Churches that Make a Difference: “Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works”
By Sider, Olson, Unruh

Chapter 1: What Does Holistic Ministry Look Like?

Provides four illustrations of holistic ministries in the Philadelphia area, showing how holistic ministries can take many forms or patterns including:

1. **Focus on ministries of personal spiritual transformation as a path to social change.** “Spiritual renewal empowers change in every area of a person’s life, and the transformation of individuals in turn serves as the seed of lasting change at a community level.”

2. **Focus on social services ministries as a door to evangelism.** “Helping to meet people’s social needs lays a foundation for spiritual nurture.” This is the Abiding Love model through our Food Pantry and Children’s Center.

3. **Focus on ministries of reconciliation that witness to unity in Christ.** “Only by the power of the Spirit can holistic churches take on the seemingly intractable divisions of race.”

4. **Focus on community development to express God’s love for whole persons and communities.** “If the community is unhealthy, the people who live there will continue to fight an uphill battle to realize the quality of life God intended for them.”

5. **Focus on justice ministries that embody the empowering message of the gospel.** “Unjust systems and institutions block people’s access to opportunities, stunt their human dignity, and rob them of shalom.”

6. **Focus on reaching skeptics by demonstrating that the church makes a difference.** “Developing a reputation for social activism makes churches especially attractive to spiritual seekers who value justice and compassion without knowing the God of shalom.”

Chapter 2: The Church’s Calling to Holistic Ministry

Examines the church’s calling to share the gospel through both Good News and good works. Jesus not only touched individuals by meeting their physical and spiritual needs, but He also challenged the status quo in its view of women, wealth, power, leadership, and violence.

People are body-soul unities created for communities. “We are called to reach our communities with the whole gospel for the whole person with whole churches.” The holistic church becomes part of the community and seeks to meet both the spiritual and physical needs and to be a voice against injustice.

Chapter 3: Making Evangelism Central

“A ministry of Christian community development without evangelism is like a body without a soul.”

Evangelism types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Network Evangelism</td>
<td>Natural networks (friends, coworkers, family, etc) where people share their testimony, invite, and offer to pray. Lifestyle evangelism through the way one lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Evangelism</td>
<td>Intentional personal contact with little or no prior relationship like door-to-door, street evangelism. Kindness evangelism such as giving out water or offering free car washes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Evangelism</td>
<td>Contact through community service like a sermon at the food pantry or a devotion at a youth basketball practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctuary Evangelism</td>
<td>Regular worship services, Bible studies, seeker-friendly services. Draw people with exuberant services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Event Evangelism</td>
<td>Special event (outdoor service, concert, health fair) where non-Chritians are invited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Evangelism</td>
<td>Via radio, television, Internet, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Evangelism</td>
<td>Intercessory prayer on behalf of non-Christsians</td>
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The churches evangelism ministries should be assessed; not only what is being done but how you are doing it. “Are non-Christsians viewed as unique individuals to be understood and loved or merely as targets?” “…no person or need is beyond the reach of God’s amazing grace. This is why we can share the gospel with confidence and with joy in the midst of the world’s brokenness.”
Chapter 4: Embracing Social Action – from Relief to Social Action

There are different levels of social ministries including:

1. Relief involves directly supplying food, clothing, or housing to someone in urgent need. (Food Pantry, Interfaith Hospitality Network, free immunization services)
2. Individual Development includes transformational ministries that empower a person to improve physical, emotional, intellectual, relational, or social status. (GED tutoring, credit counseling, Financial Peace University)
3. Community Development renews the building blocks of a healthy community such as housing, jobs, health care, and education. (Habitat for Humanity, 1 House at a Time, Childcare Center, Health Clinic)
4. Structural change means transforming unfair political, economic, environmental, or cultural institutions and systems. (lobbying against unfair lending practices, advocating to raise minimum wage, promoting pro-marriage legislation, lobbying for affordable healthcare)

The church should not try to do everything. Suggests that church choose one or to areas of ministry focus where we are poised to have a great influence. But address the social need from several angles or levels. So beyond providing relief efforts, examine why the problem exists and work on the root issues (individual development, community development, structural change).

Chapter 5: Integrating Evangelism and Social Outreach

Four Basic ways that churches of integrating evangelism with social outreach:

1. Explicit evangelism is not a part of the church’s outreach ministry.
2. Evangelism is valued and practiced but not in the context of social ministry.
3. Evangelism and social ministry are integrated in various ways. (This is the model for the holistic church)
4. Little conventional social ministry is present.

Some ways you can develop a style like #3:

1. Create opportunities for members of your church (not just staff) to get to know the beneficiaries of social ministries. Build relational time into volunteer assignments.
2. Include social beneficiaries in social events outside of worship services, which provide more informal, nonthreatening soil for nurturing relationships.
3. Create an alternative service for people served by outreach ministries who hunger for a worshiping community but just cannot bring themselves to walk into a Sunday morning service.
4. Involve service recipients in serving alongside church members.

Chapter 6: Divine Love and Power for Outreach Ministry

Discusses ways the people become wholly committed to lives of service and instrument’s of God’s love by the power of the Holy Spirit. This includes prayer, Bible study, and meditation so that we can love our neighbors as ourselves.

Chapter 7: A Commitment to Community Outreach

Boundaries exist between church and community:

1. Spiritual boundaries between believers and non-believers.
2. Geographic boundaries – distance to your community of ministries.
3. Demographic and cultural boundaries – guests may feel out of place.
4. Boundaries of class and race.
5. Boundaries of “Church Culture” – rituals that would make no sense to others.
6. Physical boundaries – layout of the church may not send the welcoming message.

Building bridges between church and community:

1. Welcome whoever walks thru the door.
2. Network in the community targeting such institutions as other churches, social service agencies, schools, police departments, social security and welfare offices, businesses, health clinics, and foundations. Youth leaders should sit down with director of local boys and girls clubs, school principals and teachers and people associated with juvenile court system.

3. Cultivate a sense of belonging to the community. Invite community leaders to the church’s Christmas party and attend the dedication of the new school. Host town meetings, AA meetings, community theatre productions. Sponsor a little league team. Be a presence in times of tragedy or outrage.

4. Incorporate a commitment to the community and outreach mission into church life. Do songs talk not only about our personal relationship with Jesus but also reinforce the message about God’s love for the rest of the world? What does the art and religious symbols displayed in the church say? What does the bulletin an newsletter reflect about community involvement?

5. Interweave the interests of the church and the community.

6. Take the church out into the community. Hold outdoor worship services.

7. Support the relocation of church members into the community.

Chapter 8: A Healthy Congregational Base for Ministry.

Examine the relationship between the church’s external mission of holistic ministry and several key internal functions – worship, sacraments, tithing, small group discipleship, youth ministry, and koinonia.

Effective holistic ministry depends on vibrant worship, sound discipleship, and loving fellowship within the congregation.

Chapter 9: Church Leadership for Holistic Ministry

Qualities of leadership for holistic ministry includes:
1. Committed discipleship
2. A costly, contagious love
3. Faith
4. Humility
5. Flexibility and vision
6. Ability to Build up people
7. Ability to serve as a catalyst
8. Ability to connect people
9. Ability to maintain perspective

Chapter 10: A ministry-Centered Organizational Structure

Warning signs of an unhealthy organization:
1. A lack of organization.
2. An overemphasis on structure and efficiency as the goal, other than a mean to an end.
3. The church is efficiently organized to serve a purpose – but it is the wrong purpose.

Organizing for holistic ministry:
1. Make and implement ministry related decisions,
2. Facilitate communication.
3. Generate ministry resources. (funding and personnel)
4. Manage volunteers.
5. Plan for growth.
6. Respond to requests for emergency assistance.

Chapter 11: Ministry Partnerships

Gives practical reasons to develop partnerships including:
1. Few churches have the resources on their own.
2. Expand opportunities to expand evangelistic relationships.
3. Prevent duplication of services.
4. Encourage cooperation not competition.
5. Expose people to social issues outside their usual context.
6. Established agencies smooth the way for new ministries,
7. The current political and social context creates new opportunities and incentives for collaboration.

**Chapter 12: Developing a Holistic Ministry Vision for Your Context**

Study the congregation by commissioning a small group. This includes the following questions:

1. Who are we?
2. What do we believe?
3. What do we do?
4. How do we do what we do?
5. What are our relationships like?

Study the community including:

1. Demographics.
2. Culture
3. Organization – take note of institutions (schools, businesses, churches) and infrastructure (parks, streets) and systems (economy, criminal justice system)

**Steps to developing a Holistic Ministry Vision**

1. Pray
2. Read
3. Pray
4. Discuss
5. Pray
6. Brainstorm
7. Pray
8. Discern
9. Pray
10. Plan
11. Pray
12. Confirm
13. Pray

**Chapter 13: Rallying Support for the Vision**

Cultivate the congregation’s ownership of the holistic ministry vision. Provides tips for communicating the vision which includes the following parts:

1. Inform
2. Motivate
3. Empower
4. Ask
5. Reward

**Chapter 14: Dealing with Fears, Change and Conflict in Your Congregation**

Contrasts risks vs. opportunities when making changes.

Discusses causes of conflict and ways to deal constructively with conflict.