

# TRANSFORMING CHURCHES

*A tool for CBOQ church leadership teams to help  
Navigate congregational life and change in  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Central Canada*



TRANSFORMING



RESOURCING



NETWORKING



PLANTING

**Jesus Christ** is the same yesterday, today and forever.  
For a church to be **faithful to God** and **responsible to serving others**,  
it cannot remain the same yesterday, today and forever.  
**God's Spirit** and the needs of people will always require churches  
to give **fresh expressions of resurrection gospel** to the unique  
and ever-changing needs of people.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## *CBOQ Churches Navigating Life in 21st Century Central Canada*

We are living in a fascinating season for churches. For most of us, ministry in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Central Canada context feels like we are in uncharted terrain. The reports are everywhere – declining church attendance, the absence of younger people, financial turbulence and the challenge of disunity. In many ways, the future seems bleak...*and there has never been a more exciting time to a part of this family of Baptist churches.* Our hope is not in our skills or efforts but in our Triune God. The following document is designed to help a church discern next steps towards greater health and participation in God's mission.

### **This process was designed...**



To be used by a church leadership team (Board of Deacons, Board of Elders or Board of Directors).

A couple alternatives could be to...

- Create a task force with input from various teams, committees, and ministries
- Adapt the process so it can be used by an entire congregation (ideal for smaller congregations)



To be worked through within a 2-3 hour block of time.



To help your church work through a process more than provide easy solutions and quick fixes. This document is not a Bible study or theology of change.



To facilitate and stimulate dialogue. As questions or concerns arise during the discussion, track those questions or issues and return to them at a later, agreed upon time.



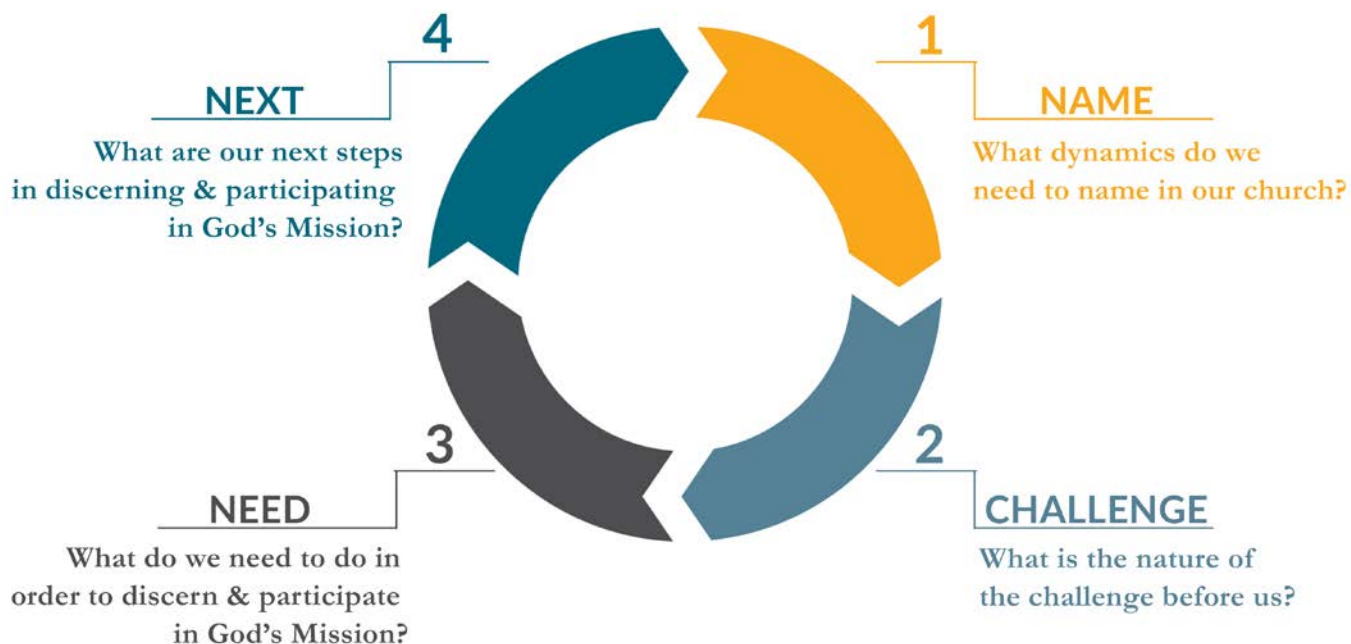
To be used as is or to be adapted to fit the specific needs of your church. Feel free to change the questions to address your needs or purposes.

# PURPOSE

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The tool invites your church to consider four questions:

- What dynamics do we need to **NAME** in our church?
- What is the nature of the **CHALLENGE(S)** before us?
- What do we **NEED** to do in order to discern & participate in God's mission?
- What are our **NEXT** steps in discerning & participating in God's mission?



# NAME

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There is power in naming something. Throughout scripture we see God changing the names of individuals – Abraham, Jacob, Peter, Paul. God changed their name when there was a new task or challenge before them. We also understand the importance of naming our praises, laments, beliefs, emotions, behaviours and prayers. For churches seeking to discern what they need to do next, it can be very valuable to identify or name the dynamics that have shaped the community.

You are invited to take three snap shots of where your church has been, where your church currently is at and who God could be inviting you to become as a people.

NAME THE PAST

NAMING THE PRESENT

AN UNNAMED FUTURE



NAME

What dynamics do we need to NAME in our church?

# NAME THE PAST

## INSTRUCTIONS (15 minutes)

1. Read the instructions
2. Give people 1 minute of silence to reflect on their experience of the church and a few moments to write down up to 3 answers for each question.
3. Have people clarify if the strengths & challenges they noted are *identified*, *unspoken* or *unconscious*.
4. Have participants share what they wrote & why (keep answers short - 30 seconds each) without interruptions, explanations or discussion.

REMEMBER: This is just a gathering information exercise. No one is to defend their experience or understanding of what has happened. It is not a brainstorming exercise.

Often we can have a need that is an *identified challenge* (“presenting issue”) maybe a financial crisis, conflict or leadership crisis. However, there may also be deeper *unspoken challenges* (people exhibiting power struggles, inadequate organizational structures, etc.). There may be even deeper issues that exist on an *unconscious* level (sin [past or present], lack of trust or respect). In order to discern God’s next step for a church, sometimes we need to name what lies beneath or what has happened in the past.

Name three of the historical strengths of this church

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Name three of the current challenges of this church

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Challenges</b>
Identified strength 1-		Identified challenge 1-
unspoken strength 2-		unspoken challenge 2-
unconscious strength 3-		unconscious challenge 3-

# NAMING THE PRESENT

## INSTRUCTIONS (15 minutes)

1. Read the instructions and statements below.
2. Have each person identify, by putting an X on the line, if the description is accurate or not.
3. For each of these aspects of church life, see if there is consensus among the responses or an array.
4. Identify the top three (strengths) of the church and bottom three (challenges) that you believe describes your church.

### Community

Our church is practicing a common life in the way of Christ. We have our challenges, like any family, however we resolve our conflicts, provide hospitality to the stranger, discern together God's will for us, and have healthy rhythms of celebration, work, rest and play.

not us  us

### Worship

Worship is a way of life in God's kingdom and when we gather we love to worship the living, Triune God. When our lives are ordered rightly, our lives are an act of worship. Our worship services are engaging, Spirit led, authentic and intentional.

not us  us

### Formation

Practicing the way of Jesus, means that our entire lives are being shaped and formed through practices and postures that help us mature as disciples. We are intentional in helping people, of all ages, take that next step on their faith journey.

not us  us

### Mission

When we are on mission we are bearing witness to the love of Jesus and the reign of God. Mission is joining in the Spirit's movement in the neighbourhood and beyond. We as a church have hearts that are directed outwards and seek to share the Gospel through word and deed.

not us  us

### Leadership

While our leaders are not perfect, we are blessed to have godly leaders that both encourage and challenge us, empower and release us into mission. We are developing our leaders so they can mature in their skills and gifts. Our leaders are displaying Christ-like servant hood.

not us  us

### Organizational Capacity

Our church has healthy structures (teams, boards, committees, policies, procedures, etc.) that enable us to be transparent, accountable and faithful to God, our membership and our government's requirements.

not us  us

### Next Generation

We have young people that are engaging in the life, ministry and mission of the church. We are intentional in providing them mentors and resources that help them integrate into the life of the church community.

not us  us



# AN UNNAMED FUTURE

## INSTRUCTIONS (10 minutes)

1. Have three people pray aloud.
  - First person - offer a prayer of Thanksgiving for how God has been present and faithful
  - Second person - offer a prayer of indifference towards individual biases & assumptions
  - Third person - offer a prayer of wisdom that God would provide guidance
2. Read the statements aloud.
3. Give people 1 minute of silence to think about what they have read and after a minute check what direction they see the church moving towards.
4. Have each person share what they put down and why (within 30 seconds) without interruptions or discussion.
5. If there is a clear consensus in the answers then you can move forward. If there is an array of answers, take the time to work through which is the greatest need before moving forward.

While recognizing that...

**God has been and continues to be faithful**

AND

**every year CBOQ churches close**

AND

**we have no capacity to predict the future,**

**I believe that in a few years our church will be...**

<b>Thriving</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Surviving</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Closed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# CHALLENGE (30 minutes)

There are multifaceted, complex challenges facing churches these days. Leadership and organizational change expert, Ronald Heifetz identifies two types of challenges: Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges. (Heifetz, Ronald A. et al. 2009. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.)

## Technical Problems

## Adaptive Challenges

1. Easy to identify	1. Difficult to identify (easy to deny)
2. Often quicker and easier (cut-and-dried) solutions	2. Require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships & approaches to work
3. Often can be solved by an authority or expert	3. People with the problem do the work of solving it
4. Require change in just one or a few places; often contained within the church's established boundaries	4. Require change in numerous places; usually across the church's established boundaries
5. People are generally receptive to technical solutions	5. People often resist even acknowledging adaptive challenges
6. Solutions can often be implemented quickly – even by an edict	6. "Solutions" require experiments & new discoveries; they can take a long time to implement & cannot be implemented by edict

## Examples

Providing better quality financial statements	Developing a culture of stewardship & generosity
Introducing new instruments and worship songs	Establishing an atmosphere of intentional God honouring worship
Starting a prayer meeting	Fostering a commitment to prayer throughout the congregation
Tweaking and updating board agenda's and minutes	Empowering the Board to provide leadership and serving the needs of the congregation



What is the nature of the **CHALLENGE** before us?

**CHALLENGE**

# CHALLENGE

Go back to **NAME THE PAST** and write the three challenges that this church keeps facing.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Go back to **NAMING THE PRESENT** and write the three challenges your church is currently dealing with

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Break into groups of two or three people and now place the six challenges above into the two categories below.

Technical Problems	Adaptive Challenges

## HEART CHECK MOMENT

*When you look at this list what is your prayer?*

## REVIEW

You have identified the challenges before you

You have identified the urgency of the matter (Thriving / Surviving / At or Near Risk)

You have identified the nature of your challenges as either:

1. Technical Challenges (where solutions are available via google, CBOQ or other means) or Adaptive Challenges (where we are required to learn or unlearn some of our past and current behaviors)

# NEED

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We started by **NAMING** where we are at as a church. Then we recognized the types of **CHALLENGES** before us. Next we identify and acknowledge what might we might be missing or needing (**NEED**) in order to best live out God's mission for us as a church community.

## What kind of changes do you need to make?

1. We simply need to make some **technical changes** but we can do that **ourselves**.
2. We simply need to make some technical changes and we will need some outside resources to help.
3. We need to do some serious discernment about the **adaptive changes** we need to make but we can do that **ourselves**.
4. We need to do some serious discernment about the **adaptive changes** we need to make and we can't do that ourselves, we **need outside resources to help**.



# NEED

## INSTRUCTIONS (10 minutes)

1. Read the instructions and the statements aloud.  
Have each person identify (by circling a number 1= low / 5=high) what they believe is the most pressing NEED for the church.  
Have each person share what they put down and why (within 30 seconds) without interruptions or discussion.  
Once each person has responded, go around the room and identify the top NEED(S).  
If there is a clear consensus in the answers then you can move forward. If there is an array of answers, take the time to work through which is the greatest need and what you need to do about it.

## QUESTION

**What do we need to do in order to discern & participate in God's mission?**

### MOTIVATION

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Are we motivated to discern together God's mission for us as a church? Are we motivated to seek God's direction and leading for us, even when it requires uncomfortable steps of faith?

### KNOWLEDGE

1	2	3	4	5
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Do we have the knowledge needed to enter into a discernment process? Given that Scripture, prayer and the wisdom of others is available to us, do we currently have adequate knowledge to lead our congregation in discerning God's mission?

### DISCERNMENT

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Do we have an intentional discernment process that will serve us in collectively discerning and participating in the mission of God?

### ACTION / FOLLOW THROUGH

1	2	3	4	5
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Does our history indicate that we will act, behave or follow through in what we say we want or will do? (Some churches have indicated that they have gone through previous discernment processes, *Natural Church Development*, etc. only to realize that nobody really wanted to take that next step).

# NEXT

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Some things to consider based on how you evaluated your:

1. MOTIVATION / DESIRE
2. KNOWLEDGE / INFORMATION
3. DISCERNMENT / STRATEGY
4. ACTION / FOLLOW THROUGH

## Scenario 1

Our church has high motivation to tackle the challenges before us. We just don't know where to start. Once we get going in the right direction, our wonderfully gifted people will act accordingly and follow through to the best of their abilities. We need help with what to do next (knowledge & discernment).

## Scenario 2

Our church has a history of talking, praying, discerning what we should do next (high knowledge & discernment). The biggest complaint is not that we don't know what to do, but rather that we just need to get out there and do it (low motivation and/or action)! We need help with motivating our people and/or helping create a culture of commitment.

## Scenario 3

The people of our church love God and have done great ministry throughout the years and now we are tired and we simply don't know what to do next.



# NEXT

## INSTRUCTIONS (15 minutes)

1. Read the instructions and the statements aloud.

Have each person check which NEXT step they believe the church leadership team should take.

Have each person share what they put down and why (within 30 seconds) without interruptions or discussion.

Once each person has shared, look to see if there is consensus or an array. Take the time to work through which is the greatest need and what you need to do about it.

## QUESTION

**What are our next steps in discerning & participating in God's mission?**

**Do we need outside Coaching / Facilitation?**

*(i.e. We need to make some BIG/ADAPTIVE changes which will require us to utilize coaching/facilitation from a source outside our church.)*

**We acknowledge we need to do something different, we are not sure what we should do next, we would like to invite a representative from the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec to provide us with some coaching / facilitating on what we should do next. Recognizing that it is still our responsibility to take ownership of the process and the next steps.**

**Do we need a Discernment Process?**

*(i.e. We are would like to lead ourselves through a discernment process with external materials such as The Looking Series.)*

**We would like to enter into a self-led discernment process such as...**

1. *The Looking Series*: CBOQ [www.baptist.ca](http://www.baptist.ca)

*Discover*: CBM & CBOQ [www.cbmin.org](http://www.cbmin.org)

*Other*: can you help us identify a discernment process that could work for us

**Do we need to craft our own unique Discernment Process?**

*(i.e. We are ready to engage in a discernment process with our current leadership.)*

**We believe we have the right leadership and expertise to develop and proceed with our own discernment process. We would invite prayer from the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec as we journey down this exciting road.**

# SEEKING HELP FROM CBOQ

## NAMING the Past

- Our biggest identified challenges are \_\_\_\_\_  
 Our unspoken challenges are \_\_\_\_\_  
 Our unconscious challenges are \_\_\_\_\_

## NAMING the Present *(check the appropriate box)*

Aspect of Church Life	Thriving	Surviving	At/Near Risk
Community			
Worship			
Formation			
Mission			
Leadership			
Organizational Capacity			
Next Generation			

## An UNNAMED Future *(check the appropriate box)*

We believe that in a few years our church will be THRIVING  SURVIVING  AT/NEAR RISK

## Top Three Technical CHALLENGES (easily identifiable) before us...

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Top Three Adaptive CHALLENGES (challenges to the way we do things) before us...

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Rank your greatest NEED *(circle the appropriate numbers)*

- |                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Motivation              | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Knowledge               | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Discernment / Strategy  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Action / Follow-through | 1 2 3 4 5 |

## Our NEXT step is to.... *(check the appropriate box)*

- Ask the CBOQ for some coaching / facilitation advice
- Ask the CBOQ for some discernment process tools
- Develop our own process & ask the CBOQ to keep us in prayer





# NEXT STEP WORKSHEET

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(10 minutes)

What are the NEXT steps we are going to take?

Action Item	Description	Person Responsible	Due Date	How it will get reported back to us
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

# SELF-EVALUATION

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## *Five Questions to reflectively pray*

(5 minutes)

**The following questions can be used for self-reflection and prayer to reflect on your honesty with God and each other.**

1. Am I prepared to listen well to God and others for the sake of God's mission for us as a church?
2. Am I making Bible study, theological reflection and prayer a continuous priority throughout this process?
3. Have I actually named the parts of the iceberg that are under the water or "elephant in the room"?  
Have I avoided the real issues and the real questions that are plaguing us?
4. Am I willing to share the responsibility for the church's future together?
5. What leadership skills or capacities do I need to develop for us to move forward?

# NEXT STEPS

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