking.

not interested.

not even  
thinking about it.

# Current Reality in WELS

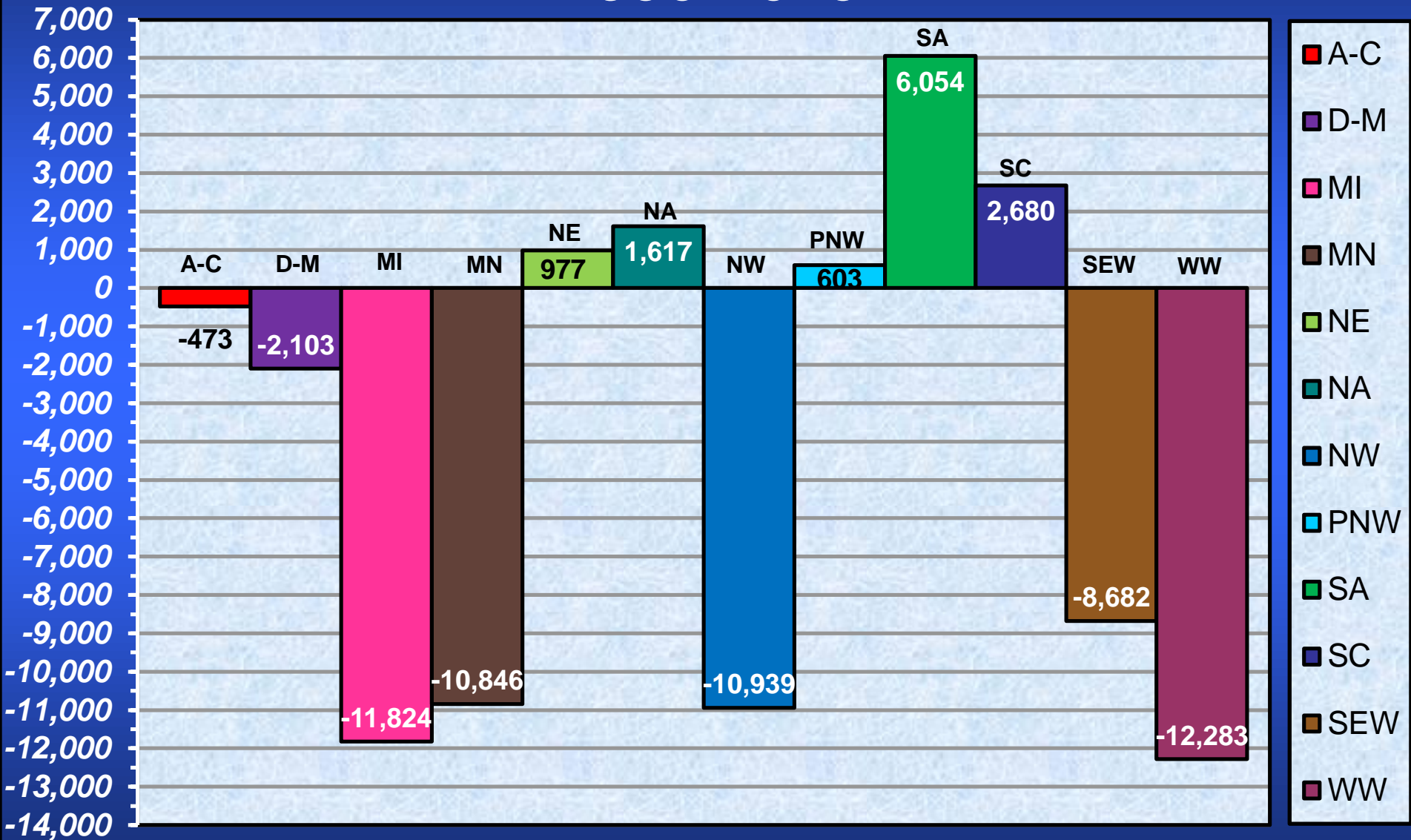


Underscores the need for strategic planning...

# WELS Total Souls by Year

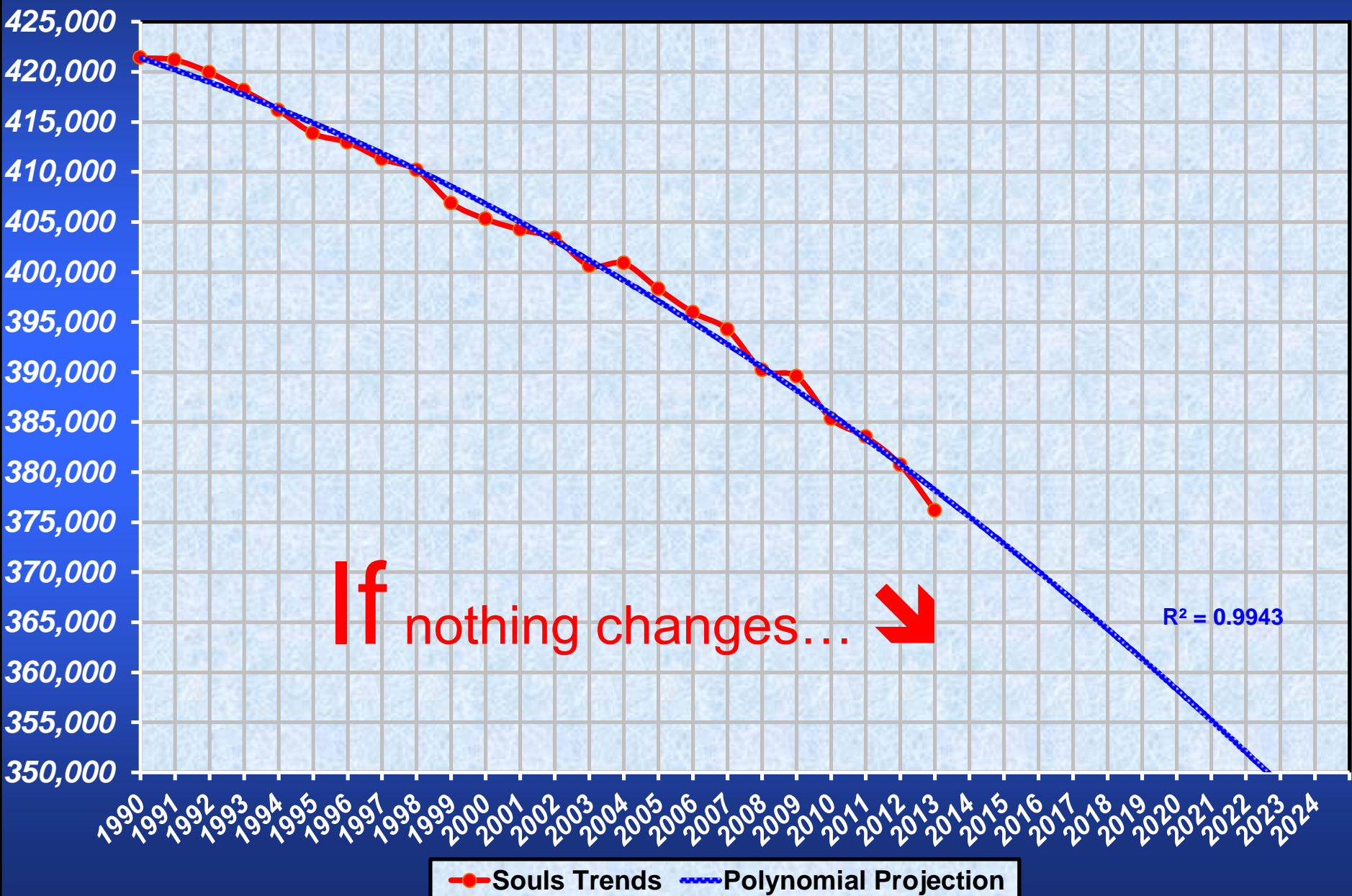


# Gains/Losses of Souls by District 1990-2013





# WELS Souls 10 Year Projection





# What needs to happen for downward trends in the WELS to be reversed?



(Regarding denominations...)



*“The visioning that needs to happen will be at the local level, where congregations are still too inward-focused and tend to fuss about internal concerns because they are easier to address.”*

Tom Ehrich - Morning Walk Media

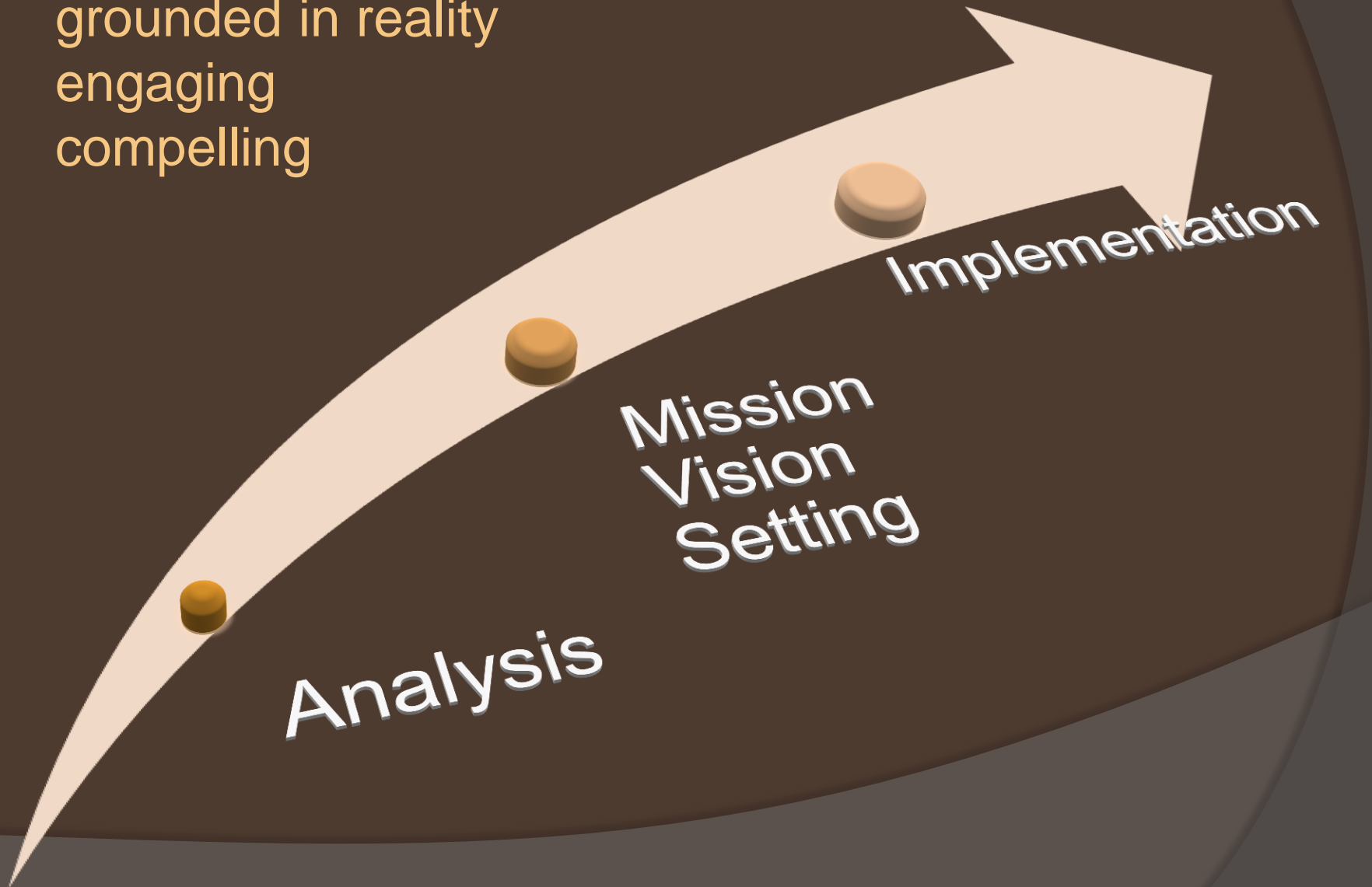
# Comprehensive Ministry Planning

well informed

grounded in reality

engaging

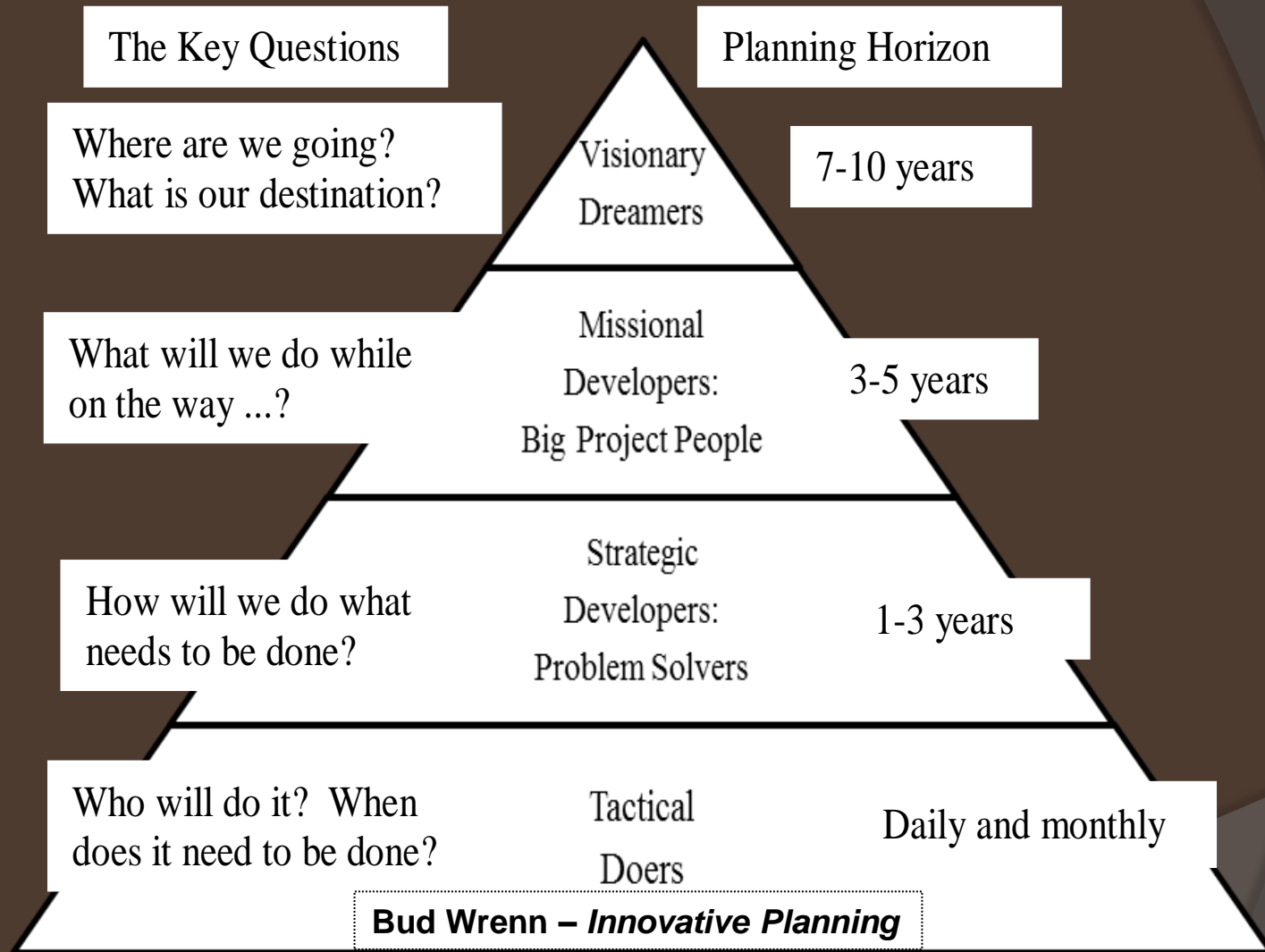
compelling



# An Outline of Ministerial Practice

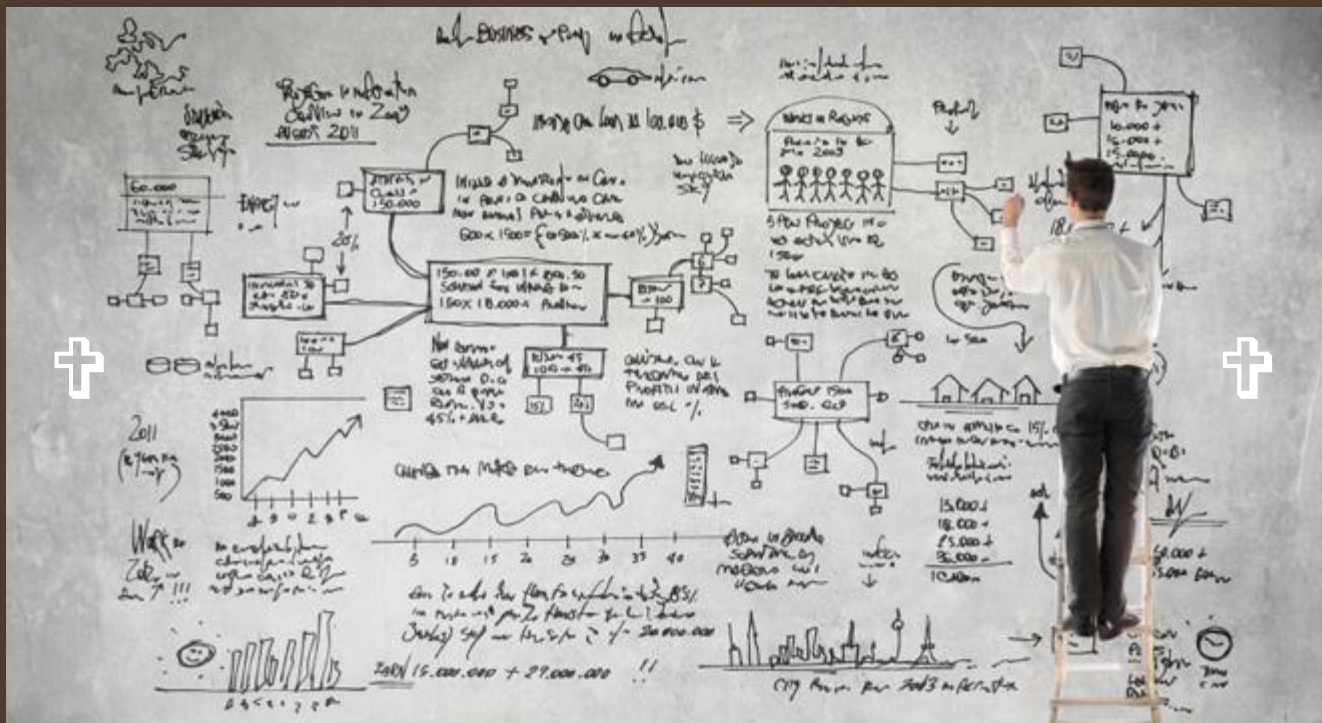
- **THEOLOGY** is what we believe and teach.
- **MISSION** is what we exist to do.
- **ANALYSIS** is how we discover current reality.
- **PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY** is *why* we do *what* we do the *way* we do it.
- **VISION** is where, under God, we are going.
- **STRATEGY** is how we intend to get there.
- **MINISTRY** is what we do based on our assumptions about what should be done, when, by whom, and why.

# Types of people needed when planning



Identify and utilize peoples' gifts at appropriate times in the process!

Leading change can be complex,  
but organizing efforts under  
these four headers will help.



# Strategic planners will want to...

1. Lay a firm foundation for planning
2. Accurately analyze ministry context
3. Form and cast a compelling vision
4. Gain measurable traction with implementation





# Lay a firm foundation for planning

- ◎ Make sure people understand *WHY* planning is important and *WHY* change is needed!
- ◎ Focusing on *WHY* unites people; rushing ahead to *WHAT* and *HOW* divides people.

*“Leaders who relentlessly refocus on the why are always the most effective leaders.”* (Carey Nieuwhof)

Gospel-motivated hearts compel people to take action and empower their efforts.



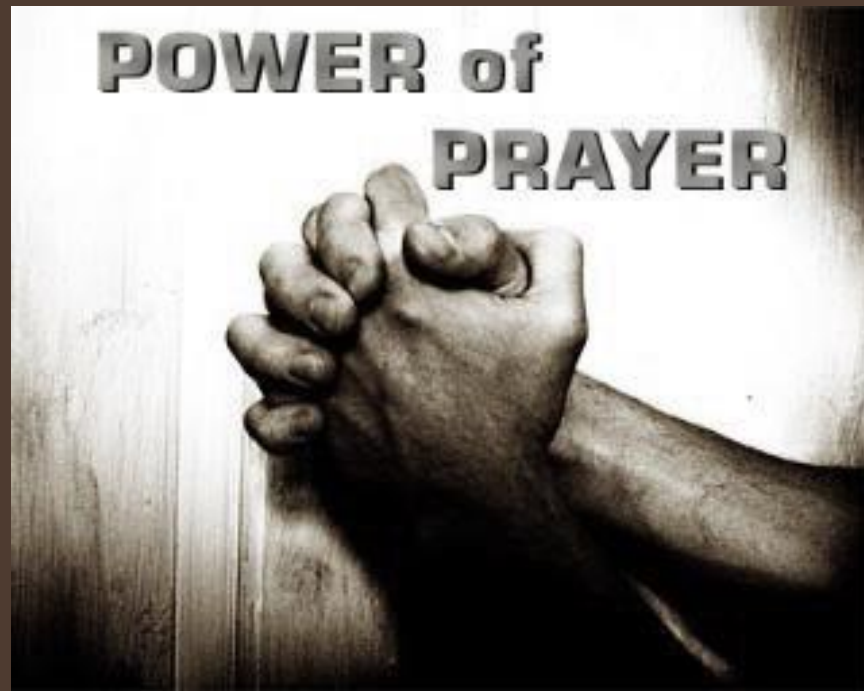
# Healthy relationships

*“When it comes to WELS schools and their health – it’s the people, it’s the people, it’s the people and their relationships with their Lord and with each other.”* (Greg Schmill, MLI President)

*“During our church’s decline relationships suffered; during and after our turnaround, relationships thrived.”*

(Turnaround Churches in the WELS – comment by a member)

# Prayer



# Faith-inspired confidence

*“We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”  
(Numbers 13:30)*



# Accurately analyze ministry context



# Factors that Shape Ministry Context

## 1. Global Factors



## 2. National Factors



## 3. Community Factors



## 4. Internal Factors





# Global Factors



*“The center of Christianity has been moving away from Western Europe and North America to the third world countries... The new Christianity of the global south and east, which bears the scars of hardship and persecution... may be closer to classic Christian doctrines and imperatives than in the north where it has assumed modern, post-Christian cultural norms.”* (John Brenner, reviewing *The Changing Face of Christianity*, WLQ)

# National Factors



*“The end of the first decade of the 21st century marks a turning point in the nation's social, cultural, geographic, racial, and ethnic fabric. It's a shift so profound that it reveals an America that seemed unlikely a mere 20 years ago — one that will influence the nation for years to come...”*

*(20 Years of Sweeping Change, USA TODAY August 10, 2011)*

# The audience is changing



Prediction: By about \_\_\_\_\_ the White (Anglo) population will be a minority in America when compared to all other groups combined.

# Percent of people who would change:

(Ellison Research)

      % their toothpaste



      % their toilet paper



      % their denomination

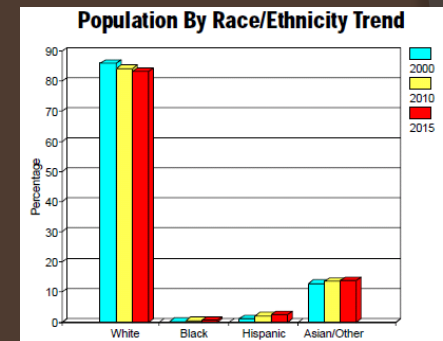


# Community Factors



- ⇒ Hard data (quantitative, factual, statistics, graphs)
- ⇒ Soft data (qualitative, subjective, interviews, opinions)
- ⇒ Demographic research

- Percept Ministry Area Profile (MAP)
- ZIPskinny.com, 2010.census.gov, etc.
- Interview key people in the community



- ⇒ What's changing? Who's moving in/out? Why?
- ⇒ Our reputation of ministry? Etc...???

# Internal Factors



- ⇒ History (people/events that shaped the organization)
- ⇒ Trends (membership, worship, Bible study, enrollment, etc.)
- ⇒ Finances (debts, budgets, balances, reserves, stew. educ.)
- ⇒ Property & facilities (tools for ministry advancement)
- ⇒ Staffing level (staffing to grow or staffing to maintain)
- ⇒ Relationships (conflict on a scale of 1-10)
- ⇒ Administration (leadership, organization, communication)
- ⇒ Attitudes, perspectives, priorities (culture, DNA, core values which affect decision-making)



Ask difficult questions...



Have those hard discussions.

# Analysis components

- ⇒ Surveys (How I Feel, What I Believe, Worship)
- ⇒ Pulse groups (church focus, school focus, cross section)
- ⇒ Personal interviews (confidential)
- ⇒ Leader input (blessings, dreams, obstacles)
- ⇒ Called worker input (interviews, personality profiles)
- ⇒ Visitor input (especially non-WELS)
- ⇒ Review programs, groups, events, activities
- ⇒ Facility evaluation (What's helping? What's hindering?)

# Leaders Listen



- ⇒ Faithful leaders first go to (listen to) God's Word, and then they stay grounded in the Word.
- ⇒ They want to listen to all constituents (give everyone an opportunity to have a voice; 50% *"no part in making decisions"*)
- ⇒ They want to receive honest, heartfelt input.
- ⇒ They listen more than they talk.
- ⇒ They have the attitude of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5).

# Analyze the data

Root causes are often discovered beneath the presenting symptoms (e.g. lack of volunteers, poor attendance numbers, woeful financial support).

- ⇒ **Sort** (How do we categorize all the information?)
- ⇒ **Interpret** (What are our strengths, our concerns?)
- ⇒ **Conclude** (What's the big picture, what's significant?)
- ⇒ **Identify** (What needs to change and why?)
- ⇒ **Surface** (What do you share publically and privately?)
- ⇒ **Communicate** (Unless people are convinced and you have heartfelt buy in, you'll lack support and participation.)

# Self-analysis hazards

Be concerned about...

- ⇒ having a blind spots
- ⇒ emotional baggage
- ⇒ operating from an institutional frame of mind
- ⇒ playing it safe so everyone is comfortable
- ⇒ allowing the planning process to stall
- ⇒ getting lost in the details (analysis paralysis)



Blind  
Spot

# Form and cast a compelling vision





# Mission/Vision Setting



After honest analysis...

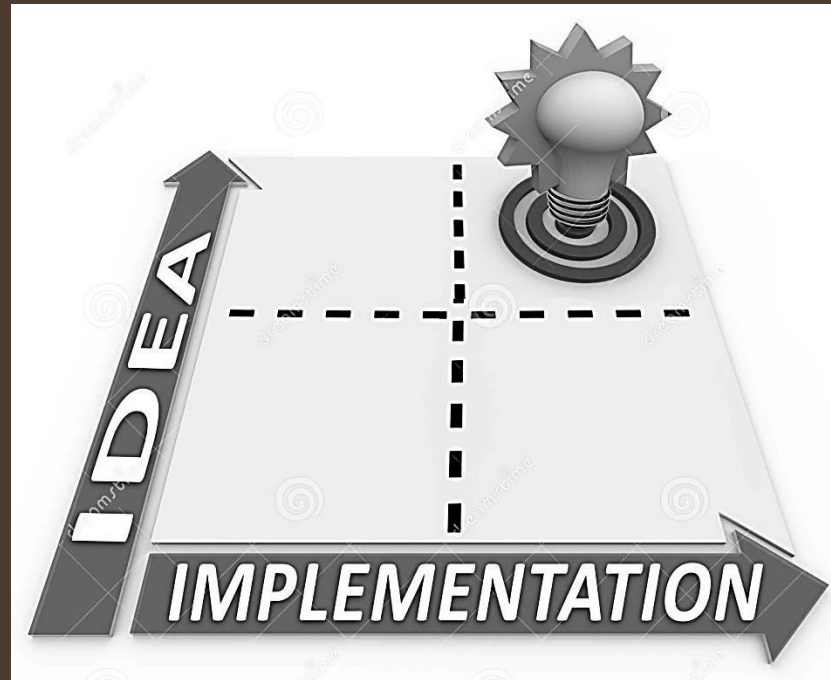
- ◎ Leaders must lead by:
  - establishing ministry goals
  - Prioritizing initiatives
  - gaining/granting approval
  - providing resources (incl. PD's and training)
  - holding each other accountable
- ◎ Planning retreat (an annual event - refresh)

# Communication



- ⇒ Communicating *convincingly* is key to ensuring support and participation!
- ⇒ Help people both to *see it* and *feel it*!
  - Visually (words, pictures, graphs, video clips)
  - Stories (sad, uplifting – touch the emotions)
  - Technology (know your audience)

# Gain measurable traction with implementation



# Organizational Realignment

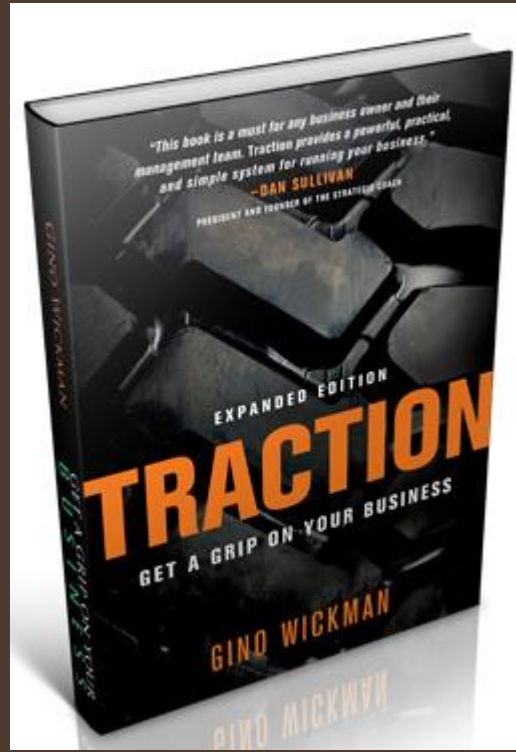


Do we have the right structure to  
accomplish our goals?

Who owns each goal?

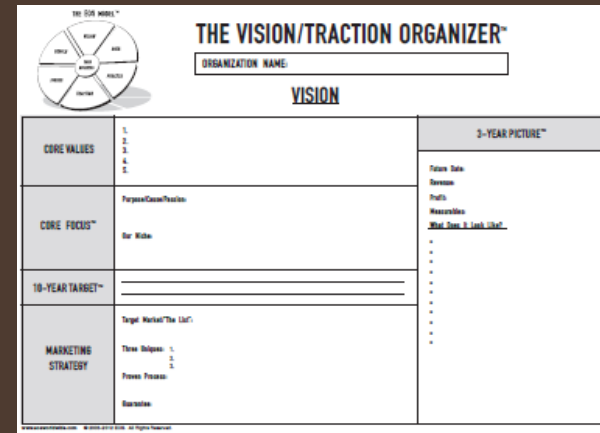
# Advice for gaining traction

## A business book, but...



# Useful traction tools...

V/T Organizer →



**THE VISION/TRACTION ORGANIZER™**

ORGANIZATION NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**VISION**

<b>CORE VALUES</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	<b>3-YEAR PICTURE™</b>  Future Date: Season: Month: Week: <u>What Does It Look Like?</u> * * * * * * *
<b>CORE FOCUS™</b>	Purpose/Mission/Values:  Our Vision:	
<b>10-YEAR TARGET™</b>	_____	
<b>MARKETING STRATEGY</b>	Target Market/The List:  Three Steps: 1. 2. 3. Process/Process:  Execution:	

## The Level 10 Meeting Agenda

- |                           |            |                  |
|---------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. Good News              | 5 Minutes  | ] Reporting Only |
| 2. Scorecard              | 5 Minutes  |                  |
| 3. Quarterly Rock Review  | 5 Minutes  |                  |
| 4. Customer/Employee News | 5 Minutes  |                  |
| 5. To-Do List             | 5 Minutes  |                  |
| 6. Issues Solving         | 60 Minutes |                  |
| o Identify                |            |                  |
| o Discuss                 |            |                  |
| o Solve                   |            |                  |
| 7. Conclude               | 5 Minutes  |                  |
| o Recap To-Do List        |            |                  |
| o Rating (1-10)           |            |                  |

← Level 10 Meeting

Solving Issues →





# Critical components when using outside assistance



(team building + strategic planning teams)



- ◎ Key leaders own the effort locally (called and/or elected – ensure targeted assistance and cooperation)
- ◎ Prework (reading, evaluations, personality assessments, other instruments)
- ◎ On-site engagement (teaching, tools, real-time application of concepts within the ministry being served)
- ◎ Follow through (scheduled contacts, in-depth discussions, coaching)

# SMARTER Planning



- Specific ... *Who? What? When? Where? Why?*
- Measurable ... *When will we know this is accomplished?*
- Attainable ... *Can this goal be accomplished?*
- Relevant ... *Is this the right time and place?*
- Timed ... *What are the checkpoints?*
- Evaluated ... *How well is this going and why?*
- Revised ... *What adjustments are needed?*

Developed by Crossroads – SMARTER Planning Form

# Develop a baton-passing culture...

- prioritize leadership development
- accelerate ministry planning
- provide training/tools



Annual leadership development/strategic planning event



# Visions lose energy...



An example of a WELS congregation that  
has experienced – by God’s grace – the  
benefits of recurrent planning...



YouTube – “Trinity 2020 Intro”





## **Assisting God's People with Pursuing His Mission**

- Analysis
- Vision Setting
- Implementation



- Christ Centered
- People Focused
- Custom Designed

[www.timeforcrossroads.com](http://www.timeforcrossroads.com)

# 10 Planning Components

## Ministry Planning Optimizer

1. Make decisions based on your core values
2. Pursue your core mission
3. Aim at your 10-year target
4. Advance toward your 5-year visions
5. Focus on your 3-year core strategic priorities
6. Establish your 1-year plan
7. Develop your selected tactics
8. Achieve your quarterly priorities
9. Communicate effectively
10. Evaluate your progress regularly (checkpoints)

# Strategic planners...



## **4 KEY POINTS**

While remaining biblically grounded...

1. lay a firm foundation for planning
2. accurately analyze ministry context
3. form and cast a compelling vision
4. gain measurable traction with implementation

*“If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”*  
(James 4:15)

*“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning...” (Ecclesiastes 9:10)*





**time for** **questions**

?

# Remember (after praying)...

The first step in achieving any goal is to develop a plan.







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*Assisting God's People with Pursuing His Mission*