

# Twelve Steps to Church Growth

adapted slightly from “Re-Imaging Church for a Post-Christian World”  
a presentation given by the Rev. Dr. Gary Nicolosi  
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## Step 1: Focus on Spirituality

*Principle: Foundational to church growth is to make our churches communities of transformation where people experience God. The church of the future must emphasize spirituality. It must not shy away from the supernatural. Above all, the church must put its focus into satisfying the spiritual hunger that is in every human being who seeks an experience of transcendence, and yearns for purpose, meaning and significance. To do this effectively, the church will integrate the classical spiritual disciplines with a post-modern spirituality. It will focus on Jesus rather than on the institutional church.*

### Old Paradigm

Spiritual but not religious  
Dwelling  
Intellectual  
Institutional  
Either / Or  
Closed boundaries  
Withdrawal from the world  
Sacred and secular separated  
Permanence  
Membership  
Inhabiting  
Rules  
Systematic understanding of life  
Liturgy as uniform experience  
Church, Bible, Denomination  
Search for the historical Jesus  
Christian education  
Prefers absolute answers  
Systematic theology

### New Paradigm

Secular but spiritual  
Seeking  
Experiential  
Individualistic  
Both / And  
Open parameters  
Engagement in the world  
Sacred and secular connected  
Transition  
Connections  
Journeying  
Symbolic Messages  
Try whatever promises to work  
Liturgy as variety  
Jesus  
Search for the life transforming Jesus  
Christian formation  
Comfortable with paradox  
Contextual theology

### ***Action Steps:***

- (1) Teach people the classic spiritual disciplines, especially how to pray, meditate and read the Bible.
- (2) Give seekers an experience of God, invite them into community, and help them grow in faith – experience, community and faith – in that order.
- (3) Provide a balanced spirituality of the God encounter, the journey within and compassion for others.
- (4) Emphasize the importance of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, as a way of encountering God.
- (5) Rediscover a living liturgy as the center point of life, including the importance of music, art, architecture, color, dance and drama.
- (6) Teach stewardship as personal life management.
- (7) Offer group and one-on-one spiritual direction.
- (8) Offer courses on Jesus.
- (9) Offer both thinking and feeling approaches to faith.
- (10) Develop a healing ministry and prayer partners.

### ***Questions:***

- (11) What opportunities for spiritual growth exist in your church? Do the ministries of the church help you to grow spiritually? How?
- (12) What is it that you deeply long for as a regular aspect of your life? How can the church help meet that need?
- (13) How does the liturgical life of your church promote the spiritual growth of members? Non-members with little familiarity with Christianity?
- (14) Describe a person who embodies for you an inspiring example of a spiritual life? What are some of the traits that characterize such a life?
- (15) How does being Anglican assist people to grow spiritually? What does the Anglican tradition have to offer seekers?

## Step 2: Become an Open Church

*Principle: An open church believes passionately that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is about God's amazing grace and unconditional love transforming lives. Therefore, an open church practices radical hospitality that welcomes, accepts and reaches out to all sorts of people – no matter who they are or where they are on their journey of faith. It is a church that practices radical hospitality, blessing rather than cursing, including rather than excluding, always finding room for one more so that no one is ever shut out. The open church draws the circle wide – as wide as the love of Jesus. It is a church of open hearts, open minds and open doors, where everyone is accepted at his or her own level of need and understanding.*

### Old Paradigm

Church as birdcage  
Defined parameters  
One size fits all  
Church as destination  
Church in the box  
Church for members only  
Exclusive  
Dogmatic  
Join an institution  
People conform to church  
Institution as priority  
Fixed rules  
Principles above people  
Keeping the faith  
Possessing the truth  
Having the answers  
Church-centered  
Believing the right things about God  
Baptism leads to communion  
Believe to belong  
Certainty  
Spirit in the church alone

### New Paradigm

Church as birdbath  
Freedom and flexibility  
Custom fit  
Church as way station  
What box?  
Church for members and seekers  
Inclusive  
Pragmatic  
Bond with people  
Church accommodates people  
Relationships as priority  
Flexible rules  
People above principles  
Exploring faith  
Pursing truth  
Living the questions  
Christ-centered  
Experiencing God  
Communion leads to baptism  
Belong to believe  
Clarity  
Spirit in the church and world

### *Actions Steps:*

1. Help seekers experience God, invite them into community, and lead them to faith.
2. Put an inclusive statement of welcome in your worship bulletin such as, "Whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome."
3. Take Robert Frost's definition of home and apply it to your church: "the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

4. Recognize that becoming a Christian takes a lifetime of growth, and that people who come to your church are at different stages of development.
5. Don't expect people to act like Christians until they are Christians.
6. Be patient with people who know little or nothing about Anglican decorum.
7. Follow the wisdom of an old Chinese proverb: *“Go to people. Live among them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build on what they have.”*

***Questions:***

1. What does your church believe about God's love for all people?
2. In your reading of scripture, how does Jesus treat “outcasts, sinners and disreputable people”, and how does your church treat them?
3. Would outsiders and non-members recognize Jesus present in your church? If so, in what ways?
4. In the life of your church, how do you include people? How does your church exclude people?
5. Would someone of little or no church background feel comfortable in your church? Why or why not?
6. What judgmental or moralistic attitudes in your church might turn outsiders away?
7. How can your church proclaim, “Jesus is Lord” without appearing to be intolerant?

**Step 3: Upgrade Your Physical Facilities**

***Principle: The first impression people have of a church is the facilities. An attractive church complex attracts visitors. The appearance of church facilities presents an image to outsiders as warm, friendly and inviting or cold, uncaring and foreboding. Growing churches have gotten over their addiction to physical mediocrity.***

**Old Paradigm**

Traditional  
Handicapped inaccessible  
Dark and cramped  
Stuffy and musty  
Member sensitive

**New Paradigm**

Contemporary  
Handicapped accessible  
Bright and spacious  
Fresh and invigorating  
Guest sensitive

Buildings look and feel old  
Falling apart  
Pews  
Buildings reflect a staid church  
Too scary to enter

Buildings look and feel new  
Well maintained  
Chairs  
Buildings reflect a lively church.  
Too attractive not to enter

### ***Action Steps:***

1. Begin with your signs, parking facilities and restrooms.
2. Have handicapped accessible entrances and washrooms.
3. Maintain an excellent sound system.
4. Invest in warm, inviting lighting.
5. Designate visitor parking.
6. Air-condition the worship space.
7. Build a cry room.
8. Spare no expense to provide an excellent nursery.
9. Provide change table in both men and women restrooms.
10. Remodel on an ongoing basis.
11. Remember the Rule of 80: when the church is filled at 80% of capacity, it feels full. At that point, begin a second service.

### ***Questions:***

1. If a group of strangers looked at the outside of your church, would they want to come in? Why or why not?
2. What do the physical spaces of your church “say” to strangers and newcomers? What are the unspoken, and perhaps even unintentional messages being projected?
3. Survey the grounds, the nursery, the restrooms, the outer appearance, and so on, as a guest. What needs to be done to give the property a sense of excellence?
4. What physical barriers might exist in your church that makes it difficult for young families, seniors, and the physically challenged to feel welcomed or included?

## **Step 4: Become a Third Place in Your Community**

***Principle:*** *A Third Place is that informal public place outside of work and home – where people gather, put aside their concerns of work and home, relax and talk. According to sociologist Ray Oldenburg who first elaborated the concept in his book *The Great Good Place (1989)*, a Third Place promotes connection, conversation and community. In a church setting, a warm, caring community is one of the first things a visitor notices and one of the last things a member relinquishes. All visitors expect to find blessing in the church by a meaningful*

*touch, spoken words of acceptance, their high value affirmed, a special future for their lives and an active commitment to the fullness of life. Growing churches will help visitors feel affirmed, accepted and welcomed into the life of the congregation. They offer a non-pretentious homey place, foster a playful mood, and promote social equality and an inclusive atmosphere.*

**Old Paradigm**

Membership  
Believing leads to belonging  
Low touch, no touch, slap  
Church as a proper place  
Judgmental  
Law  
Formal dress code  
Bigger is always better  
Keep up appearances  
Perfect people  
Affirming the strong  
Casual talk  
On your guard

**New Paradigm**

Relationships  
Belonging leads to believing  
High touch  
Church as a safe place  
Non-judgmental love  
Grace  
Informal dress  
Intimacy is what matters  
Unconditional acceptance  
Imperfect people  
Healing the wounded  
Meaningful discussion  
Letting go and letting God

***Actions Steps:***

1. Position your church as a web of relationships.
2. Have a friendly pastor: “Give a look, a word and a touch.” (Robert Schuler)
3. Make a friendly first impression within the first twelve minutes of a visitor coming to your church.
4. Allow and affirm diversity.
5. Show concern for what people think, feel and need.
6. Offer opportunities for connection, conversation and community.

***Questions:***

1. Describe a Christian community you think embodies the church at its best. What are some of the traits that attract you?
2. How important is a caring community in the lives of your church’s members? How open are they to showing that caring to strangers?
3. Why do some people feel it difficult to welcome strangers? How might strangers threaten us?
4. Have you ever experienced being a stranger? Describe the situation, the emotions, and the story. Did anyone welcome you with hospitality? If so, what forms did the

hospitality take?

5. In what ways does your church practice “intentional caring” for each other?
6. How might your church strengthen the bonds of community that already exist?
7. Is your church a “safe place” to belong, where people can find security, honesty and vulnerability with one another? What might be done to make this kind of community a reality in your church?

## **Step 5: Be Intentional about Newcomer Ministry**

*Principle: The primary purpose of newcomer ministry is to build relationships with the people who come to your church. Newcomers do not join churches; instead they bond with people. Their first question in evaluating a church is, “Is there anyone here like me?” Therefore, the initial task is to introduce newcomers to people like them – people who have common bonds, common experiences or common backgrounds. The goal should be to expose guests to seven contacts with people like them over a three-week period. You then incorporate people into the church by encouraging and equipping them to become involved in ministry, thus developing even more relationships.*

### **Old Paradigm**

Membership  
Visitors  
Church for believers  
Denominational loyalty  
Stability  
Church as destination  
Dwelling spirituality  
Seek the truth  
Tell me about Jesus  
Tradition  
Heritage

### **New Paradigm**

Relationships  
Guests  
Church for seekers  
Personal Preference  
Transitions  
Church as a way station  
Seeking spirituality  
Seek what works for me  
Show me Jesus  
Transparency  
Authenticity

### ***Action Steps:***

1. Train ushers and greeters in relationship evangelism.
2. Develop a clear and attractive information packet.
3. Consider producing a church video.
4. Use e-mail to communicate with guests.

5. Introduce newcomers to people “like them” in the parish.
6. Follow-up on visitors within 72 hours by phone call and letter / e-mail.
7. Be extra diligent on Christmas, Easter and special occasions.
8. Develop a four-part membership program: Basic Christianity, Anglicanism, knowing your spiritual gifts and cultivating the spiritual life.
9. Have as your goal “Worship Plus Two” for all newcomers: worship plus a ministry to serve others, plus a ministry to nurture oneself.
10. Provide additional nurture opportunities in Christian faith and spirituality.

***Questions:***

1. Why are people in your area most likely to attend church?
2. If a couple, thirty years of age, with two children, should visit your church,
  - a) Why might they join?
  - b) Why might they look elsewhere?
3. What are the kinds of things that first time guests might think and feel as they enter your church? If you were a first time guest, what would you think and feel about your church?
4. Why do you want people to come to your church? How ready and willing is your church to welcome them?
5. What type of newcomer ministry do you have in your church now? How well does it work? What can you do to improve it?

**Step 6: Be Seeker Sensitive in Your Worship**

***Principle: While Anglican churches cannot be seeker-driven, they can and should be seeker-sensitive. That means planning and evaluating your worship through the eyes and ears of a seeker. In an experiential economy, people evaluate preferences based on experience rather than logic. So ask: What kind of worship experience are we offering seekers? Does such worship resonate with the people we seek to reach? Are we connecting with the community through our worship? Regardless of the worship style of your church, every worship experience should be an encounter with the living God. Seekers evaluate worship in three ways: ANTICIPATION (Something good is going to happen to me through this worship. Did it happen?); CELEBRATION (I experienced a divine presence in this worship. Was this service alive or dead?); INSPIRATION (I came away from this service strengthened for the journey of daily living. Did the service give me a lift or let me down?).***

### **Old Paradigm**

Learn about God  
Print / book  
Linear thought  
Creeds  
A community of the baptized  
Presumed religious literacy  
Continuity of church and culture  
Liturgy as uniform experience  
Male  
Dress up in Sunday best  
Traditional worship  
Didactic sermons

### **New Paradigm**

Experience God  
Sight, sound, sensation  
Kaleidoscopic thought  
Celebration  
A gathering of baptized and seekers  
No religious assumptions  
Discontinuity of church and culture  
Liturgy adapted to different people  
Male and female  
Casual dress  
A variety of worship experiences  
Narrative sermons

### ***Action Steps:***

1. Do worship planning with your target in mind by asking: “Who are we trying to reach? And will this worship service resonate with such people?”
2. Match your music with the people you want to reach.
3. Make worship times convenient to the people in your community.
4. Offer multiple worship styles: traditional, contemporary, blended, *et al.*
5. Avoid wordiness in the liturgy and preaching.
6. Shorten the lessons or use two lessons instead of three.
7. Keep to a one-hour service. (One hour ten minutes maximum in large churches)
8. Concentrate on making guests feel comfortable
9. Preach to the real needs of people with biblical, practical sermons.
10. Combine high tech and high touch in one worship experience.
11. Print a user-friendly worship bulletin or use screens.
12. Read scripture from a contemporary translation.

### ***Questions:***

1. What is negotiable and what is non-negotiable about your worship? Why?
2. Look at the worship service through the eyes of first time unchurched guests. What might they be thinking or feeling? What might you do to make the service more visitor-friendly?
3. Evaluate the sermons from the perspective of a newcomer. Look at the topics addressed, the language used, the relevance to everyday life, and the applicability. How might the sermons be more visitor-friendly? What topics might the sermons deal with in order to accomplish this goal?

4. What does your worship say about the kind of church you are? Who is excluded from your worship? Who is included?
5. In what ways does your worship connect with people in your community? Identify any cultural barriers first time guests need to overcome in order to feel comfortable with your worship?

## **Step 7: Market and Advertise with Your Target in Mind**

*Principle: “If you build it, they will come” only works in the movies. Growing churches market and advertise themselves with great method and intention. For any congregation the competition is not another congregation, but all the recreational activities, audio / visuals, and sporting events the world has to offer. Moreover, we know that the most open segment of the population to attending church is families with young children. To prepare your church to reach this group, you need 1) Excellent staff, programs and facilities to draw and keep families, and 2) Ministries that respond to the needs of families, offer them support, give them guidance and help them in parenting.*

### **Old Paradigm**

Church as all things to all people  
 Church as a center of community  
 People connect with the church  
 Passive church  
 One size fits all  
 People come to church  
 Brand loyalty  
 Assume your purpose  
 Live with mediocrity  
 Expect people to come, regardless  
 Offer people nothing special

### **New Paradigm**

Church designed for specific groups  
 Segmentation and niche marketing  
 Church connects with people  
 Competitive church  
 Many styles meet specific needs  
 Church goes to people  
 Consumer preference  
 Know your purpose  
 Pursue excellence  
 Add value to people’s lives  
 Offer what only the church can give

### ***Actions Steps:***

1. Probe: learn all you can about your area.
2. Partition: divide your market into segments.
3. Prioritize: choose which segments to go after.
4. Position: develop a clear image of the type of church you want in relation to the type of person you want to attract.
5. Define your target geographically, demographically, culturally and spiritually.
6. Focus on groups your church is most likely to reach.
7. Learn to think like an unbeliever.
8. Let your target determine your approach.

### ***Questions:***

1. Who is your church currently reaching? What is the average age of your community? What is the average age of your church members? How do the two compare? In general, does your congregation reflect the community?
2. Describe the type of person you are. Describe the kind of people who already attend your church. Why do you think members are attracted to your church? What needs are you meeting?
3. What does your church do well? What would you like to improve?
4. What needs are not being met by other churches in your community? What people are not being reached? What are the characteristics of this target audience (their values, attitudes, beliefs, musical tastes, view of the church, and so on)?
5. What will reach them? What activities, styles of worship, or programs might attract them? Develop a profile of the target audience.
6. What makes your church different from other churches in your community?
7. If your church ceased to exist, would anyone in the community miss it? Why or why not?

## **Step 8: Train People in Lifestyle Evangelism**

***Principle: Lifestyle evangelism is simply speaking truthfully and lovingly about what is experienced in one's life as a result of being a Christian. Lifestyle evangelism training should be an on-going part of the formation of all members in general, and specifically for those members called and gifted in the ministry of evangelism. Anglicans need to learn ways to share their faith with family and friends naturally and respectfully – and feel comfortable about it.***

### **Old Paradigm**

Christianity as religion  
Only clergy engage in mission  
Mission field far away  
Evangelism by advertisement  
Proclamation  
Salvation  
Words of condemnation

### **New Paradigm**

Christianity as lifestyle  
All baptized are missionaries  
Mission field at home  
Evangelism by invitation  
Relationship  
God's love  
Words of affirmation

Confrontational  
Bring Jesus to people  
Spirit confined to the church  
Talk of heaven and hell  
Non-Christian religions ungodly  
Four Laws  
Faith in the abstract  
Talk about my church  
Appearance and propriety

Care-frontational  
Finding Jesus in people  
Spirit everywhere in the world  
Talk of life issues  
Non-Christian religions respected  
Personal narrative  
Faith in my life  
Talk about Jesus  
Honesty and transparency

### ***Action Steps:***

1. Teach and preach on lifestyle evangelism.
2. Offer training programs in faith sharing.
3. Allow occasional two-minute personal testimonies at worship.
4. Use Jesus as the model for evangelism.
5. Build bridges of friendship with the unchurched.
6. Avoid being judgmental at all cost.
7. Teach people to share their faith stories with those outside the church by answering the question, “How is God (Jesus) making a difference in my life?”

### ***Questions:***

1. Watch some TV commercials with a group and discuss: What is being sold, and to whom? What is the producer using to sell the product? What do you suspect this product will in fact do? What testimony does this ad give to the values and priorities of our society?
2. What are the various forms in which people give testimony, verbal and nonverbal? Which of these does your church encourage? Which is discouraged?
3. Has there been a time when you experienced the activity of God in your life? Can you tell the story, speak it out loud?
4. Do you feel anxious when you consider speaking out loud about your faith? Can you articulate the reasons for your anxiety? How might the church help you overcome that anxiety?
5. Think of someone who’s living / dying has been a testimony of faith. Describe the person and why you value him or her.
6. Why do you attend your church? Has participation in the church made a difference in your life? Explain the difference it has made.
7. In what ways can you affirm “Jesus as Lord” without appearing a bigot?

## Step 9: Transform Your Church a Mission Outpost

*Principle: If the primary mission field is right outside our church doors, then churches need to become mission outposts and members need to see themselves as missionaries. Evangelism becomes the starting point for all church ministries. Making evangelism a priority in the church's life is to evaluate every ministry by asking, "How does this ministry contribute to reaching people with the good news of Jesus Christ?"*

### Old Paradigm

Christendom  
Supportive culture  
Mission field away  
Church as mainline  
Church as fortress  
Passive church  
Church programs for members  
A church for believers  
Top priority: maintain traditions  
Focus on members  
Exclusive  
Maintain the institution  
Christians as respectable citizens

### New Paradigm

Post Christendom  
Neutral or hostile culture  
Mission field at home  
Church as marginalized  
Church as light and leaven  
Engaged church  
Church programs for non-members  
A church for believers and seekers  
Top priority: share the Gospel  
Outreach orientation  
Inclusive  
Reach the unchurched  
Christians as resident aliens

### *Actions Steps:*

1. Evaluate ministries by their effectiveness in reaching nonmembers.
2. Let the mission of the church determine the ministries of the church
3. Be sensitive to scheduling concerns.
4. Offer high quality program options.
5. Be focused on your message but be flexible in your methods.
6. Design ministries for different generations.
7. Plan programming with the unchurched in mind.
8. Open church facilities to community groups.
9. Have members struggle with the question, "What is it about this church that I cannot live without?"
10. Focus on the Great Commandment and the Great Commission: love God, love people and reach out to others

### *Questions:*

1. What are the things your church is doing today that no longer make sense? Why does your church continue to do them? What are the implications of not doing them? Is it possible to direct them towards ministries, which further the church's mission?

2. What can you make possible today in your church to make it more vital and relevant tomorrow?
3. In what ways do the programs of your church reach out to the unchurched in your community?
4. How might you design your church programs to have an outreach component?
5. What is there about your church that people cannot live without?
6. Who is Jesus to you? Why should others know him?

## **Step 10:        Develop a Permission-Giving Ministry**

***Principle: Every Christian is a minister by virtue of baptism. Moreover, every minister is important. Growing churches give people permission to develop their own ministries based on their spiritual gifts, provided the ministries are in accord with the church’s mission statement. Therefore, a growing church will intentionally encourage, equip and empower its members to develop new ministries in the church and new ventures in mission in the world.***

### **Old Paradigm**

Priesthood  
 Role determines ministry  
 Centralization  
 Hierarchy  
 Focus on the needs of the church  
 Ministry as necessary to the institution  
 Busy with meetings  
 Committees, votes, lengthy process  
 Systems and structures valued  
 Clergy minister to members

### **New Paradigm**

Laity  
 Gifts determine ministry  
 Decentralization  
 Ownership  
 Focus on the gifts of the members  
 Ministry as meaningful to members  
 Active in ministry  
 “Just do it!”  
 Spontaneity valued  
 Members minister to members

### ***Actions Steps:***

1. Teach stewardship as personal gift management.
2. Preach on vocation and spiritual gifts.
3. Help people to find their SHAPE: spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality type, and experiences.
4. Maximize ministry and minimize maintenance.
5. Make ministry placement a priority in your new member assimilation strategy.
6. Provide on the job training.
7. Never start a ministry without a minister.

8. Delegate authority with responsibility.
9. Keep your ministries visible.
10. Celebrate all parish ministries at least once a year.

***Questions:***

1. How do you view the clergy of your church? What kind of authority do they possess? What is their leadership style: Authoritarian? Directive? Facilitating? Equipping? Collaborative? Supportive?
2. What makes ministry meaningful to a person?
3. Why do people sacrifice themselves for a cause?
4. Why do you volunteer in your church? What benefits do you receive from volunteering?

**Step 11: Transform Your Ministries into Sharing Groups**

*Principle: Churches can only grow larger by becoming smaller – and this happens through sharing groups. Any ministry in the church can become a sharing group where people experience Christian community (koinonia). Sharing groups provide people with an opportunity for building relationships, finding support, experiencing affirmation and ministering to people. Sharing groups may be service-oriented or nurture-oriented.*

**Old Paradigm**

Believing  
 Sunday school  
 Attending  
 Membership  
 Entry point: Sunday worship  
 Clergy as pastors  
 Clergy-led Christian education  
 Meetings at church  
 Meetings on Sundays  
 Formality  
 An appearance of being okay  
 Church for the healthy and wholesome  
 Clergy minister to members  
 Keeping the pain to myself

**New Paradigm**

Belonging  
 Seven-day-a-week church  
 Bonding  
 Relationships  
 Entry point: Need meeting ministries  
 Laity as shepherds  
 Lay-led spiritual formation  
 Meetings in homes  
 Meeting when convenient  
 Intimacy  
 “I’m not okay, you’re not okay”  
 Honesty, vulnerability, acceptance  
 Members minister to each other  
 Sharing my wounds with others

### ***Action Steps:***

1. Create points of entry with need meeting ministries.
2. Find new ways to meet needs and heal hurts by starting more groups.
3. Develop sharing groups with distinctive purposes: evangelizing the unchurched, discipling new Christians, and shepherding members.
4. Train the laity to conduct sharing groups and regularly evaluate effectiveness.
5. Assimilate new members into a sharing group within six months of their first visit.
6. Always look for ways to form new sharing groups, link sharing groups to ministry interest, and let some groups die a natural death.
7. Structure your church into three parts: Celebration (the entire parish), Congregation (different worshipping groups) and Cell (ministries within the church).

### ***Questions:***

1. Define your church's current strategy for nurturing people? Is the strategy working? Does it offer people a way of experiencing continued spiritual and personal growth?
2. What do you want to have happen in the lives of your members? How can you actively encourage people to grow?
3. How might small group ministry already be present in your church? How might it be extended?
4. Why might some clergy feel threatened by small groups led by laity? How might their apprehensions be alleviated?
5. Identify some personal and community needs where small groups might be an appropriate response by your church?

## **Step 12: Engage in Community Outreach**

***Principle: Growing churches take the whole gospel seriously. They are active in living out their faith through good works in the community as a witness to the living Christ within them. Offering missional evidence to the truth they proclaim helps not only the recipients of their activity, but allows the members to grow spiritually.***

### **Old Paradigm**

Obligation

Church as exclusive

### **New Paradigm**

Compassion

Church as inclusive

Church as other-worldly  
British / European  
People give to the church  
Maintenance  
Focus on the soul  
Congregational life in church building  
Live for self  
Get people to join the church  
Tell people the Way  
Love in words  
What you know

Church as this-worldly  
Multicultural  
Church gives to the community  
Mission  
Focus on the whole person  
Congregational life in community  
Live for others  
Share the good news of God's love  
Show people the Way  
Love in action  
How much you care

### ***Action Steps:***

1. View the church as a centre of ministry in the community.
2. Teach a spirituality of engagement and connection with the world.
3. Practice hands-on ministry.
4. Offer people opportunities for mission.
5. Discern what needs in the community your congregation can meet.
6. Proclaim a *whole* Gospel to the *whole* world for the *whole* person.
7. Think globally, act locally.
8. Meet needs and heal hurts. Note: the more needs your church meets and the more hurt your church heals, the more likely your church is to grow.

### ***Questions:***

1. How do you understand the Gospel? Do you think that evangelism and social justice are both part of the Gospel? Why or why not?
2. How does your church express love beyond itself? How does your church make an impact on the surrounding community right now?
3. What needs are not being met by other churches in your community? What people are not being reached? How might your church respond to them?
4. What kind of vision does your church offer people? What kinds of opportunities do you currently offer that enable people to make a difference? What opportunities could you offer?
5. Given the resources of your church, what needs in the community might your church respond to?
6. If money were not an issue, what kinds of outreach would you like your church to do within the next five years?