

Evaluating Mission and Ministry Involvement (EMMI)

Overview

As your congregation continues to grow as disciples of Jesus and seeks to become truly “mission driven” it’s important to evaluate the missions and ministries you are already involved with. Just like businesses and nonprofits, congregations have a tendency to keep adding programs and ministries, while never taking inventory of or assessing what they are already doing. It’s so easy to fall into an “activity trap” and overload, which can lead to burnout.

One person twelve years ago had a passion and connection to the local crop walk, but they are no longer with your congregation, and it’s still on the “to do” list. Your church is on the list of the local Habitat for Humanity to refurbish a house every year. It used to be easy to recruit folks, but now it takes a lot of effort and fewer people seem to be interested. There is nothing wrong with either of these once-a-year programs/ministries, but it may be time to evaluate whether your congregation is really “called” to them today or should direct its efforts to other areas. We are not called to be busy followers of Jesus, but prayerful and committed ones.

According to Peter F. Drucker, a late 20th century’s leading writer and consultant on management, organizations should engage in “organized abandonment” on a regular basis because it results in renewed focus, energy and overall improvement.

The following couple of pages lay out a **three-step process** for evaluating the mission and ministry involvement (EMMI) of your congregation, with a focus on missions. In the process of deciding which ministries to prioritize or abandon, you will be asking yourselves questions like: What are people passionate about? How many people are involved? Which ministries help us grow as followers of Jesus? Do we have the financial and human resources? Who are our neighbors, what do they need today, and how can we show our love to them in word and action? What ministries will help us grow in obedience to Christ’s Great Commission?

Also, just because a ministry or mission area takes time, money and/or effort does not mean that it is ripe for “abandonment.” Indeed, it may be that the ministry that is most “expensive” in those areas is the one that God is calling you to, that most people have a passion for and the one that either already does or has the potential to develop deep mutual missional relationships.

Depending on the structure of your congregation, EMMI may be accomplished by the Mission Team. Also, you may want to consider other possibilities like the Mission Team in conjunction with Evangelism, and/or Children, Youth and

Families—or any ministry area whose focus is *outside* the walls of your church. The process will take time and several meetings, but we begin the journey today.

EMMI Step One: Identify Ministries and Missions of Your Congregation

This in and of itself will be a helpful exercise for your congregation or ministry area as part of a visioning process. Two-three people may want to work together to develop the list by communicating with ministry leaders and staff (telephone and email works great for this) and drawing from budgets, church newsletters, annual reports and the minutes of team meetings.

EMMI Step One: List of Ministries and Missions of

Congregation

EMMI Step Two: Time/Money Matrix

One way to begin evaluating a ministry or mission is to understand how much time it requires as well as its funding requirements. "Time" can be determined in hours, days and numbers of people involved. You will need some accounting information for a good estimate.

Directions:

1. Convene a group that may be larger than but include some of the members of the group in Step One.
2. Begin your meeting with scripture and prayer.
3. Have people silently review the list and place the number of the appropriate quadrant of the matrix next to each item on the list. Do this **without** discussion.
4. Proceeding down the list, each group member shares how they rated every item. Discuss differences and come to a group decision for each one.
5. Place all ministries in the Time/Money Matrix on the next page.
6. Study, discuss and pray over the completed chart.
7. The ministries in the top two quadrants (quadrants 1 and 2) are targeted for further consideration in Step Three because giving of time means it is something the congregation cares about. The thing about a passion or a true priority is that you will make time for it. Upon that assumption, these ministries represent what the congregation cares most about in real terms.
8. Take another look at the ministries in quadrant 3. Are there any there that have potential because they are new or because a small group of people are heavily committed? Or because they are part of a partnership through which deeper relationships could form. Discuss and pray.

NOTE: Depending on your schedule, you may want to move tasks 7 and 8 above to Step Three—Gospel Shared/Effort Chart

EMMI Time/Money Matrix

Evaluating Ministry and Mission Involvement Step Two

1. Time / Money	2. Time / No Money
3. No Time / Money	4. No Time / No Money

EEMI Step Three: Gospel Shared/Engagement

Another way to evaluate a ministry or mission is to explore its potential for sharing the Gospel through word and action while also looking at the number of people directly and indirectly engaged in it.

We get involved with ministry and mission, not to be “good” or because we sense we “should” do it, but as an intentional, loving and grateful response to Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection. This is a very different reason than what motivates secular society.

“Engagement” may be the number of people involved on both/all sides of the mission partnership—including your congregation and the community/ministry being served. Involvement may include planners, those praying, on-the-ground service providers, people being served (mission partners), on-going relationship building activities.

Directions

1. Begin with scripture and prayer
2. If you haven’t already done so, review tasks 7 & 8 from Step Two and agree on those ministries you want to move over to Step Three’s Gospel Shared/Engagement Chart on the next page.
3. Group members silently review the missions and ministries in quadrants 1 & 2 of the Time/Money Chart as well as any in quadrant 3 the group felt had genuine potential for growth, and place the number of the appropriate quadrant for the Gospel Shared/Engagement chart next to each. Do this without discussion.
4. Proceeding down the list, ask each group member to share how they rated each item. Discuss differences and come to a group decision for each one.
5. Place all ministries in the Gospel Shared/Engagement chart on the next page.
6. What have you learned? Some questions for discussion.
 - Look at those in quadrants 3 and 4. What value do they bring to the congregation’s mission?
 - Are there any new ministry partnership opportunities that may merit more focus and energy than some of those listed in quadrants 1 & 2.
 - Those in quadrants 1 and 2 are potential mission partners. How can you deepen those relationships? (You may want to refer to the Mission Light or Mission Deep Word Pictures to further your discussion.)

Where is God calling your congregation today? Developing a final list. (NOTE: This task may best be done in a separate meeting after prayerful thought.)

EMMI Step Three: Gospel Shared/Engagement Matrix

Evaluating Ministry and Mission Involvement Step Three

1. Gospel Shared / High Effort	2. Gospel Shared / Low Effort
3. No Gospel Shared / High Effort	4. No Gospel Shared / Low Effort

Mission Light vs. Mission Deep Word Pictures

Congregations may want to develop guidelines when evaluating mission ministries for funding and active ministry. Here are some that may be useful. Not all of them may be appropriate for your particular culture and context.

Light Connection

Send a check get a letter/newsletter

Pray for

Around the world

Do good to

Silently serve (with a t-shirt)

Once and done

Only for adults

Only for those that go

Only volunteer for those that can

Evangelism = marketing

For a committee to do and decide upon

Broad scatter
(the more the better)

Out of what we *should* do

What we do

Done by the church

Support because of the institutional ties

Deep Connection

Have a relationship

Pray with

Around the world, within our state,
in our town

Do good with

Serve and share why and
in whose name

Return and build from
(relationship building)

All called and gifted

Opportunities for all locations
and skills/gifts

All are ministers and missionaries

Way of life
(response to discipleship)

Corporate, team, and individual called
to mission and mission support

Focused, intense,
Intentional relationships

What we are called and gifted to do

Look to join what God is doing

Done by each individual,
as teams, as church

Support groups out of personal
connections and shared vision/purpose

Appendix – Congregational Road Map

OVERVIEW

It is the goal of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) to inspire congregations to be truly “mission driven.” First, what does “mission” mean? If we went around the room or asked people in your group or congregation, it is likely you would hear many different definitions. Obviously we look to scripture, and no one person is every going to understand it perfectly. . .because it is lived out through our congregations and our lives in ever-maturing ways as we grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. For the purpose of talking about mission and to embrace this key element of the NALC mission statement by creating a team *Vision for Mission* this is one definition that may be helpful: ***“Mission is sharing the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection, bringing the kingdom near, making disciples, together, following all that Jesus has commanded us.”***

In order to sharpen our focus on reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ it’s important to take a realistic assessment of where your congregation is at the present time. For mission teams and all ministry teams, a SPOT/SWOT analysis can be a very helpful tool. This includes identifying the *strengths/assets, problems/weaknesses, and threats* that challenge us. Did you connect with some of the issues and roadblocks the panel presenters talked about this afternoon? Are there other obstacles that face your congregation’s ability to engage successfully in Christ’s Great Commission?

This covers the S,P/W and T. But because the power of the Holy Spirit is available to us these can work for good and amazing *opportunities*. So, in doing a SPOT or SWOT analysis new ideas and opportunities present themselves. And for the purpose of this exercise as many as possible should be considered. Let the juices run and prune back as you get further into the visioning and action planning stage. Even though you approach the exercise from a personal or individual point of view, stay at the broad level...your focus is your congregation within the context of its immediate community, region, nation and world.

Strengths and Problems (20 minutes)

1. Appoint a recorder/facilitator for the group and a presenter (they don’t have to be the same person) who will speak for the group when the large group reconvenes.
2. One person agrees to be the timekeeper.
 - Read along with the Directions.
 - ***Quietly & alone***, each person should spend 3-4 minutes jotting down strengths and problems on notepaper. You can also jot down a threat if you like.
 - Starting with **strengths**, the facilitator will ask everyone to contribute one idea, going around the group several times, and writing responses on the flip

chart. Don't duplicate other ideas expressed, even if you had them on your list.

- After a list of 6-8 have been generated, **cluster** those ideas that naturally go together (in other words, are really the same strength).
- Have the group agree on the **top three strengths** and "star" (★) them.
- Repeat steps 1-4 for "Problems." Transfer the new categories to the larger template at your table.
- If there were more time, for each major problem area, describe what would happen if no one took action? Write that down next to the problem.

Threats (2 minutes)

Can the group identify one or two "threats" (problems/weaknesses that will cause extreme turbulence and prevent you from moving forward)? Most "threats" are really problems. Note them on the Chart.

Opportunities (15 minutes)

1. Study the lists of strengths, problems and threats. All of these can be turned into opportunities for ACTION. Be open and creative...this is NOT the final Vision element or "To Do" List.
2. Each person should take 2-3 minutes jotting down a word or phrase that describes future opportunities.
3. Then share with the group and cluster ideas. It doesn't have to be perfectly planned out yet...it needs to be prayed about and slept on, so to speak.
4. The six or so ideas that get the most mentions should be placed in the stars on the template. You can state a concept and list a couple of components/or actions under it if you like....but not all ideas lend themselves to this.

NOTE: Even though we are not ready for it yet, some people may have generated a nice list of action steps. Save these for the next steps in the visioning process.

Report Out (15 minutes)

The larger charts will be collected and posted at a place to be announced so others can view. Next steps in this process will be provided at this time for continued work upon return home from the conference. Please agree on a scheduled meeting time to begin working on the next step and write it in your calendar. Close with prayer.

MISSION DRIVEN! SPOT/SWOT for _____ Congregation

