

I will build my Church

- *Jesus Christ*

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Church between Family and Service Organization



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CHURCH BETWEEN FAMILY AND SERVICE ORGANIZATION

By

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POSITION PAPER FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP
BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG, GERMANY 2021

In many congregations today, we observe the desire to become more and more professional. Even houses of prayer, which want to emphasize prayer's simplicity, appreciate their professional musicians. It is noticeable how congregations make their service offerings more extensive and how advertising is becoming even more elaborate. Simultaneously, one might ask the question: Does it make sense to offer the right service for every need so that the number of consumers keeps growing? Or are we not developing more in the direction of a modern service company with our communities? Do we have to keep perfecting our programs so that performance and service quality continuously increase?

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Introduction

If we ask Jesus himself, we realize that the Church's development is about God's master plan. Jesus Christ himself said, *"I will build my church!"* (Matt. 16:18) He did not say "I wish," as Luther translated it (along the lines of "I tried, but unfortunately it didn't work out with you"). No, Jesus promised: *"I will"* do it! This was a very strong prophecy. Because it is His own plan, it will not fail, because He had a very clear idea of what the Church should look like. He explained to us that its extraordinary characteristic is the love with which he himself loved us. It not only distinguishes it from all other associations or groups, but also makes possible a unity reminiscent of his own relationship with his Father. Attendance may dwindle in Corona times, memberships may decline, or pastors may fear for their salaries, but the Church grows Day by Day - especially in Quality and maturity. Jesus even promised, "The kingdom of the dead with all its power will not be able to overpower the church." (Mt 16:18) He Himself watches over His Church, over people whom He has "called out" (Church, Greek *ekklesia* = called out) from a *"meaningless and purposeless life"* (1Ptr 1:18), so that they live as a *"family"* (Eph 2:19) of God. What did they do as a family? What distinguished them? Four things: *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to ..."*

prayer.” (Acts 2:42) It was also striking that everyone contributed when they came together (1 Cor 14:26). I wonder if these kinds of “family churches,” as I call them, still exist today. Even if a business culture often threatens our churches’ family culture, we know from service companies, I think so. And this already opens up the area of tension that we are talking about here: We may develop programs or services in well-structured Christian organizations, but to what extent are these even still part of a church that Jesus envisioned?

When I think back to my 12 years as a pastor in the 90s, many activities come to mind. What had we not raised with God’s help in children’s, youth and social work, conferences, healing services, and what do I not know everything. At some point, we even added the Christian academy and the weekly spot on local television. It was like you could never get enough, and to be honest, it seemed a bit overloaded for a small church with only two to three hundred visitors a week. But program diversity just appeared to be the secret to success that drove us all. If only there hadn’t been this inner voice telling me that this couldn’t go on forever if people continued to grow in their relationship with Christ. Most of the visitors I saw only once a week anyway, if at all. And there were only a few staff members; mostly, they were always the same ones. There were also those visitors who missed the love we still felt in the early years. Whether this was the kind of Church Jesus had envisioned?

In the meantime, I could see that I was no longer alone in my reflections, although at first, I could hardly talk about it. But in 2007, the founder of the well-known Willow Creek church, Bill Hybels, boldly confessed, “Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn’t helping people that much. Other things that we didn’t put that much money into and didn’t put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for.”¹ That was the result of the so-called “Reveal Study.” It became pretty evident that the Church must be much more than just a program-oriented service.

Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn’t helping people that much was the case.

– Bill Hybels, 2007

Let us have a look at the term “service organization” a little more closely. One speaks of immaterial goods (e.g., cab ride, theater performance) in distinction to the production of goods (material goods).² In this article, however, I am more concerned with church services such as worship services, seminars, worship events, pastoral care services, and social services (e.g., food distribution, school homework help, medical first aid). Such a Christian organization offers programs for the people’s needs or (potential) worship visitors. Not infrequently, they also follow prescribed quality standards, which are described today in quality standards³.

So what’s the difference between a family-centered church and a service organization like this? You often can’t tell right away because many organizations start with a pronounced family culture and maintain it for a very long time. The transition to a growing company often progresses very slowly, so that hardly anyone notices this at first. Only the many new programs and goals give people a sense of where the journey is heading.

In his book “Church with Vision,” which has become an indispensable part of church growth and leadership seminars, mega-church pastor Rick Warren tells us very well how a Christian church business works. He also explains the concept he followed in building his Church. You have to scroll a little further until you come across the term “Total Quality Ministry Church” in the book.⁴ This term is a designation that stands for a church that functions according to modern quality management principles. And indeed, Warren seems to be an excellent quality manager, as Jack Welsh, founder of the famous Six Sigma quality method at Motorola, even considered him “the greatest thinker”⁵ he had ever met. When I heard about this, I became very attentive because as a management consultant focusing on Quality, working for the largest automotive supplier worldwide, I knew a lot about it. I soon discovered that the University of Wales was interested in the topic “Opportunities and limitations of Total Quality Management in Christian churches.” And I was lucky in that I

was allowed to research this very topic at the Faculty of Practical Theology.⁶

So when Rick Warren uses the term “Total Quality Ministry,” I can confirm that the word “Total” means that all groups of people should be involved in a continuous quality improvement process - in terms of five quality criteria. They are also called the five pillars of Total Quality Management (TQM) and are:⁷

1. customer orientation
2. leadership behavior
3. strategic planning
4. process orientation and
5. continuous improvement.

Based on these TQM criteria, you can work out the differences between Christian service organizations (TQM churches) and New Testament churches very well. In the end, you can answer the question: What conclusion can we draw from this for our church practice?

1. Customer Orientation

Christian service organizations interpret the term customer orientation to mean identifying the customers’ needs. Here, the so-called “external customers” are the potential and current worshipers, while the employees are more comparable to “internal customers.” Warren holds that customer orientation always begins with an analysis of the target group. It is essential to gather all the necessary information about the place. The entrepreneurial “church must define its target in four specific ways: geographically, demographically, culturally and spiritually.”⁸ The next step is to create appropriate offerings because not only do you want to help people become believers, it would also be nice if they stayed in the Christian organization.

a. Customer-related Quality

Customer expectations regarding preaching, music, pastoral care, and children’s, youth, and seniors’ ministries should be met whenever possible in a Christian service organization. Quality is roughly understood to be what Methodist pastor Jones summarizes in his book *Quest for Quality in the Church*. In it, he describes three levels of Quality with the following quality criteria.⁹

Assumed Quality: Things that are taken for granted in a church today, so-called “must-haves”: that there is a musical part in the

service; that children are thought of, and an appropriate program is offered to them parallel to the service; and that there is spiritual input in some form - a clear sermon. From this, he distinguishes the higher level of Quality:

Expected Quality: Things that are actually expected but are not always present: That musical worship is led by those who are even musical and can sing; that one’s child returns joyfully from the children’s program; or that the sermon has a biblical foundation and is attractive. But even to this, according to Jones, there is a step up:

Delighted Quality: Things that excite, where someone comes to say, “I found myself being completely lost in worship and having an encounter with God during the sermon.” Or, “The leader of the children’s group called me on Monday and introduced me to a special program that my child was interested in.”¹⁰

Many people find faith in Christ in these programs, which cannot be denied. It’s more or less the evangelistic anointing that is felt. Warren also affirmed “the focus on evangelism”¹¹ as a distinctive feature of his TQM church. I think this is precisely where their strength lies. During longer business trips, I often had the opportunity to visit such TQM churches or preach in them. You can find them everywhere, in the USA, Asia, Australia, even in Germany. Often it is the intoxicating dynamics that have a positive contagious effect. As a first-time visitor, the people receive you like a potential customer. In one Church, smiling “greeters” already showed me the way in the parking lot. And at the entrance, handsome ladies and gentlemen with long white gloves were waiting to escort me to my seat. On top of that, I was showered with a pile of flyers, address cards, and advertising brochures and was able to sign up for certain program offers right away. Of course, the voucher was not missing either, which I was allowed to redeem after the service. Coffee and cakes, CDs, DVDs, books, and drinking bottles, all bearing the Christian company’s logo, are probably the most popular souvenirs. It is already noticeable that one would like to lure, inspire and bind the “customer” to the Christian enterprise.

For a Christian community, the term “customer” has been considered inappropriate. One of the best-known critics became Stephen Pattison, professor of Religion at Birmingham University, with his book *The Faith of the Managers: When Management becomes*

Religion. In it, he considers the term “customer” to be entirely wrong for the Church, writing that “we are not all in a mutual customer relationship” but “children of God and brothers and sisters to one another.”¹² Pattison also criticized focusing on purchasing power or potential donation volume, which would only suggest a “usually self-centered view”¹³ of a service organization. Of course, these evaluations are not entirely out of the air when I think of my visit to a mega-church in Tulsa, USA, where the announcement of the latest books, CDs, and other products took about as long as the worship time itself. Here, proportionality is certainly a valid point of criticism, even though there is nothing in principle against economic relationships between brothers and sisters. Especially in light of the many volunteer ministries we also find in TQM churches, Pattison’s judgment seems questionable to me.

I instead agree with Mega-Church founder Francis Chan when he states that most of us “have good motives in our actions, for we are only trying to attract people to come to His Feast.”¹⁴ However, Francis also criticizes, “Our current models seem designed only to entertain [people] with] well-attended worship services.” For this case, he even recalls the prophet Malachi, who lamented that “worship had become something boring for God’s people” and that God’s response was not exactly “gentle and kind.”¹⁵ Therefore, it is even more important to understand what kind of Quality God Himself is looking for. In this sense, customer quality in a service company does not reflect the highest and noblest form of Quality.

b. Quality in the Church

There are five terms for quality science: product quality, process quality, value-based Quality, and customer-based Quality. But the fifth quality term is more or less a mystery in the literature. Harvard professor Garvin called it “transcendent quality,” which should be more or less a placeholder for “immanent goodness.”¹⁶ It sometimes reminded me of the statue named “To the Unknown God” that Paul found in Athens and referred to in his sermon. I felt similarly about the kind of spiritual Quality God is looking for.

So I talked about this at a quality seminar with God in prayer. I was reading the passage from First Corinthians where Paul was also teaching about Quality. It was a prophecy about the judgment day because he was prophesying: *“If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the **Quality** of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved –even though only as one escaping through the flames.” (1Cor 3:13-15)*

According to this, Quality has something to do with what still has value in eternity. I remember how, as a pastor, I occasionally spoke with dying people. Isn’t it interesting what issues remain essential to these people? It’s not about organizations or performance at all anymore. It’s other things that keep them busy: Reconciliation with family members, for example, or the often far too few moments when genuine love was felt. Most of all, they remember the unforgettable moments when God’s presence touched and changed them. It is these spiritual experiences that matter, that never age, and that never wear out.

Quality for Eternity:
**The fire will test the Quality of
each person’s work**
1. Corinthians 3:13

When some people left our Church because they started new churches, God spoke about my attitude toward them. He pointed out to me that reconciliation meant much more than just saying, “I forgive you, but unfortunately, I’ve come to know you.” In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained that there is even a prison of unforgiveness. In this, people are imprisoned until they *“have paid the last penny” (Mt 5:26)*. So I traveled all over Germany, paying back my pennies. I said, “I owe you a reconciled relationship!” People looked at me as if I had fallen out of heaven. But God marvelously blessed my requests for reconciliation by restored friendships. That was such a spiritual experience for me to speak of. It has never aged, and I still see the reconciled faces before my eyes as if it were only yesterday. So, relationships always became more important to me than programs. I also wanted to take care of my own family more intensely, which was probably one of the best decisions of my life. It

became apparent when I look back at my three grown sons, whom I always refer to as the “fortunes” of my life because they live for Jesus today.

Paul called for everyone to do a quality check for themselves once: *“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to **discern what is best** and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ”* (Phil 1:9-10). Another time he said: *“**Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.** Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—**unless, of course, you fail the test?**”* (2 Cor 13:5) It seems obvious, then, that God is also interested in quality testing. The Amplified Bible translates: *“Test and evaluate yourselves... examine yourselves... unless indeed you fail the test and are rejected as counterfeit?”* Jesus Himself also advised us: *“buy from me gold refined in the fire”* (Rev 3:18), that is, one with a seal of goodness or Quality that will last in eternity.

When I once asked God precisely what kind of Quality He was looking for, I got the answer in the form of a slogan that has never left my mind: *Quality for Eternity*. That doesn’t just sound good in English; it is good! Quality that counts forever is Quality that will endure in eternity. I thought to myself, that’s what it’s all about.

c. Lessons from a sobering experience

When I moved from the north to the south of Germany at the end of 2008, I had a sobering experience in a well-known church in Germany. There, an elder told me straight to my face, “You know, you somehow don’t belong to our target group.” I was in the process of selling our house in Schleswig-Holstein and told my family that they could go ahead and attend the services of the Church I knew. When I then followed up after a month, I sought a conversation with an elder and experienced a rebuff that was quite a surprise. It was important to me not only to attend the services but also to participate actively. When he realized that I had already worked as a pastor myself for many years, I don’t know what was going on in his mind. I think he also had another problem. He lectured me about how many years he would have worked his way up in that organization to

be where he was today - a phenomenon we, unfortunately, encounter all too often when people view a service organization as a spiritual career platform. This elder - God bless him - pushed us out of the Church simply because we were not part of his target group. I realize that this is an extreme example. But I mention it here because it is repeated like this in one or another weakened form. After all, it is nothing new. We remember what John already wrote about Diotrophes, how *“he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.”* (3Jo 10). The conclusion John drew was that he *“has not seen God”* (v. 11).

When I asked God what this experience meant to me, I felt as if He was saying, “You know, until now, it has mostly been you who have set the conditions and rules for cooperation. But do you have any idea at all about my people who only want to belong?” Then God showed me a picture: If I were to lose a finger, it just has to go back to the body! That’s the whole secret, and already the life and warmth will come back. I said, “Lord, we have welcomed everyone in our church, even the ordinary people who came to our social work, plus many guest speakers from all over the world.” “I know,” said the Lord. “And yet you thought you were someone who had a special calling. I, therefore, want you to learn to feel with people as I do. For each of my children possesses the highest calling there can be.” - That hit home.

Church corporations like to refer to Paul, who stated: *“To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews”* (1 Cor 9:20)? Sure, that’s true, but he also said, *“I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some”* (1Cor 9:22). Indeed, a family-oriented New Testament church’s target group is everyone the Lord

will reach with his love. We may have different gifts, but we are united by the same calling: *“To all in Rome who are loved by God and **called** to be his holy people.”* (Rom 1:7) Or even more, he wrote it in Ephesians: *“I urge you to live a life worthy of the **calling** you have received.”* (Eph 4:1) So, dear pastors! Not only are the ordained called, but every child of God has a calling! Notice, then, that there are many different gifts mentioned in the plural in Rom

*Every Christian has a true calling:
**Live a life worthy of the calling
you have received**
Ephesians 4:1*

11:29, but the one calling only in the singular: “for God’s gifts and his *call* are irrevocable.” We don’t have to wait for prophets to tell us, “I see a real calling on your life!” We should have known that by now. Peter summed it up, “But you are a *chosen* people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who *called* you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Pet 2:9)

Let us, therefore, note that the quality criteria in a congregation differ from those of a Christian service company. Sophisticated programs that address people through high-quality music, sermons, or contributions have their place, especially in evangelism or missions. However, it is not their performance that is the focus for a congregation, but rather the faith that is lived out, which is evident through practical love. Lived relationships are clearly in the foreground here. The understanding of Quality is not temporal but eternal. The slogan “Quality for Eternity” sums it up best for me. For all its well-intentioned customer orientation, a target group-oriented TQM church, in particular, must also be aware that people can feel excluded. If they have the impression that they are not in focus, they will not be reached. On the other hand, a church must remain open to everyone who is placed in the family of God and held by his love.

2. Management and leadership behavior

The importance of exemplary leadership is undisputed, even if it functions quite differently in a Christian service company than in a family congregation. For many clerks, quality management has only something to do with an increased workload for documentation. But in the term “Total Quality Management,” the word “management” not only stands for the administration of tasks but also all operational planning, leading, controlling, and monitoring activities in an organization. Instead of improvisation and intuition, clear rules and responsibilities should govern cooperation. There are many positive examples of how this

has also contributed to numerical growth within many Christian service organizations.¹⁷

In the many attempts at imitation, however, it was also found that pastors were overwhelmed with applying TQM principles. A bishop of the Protestant Church in Pomerania, for example, complained: “Hardly any parish pastors feel properly trained for their current job.”¹⁸ In his book “Spiritual Congregational Management,” he writes that pastors and managers alike “suffer from the imposition of Omni-responsibility” because “both job descriptions are quite comparable.”¹⁹ Both are ultimately responsible for all aspects of the company. They are crisis managers, representatives to the outside world, responsible for the company organization and the working atmosphere, and perform numerous representative duties. The leaders of a congregation that want to develop in the direction of a Christian service company must know what is in store for them. The bishop even called for a reformation of the theology curriculum.

a. The Management of a SO

You need to know that there is a distinct hierarchy in Christian service organizations based on business models. Most still follow the models of an organizational structure or matrix organization with its various departments for music, youth ministry, worship, administration, money, and construction. Here, the respective department heads are usually accountable to their superiors.²⁰ Process owners submit proposals, but in the end, the hierarchy of the board of directors up to the CEO, which makes the final decisions, takes hold again.

Two years ago, Francis Chan described in his book “Letters to the Church” why he left his mega-church at the height of its so-called success.

“²¹ He explained, “I realized

that by being a prominent leader, I denied others from coming into their responsibilities.” It had direct consequences: “When we were talking about building a new building, and what the cost would be, the elders discussed the question of what would happen if I were no longer their pastor. Would Cornerstone Church then be like so many other churches, left with a huge but empty building? Once again, this is a big problem! Not just because of the wasted money,

I realized that by being a prominent leader, I was denying others to come into their responsibility.

– Francis Chan, 2018

but because no church should be so dependent on one person. We wanted people to come to our Church to experience Almighty God and the work of the Holy Spirit - not to hear Francis Chan.”²²

In the software industry, attempts have been made to prevent excessive dependence on authority by developing the “integrative decision-making” approach, known as “holacracy,” for short. But even this model has come under criticism, most recently for low career opportunities and unfair pay structures.

Some communities today ask: If the worker is truly worthy of their wages, where do I start paying a salary, and where do I stop compensating services? An example of this is the countless worship group rehearsal hours on which so much emphasis is placed in our worship services. Aren't they also worthy of adequate compensation or at least recognition? Instead, everyone looks only to the pastor, so that sometimes people ask: Are we even a “real” church if we can't even afford a pastor? What a “real” congregation is should not depend on the compensation of a pastor's position. But it should realize that paying professionals often sets the stage for an organization where more staff can envision a service contract.

Meanwhile, I believe that it can be an advantage to be a volunteer in a community. I didn't always see it that way. But my father was a real role model for me in this, having been a church planter and volunteer all his life. When the Lord reminded me that I had had a university degree in physics for many years but had never used it for His kingdom, a whole new phase in my life began. I soon found that I could finance my missionary activities myself. And that wasn't so wrong, as I found out. I felt it was a kind of “freeing up” for mission among ordinary working people. I also began to lay down to God all the “clergy-laity thinking” that had so characterized me in my theology studies and was allowed to expose the lie that only a few were called to “full-time ministry.” I was allowed to understand the priesthood of all believers in a whole new way. Finally, as a quality consultant for the world's largest automotive supplier, God led me to over 30 countries where I experienced fantastic conversion stories. Hundreds of managers and board members heard the gospel, and I recently captured some of the stories in my book, “When God Works. Work-Life Balance in Career and Vocation.”²³ In it, I highlight that Jesus was in a

secular job for the longest time of his life, for a good reason. I want our worship services to be full of testimonies and reports from people, especially from the Church's leaders. They during the week have made it easier for others to believe - amid everyday life. Even for working elders, their daily life function should always be more significant than their Church position.

In service organizations, on the other hand, titles are often overrated. They call their CEO or president a pastor, their board chairs or vice presidents elders, and their directors deacons. But merely using spiritual titles from the New Testament does not change a Christian service organization's business culture. Nor is this necessarily desired because CEO-pastors often see an advantage in short decision-making paths. They often still derive their understanding of leadership from the Old Testament. Again and again, one can observe that they see themselves as “the anointed one” like Moses, who appointed elders over hundreds, but who were still subordinate to him.²⁴ David is also often taken as a model, as well as other God-fearing kings or revivalists. Heroes are sought and found. It has not changed to this day. We have long since ceased to live in the Old Covenant and are now living in the New. In this sense, it is no secret that there are better and worse service organizations. The humbler the leadership, the better the “performance.” So there are also excellent examples of blessed service companies.

Deadly sins of the Management

Edward Deming, who is called²⁵ the “father of modern quality,”²⁶ a physicist and Christian, once spoke of Management's “deadly sins.”²⁷ He did not choose this biblical formulation by chance, because like the other founders of Quality, Philip Crosby and Joseph Juran, he was also a believer. It is undoubtedly one of the reasons why Christian churches have opened up more and more to TQM. Already at the end of the last century, there was talk of a quality movement within the church landscape.²⁸ But few have understood Deming's approach to Quality and what he meant, for example, by the term “deadly sins” of Management. These include not only the short-term profit motive or disproportionately high manager salaries, which even CEO pastors use to afford their private jets. According to Deming, the constant monitoring and

performance appraisal of employees are also among the favorite sins of Management. Thus, even in most Christian service organizations, the leader still considers himself a boss who must evaluate his employees.

Such organizations' culture becomes apparent when, a few minutes later, the leader enters a room where people had previously been engaged in lively conversation. Suddenly, everyone falls silent. The free exchange of ideas breaks off. Everyone is afraid of saying something wrong. It is dreadful and exactly what Deming denounced. He demanded that the fear of saying or doing something wrong must disappear completely between departments and toward superiors. It is the only way to ensure creativity and effectiveness. To this day, this has still not been understood in most companies. There the sub-suppliers are invited to so-called "barbecue meetings" on Friday afternoon, in which they are then to be "grilled." After all, they want to show them who is the customer and who is in charge. Some Christian companies don't know about Christian quality management principles, what, e.g., Crosby meant by trust and "completeness," as he expresses it in his book of the same name.²⁹ The pompousness of pastors, characterized by an inflated sense of mission, belongs in the "sin garbage can." The founders of Quality, who were also called "quality apostles,"³⁰ always spoke of the importance of "role models," i.e., managers' role model function. And on this point, they were right.

b. Understanding leadership in the Church

In the Church, elders are people who share their life experiences with you. They may not be the better Christians at all, but they have a leadership gift. True, there are also spiritual fathers in Christ who may be more mature than the elders (cf. 1Jo 2:13). But if they do not have a leadership gift or are not capable of teaching, they do not qualify for the office of elder. So it is not a matter of better or worse. There is no caste of the ordained, only the priesthood of all believers. But if we have elders, they are expected to be "*examples to the flock*" (1Pet 5:3) to use Peter's expression. They are to share with us the ways of God as He leads through the ups and downs of life while strengthening our

faith. They share not only their successes but also their defeats, their so-called "lessons learned." They have a maturity that you may not have seen before. You may enjoy them like a good, mature wine. Paul, who held himself up as a role model for the churches, never called himself an elder. We find no indication that he was married and had children and family experience.

On the other hand, Peter met this criterion and called himself "*a fellow elder*" (1Peter 5:1) in the church family. When Paul called for "*appoint[ing] elders in every town*" (Tit 1:5), we find the Hebrew word for "elder" *zaquen*, meaning "old man"; the Greek word *presbyteros* has the same meaning. So these men not only have a certain spiritual age (are not new converts (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6), but also a natural maturity. It is evident from their station in life alone, for they are said to be married whose grown-up "*children believe*" (Titus 1:6). The Greek word *pistos*, which is translated as "believing," also means "trustworthy" and refers to a mature person who is "*not open to the accusation of being loose in morals and conduct or unruly and disorderly*" (Tit 1:6; AMPC). We are certainly not talking here about kindergarten or elementary school children debauchedly celebrating their chocolate cookie battles.

Moreover, Biblical leadership always works in a team because every biblical leader knows that they require supplementation. But this diversity of elders' talents is different from the heterogeneous composition of a corporate board. The modern buzzword for this is "diversity." For a service company, diverse leadership may be an advantage if every age group and every walk of life are represented there. But for a family church, the selection criteria for elders with family and spiritual experience are crucial. Thus, the elders' team shapes the Church not with a boss culture but with a team culture. Therefore, elders do not meet each other as colleagues, but as friends and brothers, so do the women. Jesus said to his disciples, "My friends" (Luke 12:4). It is love for one another that creates a pull for more. Everyone wants to have what this leadership exemplifies. By the way, it includes deacons; the Bible is full of examples of good deacons

Biblical leadership can only succeed in a team of peer elders who, through their adult, believing children, have the necessary experience to lead a family.

and deaconesses. Reading some books of the so-called Emerging Church, one can get the impression that only the community left, but no leadership. But with all appreciation for the rediscovered community and the necessary maturity of the church family, it will never reach full maturity without the God-given leadership of elders and deacons.

Let's summarize: **Since a service organization is run like a business, we also find the usual hierarchies, control, and salary structures. As long as leaders humbly serve the organization, they can make decisions quickly and flexibly and mobilize forces for missionary outreach. Service organizations can be a fantastic complement to missional church work if managers properly apply TQM principles. However, the major drawback must be seen in the fact that leaders maintain more collegial than familial working relationships. Each employee and manager are subject to constant evaluation. Moreover, leaders are often far removed from members who, however, need role models as in a family-oriented church where life is shared, prayer is offered together, and God's voice is heard. Here, elders should be more easily recognizable as real, touchable role models. There can be no substitute for this.**

3. Strategy (Vision, Mission)

Let's move on to the third pillar of TQM. It emphasizes the planning and strategy of the company. If God is our partner, we may set our goals high. It is true, but not to satisfy our ambition, but as we receive them from God in prayer. The challenge, then, is to communicate the very vision that Jesus has long had on his heart for his Church. So let us ask ourselves the following question:

a. What is your vision?

In the German Society for Quality (DGQ), the terms vision, mission, and values are presented as the essential components of a quality organization at the top of a pyramid. In it, the term vision is defined as follows: "Imagination of how the organization sees itself in the future and wants to be seen. The vision [also] contains statements about desired achievements."³¹ Thus, the quality standards

require that each company make its vision available to all employees. The so-called quality policy is, therefore, usually posted in the entrance halls of the companies. It contains sentences such as that they want to be the world market leader for a particular product family. Often a target date is also attached to it. And Christian organizations that see themselves as such companies adopt precisely this kind of visual definition. Their missions are then nothing more than their programs to enable their success.

Warren's book *Purpose Driven Church* was translated as "Church with Vision" for a reason. He makes the statement that where there is no vision, people will look for another church. He claims that many churches barely survive "because they don't have a vision."³² Bill Hybels was also convinced: "When God enters the life of a leader with the clarity of vision, everything changes,"³³ he explained. First, the leader must see the vision. Then, secondly, the passion should follow and, thirdly, the assumption of responsibility. This approach corresponds to the usual procedure in a quality-oriented company and also in Christian Service Organizations. Pastors' conferences are then used to practice how to define a clear vision for the Church. I even found written guidance for this in the Christian magazine *Ministry Today*. The article is called "Healthy Church Vision."³⁴

A typical phrase I've often heard from church leaders is this, "If you don't support the vision of this church, why don't you find a church to stand behind?" - Well, that may be true for the politics of a Service Organization, but not for a biblical church. In numerous leaders such as Moses,³⁵ David, Solomon, Nehemiah, and others, it is possible to discern a goal definition's beginnings. These spiritual leaders led God's people. However, since these are Old Testament examples, they cannot easily be transferred to the New Testament church - although this is often done. One likes to refer to the English King James translation of Prov 29:18a: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." But the Hebrew word translated here as "vision" means "revelation," which the NIV translates correctly: "*Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint.*" The English Amplified Bible speaks even more precisely of "*revelation of God and His word*" (Amp).

Other Old Testament Bible passages that contain the word "vision" also often have to be

used for the business visions of service companies. A popular passage is Habakkuk 2:2, where God said to the prophet Habakkuk, “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables” (KJV). What was it about? The prophet had an apparition about the coming judgment under the reign of Chaldeans. Again, it was not a business vision, although many pastors often refer to this scripture when writing down their church growth goals so that they are “effortless to read.” In the Old Testament, then, the term “vision” occurs in the context of spiritual appearances, as Jacob saw a ladder and Moses saw a burning bush.³⁶

People also had visions in the New Testament. Peter said it clearly in his Pentecost sermon: “Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17) For example, he saw a vision of animals to eat. And Paul saw a man in Macedonia saying to him, “Come!” Both of these visions were in the context of a mission for spreading the gospel to new territory. However, these visions were not successful goals for building Christian service centers.

Another moment caught my attention when my oldest sister sold her successful business and decided to work for me as a general manager, so to speak, in the church office. What struck her on the very first day was that I was running the Church in much the same way she was running her business - with a clear “vision,” as we called it, and a clear idea of measurable success. Now was this a good sign or not so good, I wondered?

Most pastors I know believe that church growth is a critical success criterion. They claim that healthy churches grow. It is what Christian Schwarz, a Lutheran, tried to tell us back in the 1990s when he studied 1000 growing congregations in 32 countries.³⁷ If something is successful, it must surely be good, many Christians think. “This man’s success proves him right” - we all know this saying. But is that the case? What kind of success are we talking about anyway? Francis Chan once made a statement that made me and many other people very thoughtful. He said: “If Jesus had a church in my town, I’m sure my Church would be bigger than his! Why? Because he would demand such devotion that today, as then, many

would surely turn away from him.” It brings us to the question: how would Jesus formulate his vision for the Church? He developed it long ago. When Jesus once prayed for a very long time, also for us, John listened. He wrote it down what Jesus’ heart was beating for. Hardly anywhere else is his vision clearer than in this prayer:

I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” (Joh 17:26) Paul also linked to this again and again in his prayers. He emphasized, “speaking the truth in love, we will

grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph 4:15-16) It is indeed a glorious church vision! (see Eph 3:17-19)

Jesus has long since formulated his vision for the church:

I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

– John 17,6

What does this insight now mean for our further course of action?

Do we want to keep our service enterprise as a community center and practice family community best in smaller groups?

Or do we see the family congregation as the center of our congregational life? Maybe some members could become involved in supra-congregational service enterprises?

b. The authorization of a Service Organization

For evangelism, a service company can be beneficial. There is a huge influx among young people to watch a Christian show in front of huge screens in disco-like spaces and listen to a motivational speaker. People find faith and pray for change. I believe that the best motives are often used here, as someone put it: “While the bottom line in business is net profit, the bottom line in Total Quality Ministry is a changed life.”³⁸ We should not condemn a work just because it is not our style. Honestly, I can talk like this today because God once had to correct my attitude toward modern service centers. When I attended a service in Texas, I ended up lying on the floor and could hardly move after the Spirit of God fell on me. He admonished me,

“Judge not lest you be judged. Better not reach into someone else’s office, for there is only one judge!” That was an incredible experience for me that you don’t soon forget. That’s why today I say: why shouldn’t I go to a Christian concert or performance if I bring a guest with me and intercede?

Many pastors have also tried to bring about spiritual growth with the help of service enterprises. Thus, attempts have been made to use management methods to control and measure maturity processes. For example, Kallestad and Shay listed eight well-intentioned goals for spiritually mature members:³⁹

1. can list at least seven new friends made in the Church
2. can identify spiritual gifts
3. is involved in at least one role/task/work that corresponds to one’s spiritual gifts
4. is involved in a small group
5. demonstrates a regular financial commitment to the Church
6. can personally identify with the goals of the Church
7. demonstrates a regular worship commitment to the Church
8. is excited about finding unchurched friends and family members, inviting them to Church, and helping them commit to God.

However, while all of these goals are not bad, the question is whether the pressure of expectations would prevent some from seeing this organization as home. Before deciding on a TQM organization, all members need to know what is in store for them.

If the number of those who make at least seven new friends a year increases, that may be a metric for the community’s ability to connect and relate. For extroverts, the goal of seven may even be an incentive. Still, for more introverted personalities, on the other hand, it may be a goal they miss, which would then inspire feelings of inferiority and isolation.

Similarly, the number of employees who are engaged is a popular indicator of Quality. But in a service organization, everyone needs to know that service and work contracts must be fulfilled, and volunteers are judged more strictly. If you don’t show up for rehearsals, you won’t be able to sing on stage. The rules are clear so that more collegial behaviors govern how we treat each other. Of course, there will always be friendships, which can also be lived,

but a service relationship among the employees will primarily characterize everyday life.

Those who then want to withdraw more into small group work must know that it is customary to report regularly to the respective district leader. They check whether the vision is being lived out and whether the annual goal is also achieved with the small groups. It is part of the DNA of a company to set targets and define growth objectives. For example, small groups have been expected to cut themselves in half every year based on growth visions.

Is that really what we want?

c. The family-oriented Church

The second way is to remain a family at the core simply. As mentioned earlier, Paul told the Church at Ephesus, “*you belong to God’s family.*” (Eph. 2:19; Elb) Perhaps this family church would like to afford an evangelistic ministry arm in the form of a Christian business. Could this be a viable alternative? Why not? As long as the workers do not give up their family relationships, nothing can be said against it.

One pastor claimed that the best way to get to know each other is through work. That may be so, but the kind of spiritual community to which we are called goes further than a collegial relationship. I like to illustrate this with the discovery Peter made when he said to Jesus, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!” Jesus responded, “*this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.*” (Mt 16:16-17) For months or years, this fisherman followed Jesus, knowing him as a lover of nature, a lover of men, and a worker of miracles - just as other people knew him. But then the Spirit of God revealed to him who he was. It is an experience that is yet to come for some of us - discovering Jesus himself and his side in our brother or sister. When this is the case, brothers and sisters often begin to share prophetic impressions about one another. They encourage each other and begin to use their God-given gifts.

For Paul, it was a shock when Jesus said to him, “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*” (Acts 9:5) He would never have thought it possible that Jesus would identify himself with his Church in this way. But later he made it a lesson for the Church: “*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.*” (2 Cor. 5:16) In a church

family, this is quite crucial. Occupation, appearance, or social standing are secondary. Within the Church, we may know a person's abilities, talents, or performance and judge them "from a worldly point of view." But this need not remain so. However, we need spiritual fellowship for this, not a monologue, but a dialogue, a heart-to-heart exchange. Inexperienced or newly converted Christians usually do not yet understand this art of communication. They talk at the Advent celebration of the Church just as they do with their neighbors. They spend more ambition and energy on honing their talents and skills than developing the high art of fellowship. For this, the Greek has the word *koinonia*, which means "participation in something," sharing spiritual substance, "*being one in spirit and of one mind*" (Phil 2:2). I am convinced that when two people of faith no longer touch each other in their hearts, something is left unsatisfied when they part - simply because they are called to fellowship in a family. That is why these were Paul's last words to the Corinthians: "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all*" (2Cor 13,13; ESV).

Conclusion: In a service organization, you first have to find out its vision because Management defines it. In the family church, on the other hand, the concept has long been clear. Here, it is about growing in its love for Christ and one another. It will produce new spiritual children, but they are to be led into maturity to create other families. One does not speak of divisions here but of a natural process of cutting the cord when young men have become fathers, and girls have become mothers. Even a continually growing service company cannot substitute for this natural development, but it can be a valuable addition to a community.

4. Process Orientation

A process is the bundling of activities with defined input and output. Just as a pencil sharpener turns a new pencil (input) into a sharp pencil (output) or a washing machine turns dirty laundry (input) into the clean laundry (output), a church should turn people (input) into disciples (output). But a service organization has defined many other processes about which one can have different opinions as to whether they are conducive to the overall goal.

a. Processes in the Service Organization

In a service company, the focus is on programs, their planning, execution, and evaluation. A chaotic process is certainly not a sign of spirituality because the God of the Bible is a God of order (1Cor 14,33). Of course, the establishment of a quality management system can also make a valuable contribution here.

One distinguishes a one-time procedure from a process. Even a project is not yet a process. A project can be, for example, a specific mission assignment that is projected, organized, and completed. On the other hand, a process has a "repetitive character"⁴⁰ like a recurring evangelistic service with preparation, implementation, and follow-up. Examples are recurring street outreaches or youth events. Everything is described, measured, and regulated to increase performance continuously. However, whether the increase in the respective process performance supports the actual primary process of transforming people into mature disciples is another question altogether.

Thus, efforts have been made to increase internal customers, i.e., church members, in addition to evangelism. Again, they developed specific programs like "Deep Dive" seminars or "Deeper" weekends. By the way, this used to be called Bible teaching. For some interested people, there were even Bible school courses for a fee. So that no one misunderstands me: I love Bible teaching. I believe in the fivefold ministry in the Church. It is not just the teachers who teach with authority who are part of it. We need the whole input to equip the saints, as Paul put it. But when a family comes together, it's not just one person talking. It is not only about input but also about output. The children speak up, sometimes quite loudly. They listen to each other, talk to each other, pray together, and celebrate the Lord's Supper together as a true fellowship and a love feast.

b. The fivefold supporting Church processes

In a Christian congregation, it can only be about the one main process of making people into fervent disciples, but several supporting developments or processes can further this. However, this is not about programs but the direction of the congregation. I would now like to explain this briefly using the five ministry gifts:

The New Testament tells us that the first thing Jesus thought of in his resurrection was his Church: *“When he ascended on high, he...gave gifts to his people” (Eph 4:8)*. It is why these gifts are sometimes called “resurrection gifts.” Here we find the Greek word *doma* (not *charisma*), which stands for the five ministry gifts. What is important now is that they should shape a congregation as “process owners,” so to speak, to use a TQM expression. In the course of these processes, then, *“the body of Christ may be built up,”* as it is stated in Eph 4:11-12: *“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”*

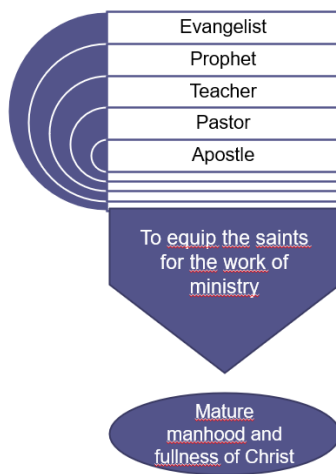


Fig. 1: Balanced church growth made possible by five ministry gifts

For example, when a church is blessed with evangelists, it develops into an actual lighthouse in this world, where every believer is a witness of Christ: *“You will be my witnesses,”* Jesus promised. I used to think that the evangelist was only active outside the Church, as a foreign minister of the Church. But God has given this gift to the Church so that it may develop evangelistically as a whole. It is true that every Christian already has his life testimony to share with others from the beginning. But it takes time for us to sympathize with the lostness of people as Jesus did. The shortest verse in the Bible is John 11:35: *“Jesus wept.”* He wept with the mourners. - Evangelism begins where we begin to care about our fellow man. We learn this from Jesus as he observed Nathanael long before coming to Jesus (Jn 1:48). As love grows in us, it will do so toward the lost. We don’t have to bend to do this because the beautiful thing is that Jesus said, **“I will make you become fishers of men!”**

(Mark 1:17) He does. Some go door to door as if they are selling vacuum cleaners and insurance. But others say I don’t have that gift. It’s not in me to run a program in the pedestrian zone either. I’m not the entertainer type either. You don’t have to be. Just be part of the evangelistic process within the Church where your missionary passion will grow.

The second supporting process that runs in parallel in the Church is the development of the prophetic ministry. In this process, God uses the prophet’s gift to make a congregation give more freedom to the prophetic gifts. Hearing the voice of God should be something normal for us. Jesus said, *“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Rev. 2:7)* - Although Paul wished for everyone to have the gift of speaking prophetically, this is not the case. Nevertheless, he encouraged all to strive for it. (1Cor 14:1, 12). However, this development is a process that can take years. It happens as our faith increases, as we prophesy *“in accordance with our faith” (Rom 12:6)*. If a church leader chooses to assign the lead of worship to a gifted musician or a prophet, I would always suggest the prophet. He doesn’t have to be the first voice, but he can set accents with song selections or encourage the congregation with prophetic impressions during breaks. Musical groups that are put on stage should have experience in using the prophetic gifts. After all, it is not a matter of replaying one worship song after another or creating a wellness atmosphere that is pleasant to the point of perfection. Where prophetic ministry is underdeveloped, the audible speaking of God is often no longer perceived. That is why Paul recommended that two or three prophets minister to the Church, and then the Church test the words. Human vessels are never perfect, nor do they need to be. And yet, we are encouraged to ignite our gifts and continually develop them. Musicians understand this and meet to rehearse. Prophets could do the same and learn from musicians. They could meet for prophetic workshops to ultimately encourage the whole congregation’s prophetic orientation.

The third supporting process transforms the Church into a place where there is never a lack of abundant spiritual nourishment. To this end, God employs the gift of the teacher. Although, in a sense, every believer is called to pass on the commandments of God (Heb. 5:12) by making disciples of others (Matt. 28:20), the ministry gift of a teacher is a special gift to the

Church. Not everyone who can teach in the pedagogical sense is a teacher in the biblical sense. While the pedagogue primarily imparts knowledge, upon the teacher appointed by God rests the “spirit of wisdom and revelation” (Eph 1:17) so that we may attain full unity in our knowledge of God’s Son. Jesus is reported to have taught “as one who had authority,” in contrast to his day’s scribes (Matt. 7:29; Mark 1:22). With him, the presence of the Word of God became real.⁴¹ - In churches where the teacher’s gift is lacking, it is difficult to gather people together in the middle of the week for Bible study. But where it is available, a brief contribution on a Sunday morning has often been enough to spark a spiritual hunger for the Word of God. Bible studies and weekend seminars have sprung up. It is an exceptional experience to sit under the ministry of a teaching gift. In our day, this is one of the most important gifts of all, since otherwise, the Church runs the risk of being blown about by every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14): “They will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” (2 Tim. 4:3). The biblical office of teacher, on the other hand, does not make people followers of their personal opinions, but disciples who follow Christ. It kindles a hunger for the Word of God so that believers can feed themselves and gather their own “manna.” Indeed, when this Church, grounded in the Word of God, then comes together, everyone has a contribution to encourage, “a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation” (1 Cor. 14:26).

Finally, there is the fourth supporting process, which is brought to life through the gift of shepherding. This process, more than any other, develops the family culture of a congregation. David already interpreted the relationship between sheep and shepherd (Greek *poimen* =pastor; Hebrew *ra’ah*) in Psalm 23 with the words “The Lord is my shepherd” (Ps 23:1). This Lord wants to seek the “lost,” bind up the “broken,” and heal the “sick” (Ezek 34:16). The prophet Ezekiel dedicated an entire chapter to the shepherds of Israel, so this image of the shepherd and the sheep is also taken up in the New Testament for the office of the pastor, who serves the Church with great “devotion” (cf. 1Pet 5:2; Acts 20:28).

It is wonderful when a shepherd “shows mercy with cheerfulness” (Rom 12:8). There in Romans, Paul calls this special kind of mercy a charismatic gift. My father had this gift, so we constantly had guests in the house who asked to just stay for a few days. The peace in the house did them good, and quite a few left healed. Above all, I was impressed by his patience in dealing with people who suffered from depression, who were addicted to alcohol, or whose marriage would not heal. The Bible reminds us, “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal 6:2) It is the law of love that must become very practical. But it often takes many years for Christians to grow into this lifestyle. If we do not have role models in the ministry gift of shepherds or elders, this process is unnecessarily delayed. It also does not help when Christian service centers offer consultation hours and outsource pastoral care to professional counselors or Christian psychologists. The members in a family are called to comfort, admonish, and encourage one another. Spiritual maturity is ultimately seen in the fact that we pray more for others than for ourselves.

In love, the spiritual gifts, prophetic encouragements, and true intercession are at work. In a family, all these things flow together so that everyone is strengthened.

I would like to dedicate one last thought to the apostle’s

ministry gift. A church that keeps inviting apostles will grow in its missionary zeal and willingly send out apostolic teams. This leaving of some groups will then not be reinterpreted as a division but will even be encouraged to establish new churches. The apostle’s ministry gift is not to run a large service company. If the CEO calls himself an “apostolic leader,” he is not apostolic because he has responsibility for a pastor’s team. If he claims to have an apostolic ministry, God must confirm this gift through blessed church planting. For example, the president of the Pentecostal network “Praise Chapel,”⁴² Larry Neville, leads a network of churches with 4300 congregations in 30 nations that has an extraordinary focus: When the churches have reached a critical mass in a positive sense, they send out some of their most experienced people to plant another church - not necessarily far away, but also in their neighborhood or another district, if God

WIN-BUILD-SEND

**Win the lost for Jesus
Build them up in the faith
Send them out to plant another
church.**

– Larry Neville

confirms it. They call this principle: “Win-Build-Send.” Win the lost for Jesus -> Build them up in the faith -> Send them out to plant another church. Leaders with apostolic gifts do not go alone, but so-called apostolic teams support them in new planting. Maybe you are wondering if this even works? I have thought so too and preached in some of these churches. My impression is that it does work - not everywhere yet, but my friend Larry is working toward it.

However, church planting cannot happen of its own volition, but only where the Lord opens a “door of the word” (Col 4:3; 2 Cor 2:12). Paul admitted: “We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the **sphere of service God himself has assigned to us**...For we do not want to boast about work already done in **someone else’s territory**. (2 Cor 10:13,16) If you have ever tried to plant a church, you know that this is impossible without a purpose for that region and God’s work. We may start associations or clubs, but only Jesus builds His Church from people who find faith and are devoted to one another in love.

c. Understanding Church Cultures

Depending on the maturity of the supporting processes, the culture in a community will also develop. The real differences between “better and worse congregations”⁴³ are not in the rooms’ equipment, the technical facilities available, or the qualification of their full-time staff, but in their culture.⁴⁴ It is rare to find a church that is both family-oriented, evangelistic, prophetic, apostolic, and at the same time grounded in biblical teaching. So far, I have not met a church that does not lack any gift. Even among the Corinthians, who were said not to lack any charismatic spiritual gift (gr. charisma) (1Cor1,7), it is not clear whether among them all five of the ministry mentioned above gifts (Greek *doma*) were present. A church that has been shaped only by pastors has a different culture than one led by evangelists. But it is not a question of which culture is better or worse. What is needed is to complete all the above five support processes to achieve a balanced church. But this lofty goal is only achievable if the congregation functions as one body, one organism.

If, on the other hand, the focus is on the service enterprise, what organizational scientists have found to be true for any

organization holds: One of the following four characteristics will always prevail, either the culture of a clique, that of a hierarchical organization, market orientation or what is called adhocracy culture.⁴⁵ I would now like to outline these for better understanding briefly:

Flexibility/ Diskretion	Clan	Adhocracy
	Hierarchy	Market
Stability/ Control	Internal Focus/ Integration	External Focus/ Differentiation

Fig. 2: Competing values of organizational cultures ⁴⁶

1. *The Clique Culture*: A group with a clique culture is a friendly place where people reveal a lot about themselves, much like an extended family. The leaders are mentors and perhaps even parental figures. It is held together by loyalty or tradition, and commitment is high. It also emphasizes the long-term benefits of character development. It emphasizes cohesion and morale and encourages teamwork, participation, and consensus. - So far, so good. But its crucial drawback is that members act as if in a self-contained clan to which outsiders have little access. The messages give the impression that the people live in a bubble, which they no longer even perceive. Most such groups are therefore unattractive and struggle with stagnation. For a Christian community that has fallen into this trap, we have already shown how out of this dilemma: The first step is to receive the five service gifts and thus promote all the supportive processes described above.

2. *The Hierarchy Culture*: As the name suggests, this culture emphasizes a clear hierarchy. Beginning with the homegroup leader and ending with the head pastor, there will always be a boss to whom one is accountable. The need for stability and control is crucial here. The Church with a hierarchy culture is therefore very formalized and structured. Procedures and rules dictate what people do. Leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organizers because keeping the organization running is the most important thing. Success means being reliable and efficient. However, this hierarchical culture’s primary disadvantage is obvious:

individuals have to ask for everything and may feel controlled or patronized. However, a church's goal should be to help each believer reach spiritual maturity and maturity, i.e., not to be tied to leaders. Still, to Christ, such a culture is rather counterproductive to spiritual growth. Here the church member will have the hardest time developing personally, not to mention the possible abuse of power complained about time and again. The only way out of this is to build trust rather than control. The elders are asked not to act as masters of the Church but to become role models of the flock. (1Pet 5:3), knowing that God can speak through anyone and that a leading pastor is not needed as the final authority to check and release everything. Nobody should stick to his chair because even for fixed offices required by the state, as the 1st chairman of a non-profit association, one could also think about a rotating responsibility.

3. *The Market Culture:* The Church with a market culture is a purely results-oriented service organization. Employees are both mission and goal-oriented and are explicitly praised by their leaders for top performance. It is not infrequently done publicly as well, which should encourage others to continue energetic work. The glue that holds this organization together is its emphasis on success, on achieving measurable goals and objectives. But it has as its primary focus the professionalization of its programs and must be careful not to neglect the expression of the body of Christ. Otherwise, in the long run, it will no longer provide a home for all those who seek only a spiritual home in which to grow. A church that has degenerated into a Christian enterprise with an overemphasized market culture must promote church life in smaller groups. These should remain connected to each other in a voluntary network.

4. *The Adhocracy culture:* The main characteristic of this culture is seen in the fact that ad hoc projects are carried out quite innovatively. People in such associations are not afraid of continually taking risks to try new things, for example, in evangelism or their meetings. Today they meet here and tomorrow there, for instance, in a coffee shop, a private home, or new locations. The style, the target group, or the methods can change regularly. It naturally requires a high degree of flexibility and individuality. An organization with such a culture is an extremely dynamic and creative place. However, the glue that holds this

organization together is the enthusiasm for innovative solutions to achieve a long-term and expanded organization's charisma. Success here means creating new services and new ways to grow and reach people. - All of this sounds very enticing, but it doesn't provide a home for everyone who has to go online to find out where and with whom to meet next. A New Testament church cannot function entirely without structure. It is not a place for individualists who only try out and live themselves. Where leadership is no longer desired, there ends up being nothing but a chaos club. That is why the development of a feedback culture is so important, where not only prophecies but also prophetic projects have to be evaluated. For this, God has appointed the elders, mature people who are not only good for us but to whom God has also given authority within the Church so that the fire of creativity is maintained.

Conclusion: With the various cultural expressions in an organization, we see strengths as well as weaknesses. But one of the other focuses will always prevail if we believe the organizational scientists so that one direction will still dominate the organization's culture. Therefore, building a service organization cannot be the solution for the New Testament church. If, on the other hand, we have in mind the goal of a balanced church that is both evangelistic, prophetic, familial, apostolic, and grounded in the word, then this is best accomplished with the help of the five ministry gifts. In this way, the actual primary process of transforming people into Christ-followers, who make others His disciples (multiplication), can come to fruition. However, such a church can be supplemented with a service enterprise has undoubtedly also become apparent.

Here is a brief example: Near where I live, my family visited a sizeable Christian service organization. I must say that God's presence could be felt in the meetings and many people found Christ. But at that time, my children found the journey too long and complained that they did not find fellowship and friends there. I was glad they didn't want to marvel at the back of the person's head in front of them or the performance on stage. "Occasionally, yes," they said, "but not as a community substitute." So they got involved in the Ranger ministry at a

church across the street from us and were able to help create Ranger services themselves.

We are very grateful to God for the Royal Ranger ministry. It is a fantastic way to cultivate and realize church life among young people. **The Royal-Ranger work is an excellent example of complementing the family-oriented Church with a Christian organization. There are clear hierarchies, values and goals, and a wonderful togetherness.**

5. Continuous Improvement

I remember how I met the Evangelical Church of Germany's quality representative at Budapest airport in 2007. I had just spoken at the Congress of European Churches (Councils of European Churches⁴⁷) in Hungary, saying for the Pentecostal faction on the subject of healing. But he seemed more interested in my expertise on the subject of Quality since the EKD was already struggling with enormous membership loss at that time. I also learned that Wolfgang Huber, then president of the EKD, had already presented his Protestant Church perspectives in the 21st century in 1996.⁴⁸ His impulse paper called "Church of Freedom" contained numerous quality terms such as quality assurance, quality management, quality figures, and balanced scorecards. It was believed that a Christian church enterprise should produce services whose Quality should also be measurable - either directly with numbers or indirectly through surveys.

An example of this can be found in the EKD questionnaire by the Center for Quality Development in Worship (2011 Hildesheim). It asks whether the greeting, prayers, or sermon language was natural, whether the songs were liked and whether the combination of musical instruments was appropriate. One wanted to determine whether the participants' movement, gestures, and facial expressions supported the service's message and whether it was the right length. It is only a brief excerpt. Such questionnaires are now available in most larger churches. The United Methodist Church, which openly sees its Church as a quality organization, refers to this as a "Health Survey"⁴⁹ of the congregation.

Improvement and growth are quite average. A dead tree no longer grows. But in a company, the process of improvement looks

different than in a family. While in the first case, it increases performance above all, in the second case, it depends on increasing maturity and increasing knowledge of the Son of God.

a. Improvement process in the SO

In quality organizations, the principle of continuous improvement applies, which is the fifth pillar of TQM. It expresses that no matter how good performance is, there is always something to improve. Those who resist it will soon find that stagnation means a decline. Although, on the one hand, a Christian organization is expected to be stable and maintain conservative values so that it is not "*tossed back and forth... by every wind of teaching*" (Eph. 4:14), churchgoers want reliable services, services, and products. They should be contemporary and "designed" and optimized according to their needs, which ultimately leads to increased flexibility, attractiveness, and consumerism.

In terms of avoidable errors, Philipp Crosby even called for "the performance standard to be zero errors, not simply near-zero errors."⁵⁰ Finally, a quality level of 99.9 percent would mean: There would be one hour of unsafe drinking water per month, two too-long landings at most major airports per day, 16000 pieces of lost mail per hour, 20,000 incorrect drug prescriptions per year, and 22000 checks deducted from the wrong account every hour.⁵¹ One could even argue with the Bible to defend this zero-defect standard in a service company: Even Jesus left the 99% sheep behind to follow the one percent. But does this mean that every one of those sheep has been perfect? Hardly.

Since a lot of money is often put into building an organization with honorable, evangelistic motives, one is naturally interested in whether the investment has paid off. If this is not apparent, it stands to reason that the causes should be investigated. Thus, in a TQM organization, the following process is entirely normal, which Deming called the "Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle": First, the problem is analyzed (Plan)⁵² before appropriate measures are initiated in consultation with all parties involved (Do). Then the evaluation of these preliminary measures takes place (Check)⁵³. Only when effectiveness has been demonstrated are improvements introduced throughout the organization (Act).⁵⁴

Improvement Potentials

Generally speaking, in any process-oriented quality organization, measures are continuously developed and implemented as part of a Continuous Improvement Process (CIP). This idea is also represented in quality standards such as ISO 9001, with a quality control loop that calls for continuous improvement: It would go beyond this article's scope to go into this in detail. But this much should be noted: When Schwarz was on the trail of the secret of growing communities in his study, he found that all these communities had standard features. They contained precisely eight quality characteristics that contributed significantly to the growth of these congregations. Amazingly, they are almost the same or similar criteria that were already required in the ISO 9000 standard:

1 Customer orientation (ISO) is expressed, according to Schwarz, by needs-oriented evangelism, i.e., the congregation completely tailors its evangelistic offerings to the questions and needs of non-Christians.

2 Leadership (ISO) is evident in empowering leadership. Leaders of growing churches focus their work on empowering other Christians for ministry. They do not use volunteers as "helpers" to implement their own goals and visions. They authorize, support, motivate, accompany individuals to become what God intends them to be.

3 Employee involvement (ISO) is demonstrated in a gift-oriented staff. Discovering and using spiritual gifts is the only way to make the Reformation concept of the "universal priesthood" practical.

4 The process-oriented approach (ISO) must focus on the essentials in a congregation, which is why Schwarz speaks of a love-learning process.⁵⁵ In this building of loving relationships, love is not the fulfillment of dogmatic and moral standards, but fruit, action, and deed: the result of a process.

5 The systems-oriented management approach (ISO) is demonstrated by structures that are fit for purpose. Incapacitating management structures, inappropriate worship times, demotivating financial concepts are changed or abolished. According to Schwarz, this ongoing process of structural self-renewal largely avoids "traditionalist encrustations."

6 Continuous improvement (ISO) presupposes a decision to do so. The point of difference between growing and non-growing

organizations is their dedication and enthusiasm for positive change based on a passionate spirituality.

7 The issue-based approach to decision making (ISO) requires gathering needs, experiences, and ideas in small holistic groups. All participants have the opportunity to participate so that the right decisions are made for further services.

8 Mutually beneficial relationships (ISO), especially among staff, are essential ingredients for inspiring worship. According to Schwarz, the common element that growing and qualitatively above-average congregations have is still inspirational worship.

A TQM organization has agreed that these eight characteristics can be continuously improved measurably. For example, classic indicators for this are the number of members, departures, and employees grouped by age. It is nothing unusual. Every activity report of an association lists donations, income, and expenses for the tax office. But TQM communities go far beyond that. They define indicators for just about all services. The performance of evangelism is measured by the number of first-time visitors and converts, pastoral care by the number of completed therapies, and the acceptance of seminars and conferences by the number of participants and donations received.

b. The pitfalls of ambitious goals

There are undoubtedly sensible and less exciting trends to follow. In particular, leaders are often gripped by zeal for ever more ambitious goals and flights of fancy. But therein lies the real danger of the constant drive for perfection, for James warns that this ambition can be the cause of disputes and divisions: "*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your **passions** are at war within you?*" (Jam 4:1; ESV) In the chapter before, James wrote, "*where jealousy [zelos] and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.*" (Jam 3:16) Note that here he uses the Greek word *zelos*. There was a whole group known for their political and religious zeal, the so-called Zealots. They were formed in the first century after a revolt against the Romans. For the most part, they came from the circles of the Pharisees and called for resistance against Rome. For them, the title "Zealot" was even an honorary title. It seems as if ambition is rarely so vital in

a group as in the case of the religious zealots. I think that this is the real danger: just as there is a real passion of our love for Christ, so also lurks the threat of deceitful ambition. Jesus was undoubtedly driven by the zeal of God when he cleaned up the temple, declaring, *“Zeal for your house will consume me.”* (Jn 2:17). In contrast, we find the deceitful ambition in the case when Paul came to the judgment about his fellow religious believers, *“For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.”* (Rom 10:2) Paul is not passing judgment lightly here, for after all, he knew what he was talking about. After all, he had been one of them, *“as for zeal, persecuting the church...”* (Phil 3:6) Even among Jesus’ disciples there was a Zealot, Simon (Lk 6:15), just as in the first Church: *“They were zealous for the law”* Acts 21:20).

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”

James 4:1; ESV

How do we find out the difference between religious zeal and the zeal of God? I think that it is always a question of what moves us. We are certainly on the right side if we can confess with Paul: *“For Christ’s love compels us.”* (2 Cor. 5:14). I want to illustrate this briefly with an example: I witnessed a significant church split in my immediate area in recent years. I was not affected since I was not a member of that Church. But I had some friends who were involved. I also exchanged ideas with the pastors and listened to them carefully. Above all, I prayed that they would draw the right lessons from the dilemma since the damage was significant. All the media had already reported about it, and people were talking about it everywhere. But unfortunately, not all leaders were able to derive the suitable lessons learned. I met a pastor who tried to tell me that something like this could happen again at any time because people are fickle, unfaithful, and disloyal. Shortly after that, his church leadership also broke down, and he, as the head pastor and apostolic leader, as he called himself, lost his job. He had hired the same outside church coach who was leading him astray. - What was the problem? It wasn’t professionalization at all that scared people off. People had, in a sense, come to terms with the culture of a service organization. But when sermons began to mention the organization’s name more often than the name of Jesus, some woke up. The overemphasis on corporate

identity became a stumbling block. A seductive religious zeal for the business vision had supplanted enthusiasm and passion for Jesus. The Bible would simply call it what it is: idolatry. I do not say this to point fingers. It is precise because this trend is so insidious that it is so seductive. But if we have fallen for it, we should repent and turn back.

I have met people who thought their value was that they had contributed significantly to their organization’s success. Others struggled with thoughts of rejection in light of their less dazzling talents. In essence, they all yearn for a family in which the exceptionally gifted do not have more excellent value than the less talented. This longing is sincere and right. Therefore, Paul wrote impressively: *“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.”* (1Cor 12:21-23).

This description fits well with the culture of a church family. This “less honorable” includes those who make mistakes that are not in keeping with a no-fault philosophy. They confess their sins to one another, but afterward, they learn from them (cf. Jas 5:16). They are healed, encouraged, and strengthened to run the next mile. They quote Solomon: *“for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again”* (Prov 24:16).

However, the business culture that has taken hold in the service-performance enterprise has meant that leaders no longer present themselves as vulnerable. They appear like unsinkable, oversized ships, even though we all know that the Titanic sank, too. Yet preachers speak almost exclusively of their successes and rarely describe their struggles or failures. When they have prayed with 100 sick people, the one case in which healing occurred is mentioned. Yet, it is precisely the way they deal with the failure of their prayers to be answered that should not deprive the listeners of the feeling of being unsuccessful or even forgotten by God. The consequence is that it sometimes becomes boring in our church services. Testimonies all sound the same: Nine times I asked for a parking space, and praise

God, it worked. The fact that it didn't work the 10th time, we cleverly fade out. However, this creates a fragile faith that becomes visible when the formula for success doesn't quite work out. For some, the death of the hamster is enough to trigger a medium depression.

c. The Biblical Maturity Process

Finally, let's look at the actual improvement process that is at stake for a believing Christian. We all need to grow, no matter what miracles we have seen or experiences we have. I lived in Flensburg on the street full of trees that had been eaten by the bark beetle. One evening in the dark, a heavy branch hit down behind me and missed me by only a meter. I thought how dangerous a dead tree could become when it stops growing. Afterward, I received a word from God that stuck with me: *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* (2Peter 3:18) God's word is apparent here: growth is not an option but our destiny. Every Christian is in the process of development. It is a maturing process that allows us to mature into mature Christians.

In the first phase of our faith life, we still receive a lot of input, for example, through the five ministry gifts that we have already discussed. Paul explained, they have the task *"to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."* (Eph. 4:11) He then goes on to describe the real goal of our development process: *"until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."* (Eph. 4:13) Accordingly, our maturity is expressed through faith, knowledge of the son, and unity.

By "faith" here, I'm sure we don't mean belief in a business vision, but the unshakable trust exemplified by the role models of the Bible. I like to refer to Enoch, who was 365 years old when he was raptured - a prophetic image for the Church, which will experience the same. The Bible says, *"He could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God."* (Heb. 11:5) Why was he pleasing to God? Nowhere is it reported that he built or accomplished anything significant. We

read only in Gen. 5:24: *"Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more because God took him away."* Once the Spirit of God told me, "The church that is raptured can be recognized by the fact that it lives in close union with God." So when we speak here of faith as a maturity characteristic of the congregation, we are not talking about a faith formula, a methodology, or technique. It is about the trusting relationship of faith that we build with God in the course of our lives.

The second characteristic is the *"knowledge of the Son of God."* Christians who are young in the faith know Jesus as Savior, Provider, and Healer - someone who saves us, is there for us, and with whom we can find refuge at any time. Gradually, we also discover how precious is the covenant he has made with us. But this does not mean that we know him yet. To the spiritual fathers, John wrote, *"I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning."* (1Jo 2:13) Who was that? Of whom did John write that he was in the beginning? Of Jesus, of the Son of God: *"In the beginning was the Word"* (Jn 1:1). The fathers know him. They also know that part of a father's job is to raise his children. They know

what it feels like to be raised by him. In Heb. 12:5, we read, *"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you"* (Heb. 12:5). In my home church, I occasionally ask the question, "How is God raising you right now? What

are you going through right now?" The answers then usually allow for very intense and, above all, honest fellowship. Some Christians, however, who are still unpracticed in educating God, think they have to resist every problematic situation in faith. They sometimes even believe the devil himself is behind their circumstances. But they are not fighting the devil; they are resisting their educator.

In contrast, the mature Christian knows when he is in the school of God and when he has run out of it. Mature Christians not only know the Son of God as Savior but also know that "Whom the Lord loves he educates with 'the necessary' severity; everyone whom he accepts as his son he also makes feel his punishing hand." The fruit that comes from this is a vital prerequisite for what comes afterward:

...until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
Ephesians 4:13)

complete unity. *“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” (Heb 12:11)*

Let us return to our zero-defect principle. In a sense, Jesus also desires something like this but expresses it quite differently. He demanded, *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48)*. Perhaps you’ve noticed that in the book of Song of Songs, the king always calls his bride “the perfect one.” The thing that made her perfect was that she followed his voice. *“Let me hear your voice” (Hl 2:14)*; she kept asking. And then she followed that voice, as can be seen in the rest of the book. In this sense, perfection simply means putting into practice what the Spirit of God has revealed and instructed us to do. There is also a very old-fashioned word for it. It is merely “obedience.” And when I think of teachers, who *“will be judged more strictly” (Jas 3:1)*, I now understand a little better certain phases of life when I was (and still am) brought up with a “stern hand.”

If we keep this process in mind, it becomes clear that Jesus has a very high goal with the Church: To be a real counterpart. A church planter and leader should always be aware of the following vision: *“We will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” (Eph 4:15)*

Let’s keep in mind: From its point of view, a Christian service company works successfully when it continually improves the services it offers, and goals are achieved. Doing this does not have to reinvent the wheel repeatedly because the potential for improvement can be easily identified if common quality standards serve as a guide for this purpose. For all our single-mindedness, we are warned by James against a selfish, human zeal if it displaces our passion for the house of God, the Church. The corporate identity of the business must never replace our identity in Christ, not even close. Of course, the family-oriented Church also wants to “improve,” both numerically and in its maturity and relationship with Christ. But it is not so much driven by annual goals in doing so. After all, it is a “growth in grace” (2Peter 3:18), which implies empowerment wrought by the Spirit of God according to the pace He sets.

Conclusion

From the above, it is evident that Jesus himself is building his Church. In doing so, he has a clear vision that he will fulfill with those who belong to his family. The family culture of a church is therefore indispensable. It will reach its goal in the end and produce a quality that has excellent value in eternity: Quality for Eternity. By this, we mean a spiritual maturity that, according to Ephesians 4, is characterized by a mature faith relationship by knowing God’s Son and a supernatural unity.

There is nothing to be said concerning their evangelistic activities against bundling initiatives or programs with an appropriate organizational form. If an association or foundation is helpful for this purpose, ministries can be planned, carried out, and optimized according to TQM quality criteria. But it has also become clear that such a service company cannot substitute for a family community. A company’s culture differs significantly from the family culture in terms of leadership behavior, vision formulation, focus on essential processes, and understanding of growth.

However, it can be a great blessing when specific ministries and gifts for evangelistic outreach come together in a ministry-performance organization. Programs can be brought together under one roof to establish a joint center in a district. People should have the freedom to attend these events.

Many staunch home churchgoers often do not want to miss the atmosphere of faith found at larger events. Nor should it be forbidden to become involved in it or even to become a member yourself to support it financially because city hall services or large public events require large sums of money to be donated.

Finally, a word to pastors: no matter how many of your church members are involved in a service organization, the Church will continue to be unrivaled. Its prevailing family culture, exceptional love, and the appreciation of its members for one another remain an irresistible magnet whose appeal will continue to grow. With the ministry’s gifts’ help, it is urgently needed to bring forth what the Bible calls maturity and maturity.

In the final picture [Fig. 3], the dynamics of the family congregations can be seen because apostolic teams are continually forming new assemblies. No line is drawn to the service

organization shown in the middle since membership there is not decisive. What is decisive is that every Christian is at home in the community of believers. Francis Chan, who has built such a network of smaller family-oriented

churches, says that today he is in the happiest phase of his life. It is what I wish for all of us, that we rediscover the joy of church development and that it is the greatest reward for us to be there at all to serve one another. ■

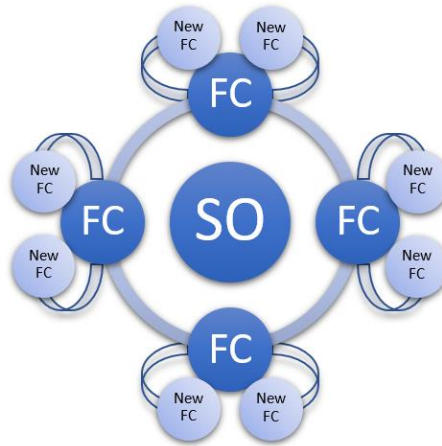


Fig. 3: New foundations of family-oriented churches (FC) and optional participation in a joint service organization. (SO)

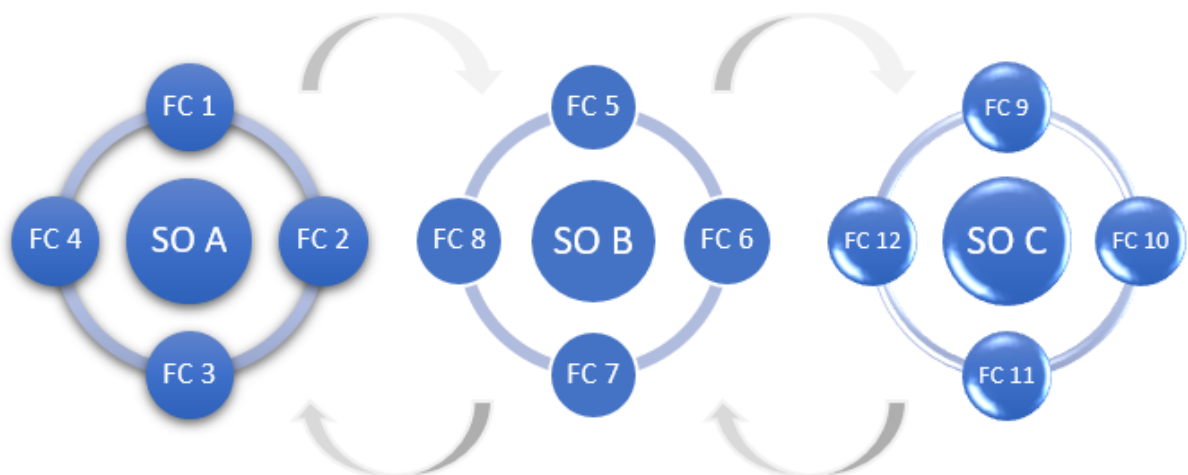


Fig 4: A network of family-focused churches (FC) with optional participation in various shared service organizations (SO)

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Endnotes

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¹⁸ Abromeit, P. 9.

¹⁹ Ebd. P. 13.

²⁰ Since there are many overlaps among the departments - e.g., they all have to do with finance - a matrix organization is occasionally found. In contrast to the organizational structure, work and decision-making steps that have to be carried out one after the other can run like processes in which all areas participate.

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- ⁵³ Trends can be tracked for metrics or indicators (KPIs).
- ⁵⁴ If effectiveness fails to materialize, further information and correlations on influencing variables will need to be evaluated. Finally, a new run through of the PDCA cycle will be necessary. The continuous improvement process assumes that it will always run through the PDCA cycle again..
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