Church Growth Drivers

‘An Evidence Based Approach to Seeking Church Growth Under God’

Speaker: Tim Sims, Sydney
Location: Science Museum
1. What are we really up against?

2. What should this mean for more **effective ministry under God**?

3. What real challenges do we face along the way?
SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

- Literature Search: 120+ *
- Expert Interviews: 75+
- Field Questionnaires: 42
- Workshops: 12
- Beta sites: 6

+ National Church Life Survey data and research 1991 – 2011

*All initiatives considered in the context of Biblical theology
DECLINE IN REGULAR CHURCH ATTENDANCE *

Source: Spirit Matters, AuSSA09, Australian Soul Bouma, *Australian national statistics
DEMOGRAPHIC DISASTER

Percent of attendees


Source: Church life profile p23 NCLS06, exceeds 100% based on optical adjustment to 15-19 year olds
Note Australian average life expectancy 82
LAZY CHURCH: INTRIGUING CORRELATION

Sources: ABS census data, Build my church p22
Note: The data does not demonstrate cause, only correlation
INSTUTIONAL ONSLAUGHT

1901 – 2006+

Millions of People

Source: ABS Census Data
Sources: Church life profile NCLS01, NCLS06, DYB 2008, Numbers as at September 21st
Note the score profile is very different in the youth ministry
1. What are we really up against?

2. What should this mean for more effective ministry under God?

3. What real challenges do we face along the way?
SOME RESEARCH OBSERVATIONS...

1. Large numbers are attending irregularly (40%) for special services (71%)

2. Newcomers best engage through normal church (67%) and a congregation member (29%)

3. There is huge churn in the population (36% every 5 yrs); moves break ties...

4. 100% of net new growth is from the young

5. Wastage rates among the youth can be huge (82%)
## THE SOUL OF BRITAIN

The percentage of people:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>1987</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeing a pattern of events such that ‘it was meant to be’</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having awareness of the presence of God</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having awareness of answers to prayer</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having awareness of sacred presence in nature</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having awareness of an evil presence</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumulative total (at least one mentioned) | 48%  | 76%  |

Source: Professor David Hay, Nottingham University, for the BBC series Soul of Britain
SURPRISING EXPOSURE

Percent of Australians Attending in the Last Year

- Special Church Service: 71%
- Cinema: 62%
- Sporting Event: 44%
- Regular Church Service: 40%
- Botanic: 39%
- Library: 38%
- Zoo: 35%
- Museum: 28%
- Art Gallery: 22%
- Opera / Musical: 19%
- Theatre: 17%
- Dance: 10%
- Classical Music: 8%

Source: ACS98 Why people don’t go to church? p67, p42, p8, p80; Build My Church p11
*Special services on average 2.6X per annum
SURPRISING IMPLICATIONS

Multiples of WASA X Per Annum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>&gt; Monthly</th>
<th>Churched Visitors</th>
<th>Non-Churched Visitors</th>
<th>&lt; Monthly</th>
<th>Special Service At Least Once</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.8x</td>
<td>0.4x</td>
<td>1.0x</td>
<td>0.6x</td>
<td>2.8x</td>
<td>6.1x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ABS, NCLS06, ACS98, based on nominal Anglicans at 19.5% of Sydney Adult population

*Note: ~0.3X invited, Special Services on average 2.6 occasions.
See back up on positive impact of Special Services
IMMEDIATE UPSIDE POTENTIAL > 4.5x

1. Discipling / Gospel Community
   - + 1x

2. Greet / Meet / Integrate
   - + 1x

3. Invitation Ministry
   - + 2x

4. Transition Ministry
   - +0.5x
“One out of every four people at Willow Creek were stalled or dissatisfied with the church many were considering leaving. When I first heard these results the pain of knowing was almost unbearable …”

Bill Hybels, 2007

Source: Reveal 2004 (6,000), Follow Me (80,000)
IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGE

1. What are we really up against?

2. What does this mean for more effective ministry under God?

3. What real challenges do we face along the way?
We have made progress and we are going better than most.

Success might lead to theological compromise.

Unease over personal effort and the sovereignty of God.

Visible political pressure at the congregational level.

Ambivalent congregations.

Personal risk in a narrow career structure.

Perceived long run ability to survive diminished performance.

Disparate congregation histories and circumstances.

Short term ‘performance pressures’.

Lack of clear evidence based research and conviction.

Very different personal gifts and experiences.

Anecdotal authority.

Well meaning inclusive complexity.

Lack of planning confidence and experience.

Entrenched conservatism under pressure.

‘Fragile’ unit, conflict and natural risk reluctance.

Lack of organisational know how and experience.

Overwhelming diary pressures.

Voluntary and part time delegation structures.
RESULTING STRESS CAN BE HUGE

Burnout Is An Issue 19%

Borderline To Burnout 56%

Extreme Burnout 4%

Not An Issue 21%

Major Stress Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Driver</th>
<th>% of Variance Explained *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Satisfaction</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational Conflict</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal faith growth</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Direction</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in the Goal</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Isolation</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strains of the Role</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Vision</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Finances</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCLSLS96 Burn out in church leaders * Numbers include co-variance and add up to >100%
DIARIES ARE FULL

Source: Diary Analysis (14)
SET PRIORITIES

1. Discipling / Gospel Community

2. Greet / Meet / Integrate
   + 1x

3. Invitation Ministry
   + 2x

4. Transition Ministry
   + 0.5x
# ORGANISE AND EMPOWER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Worship</th>
<th>Gospel Community</th>
<th>Growing Leaders</th>
<th>Invitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage</td>
<td>Grow</td>
<td>Train</td>
<td>Reach Out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Morning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Morning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteer <8 hours, Part time 8-30, Full time 30+
CONCLUSIONS

1. What are we really up against?

2. What should this mean for more effective ministry under God?

3. What real challenges do we face along the way?
“In the whole of world history there is always one really significant hour - the present…if you want to find eternity you must serve the times”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

www.effectiveministry.org
ORDINARY CHURCH, THE ENTRY POINT

First Occasion at Church

- Ordinary Service: 80% (67% Newcomers)
- Christmas / Easter: 3% (6% Newcomers)
- Small Group: 3% (4% Newcomers)
- Social Function: 1% (2% Newcomers)
- Outreach Activity: 2% (2% Newcomers)
- Baptism / Wedding / Funeral: 5% (11% Newcomers)
- Other: 6% (8% Newcomers)

Adjusted for non-participants
Source: Mission Under The Microscope
FAMILY AND ORDINARY MEMBERS KEY

Most Significant People in Finding Faith

- **Parents**: 41% (All attenders), 23% (Newcomers)
- **Spouse / Other Family**: 11% (All attenders), 10% (Newcomers)
- **Workmates / Friends**: 4% (All attenders), 9% (Newcomers)
- **Sunday School Teachers**: 9% (All attenders), 10% (Newcomers)
- **People - This Church**: 12% (All attenders), 29% (Newcomers)
- **People - Other Church**: 11% (All attenders), 8% (Newcomers)
- **Other People**: 7% (All attenders), 4% (Newcomers)
- **No-one / Don’t Know**: 5% (All attenders), 7% (Newcomers)

Adjusted for non-participants
Source: Mission Under The Microscope
POPULATION CHURN IS HIGH

Council Area Examples

Percent movement

Sources: Council Records, Winds of change p350, NCLS91
RELOCATION A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY

Reasons Left Previous Congregation

- Moved: 70%
- Married: 53%
- Unhappy With Style: 5%
- Unhappy With Theology: 5%
- Needs Changed: 5%
- Conflicts / Unhappy With Leader: 5%
- Other: 5%

### INVITATION HAS REASONABLE ODDS

#### Willingness to Accept an Invitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of my family / friends go</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Likelihood of Becoming Frequent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Unlikely</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unlikely</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ACLS98, see appendix slides 60,61
YOUTH IS A VITAL PLATFORM

Estimated Headcount Per Age Year

- New / New
- New / Returning
- In-house
- Regulars
- Drifters

Sources: NCLS profiles 2001, 2006; Why people don't go to church p23; DYB p144
## OFTEN POORLY MANAGED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dropout Rate %</th>
<th>Secondary / Post School</th>
<th>Left Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniting</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mission under the Microscope p121 NCLS91
THE EFFECT OF ALPHA ON CHURCH ATTENDANCE

% of Churches (1989 – 1998)

- Grew
- Stayed The Same
- Declined

Non-Alpha
1-2yr Alpha
3yr+ Alpha
DAILY DEVOTION

10 Year Growth Step %

-40% R² 90%

0%

20%

40%

Daily Bible Devotion %

-40% 0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

Pentecostal

Baptist

Churches Of Christ

Anglican

Lutheran

Uniting

Source: NCLS91, NCLS96, NCLS06