



Module MF01

Series: Mission Field

Title: The Church Today (You're not crazy, it was easier before)

Learning Outcomes:

- Congregations have a lifecycle like all living things.
- Most congregations follow a predictable lifecycle path.
- Societies perception of what it means to be religious has shifted.
- US culture no longer drives people to attend church.

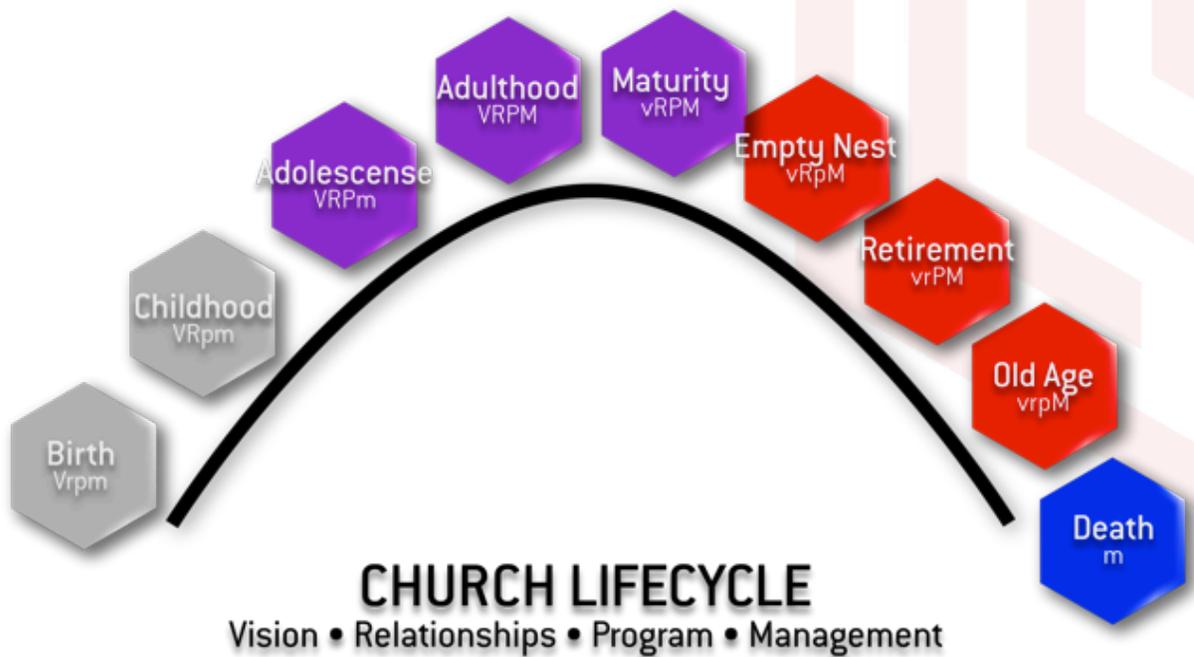
Part 1: All living things die

Resource: The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development (http://sed-efca.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/stages_of_church_life_bullard.pdf)

Watch Video: MF01 Part 1

The church is a living thing because it is made up of living things. Much like the many living parts that work in harmony to make up your body, so the church is made up of various living parts to make up the body of Christ. Also, like all living things, congregations have a lifecycle that begins at birth, moves through adolescence and adulthood, then on to maturity, then eventually death. Not to say that the whole body of Christ will someday cease, but even the congregations of Paul existed for only a finite amount of time.

The lifecycle of the church is not an issue to be solved, it just is. While our current culture might idealize the young, growing old is not a condition to be treated. It is simple part of life. We should no more look at aging congregations and say they failed than we should say the same about aging people.



Notes

Group Discussion

Where do you see your church in its lifecycle?

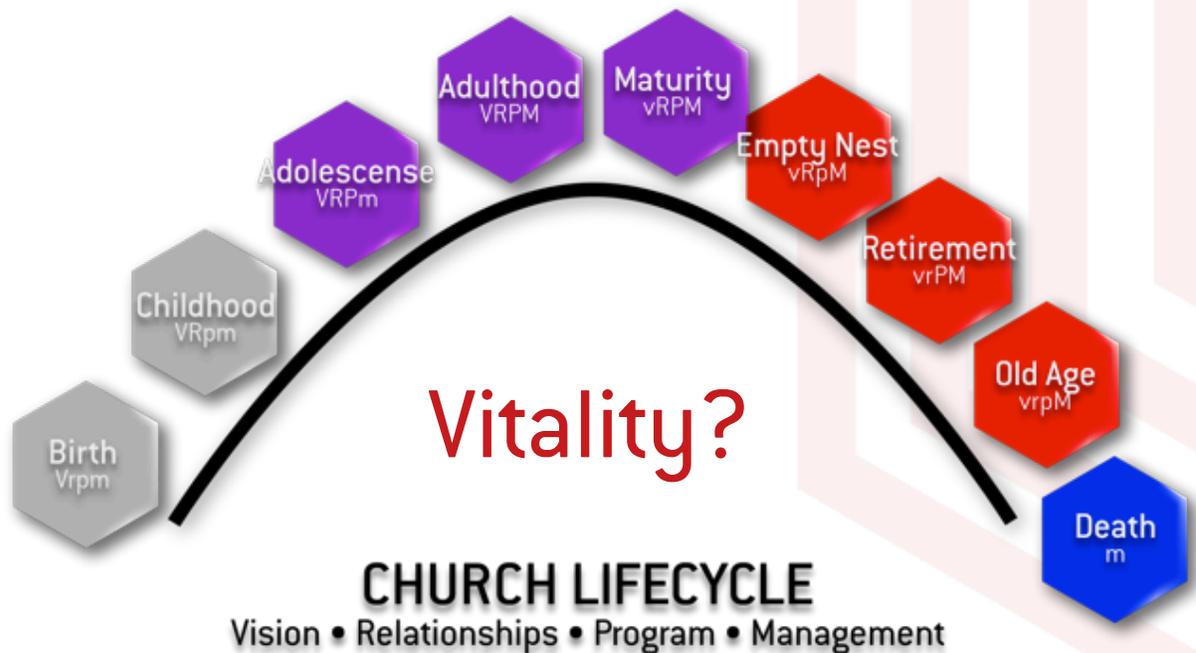
In what ways have you changed how you use space in your church building over time?

Part 2: We are not the people of resuscitation

Watch Video: MF01 Part 2

When we recognize ourselves to be on the downward side of the lifecycle will our first temptation is to try to crawl back up. This takes the form of saying things like “If only we had a stronger youth group.” Or “Our church was stronger when our adult Sunday school was full.” Instead of trying to discern who our church needs to be today, we nostalgically attempt to recreate the past. Unfortunately, this almost never works. Instead it drains us of resources and time.

As Christians, we serve a resurrected Lord, not a resuscitated one. The Jesus we encounter in the final part of the gospels is somehow different than the Jesus before. He’s the same as the Jesus who went to the cross but somehow he is also different. He is resurrected. He has been made new.



Notes

Group Discussion

What vision/purpose founded your church? Does that vision/purpose still serve you today?

Where have you seen or experienced resurrection (transformation) in your personal life?

"Nones" on the rise

State	"Nones" 2008	"Nones" 2014
USA (Overall)	15%	22.8%
Montana (8)	21%	30%
Wyoming (15)	28%	26%
Colorado (9)	21%	29%
Utah (26)	14%	22%

Notes

Group Discussion

List all the activities available in your community on Sunday morning?

Where would you go to interact with the "nones"?