

Simple Strategic Planning for Smaller Congregations

David Lindrooth

Step #1: Preparation

- Start with prayer and a review of what the Lord suggests are the essentials of New Church faith in TCR 3 and other places.
- Be careful to differentiate between the Lord's guidance and cultural assumptions about church that may not help you.

Step #2 : Health Assessment

- Perform Swot analysis on the internal health of the organization
- Also, separately do a Swot analysis on how well the church serves others outside of the organization and your impact on the community

SWOT

Weaknesses

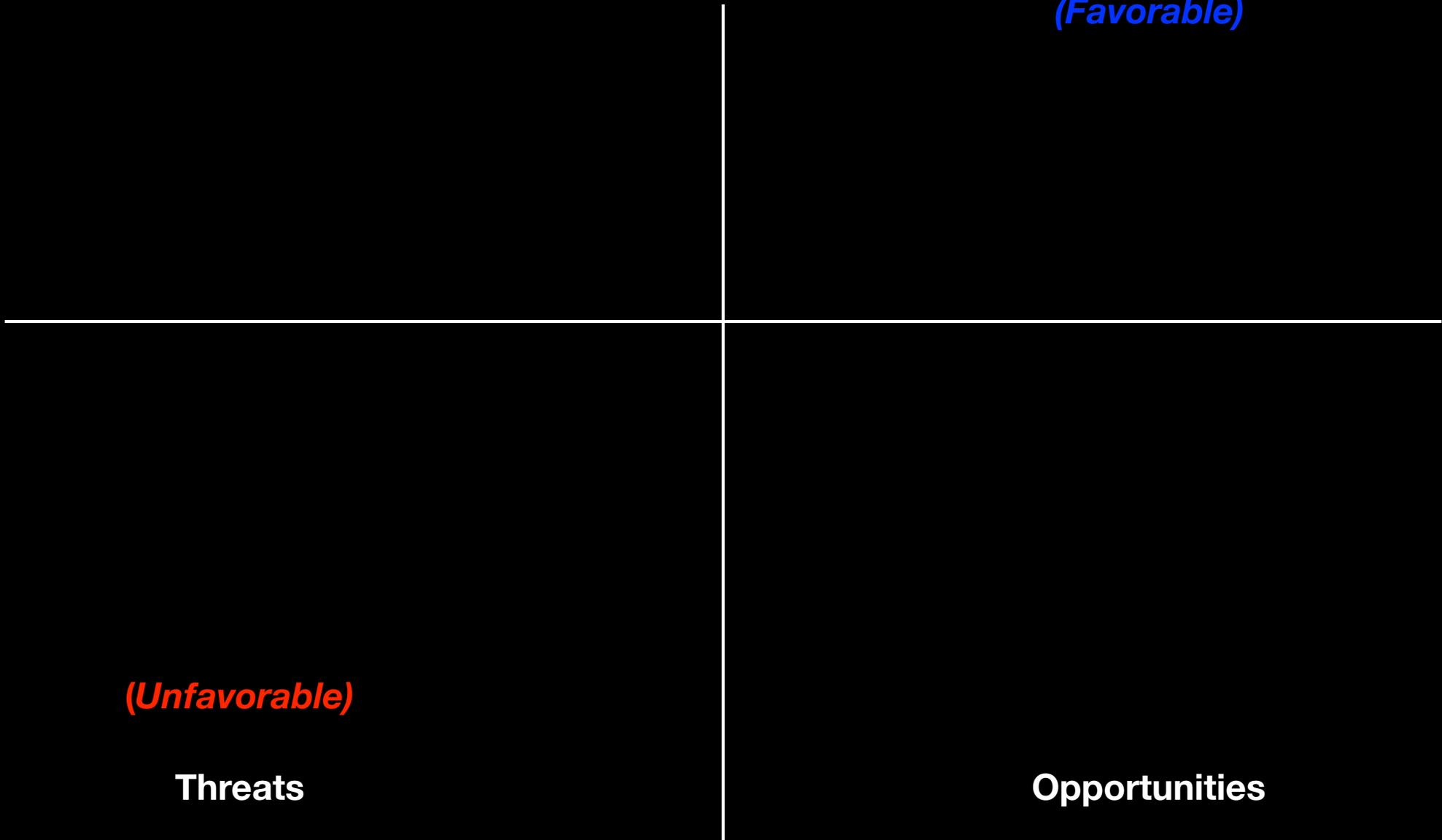
Strengths

(Favorable)

(Unfavorable)

Threats

Opportunities



Step#2: What does your Church do best?

- Fill in the blanks: Our church does _____ in order to _____. Here is an example: David counsels with couples in order to equip them with tools for a happy marriage. You need to be clear and defined.
- What is the most important use you are called to offer to your community?
- If you went out of business tomorrow, what would the neighborhood miss about your absence? (is there often a difference between this and your most important use? Why?)

Step #3: Where will you be in 3 years

- Spend some time reflecting about the congregation and its strengths and weaknesses and its opportunities and threats (you already did this in slide one).
- In several sentences describe what you would like your church to be known for (how it principally will be serving your community) in 3 years. Think about this in terms of what value people in the church neighborhood gain from having the church there.
- Write several paragraphs (maybe a page) describing (REALISTICALLY) what the church looks like, how it operates and interacts with others, and what it does, who it is serving and how they are benefitting from your efforts. Describe in writing using vivid language, but be real.

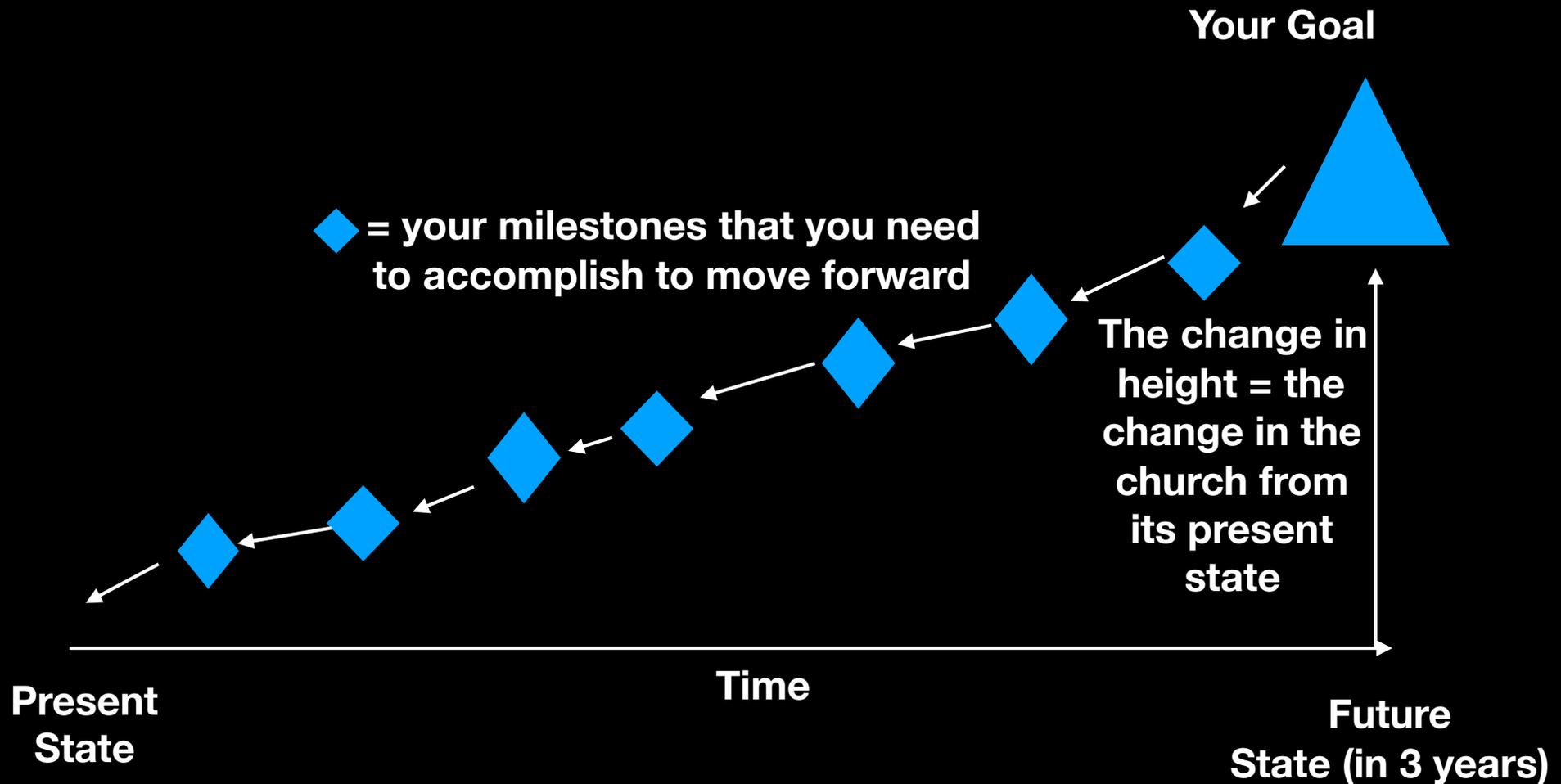
Step #4: Make a list

- “to do list” of the things the church will need to deal with in order to reach the state captured in the description. It is helpful to refer to the SWOT diagrams.
- Think about the list “NOT to do list.” in other words, the list of things you and the church are currently doing that are NOT adding value, and are not leading the church toward that descriptive end state. Part of your plan will be to stop doing those things!

Step #5: Create a timeline

- Think backwards, starting with the end state captured in your vivid description.
- Then using your lists. Place the items on the list working from the last thing you need to have in place to the first. You will get a set of milestones or guideposts out of this sequence when finished.
- Once you have worked your way backwards, then think through the sequence asking your self if you follow the steps laid out from your present state, will you navigate to the future state with your church? If not, as your self what needs to be added or adjusted? Also ask yourself if you are being realistic?
- Run the sequence by some impartial people asking them if it makes sense.

Sequencing Graphic



Step #6: Finalize the public document

- State the Mission first
- Follow with a description of the 3 year goal
- Then use several of your major milestones as goals that are set with dates in mind.
- Pray and ask the Lord if this makes sense
- Run draft by key stake holders then publicize
- Remember that you are only defining your target. You will need to adjust along the way!!!

Step #7: Get the Lord's help

- Pray that the Lord lead you and allow you to help Him in the building of His church



