PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMATION

Equipping the Church for Deep and Lasting Change
COMMON SENSE & PLANNING

- Trends are fickle
- Demographics are deceiving
- Planning is more art than science
- Most people plan for the past, rather than the future
- Dreaming is not the same as visioning; guessing is not the same as planning.
STRATEGY & TACTICS

- **Strategic thinking** – envisioning the Big Picture; exploring options, clarifying goals and objectives.
- **Strategic planning** – creating the structures and processes necessary to achieve goals and objectives.
- **Tactical planning** – developing the implementation plan for allocation of resources, delivery and evaluation.
SEVEN KEY FACTORS: WISCONSIN UMC

- Age
- Music
- Multiculturalism
- Facilities
- Technology
- Money
- Specialization
AGE

2010 – 2035

- Age 17 and under will drop from 15% to 11% of Wisconsin pop.;
- Age 55 and older will increase from 13% to 19%;
- Young families (families with young children) have least amount of disposable income and discretionary time; 55+ have greatest amount of both;
- 29 and under are most attracted to newer churches and stay an average of 2 years; 55 and older are most attracted to established churches with relationship and service opportunities and stay an average of 8.5 years.
- Sharp increase in “designer spirituality” - <45
Music has become perhaps the most important factor determining where people worship –

- 1-in-3 visitors to a church will not return if organ music is the primary form; 4-in-5 will not return if organ is only form
- 3-in-5 visitors will not return to a church where music is poorly performed; the same number will not return if music is performed for them;
- New music must be taught – 90% of people want to sing songs they know;
- Churches offering a diversity of styles will increase; those featuring a single style will not; those attempting to “blend” styles will decrease
MULTICULTURALISM

- Monoculture is ending – acting is better than reacting
  - Non-Mexican Latinos will be the fastest growing non-Euro-Caucasian segment;
  - Mexicans will be the second fastest segment
    - There are between 50 and 70 different “Hispanic/Latino” cultures present in the U.S.
  - Churches should be offering Spanish as a second language (SSL) to their congregations as well as English as a second language (ESL) to immigrant populations
  - The prevailing context should be “ministry with,” rather than “ministry to” or “ministry for”;
    - Stereotyping must be challenged – Hispanic/Latino students have passed Anglo student in SAT/ACT scoring.
FACILITIES

- Critical analysis and evaluation of our facilities (buildings and properties) must occur
  - By 2035, 90% of our buildings will be over 50 years old; 80% of them supported by a congregation smaller than when they were built
  - Building, insurance, and maintenance costs (including loans) account for 35% of church budgets – will rise to over 50% by 2035
  - It is estimated that 70% of our buildings are larger than necessary; 85% of church space used less than 3 hours each week;
  - Fastest growing and healthiest churches doing more and more ministry “off-site”
TECHNOLOGY

- Modern tech is important – people will not attend a church that doesn’t provide them with bare-minimum
  - Cutting edge tech costly; costs fall fast as tech changes
  - Sound and visuals become more important as churches age
  - Boomer/post-Boomer expectations higher for sound and picture quality – expertise in using tech
  - Not using technology at all is better than using technology poorly.
  - Websites will become essential – blogs, pod casts, video, social networking (Cyber-church becoming reality)
The largest pool of discretionary disposable assets will peak somewhere between 2021 and 2027.

- Those non-profits who receive gifts will be those who ask for them.
- Churches focusing on planned giving and building endowments today will benefit most.
- Monies for missional initiatives will be easier to cultivate than monies for building and property.
- Investment in the future will trump maintenance every time.
- Good stewardship of church resources will become a top priority (but the trend will be toward more rather than less).
SPECIALIZATION

- UM churches cannot go toe-to-toe with the mega-church (unless Adam Hamilton is your pastor)
  - The healthiest churches will excel at one or two distinctive ministries
  - Greater intra-denominational and ecumenical partnerships and support are the wave of the future – healthy churches plan ministries too big for them to handle alone
  - Pastoral partnerships are necessary – networks of specialists (Circuit Ministry?)
  - Witness and reputation should become planning priorities
  - Think “one big thing” at a time
  - Make excellence (depth) a higher priority than reach (breadth).
SUMMARY

- In 2035, we will be:
  - Older
  - More diverse
  - Wealthier
  - In smaller facilities
  - With cutting edge tech supporting high quality music & worship arts
  - Collaborating in specialized ministries
    - (or else we will be gone...)