

OUTCOMES PROCESS

*Note: Some districts will ask their churches to follow this process.
Please check with your district office for more information.*

“We want disciples - people changed by their encounter and engagement with Christ.

We want a transformed world - a place changed by the differences that disciples bring to relationships, to setting priorities, to redirecting resources, to addressing the needs of others instead of their own preferences.”

*(Gil Rendle, *Doing the Math of Mission*, p. 24)*

We all want to make a difference. As Christians, we want to bring about change in people’s lives and in the world around us for God through the church we love and serve. In the end, we may discover that our biggest challenge is to change ourselves and the church. Only then will transformation of the world be possible.

Rendle argues that our path to a transformed world must come through identifying *outcomes*:

“For the church, an outcome is (1) the difference that (2) you believe God has called you to make (3) in this next chapter of your life” (p. 23).

For the purpose of helping our churches to be more effective in their mission with the community, please follow these steps during this coming year – preferably beginning early in the year to allow enough time:

- 1) Invite members of the congregation (everyone whom you can) to engage the community to gain an understanding of the collective vision for its future. It is important that the congregation gain as wide a sample of community input as possible and be open to the variety of perspectives that they may hear. Many of you will have to define your community since you live in a metropolitan area.

The task is to seek out a variety of people in the community:

- community leaders, such as the mayor and city council, chamber members, school board members and school superintendent, active civic leaders
- people who have lived in the community for a long time and people who have moved into the community only recently
- people of diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds
- people of different ages
- people of different faith communities

Ask each person to do the following:

Describe what you would like this community to look like in ten years.

In their responses, you will likely hear their concerns and their dreams for change.

- 2) Have your church members bring the results of their community engagement to the church at one time. Display all of the responses in a way that everyone can see them. Talk about the similarities and the differences in the responses. Ask for surprises. Ask for their emotional responses to the data. Some of the responses may fit into current ministries of the church. Others will likely be new learnings by the congregation.

The task now is to identify the one, two or three changes identified in this process to which God is calling your church to respond.

Through a discernment process (in which all are involved) of prayer, scripture, and discussion, formulate an answer to the following question:

What difference is God calling you (the church) to make?

This is the most important question for the church to answer.

Be prepared to share your information from #1 and answer to #2 at the fall charge conference.

- 3) Based on your answer above, how you will make that difference? Perhaps it is a new ministry, such as an after-school program, elder care, or environmental efforts. What resources will you need? What is the timeframe for accomplishing this difference (e.g., one year, five years, or the next decade)? How will you know when you have made the difference?

When you have determined this plan, please share it with the congregation and with the district superintendent.

Being clear about what difference God wants your church to make with its community will boost the congregation's will to be in mission and thus to transform their world.