

THE CHURCH I CAN SEE



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IMPACT church is the hive

I see a church where the people are busy. They are involved in a variety of activities. I see motivated people who believe that other people are counting on them. They represent hope to people who are not inside the church building.

The members of this church work in the schools in the area, they are familiar sights in the passages and wards of the local hospitals. They are known at the primary schools and high schools. They have specks of paint on their glasses, they are sunburnt, and they are excited - excited because they feel that God is smiling on them - He's proud of them.

I see a church where people come to be refreshed, where they come to report with great joy, where there are cheers and high fives. We know that we count.

I see a church where a lot of planning takes place - where rooms are often used by small groups strategising and planning their next adventure, their next project, their next endeavor.

CHURCH IS A HUB -
PLANNING, TRAINING,
EQUIPPING, REPORTING,
REJOICING.

SUNDAYS ARE FOR
REFRESHING, WORSHIPPING,
CONNECTING, RECRUITING
FRESH HELPERS AND THEN
GOING.

PURPOSE

We exist as a local church to please God. Our unity, our worship, our witness, our devotion and obedience - THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED.

We are here to be a witness - to shine in the Southern Suburbs. We shine by doing good works. Taking responsibility for our society, where we are, is why we are. Schools, young people, the poor, the struggling, the weak. We witness by doing good. We also witness by telling people about Jesus - through our Sunday programmes through our social interactions and through chance encounters. WE LOVE JESUS AND ARE PROUD OF HIM - so we speak.

Our TPC Connect Groups form around doing work. Work is the catalyst that forms mini community. Each small group does something - be it acts of mercy, practical work, hospital visitations, being involved in schools, loving shut-ins - whatever. Just do something. Our Connect Groups run on a 6 week cycle - 4 weeks DVD materials, 1 work week and 1 Prayer Connect at the Church. Our work week is one of the ways we get involved and impact our communities.

We exist for those who have never had a fair life - the weak, the voiceless, the disempowered, the vulnerable. We are strong. We have resources. We can employ a lawyer. We can borrow from a bank. We have title deeds to property. We have education. We can visit a specialist doctor if necessary. We have transport and are relatively safe physically, we have ADT. Most don't. We are here to defend the weak.

This is Africa's moment. We exist to reach out with good news and exist to build a different world. **We exist for Africa.**

So we need to grow strong because the challenges are huge. We need resources. So we work to be stronger. **We need a great "from" in order to have a great "to".**

ETHOS

WARM: People are valuable, interesting. They all have something to add to your life and they all have a fascinating journey to describe - all people. Not all people are good, but all people have good in them. "Warm" doesn't mean we are naïve. We have a duty to guard and protect. Some have agendas

PURPOSEFUL: We are tough minded and purposeful. We know where we are going and we will not allow people to deflect us and to steer us. Not everyone will fit in with us. This we accept without feeling bad. We won't try to please everyone.

IN TUNE WITH SOCIETY: We work at remaining current. By this we don't mean faddish and modish. Fashions are short lived and can be ridiculous. To follow can be mindless. But we don't want to be dated and stuck - we work at remaining in touch with trends and issues. The media and arts are important. We must remain sophisticated in our approach and thinking. We strive to remain current.

INCLUSIVE: In style we seek a middle road. People who are conservative by nature and the Avant-garde should feel at home among us.

CHANGING: We're constantly trying new things, willing to make mistakes, not rigid and stuck in our ways. We want to do better, so we can be more effective.

BELONGING: We want to be a church where people feel 'this is my home'. This is a place of safety. A place where people rejoice at the variety of styles, personalities and ages; a place where it is safe to express your individuality, and where you are accepted and feel, "Here I can flourish," and "HERE I AM SAFE".

CREATIVE: A place that isn't boring and repetitive. I see people arriving on a Sunday with a sense of anticipation - "I wonder how it's going to be today?" Here people are creative.

HELPFUL: I see a church that provides guidance on the issues that trouble people. People will come in and go home helped and directed, having received hope and fresh courage. Here I am helped.

UNITED: I see young and old enjoying church together - also rich and poor. As they walk into the building the demographic cross section is striking. I see people drawing energy and comfort from each other. Just being together helps and strengthens. I see individuals melting together to form a mystical unity, so that the sermon and the programme aren't the only things that people come for. They come for the gathering, true unity.

**HERE WE ARE TOGETHER.
CHURCH - A PLACE THAT I CAN JOIN.**

VALUES

These are things that we do not violate. Values are embedded. They don't describe our activities, they describe our character. This is what we are.

BELONGING

The antithesis of individualism and self-love. I belong to the Body, I belong to you. I'm a gift to you and you to me. "Because you are, I am" (quote from the movie BEAUTIFUL MIND). I join, I commit

I see a church that understands how God designed the church. I EXIST FOR THE CHURCH. So I see a church with people who value unity, loyalty, solving interpersonal issues, who serve the greater good, which is what is good for our local church. Not 'me', but 'us'.

Christianity has never been a faith that involves just me and Jesus.

PURPOSEFUL SPIRITUALITY

We believe in spiritual gifts, in revelation, in the supernatural. Our work here can't be done using our talents and resources alone. We believe that Spiritual Gifts are to equip for work that needs to be done. We strive to have this local church look outwards.

We want to be a church where people are changed and grow into spiritual maturity, becoming a better citizen, better parents, better children, better spouses, better employees and better employers. - that too is spirituality (like Joseph).

LOCAL CHURCH

So I see a church that understands what local church is and why we think it's so important that it gets described as a local church. We are not individuals. We are a Body - incomplete in ourselves as individuals and full of signs to come as a component of something bigger.

So join us/ link with us/ find your place/ connect/ be there/ be present/ assemble/ be at your post/ don't be absent/ be accountable - all these are words we use and understand. I see a church that is talked about and understands community and Body.

IMPACTFUL

I SEE A CHURCH THAT HAS A SENSE OF URGENCY. We are not waiting. We are going. There's a huge need. Voices are calling to us, "Please come to help. We are desperate. We need help." So we go. So we understand that it's not about us. It's not about the saved. Titanic - an image of unnecessary loss of life. What we do has got to count.

CONTEMPORARY

I see a church attuned to the world - "Converted to the world". Our vocabulary, style, technology all say that we are in touch. We are committed to the world. We love this world. We haven't opted out, climbed off at some point. We are not frozen in a time that was.

GENEROUS

Complimenting, smiling, and reaching out, connecting. Giving freely, a church that laughs easily and says 'Amen' easily. A church that works hard to win - believes the best. A church where it is safe to make a mistake - there isn't an overwhelming fear of consequences. A church with space to move. Not all protocols and rules, structures and notices on the walls saying "DON'T". Generous is a culture, not just about money.

THINGS WE NEED IN ORDER TO WIN

GREAT MUSIC

This is an absolute priority. Music opens people up. Music needs to be broadband - have a general appeal. Not all music appeals to all people. But there is a middle road - music purists might despise it, but there is music that gets feet tapping, that is easy on the ear, that doesn't offend anyone. We want everyone to feel this is home. To succeed we must have great music, we won't win if we don't.

SOUND ADMINISTRATION

We need to be well organised. If we aren't, people get annoyed and lose confidence. Administration has to be trustworthy and seen to be worthy of trust. The congregation must receive unsolicited assurance that their money is safe and wisely administered.

EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

Questions must be answered before they are asked. People must feel that they are included in the journey. They must know where the bus is going and where the bus stops are, and how we are progressing

A CONSTANT FLOW OF NEW PEOPLE

There is always a degree of attrition. Where are all the new people coming from? To win we must intentionally bring new people in. So to win, we must have special events, musicals, plays, lectures on subjects, guest speakers - INTENTIONALITY!!

Our nets must be mended. Chat room, small groups, website, hand-outs - all such help inflows. The best new people are newly saved new people. Transfer growth can be complicated growth. New converts are open, fresh and full of joy.

A critical question: who brings new people? Nurture such people. Identify those people. You will almost always be surprised at the type of person they are. Solid, well established and thoroughly sanctified believers don't bring people to church.

WHAT I CAN SEE - THE SUPERNATURAL

There is a givenness about church work - **we cannot do it all in our own strength**. Just as a yachtsman has great skill but he cannot make the wind blow, so too, we can do lots of work, but if God doesn't move by the Holy Spirit we won't get to see what we can see in our mind's eye.

So I see a church with a culture of prayer - I see a church with a living faith - speaking expectantly, feeding itself with scripture, testifying - a praising, thanking and buoyant church.

Spiritual gift:

(this pertains to the value of PURPOSEFUL SPIRITUALITY)
I see a church that operates with the equipping and empowering for effective service.
I see a church that provides wise leadership in all areas, including the area of spiritual gifts.

So I see people going out into their world, ministering with extraordinary effectiveness, and returning to the church with great stories, with rejoicing. Returning for refreshing, guiding and further equipping and training.