

Great to Good Churches

We had our monthly Roundtable meeting on Thursday evening of this week. It is always enjoyable to me. The atmosphere is informal. The company invigorating. The ideas intriguing and the takeaways ... invaluable.

Often, I find myself struck ... yes, I mean startled at the natural normal sentiments that are expressed. They are so different than the way that my pastoral mind works. Although she wouldn't want to be recognized for this, Bonnie Green wondered if we, as a church might consider supporting the midweek children and youth ministries being carried on at the Lighthouse.

Here is the way that my mind works ...

They have a youth ministry so we need a youth ministry.

They have a midweek children's program so we need a midweek children's program.

That other mind is so much more sensible. Together we are better. More needed ground is covered when we support one another's efforts rather than trying to duplicate one another's efforts. No single congregation on Grand Manan can do it all but together we can do everything that needs to be done. Really, we can.

1. Redundancy may be the biggest detriment to church (Kingdom) growth in small communities like our own.

Think about how many people it takes to do the same things in each of our churches. What if we could get it through our minds that we are all on the same team?

Now take that Body of volunteers, activate and empower them to function in their giftedness. Discover the ministry passions in their hearts and give birth to new and unique ministry efforts rather than trying to fit everyone into a pre-existing mold.

2. The spirit of cooperation and collaboration will take us much farther than the spirit of comparison and competition.

See, here's the thing ... a ministry that exists at one church may not always be feasible at that same church. Take Wonderworld for example. CLC was once home to this exceptional ministry to children. There was a convergence of factors that allowed us the privilege to house it but it really was not our own. Joy Green recruited a team of people from many different churches to staff this ministry. We miss Kirby ... she was another gifted individual who had the unique ability to recruit volunteers and to execute effective ministry. Kirby as well succeeded because there was a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.

So Bonnie blessed us with her suggestion the other night. She reminded us that we cannot and should not do everything and that the worst reason to birth ministry is because someone else is doing it somewhere else.

So a great question for us to ask as a church family is, "What has God equipped us to do that other churches for a variety of reasons, cannot do? What are our assets? What is the heart or the predominant passion of Community Life Church?

Here is another even more personal question? If God were asking you to gather a group of people on Grand Manan Island to meet a glaring need, what would that be?

3. Often, we think in grandiose terms when God's plan for us may be rather simple.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good ... because God was with him" (Acts 10:38)

*"Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how **he went around doing good** and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.'" (Acts 10:34–38, NIV84)*

Wouldn't you expect more superlatives to describe his greatness? Yet Jesus' ministry is summed up, "he went around doing good." Maybe from God's perspective, the greatest thing we can do has more to do with goodness than greatness. Some churches follow that pattern—trading "greatness" in numbers for doing the "good" that Jesus modeled.

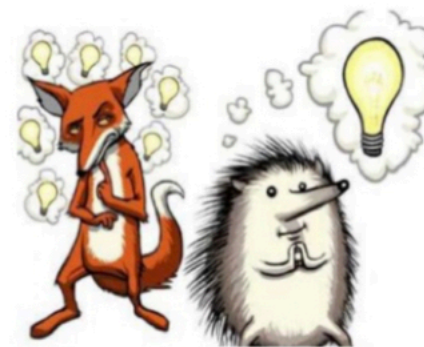
These are the "Great to Good" churches.

And this isn't just about big churches. Two-thirds of America's churches are either plateaued or declining. Not all churches are destined to become "great." But regardless of size, they can go about "doing good."

Good churches are those that do good things. The good that Jesus did can point the way.

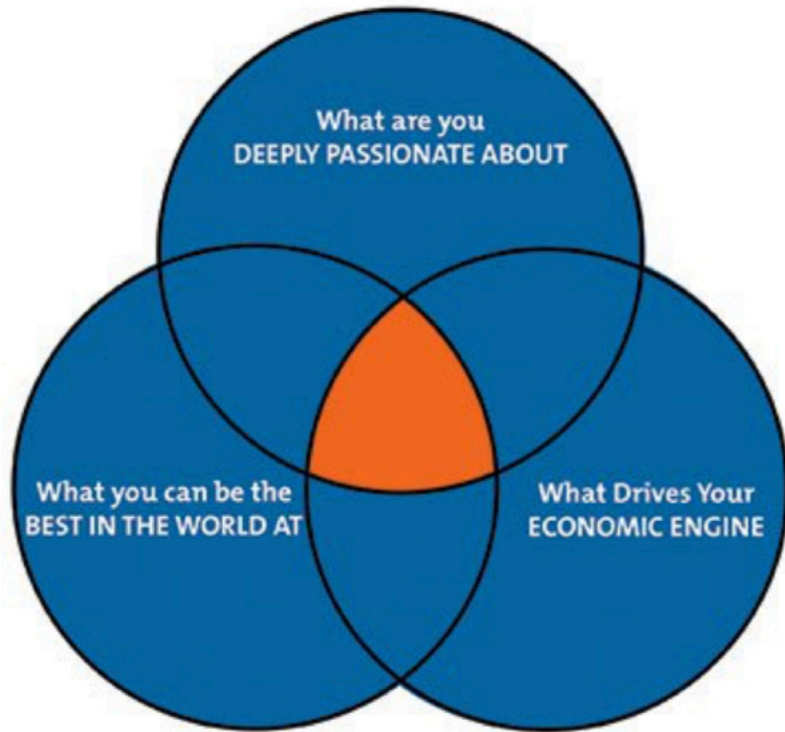
4. The Hedgehog Principle

- What are we passionate about as a church?
- What can we do better than any other church?



HEDGEHOG CONCEPT (Simplicity within the Three Circles)

- Ancient Greek parable:
 - ✓ The fox knows many things
 - ✓ The hedgehog knows one big thing
- Foxes pursue many ends and see the world in all of its complexity.
- Hedgehogs simplify the world into a basic principle, see what's essential, and ignore the rest.



- What's strong not what's wrong.
- He sets us on a collision course with our weaknesses. They become obvious obstacles to us at a time when we are most able to deal with them.
- God brings the Best, to life, in each of us.
- If any of us wait until we have it all together, to join Christ on mission, we'll never embark.