

THE CHURCH CONSULTANT'S NOTEBOOK

Insights on Church Leadership,
Systems and Ministry Growth

Thousand Hills Consulting

Introduction

The Church occupies a unique place in society.

It is at once a spiritual community, a mission movement, and an organisation that must function effectively if it is to fulfil its calling.

While the spiritual dimension of the Church is often emphasised, the organisational and leadership dimensions are sometimes neglected.

Yet both are necessary for a healthy and growing ministry.

The Church Consultant's Notebook is a collection of reflections, observations, and practical insights drawn from years of working with churches, ministries, and Christian organisations across different contexts.

These notes are not meant to be academic treatises, but thoughtful considerations intended to help church leaders think more intentionally about how their ministries are structured, led, and sustained.

In consulting engagements with churches, one often discovers that many of the challenges ministries face are not necessarily spiritual in nature, but organisational.

Issues such as unclear structures, weak systems, leadership overload, poor coordination, and lack of defined processes can quietly limit the effectiveness of even the most passionate ministries.

The purpose of this notebook is therefore simple: **to help church leaders see the ministry through both a pastoral and organisational lens.**

Topics explored in these pages include church leadership, ministry systems, organisational structures, service delivery, growth dynamics, and the practical realities of leading a modern church.

The insights shared here are not presented as rigid formulas.

Every church operates within its own calling, context, and culture.

Rather, they are intended as **frameworks for reflection**, ideas that can help pastors and ministry leaders think more clearly about how to strengthen their churches.

Ultimately, the goal of good leadership and effective systems is not organisational perfection, but **greater capacity for ministry**.

When structures are clear, systems are working, and leadership is distributed wisely, the Church is better positioned to serve people, disciple believers, and advance its mission.

And yet, as we consider leadership and organisational effectiveness, we must never lose sight of the most important truth: **it is God who gives the increase**.

Our role is simply to steward the work faithfully and wisely.

It is my hope that these reflections will provide encouragement, clarity, and practical guidance to pastors and ministry leaders who desire to build stronger and more effective churches.

About Thousand Hills Consulting

Thousand Hills Consulting is a faith-driven advisory and systems development firm dedicated to supporting churches, ministries, and Christian organisations in building effective structures for sustainable growth and impact.

We work with church leaders to strengthen the organisational side of ministry, helping them design **clear leadership structures, operational systems, governance frameworks, and strategic growth pathways** that enable ministries to function effectively while remaining faithful to their spiritual mandate.

Our areas of support include:

- **Church Systems and Structures**
- **Governance and Accountability Frameworks**
- **International Church Expansion**
- **Strategic Planning and Ministry Development**
- **Training and Capacity Development for Church Leaders**

Drawing from experience across **Africa, the United Kingdom, and Europe**, Thousand Hills Consulting brings both practical insight and strategic perspective to the challenges facing today's churches and ministries.

We believe that when leadership is strengthened and systems are properly designed, churches are better positioned to serve people, disciple believers, and fulfil their mission.

Thousand Hills Consulting is led by **Shola Ajani**, a management consultant, trainer, and ordained minister with extensive experience advising churches and Christian organisations on leadership, structure, and ministry effectiveness.

“This notebook reflects the kind of thinking that informs the advisory work of Thousand Hills Consulting.”

The Church Consultant's Notebook #1

Church Leadership, Systems and Ministry Growth

Church Visitor Journey Map

Mapping the Experience from First Contact to Attendance



Customer Journey Mapping in Churches: Understanding the Visitor Experience

One of the most useful tools organisations use to understand how people experience their services is the **Customer Journey Map (CJM)**.

A Customer Journey Map examines the **entire experience a person has with an organisation**, from the very first point of contact to the moment they engage fully with what the organisation offers.

For churches, this journey typically begins **long before someone ever walks through the doors on a Sunday morning**.

It may start with:

- A Google search
- A visit to the church website
- A social media post or livestream
- An invitation from a friend
- An online advert or event promotion

Each of these represents a **touch point**, a moment when someone interacts with the church.

In many churches, there may be **20 or more touch points** between the ministry and a prospective visitor.

These can include:

- Website
- Facebook, Instagram or YouTube pages
- Sermon clips or podcasts
- Google reviews or online listings
- Church signage
- Invitations from members
- Phone enquiries
- Car park experience
- Welcome desk interaction
- Ushers and greeters
- Worship atmosphere
- Children's ministry check-in
- Follow-up messages after the visit

Every one of these moments contributes to how a visitor **forms an opinion about the church.**

The Power of First Impressions

The experience someone has at any one of these touch points may determine **whether they decide to visit the church at all.**

For example:

- If the website is outdated or unclear, the visitor may never attend.
- If social media appears inactive, they may assume the church is not vibrant.
- If basic information such as location, service times, or parking is difficult to find, frustration may discourage them.

By the time someone eventually visits a church physically, they have already formed **a perception about the ministry.**

That perception has been shaped by **their earlier interactions with the church.**

For this reason, churches must ensure that **the experience people encounter online or through other channels matches the experience they eventually receive when they attend.**

If the online presence suggests warmth, organisation and excellence but the physical experience is confusing or unwelcoming the disconnect becomes immediately noticeable.

Moments of Truth

In customer experience management, each interaction between a person and an organisation is called a **“Moment of Truth.”**

These are the moments where an impression is formed.

Every moment of truth presents the church with an opportunity to create either:

- A **positive impression**, which encourages deeper engagement, or
- A **negative impression**, which discourages further contact.

Examples of moments of truth in churches include:

- The response to a first enquiry
- The friendliness of the welcome team
- The ease of finding the building
- The clarity of service flow
- The experience of children’s ministry
- The follow-up after a first visit

When mapped carefully, these moments reveal the **gap between the experience the church hopes to deliver and the one visitors actually receive.**

It is often within these gaps that **important improvements can be made.**

Why Customer Journey Mapping Is Valuable for Churches

A well-designed Customer Journey Map helps church leaders see their ministry **through the eyes of the people they are trying to reach.**

Some of the benefits include:

- Experiencing the church from the perspective of visitors and new members
- Identifying areas where the experience may be confusing or discouraging
- Understanding how different groups experience the ministry
- Revealing hidden barriers to participation
- Discovering what aspects of the church are most appealing to visitors
- Helping leadership prioritise improvements that will have the greatest impact

A Practical Example

In one consulting engagement, a Customer Journey Map revealed an unexpected issue for a church.

Leadership had noticed that **very few elderly worshippers attended the church**, and they were unsure why.

After mapping the journey of different visitor groups, it became clear that the church auditorium was located **on the third floor of a building without lifts**.

While younger attendees had no difficulty climbing the stairs, the building itself created an unintentional barrier for older worshippers.

The CJM exercise helped the church recognise that **its physical environment was influencing the type of congregation it was attracting**.

Without that insight, the issue may have remained unnoticed.

Strategic Insights for Church Leaders

Customer Journey Mapping can also help churches identify **the most effective ways of reaching new people.**

For example, a CJM may reveal that most visitors first discover the church through:

- Social media content
- Personal invitations from members
- Online sermon clips
- Community events

This knowledge allows the church to **focus its time, resources and investment on the channels that are actually producing results.**

Final Reflection

Churches often focus heavily on **what happens during the service**, but the visitor experience begins **long before the service ever starts.**

Understanding the journey people go through from first contact to active participation can reveal powerful insights that help ministries become **more welcoming, accessible and effective in their mission.**

At **Thousand Hills Consulting**, we support churches in mapping and improving the experience people have across every stage of their engagement with the ministry.

Understanding the journey is often the first step toward building **stronger, healthier and more impactful churches.**

The Church Consultant's Notebook #2

When Volunteers Become Employees: A Hidden Risk for Churches



Most churches depend heavily on **volunteers** to deliver their mission.

From ushers and media teams to administrative support and outreach programmes, volunteers play a critical role in helping churches function effectively.

However, many churches unintentionally create situations where **a volunteer relationship begins to resemble an employer–employee relationship.**

When this happens, the church may unknowingly expose itself to **legal obligations under employment law**, including minimum wage requirements and employment rights.

Church leaders must therefore understand the **fine line between volunteering and employment.**

When Churches Accidentally Create an Employment Relationship

A volunteer relationship may begin to look like employment when certain practices are introduced.

Examples include:

- Granting volunteers **employee-style rights**, such as leave entitlements or maternity conditions
- Paying volunteers **regular stipends or allowances** beyond reimbursement of expenses
- Issuing letters that **mirror formal employment contracts**

- Promising that volunteering could **lead to paid employment**
- Providing **rewards or financial incentives** for performance
- Applying **staff-level disciplinary procedures** to volunteers
- Paying **flat-rate allowances** not tied to actual expenses incurred
- Requiring volunteers to **repay training costs** if they stop volunteering
- Providing training that **is not directly linked to the volunteer role**

If volunteers receive **any payment or benefit beyond genuine out-of-pocket expenses**, the law may interpret the relationship as **contractual rather than voluntary**.

In such circumstances, the individual could be classified as a **worker or employee**, which carries legal implications for the organisation.

Practical Examples

Consider the following scenarios:

Example 1

Bro John volunteers in the church office to gain work experience. The church pays him travel expenses even though he walks to the office.

Because the payment is **not a genuine reimbursement of expenses**, it could be interpreted as a **wage**, meaning he may legally be entitled to **minimum wage payments**.

Example 2

Mary volunteers with a charity organisation. All volunteers receive **£3 weekly for travel**.

However, Mary walks to the park she oversees, meaning the **£3 is not covering actual expenses**.

This could be seen as **payment rather than reimbursement**, potentially creating an employment relationship.

Example 3

Joe works as an unpaid intern in the church office but receives **free CDs of the pastor's messages as a reward.**

These may be considered **“benefits in kind.”**

Because they have monetary value, Joe could legally be regarded as a **worker entitled to minimum wage.**

Example 4

Amanda volunteers with the understanding that **she will be offered employment after three months.**

This promise could be viewed as a **form of reward**, potentially triggering employment rights for the entire period she worked.

The Myth of the “Voluntary Worker”

Some organisations attempt to avoid these risks by classifying volunteers as **“voluntary workers.”**

However, in many legal contexts, **this distinction does not exist in practice.**

If the relationship between the organisation and the individual resembles employment, the organisation may be required to provide **back pay and employment rights**, sometimes covering **several years of unpaid wages.**

Should Churches Have Volunteer Agreements?

Unlike employees, volunteers **do not legally require employment contracts.**

However, if churches choose to create volunteer agreements, these documents should:

- Avoid employment language
- Emphasise **expectations rather than obligations**
- Avoid terms such as *disciplinary action, termination, grievance procedures*, etc.

The purpose of such agreements should be **clarity**, not contractual obligation.

Should Volunteers Be Treated Like Employees?

While fairness is important, **volunteers and employees represent two different models of engagement.**

Employees perform services **in exchange for payment and defined obligations.**

Volunteers, by contrast, offer their time **freely and without contractual obligation.**

If churches begin to treat volunteers exactly like employees with strict attendance requirements, disciplinary measures, or contractual expectations employment tribunals may view them as employees.

Handling Problems with Volunteers

Churches should avoid formal disciplinary procedures designed for employees.

Instead, a **volunteer management approach** is more appropriate.

If a volunteer repeatedly fails to attend scheduled duties, the church may simply choose **not to assign further responsibilities** rather than impose sanctions.

The key principle is that **volunteering must remain voluntary**.

Can Churches Pay Volunteers?

Volunteers **should not receive payments or benefits** beyond legitimate out-of-pocket expenses.

However, churches can reimburse expenses such as:

- Transport
- Meals purchased while volunteering
- Materials purchased for ministry activities

Ideally, these expenses should be **supported by receipts or reasonable estimates tied directly to the volunteer activity.**

Small symbolic tokens of appreciation such as **badges, certificates, or recognition awards** are generally acceptable because they do not have significant financial value.

Legal Responsibilities Toward Volunteers

Although volunteers are not employees, churches still have responsibilities toward them.

These include:

- Ensuring **health and safety** in the workplace
- Providing a **safe working environment**
- Protecting volunteers under **data protection laws**
- Avoiding **discrimination** when volunteers are being considered for future employment

Churches should also ensure that **insurance policies cover volunteers**, particularly in situations where volunteers could be injured or where their actions could expose the church to liability.

A Final Reflection

Volunteers are often the **lifeblood of ministry operations**, enabling churches to serve communities and deliver programmes that would otherwise be impossible.

However, the relationship between a church and its volunteers must remain **clearly voluntary**.

When the lines between volunteering and employment become blurred, churches may unknowingly create **legal, financial, and governance risks**.

Understanding this distinction is an important part of **responsible ministry leadership and organisational stewardship**.

The Church Consultant's Notebook #3

Using Social Media in the 21st Century Church



In today's world, social media is no longer optional for churches.

It has become one of the **primary ways people discover ministries, learn about church activities, and form their first impression of a church community.**

Long before a visitor attends a service physically, they may already have interacted with the church through:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- WhatsApp
- TikTok
- A church website
- Online sermons or livestreams

For many people, **social media is now the front door of the church.**

The First Point of Contact

Historically, the first contact with a church might have been:

- A physical signboard
- A personal invitation
- A community event

Today, the first contact is often **digital**.

A person may:

- Search for churches on Google
- Watch a sermon clip on YouTube
- View a church event on Instagram
- See a church advert on Facebook
- Receive a WhatsApp invitation from a friend

These interactions shape **their perception of the ministry long before they attend in person**.

This means a church's **digital presence has become part of its ministry strategy**.

Social Media Is Not Just Promotion

Many churches use social media primarily to **announce programmes or services.**

While this is useful, social media can do much more.

It can help churches:

- Extend their teaching beyond Sunday services
- Engage members during the week
- Reach people outside their immediate geographic area
- Share testimonies and stories of impact
- Strengthen the church's public visibility
- Communicate vision and values

In essence, social media allows a church to **remain present in people's lives throughout the week.**

The Importance of Consistency

One common challenge many churches face is **inconsistent online presence.**

For example:

- Pages may be created but rarely updated
- Sermons may be uploaded irregularly
- Event information may be outdated
- Responses to messages may be delayed

These small issues can unintentionally communicate **disorganisation or inactivity**, even when the church itself is vibrant.

Maintaining a **consistent and organised social media presence** helps reinforce the credibility and vitality of the ministry.

Content That Connects

Churches often assume that only full sermons should be shared online.

However, some of the most engaging content includes:

- Short teaching clips
- Inspirational quotes from sermons
- Testimonies from members
- Behind-the-scenes moments from ministry activities
- Community outreach stories
- Announcements and reminders
- Worship moments or highlights

Short, meaningful content is often **more shareable and accessible** than long videos.

Over time, these small pieces of content help build **ongoing engagement with the church community**.

Social Media as a Ministry Tool

It is important to remember that social media should not simply be treated as **a marketing tool**.

For churches, it is also a **pastoral and discipleship tool**.

Through digital platforms, churches can:

- Encourage members during the week
- Share devotional reflections
- Respond to prayer requests
- Provide guidance and teaching

In many cases, social media allows churches to **reach people who may never walk into a physical building initially**.

Governance and Responsibility

Because social media represents the church publicly, it is important to establish **clear guidelines for how platforms are managed.**

This may include:

- Assigning responsibility to a dedicated team
- Developing a simple content schedule
- Ensuring messaging aligns with the church's values
- Monitoring comments and responses
- Protecting the church's reputation online

Without clear oversight, social media can quickly become **disorganised or inconsistent.**

A Final Reflection

Social media has fundamentally changed how organisations communicate, and churches are no exception.

Used wisely, it can help ministries:

- reach new people
- strengthen engagement with members
- communicate vision clearly
- extend ministry beyond physical gatherings

In the 21st century church, **digital presence is now part of the ministry experience.**

Churches that approach social media intentionally will find that it becomes **a powerful extension of their mission and message.**

The Church Consultant's Notebook

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The Secret of Service

From time to time, I am invited to speak to church workers and ministry teams.

One teaching I have found particularly effective in energising workers and helping them understand the spirit of service is drawn from **Exodus 17:8–13**.

This passage records the first major attack on the Israelites after leaving Egypt.

The Amalekites came to fight Israel at **Rephidim**.

In response to the threat, Moses instructed **Joshua** to choose men and go out to battle the Amalekites the following day.

Meanwhile, Moses said he would stand on the hilltop with **the rod of God in his hands**.

Joshua carried out the instruction and went into battle.

However, the Bible records something very interesting.

It says that **Aaron and Hur went up the hill with Moses.**

No instruction was given to them.
No formal assignment was recorded.

Yet they went.

Understanding the Moment

As the battle progressed, something unusual began to happen.

Whenever Moses held up his hands, **Israel prevailed.**

Whenever his hands dropped, **the Amalekites gained the advantage.**

At some point, Moses became tired.

Aaron and Hur recognised the problem and took practical action.

They placed a stone under Moses so he could sit, and then they **stood on either side of him and held up his hands** until sunset.

Because of this support, **Israel eventually defeated Amalek.**

Lessons from Aaron and Hur

There are powerful leadership and service lessons hidden in this passage.

1. Seeing the Bigger Picture

Aaron and Hur appeared to understand that the battle involved more than what was happening on the battlefield.

Joshua was fighting below, but the outcome was also connected to **what was happening on the hill.**

They recognised that **Moses might need support**, and they positioned themselves accordingly.

Effective workers understand the **bigger picture of the vision and mission of the church.**

2. Initiative

The text does not record Moses asking Aaron and Hur to accompany him.

They simply took the initiative.

Great workers do not wait to be told everything to do.

They observe needs and step forward to help.

Initiative is often the difference between **average workers and exceptional ones.**

3. Availability

Aaron and Hur made themselves available.

They were present when leadership needed support.

Many people are willing to serve in principle, but effective service often begins with something very simple:

being available.

4. Problem Solving

When Moses' hands became tired, Aaron and Hur did not simply observe the situation.

They found a solution.

They brought a stone for him to sit on and then physically supported his hands.

Ministry requires workers who are not only willing but also **able to think and solve problems when challenges arise.**

5. Commitment

The Bible says they held Moses' hands **until sunset.**

This was not a momentary act of assistance.
It required endurance and commitment.

Service in ministry is rarely about short bursts of activity.

More often, it is about **faithfulness over time.**

6. Ownership

Aaron and Hur did not see the situation as
Moses' problem.

They treated it as **their responsibility as well.**

When workers develop this sense of ownership,
the ministry becomes stronger and more effective.

7. Collective Victory

When Israel eventually defeated the Amalekites,
the victory did not belong to one person.

Joshua fought the battle.

Moses interceded on the hill.

Aaron and Hur provided support.

The victory belonged to **all of Israel.**

A Final Reflection

One of the great secrets of effective ministry is **shared responsibility.**

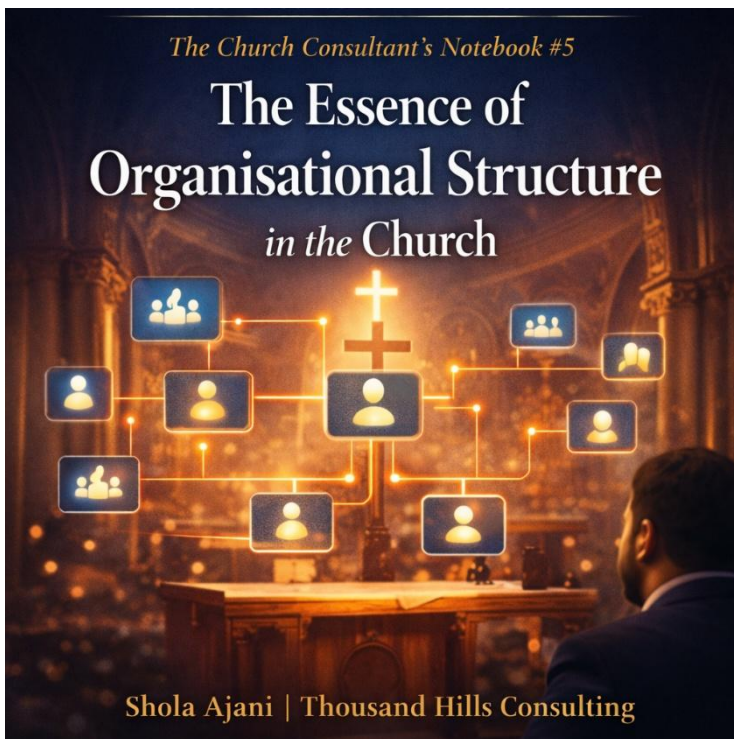
When church workers understand the vision of the church and willingly support their leaders and one another, the work of the ministry becomes stronger.

The battle is never for one person to fight alone.

When everyone plays their part, the entire church shares in the victory.

The Church Consultant's Notebook #5

The Essence of Organisational Structure in the Church



An organisational structure defines how activities such as **task allocation, coordination, supervision and decision-making** are directed toward achieving an organisation's goals.

While the concept may sound administrative, it is deeply relevant to churches.

Many ministries struggle not because of a lack of vision, passion or spiritual commitment, but because **their structure has not evolved to support the growing demands of the ministry.**

Interestingly, the Bible provides a very clear example of organisational structuring in **Exodus 18.**

When Leadership Becomes a Bottleneck

In Exodus 18:13, Moses sat to judge the people **from morning until evening.**

The people came to him with disputes, questions, and decisions that required leadership guidance.

Seeing this, his father-in-law asked him a critical question:

“What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?”

Moses responded that the people came to him because **they needed guidance and direction.**

Many church leaders today find themselves in a similar position.

Out of a deep sense of responsibility for their congregation, they feel they must personally attend to:

- every decision
- every conflict
- every request
- every spiritual need

While this commitment is admirable, it can also become **unsustainable.**

The Warning

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, gave him a clear warning:

“You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you.”

In other words, the issue was not just Moses’ exhaustion.

The **entire community would eventually suffer** because one person was carrying too much responsibility.

Many churches unknowingly fall into this same trap when **everything depends on the senior leader.**

Jethro’s Two Key Recommendations

Jethro offered Moses two important pieces of advice.

1. Teach and Develop the People

First, Moses was to **teach the people the statutes and the laws** and show them the way they should live and work.

This highlights an important leadership principle:

Leaders must **equip people, not simply serve them.**

Teaching builds **capacity within the community.**

2. Appoint Leaders

Secondly, Moses was instructed to appoint capable leaders to assist him.

These leaders were to be selected based on clear criteria:

- Able men
- Men who fear God
- Men of truth
- Men who hate dishonest gain

Leadership in this system was not simply about availability; it required **character and competence.**

Establishing Levels of Authority

Jethro also proposed a structured leadership hierarchy.

Moses was to appoint:

- **Rulers of thousands**
- **Rulers of hundreds**
- **Rulers of fifties**
- **Rulers of tens**

These leaders would handle the **smaller matters**, while only the **most difficult issues** would be brought to Moses.

In modern organisational terms, this created a **tiered leadership structure with delegated authority**.

The Benefits of Structure

Jethro outlined several clear benefits of this approach.

1. Reduced Leadership Burden

The responsibility would no longer rest on Moses alone.

Leadership would become **shared and sustainable**.

2. Greater Leadership Capacity

Other leaders would **bear the burden of responsibility**, strengthening the overall leadership structure of the community.

3. Improved Effectiveness

Moses would be able to focus on **the most important and complex matters**, rather than being overwhelmed by routine issues.

4. Better Outcomes for the People

Jethro concluded that with this structure in place, the people would **receive timely resolution and go home in peace.**

In other words, structure improves **both leadership effectiveness and community experience.**

A Lesson for Church Leaders

Church leaders today can learn a powerful lesson from this counsel.

When leaders fail to **delegate authority and develop capable leaders**, they eventually reach the limits of their personal capacity.

At that point, the quality of leadership begins to decline not because of lack of commitment, but because of **structural limitations.**

Growth without structure eventually produces **bottlenecks, delays and frustration.**

Structure as a Foundation for Growth

Structure is not the enemy of spiritual life.

In fact, **healthy structure enables ministry to grow sustainably.**

Scripture reminds us that **God is not the author of confusion.**

Where there is disorder, coordination becomes difficult and leadership becomes strained.

Strong foundations matter.

As the Psalmist asks:

“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

(Psalm 11:3)

A Final Reflection

If a church leader constantly feels overwhelmed by the demands of ministry, the issue may not simply be workload.

It may be a signal that **the organisational structure of the ministry needs to be reviewed.**

In some cases, the structure itself may be inadequate.

In other cases, leaders may need to **develop stronger leadership layers within the church.**

Either way, structure remains a critical component of **sustainable ministry leadership.**

The Church Consultant's Notebook

#6

The Church Shopper's List

Church shopping is a subject most Christians avoid discussing, and many hesitate to admit they have done it before settling in a particular church.

However, ministry leaders should recognise that the two or three visits a prospective member makes to your church are part of their decision-making process.

This article explores the typical **“shopping list” of the average church visitor.**

1. Are You a One-Stop Church?

Churches that are able to offer multiple ministries and services are often more attractive to new members than smaller churches with limited offerings.

For example, a church that provides **three to five different children's classes** for different age groups is more appealing to a family with children

of varying ages than a church with only one class for all children.

This is also a useful insight for smaller churches. Even with limited resources, it is possible to organise **at least two different classes for children** to better meet their needs.

2. Are You a Family-Friendly Church?

Do your facilities, messages, and support systems make families feel welcome?

If a church is more inclined toward a particular demographic, such as young professionals, it may unintentionally attract only that category of people.

Churches that intentionally support families often experience broader and more balanced growth.

3. Are You a Warm and Friendly Church?

How welcoming is your **frontline experience**? From the car park attendants to the welcome team and ushers, the first interaction visitors have with your church often shapes their overall perception.

A warm smile, helpful guidance, and genuine hospitality can make a lasting impression on first-time visitors.

4. Is Your Church User-Friendly?

How convenient is your church in terms of **location, accessibility, and facilities?**

Consider questions such as:

- Is the church accessible for people who do not drive?
- Are the facilities friendly for the elderly or those with disabilities?
- Is there adequate parking space?
- Is the car park well managed and organised?

Convenience and accessibility often play a larger role in church selection than many leaders realise.

5. Is Your Church Organised and Tidy?

Presentation and coordination matter.

It is not uncommon to see cables criss-crossing the altar area where the choir, musicians, and PA system operate.

While this may seem minor, it contributes to the overall perception of organisation.

Similarly, how well is your service coordinated?

Is there a **smooth and seamless flow** from one segment to the next, or are there long gaps, confusion, or interruptions?

Order and organisation communicate excellence.

6. Is Your Church Known as a Problem Solver?

Churches that are known for **addressing real needs in their communities** often attract people who eventually become committed members.

This principle is deeply scriptural. In **Acts 2:42–46**, the early church met the needs of people within their community, and as a result, *“the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*

When churches become places where lives are transformed and problems are addressed, growth often follows.

7. The Word, Prayer, and Music

This point has been intentionally left for last.

Historically, churches have emphasised **the Word, prayer, and music** as the primary factors that attract people to church.

While this remains true, these elements are increasingly becoming **common denominators**, as most churches today offer strong preaching, vibrant prayer meetings, and excellent music ministries.

Conclusion

The **Word of God**, however, remains the most important factor in people deciding where to call home.

A **Pew Research Center study (2016)** asked 5,000 people about their search for a new church or place of worship.

The research found that the most important factor people valued was **a meaningful message that**

resonates with them and provides guidance for their lives.

As Greg Smith, Pew's Associate Director for Religion Research, noted:

“This is what people value in a congregation, a good message, a good homily that resonates with them and gives them guidance.”

Finally, we must never forget that **it is God Himself who gives the increase.**

Church leaders can improve systems, structure, and experience, but ultimately, **growth is still the work of God.**

The Church Consultant's Notebook

#6

Understanding Different Contributions in Ministry Teams

In any organisation, **not excluding the church**, there are broadly **four types of people** who contribute to getting work done.

Each group brings a different strength to the team, and understanding these differences can help leaders build more effective and productive ministries.

This piece is intended to help church leaders recognise the **different skill sets available within their teams**, so they can deploy people more effectively and reduce the frustration that often comes from expecting individuals to perform roles outside their natural strengths.

Many leadership frustrations arise not because people are unwilling to serve, but because they are placed in positions that do not align with how they naturally contribute.

Benefits of Understanding These Roles

When church leaders understand the different ways people contribute, it helps to:

- **Manage expectations from people**
Leaders become more realistic about what individuals can deliver.
- **Build a high-performing team**
Complementary strengths allow teams to function more effectively.
- **Reduce frustration from perceived non-performance**
Often the issue is not lack of commitment, but a mismatch between role and strength.

Understanding these dynamics allows church leaders to organise their teams more intentionally.

Types of People in Teams

1. The Generator

Generators are **idea people**. They are naturally creative and are often the source of new initiatives, programmes, and ministry ideas.

Strengths

- Very good at coming up with ideas
- Creative and imaginative
- Often identify opportunities others do not see

Limitations

- May struggle with implementation
- Often lose interest once the idea phase is complete

Generators help ensure that a ministry **continues to innovate and explore new possibilities.**

2. The Conceptualiser

Conceptualisers may not always originate ideas, but they are **very good at developing and refining the ideas of others.**

Strengths

- Excellent at expanding and shaping ideas
- Able to think through possibilities and implications

- Helpful in turning rough ideas into clearer concepts

Limitations

- May not always generate original ideas
- Sometimes less inclined toward execution

Conceptualisers help transform ideas into **clearer and more workable concepts**.

3. The Optimiser

Optimizers are often **strategic thinkers**.

They are able to take ideas and convert them into plans and structured approaches.

Strengths

- Very good at strategy and planning
- Able to design systems and processes
- Skilled at turning ideas into practical plans

Limitations

- May not be strong in execution
- Sometimes more comfortable planning than implementing

Optimisers ensure that ideas are **translated into structured strategies**.

4. The Implementer

Implementers are the **execution drivers** of the team. They focus on delivering results and getting things done.

Strengths

- Very good at producing desired results
- Action-oriented and dependable
- Focused on completing tasks

Limitations

- May not naturally generate or develop ideas
- Sometimes less interested in strategy discussions

Implementers are essential because they **turn plans into reality.**

Analysis

From the above, it becomes clear that **we need one another to achieve meaningful results.**

Many organisations, including churches, are constantly searching for that one person who can **generate ideas, develop the concept, create the plan, and implement it effectively.** While such individuals exist, they are rare.

A skilled leader understands how to **identify where people fit within these categories and bring them together so that their strengths complement one another.**

When the right mix of people work together, ideas are generated, concepts are refined, strategies are developed, and results are delivered.

That is how **high-performing teams are built in ministry and in any organisation.**

Closing Thoughts

Leading a church in the 21st century requires more than spiritual passion alone.

It also requires **clarity of leadership, thoughtful systems, effective structures, and an understanding of people.**

Throughout these reflections, we have explored different aspects of church leadership, from how visitors experience the church, to the importance of organisational structure, and the different strengths people bring into ministry teams.

One recurring theme remains clear: **healthy churches do not grow by accident.**

They grow when leaders intentionally build environments where people can serve effectively, where systems support the mission of the church, and where leadership is able to guide the ministry with wisdom and clarity.

At the same time, while leadership, systems, and strategy are important, we must never lose sight of the fact that **the church is ultimately a spiritual organism, not just an organisation.**

Structures may support the work, but it is still God who gives the increase.

It is my hope that these reflections provide **practical insights and thoughtful perspectives** that can help church leaders strengthen their ministries, organise their teams better, and serve their congregations more effectively.

The Church Consultant's Notebook

The **Church Consultant's Notebook** is a collection of practical reflections and observations on church leadership, ministry systems, organisational structure, and the realities of leading a modern church.

These notes are drawn from consulting engagements, leadership experiences, and ongoing conversations with pastors and ministry leaders.

They are not intended to be rigid formulas, but **frameworks for thinking** ideas that can help leaders reflect on how their churches can function more effectively.

Each notebook entry addresses a different dimension of ministry leadership, offering insights that pastors, church administrators, and ministry leaders can apply within their own contexts.

The aim is simple: **to help churches become better organised, better led, and better positioned to fulfil their calling.**

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