3 Ways to Reduce Complexity at Your Church

We know that leading a church is complicated. But why? Shouldn't it be easier?

I've been thinking about that, and it occurred to me that writing down why it's so complex could provide insights that help us lead better.

Most churches are a combination of elder governed, staff led, and volunteer driven. That alone makes the complexity pretty obvious.

Who's driving?

Your church probably has some type of governing board. They have leadership and decision-making authority. Then you have staff. Something between 1 and 200 or more on your team. They **also** have leadership and decision-making authority. And the real goal is for those two groups to work together in such tightly aligned harmony that you empower dozens to hundreds to thousands (depending on the size of your church) of volunteers to serve and also lead.

What could go wrong with that?!

Now we add to the mix a spiritual realm in which we find our real power (God) and a real enemy who would like to shut your church down. (Satan)

If that isn't enough, our bottom line measurement is subjective rather than a purely numbers oriented goal. Yes, we count several things from attendance to offerings (and we should), but the real focus is spiritual transformation resulting in life change. That means you could draw a big crowd, but it's nothing more than a crowd if lives are not being transformed.

Ok, that's a clear and concise description of what we do is so complex.

So what can we do about it?

1) Keep it clean and simple.

[Clutter, distraction and busyness are enemies of the local church.](#) As church leaders, it's very easy to get pulled in so many directions that it's difficult to actually move forward. It's a deceptive reality because all that we do is good, but that doesn't mean we should be doing it.

What are the irreducible minimums of your church ministry? The point here is not about not working less, it's about being more productive. Nothing is more frustrating than to work hard, and yet accomplish little results. Focus is essential.

- Is your mission crystal clear among the leaders?
- Is your congregation clear on the purpose of your church?
- What is in print that doesn't need to be in print?

Current culture inundates us with "stuff". Don't add to the "noise" in your church, but communicate what is important. Is your list of ministries lean and effective?

What can you stop doing?

2) Strive for unity and purity among your leaders.

Focus and clarity are not possible unless the leaders are aligned. The board and staff must be of one mind and heart or leading your church becomes unnecessarily complex and difficult. If there is unresolved conflict on the board or among the staff your church may get stuck as a result.

I'm not remotely suggesting leaders must be perfect, but God does call us to holiness. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written:

> "Be holy, because I am holy."

> I Peter 1:15-16

When our hearts and motives are pure, and we seek to serve for the benefit of God's Kingdom, He is free to grant the power we need to see real life change in people's lives. You are gifted and talented, and no doubt work hard, but that's not enough. We all need God's favor and power, or church is not only complex, it just doesn't work.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:12

May God grant the favor and power you need!

3) Practice MVS (Mutual Voluntary Submission).

You can make progress in the never ending challenge to keep things simple, clear and focused. You can also live with purity of heart and mind, but if you and your church are anything like me and my experience, humanity is pretty much a 24/7 thing to wrestle down.

Yup, we're human. We have fears, insecurities and egos to contend with. It is necessary to practice Mutual Voluntary Submission (MVS) in order to see this beautiful thing called church actually work.

> [Read more from Dan](#).