

# A Tale of Two Consultancies

- Church 1
  - Family Church/Home Church (50-60)
  - The Pastor has been there for 6 years
  - The congregation doubled and then plateaued
- Church 2 (300-350)
  - The Pastor has been there for 12 years
  - The congregation doubled and then plateaued

# The Significance of Church Size & Important Factors when Transitioning

A church's functional style, its strengths and weaknesses and the roles of its lay and staff leaders will change dramatically as its size changes

Tim Keller

One of the most common reasons for pastoral leadership mistakes is blindness to the significance of church size

Tim Keller

Clergy may be set up for failure when they move from effective work in one congregation and begin a new pastorate in a different-sized congregation...

...Few denominations pay attention to this transition in context of ministry; thus they fail to prepare their clergy adequately for a new style of pastoral leadership

Roy Oswald

# Church Sizes

Tim Keller:

- Home Church (<40)
- Small Church (50–200)
- Medium Sized Church (200-450)
- Large Church (400-800)
- Very Large Church (1,000+)

# Church Sizes

Arlin Rothauge:

- Family Church/Home Church (50-60)
- Pastoral Church (50–180)
- Program Church (150-400)
- Corporate Church (350+)

# Family Church (<50-60)

- The church functions like an extended family or tribe - the group is held together by a shared history – storytelling and tradition is important
- Communication is by word of mouth and information moves swiftly through the whole membership
- Decisions are made informally by leading family members often patriarchs and matriarchs
- Change is slow and only happens with the support of the whole membership

Description



# Family Church (<50-60)

- Pastors in churches of this size are often bi-vocational or part-time, short term and somewhat peripheral to the church
- They are often manipulated into a chaplaincy role and limited to liturgical leadership, pastoral care and preaching - they are certainly not considered to be change agents
- Key lay leaders have significant relational power and may prefer not occupying formal roles

# Pastoral Church (50-180)

- The church is one worshipping community, but not everyone knows each other
- Communication is still informal, mostly word of mouth and relatively swift
- The pastor is still primarily a shepherd and so at the centre of the church's identity and unity
- A big attraction of this size of church is the sense of community

# Pastoral Church (50-180)

- The pastor is the central and primary leader of the church
- The church is usually open to change and the pastor's leadership is central to growth
- The pastor usually works closely with a group of key leaders who manage the congregation together
- As the church grows, delegation and leadership development become a priority

# Program Church (150-400)

- The church is now a multi-cell entity and so is more attractive to some but less attractive to others
- The group is held together by a shared mission and vision
- The church develops a range of programs to meet needs in both the church and the wider community
- People find their identity in their areas of ministry

# Program Church (150-400)

- There is the beginning of a multiple-staff team. Often an Administrator and then Associate Pastors are appointed.
- The Senior Pastor's role changes to that of team leader, mentor and supervisor.
- The Senior Pastor provides vision and direction.
- There are two key roles for lay leaders:
  - The Church Leadership Team moves from management to governance.
  - Ministry Leaders create teams for various church programs.

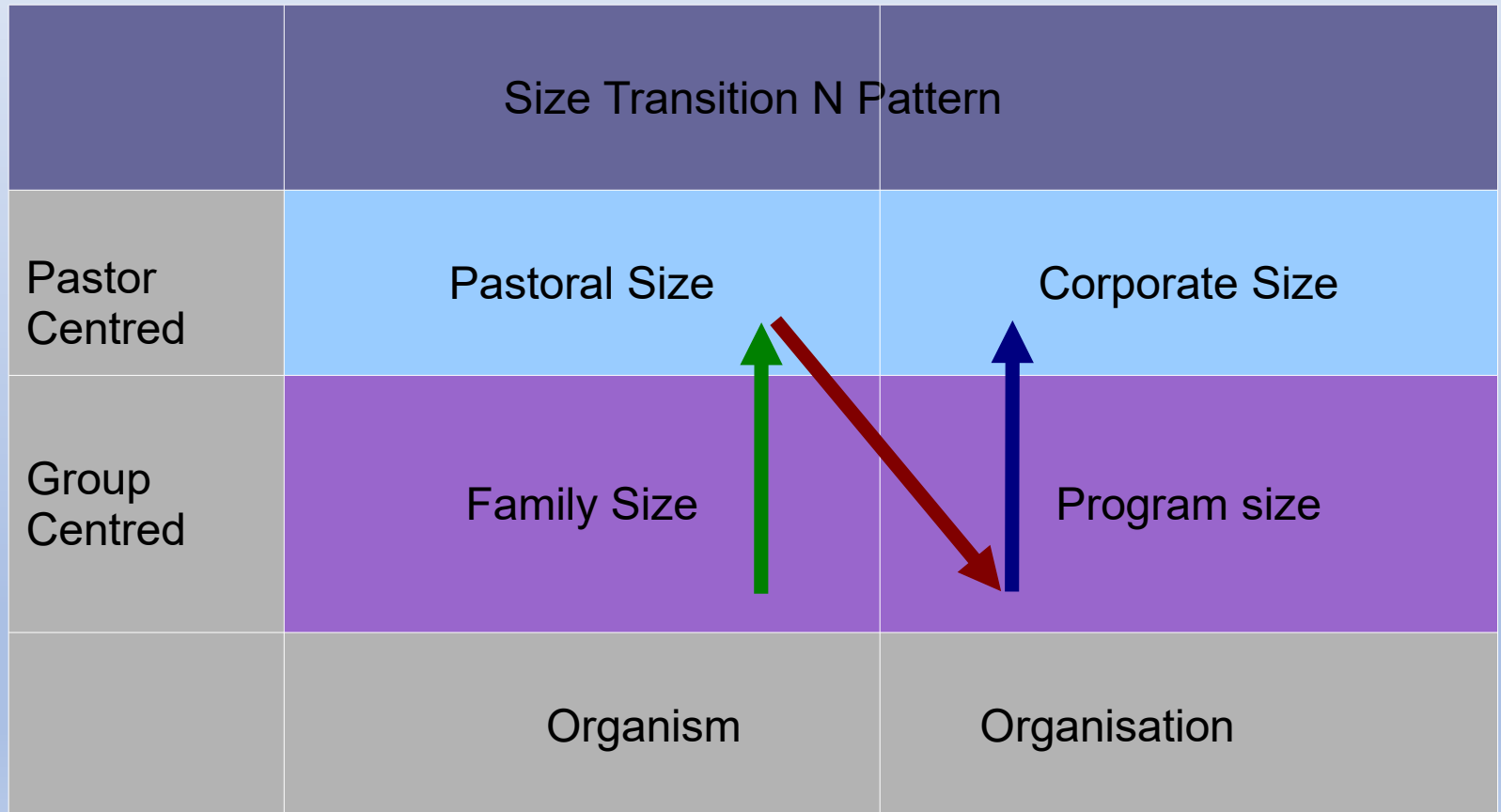
# Corporate Church (350+)

- A church of this size is a large scale organisation with a complex range of programs
- The church is held together by excellent worship, music and public preaching
- The roles of individual staff members become increasingly specialized
- The whole organisation has a sense of momentum and direction
- Decisions happen from the “top-down” from staff and lay leaders

# Corporate Church (350+)

- The Senior Pastor in a corporate church often has a high public profile
- He/she concentrates on the public ministries of the church and the communicating of vision
- Lay leaders have a well developed sense of church governance
- There is wide involvement in a complex range of age, stage, and interest-based ministries

# Growth Process





What does my Family Church need to do to break through the 50-60 persons ceiling and climb towards 180-200?

# How the Family Church grows

The Family Church grows through attraction to its warmth, relationships and people. However it can also be a personal relationship to the pastor that is the attraction for a new person.

The pastor can begin two or three new ministries, classes or groups as long as he/she has secured the support of one informal leader. Together they can begin new activities that will bring many new people into the church

# SHIFTS FOR A FAMILY CHURCH TO BREAK THROUGH THE CEILING

## + First change— Multiplication Options:

- a willingness to question the unwritten policy that every member must have a face to face relationship with every other member.
- a move past the “This church is getting too big” or “too impersonal” complaints
- a genuine welcoming of newcomers
- more than one Sunday service, or putting more emphasis on small group ministry

- ✦ Second change—a willingness to pay the cost of an additional primary ministry staff person
  - a full-time pastor cannot personally shepherd more than about 150–200 people without beginning to feel burned out
  - staffing must be for growth

+ Third change— A willingness to let power shift away from the laity and even lay leaders to the staff

- new approaches to decision making are needed

+ Fourth change—a willingness to become more formal and deliberate in assimilation and communication

- For a church to move beyond this barrier it can no longer assume that either communication or the assimilation of newcomers will happen naturally and without any planning
  - Communications have to become more deliberate instead of by word of mouth alone
  - Newcomers will have to be integrated more intentionally

+ Fifth change—the willingness of both pastor and people for the pastor to do less shepherding and lead more.

## + Sixth change— Moving to a new space and facilities

- Will such a move be crucial to breaking the next growth barrier? Sometimes, but not usually. Usually what is needed is planning multiple worship services, staffing for growth, and adjusting attitudes and expectations in preparation for a new size culture



What does my Program Church need to do to break through the 300-350 persons ceiling and climb above 400?

# How the Program Church grows

The Program Church grows through a “front door” approach. The key to its growth is the varied program of activities it offers, and what happens in the worship services – the quality of the preaching, the transcendence of the worship experience and so on

# SHIFTS FOR A PROGRAM CHURCH TO BREAK THROUGH THE CEILING

✦ First change— Multiplication options

- a great small groups program
- most people in small groups

## + Second change—a growing staff team

- more specialized staff
- staff who are able to attract and supervise others

## + Third change—shifting decision-making power

- up to this size the emphasis was on decision making being increasingly done by the board, but now decision making must be increasingly delegated to the staff

+ Fourth change—a willingness to become more formal and deliberate in assimilation and communication

- Assimilation, disciplining and incorporation of newcomers must become even more well organised, highly detailed and supervised

+ Fifth change—adapting the Senior Pastor's role.

- The SP becomes even less accessible to do individual shepherding and concentrates even more on preaching, large group teaching, vision casting and strategizing

Are there positive alternatives to a single church transitioning to become bigger?



We have been thinking about the importance of church size dynamics when a church is trying to grow bigger. In what sense is church size also an important factor when a church declines ?