

Focus on Mission

Maintenance or Mission?

By Harold Percy (adapted for National Ministries, ABCUSA)

1. In measuring their *effectiveness*, the maintenance congregation asks, "How many pastoral visits are being made? The mission congregation asks, "How many disciples are being made?"
2. When contemplating some form of *change*, the maintenance congregation says, "If this proves upsetting to any of our members, we won't do it." The mission congregation says, "If this will help us reach someone on the outside, we will take the risk and do it."
3. When thinking about *change*, the majority of members in a maintenance congregation ask, "How will this affect me?" The majority of members in the mission congregation ask, "Will this increase our ability to reach those outside?"
4. When thinking of its *vision for ministry*, the maintenance congregation says, "We have to be faithful to our past." The mission congregation says, "We have to be faithful to our future."
5. The pastor in the maintenance congregation says to the *newcomer*, "I'd like to introduce you to some of our members." In the mission congregation the members say, "We'd like to introduce you to our pastor."
6. When confronted with a *legitimate pastoral concern*, the pastor in the maintenance congregation asks, "How can I meet this need?" The pastor in the mission congregation asks, "How can our faith community meet this need?"
7. The maintenance congregation seeks to *avoid conflict* at any cost (but rarely succeeds). The mission congregation understands that *conflict is the price of progress*, and is willing to pay the price. It understands that it cannot take everyone with it. This causes some grief, but the cost of conflict does not keep the church from doing what needs to be done.
8. The *leadership style* in the maintenance congregation is primarily *managerial*, where leaders try to keep everything in order and running smoothly. The leadership style in a mission congregation is primarily *transformational*, casting a vision of what can be, and marching off the map in order to bring the vision into reality.
9. The maintenance congregation is concerned with their congregation, its organizations and structure, its constitutions and committees. The mission congregation is concerned with

the culture, with understanding how secular people think and what makes them tick. It tries to determine their needs and their points of accessibility to the Gospel.

10. When thinking about *growth*, the maintenance congregation asks, "*How many American Baptists* live within a twenty-minute drive of this church?" The mission congregation asks, "*How many unchurched people* live within a twenty-minute drive of this church?"
11. The maintenance congregation looks at the community and asks, "*How can we get these people to support our congregation in our need?*" The mission congregation asks, "How can the *Church partner with these people to meet the needs of this community?*"
12. The maintenance congregation thinks about *how to save their congregation*. The mission congregation thinks about *how to reach the world*.

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