

CHAPTER 3

THREE

Simple Church: An Extreme Makeover

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

~

Hans

Hofmann

Clarity → **Movement** → **Alignment** → **Focus**

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition is a successful television show. It is often inspiring, funny, and heartwarming. By the end of each episode, there is a huge lump in your throat.

The lump in your throat usually forms when the bus drives away and the family sees their new home for the first time. The lump grows as you watch the family walk into their newly renovated house. The lump is about to explode out of your throat when the last room is unveiled to one of the family members.

The last room is typically the "special room" that Ty, the team leader, designed. It is an act of grace. Watching the reaction of the recipient of this grace is stirring. Grace always is.

The church can learn a lot from this show.

According to 1 Peter 4:10, we are to be managers of God's grace. He has entrusted us with His grace. Trusted us with it. We are to be managers, stewards, and dispensers of His grace. The church must pour out God's grace to the world so that people may grow in His grace.

Like the homes on the television show, many churches need an extreme makeover. And the intended result of such a makeover must be the intersection of people with God's grace. For people to best experience and grow in God's grace, many churches need a redesign.

On Extreme Makeover: Home Edition families are selected to have their homes redone, fixed up, redesigned, or made over. The families are typically in desperate need of such a service. Ty and the design team show up at the family's home and announce they have been selected. The family is then ushered away for a week of vacation, usually somewhere in Florida.

While they are gone, the miracle of a new home takes place. The design team and others work almost around the clock to make it happen. It takes one week. If you have ever been involved in a church

building project, you envy the amount of work done in one week. We assume the design team has some connections with the local governments and the code enforcers.

Sometimes a home requires a lot of tweaking. Some walls are knocked out. An additional room is added. The décor, furniture, landscaping, and color scheme are updated.

Other times, the house is completely rebuilt. The old blueprints are tossed. The new house is designed from a blank sheet of paper. The existing house is torn down, and a new one is constructed—from scratch.

The same is true for churches.

*Some churches need some tweaking, while others need to redesign completely. Regardless, our research shows that *extreme makeover: church edition* is necessary for many churches.*

We don't mean the décor and color scheme.

We don't mean the floor plan of the auditorium or the footprint of the children's ministry space.

We are not talking about the building.

We mean the design for discipleship. We mean the design of church ministry. We are talking about how a church is designed and structured so people can be transformed by God's grace.

Designing

Just as Ty and his team are designers, so are church leaders.

Church leaders must craft opportunities where people will encounter the grace of God. Simple church leaders are designers, not programmers. They excel in designing a ministry process that leads to spiritual growth and vitality.

Spiritual growth is a process. It always has been. Thus, it would make sense for church leaders to design their churches around the process of spiritual growth.

In 1 Corinthians 3, believers are called God's children (v. 1), God's field (v. 9), and God's building (v. 9).

We are God's children. We begin as spiritual babies because we are born again (John 3:3). Our movement into spiritual adulthood is a process. That process is critical. Just as babies need the right environments to grow physically, people need the right environment to grow spiritually.

We are God's field. Fields do not bear fruit or crops on command. They blossom in process, and to do so properly, they need the right environment and the right nutrients.

We are God's building, God's spiritual house. He first built us (created us). He then bought us back (redeemed us) with His own blood. Next, He moved in. He took up residence in our lives. And He is not done. He continually works on us. He is constantly redecorating. Continual transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our wives and the Holy Spirit have a lot in common. It is not enough for our wives to move into a home. That is only the beginning. Redecorating is a must. And this is not a one-time redecorating. It keeps going and going.

The same is true with the Holy Spirit. Continual work is inevitable. It is never done. It is a lifelong process.

Children, fields, and buildings grow in process. They do not mature overnight. They are not built in a day. They are constantly redecorated.

Children, fields, and buildings need the right environments to facilitate the process of growth. Children need nurturing, touch, food, and love. Fields need water, care, and farming. Buildings need workers, materials, and someone like Ty.

Simple church leaders get this.

Not only do simple church leaders understand that spiritual transformation is a process, but they also respond to this reality. They do so by implementing a ministry process to facilitate this spiritual growth in people. They design a simple process and abandon everything else. They rely on their simple process to create the environments conducive to spiritual growth.

Defining a Simple Church

Here it is. Here is the definition for a simple church:

A simple church is a congregation designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth.

This definition has some weight to it.

Let's walk through the definition one phrase at a time.

The church is designed. It is not carelessly thrown together. It is not haphazardly planned. The ministry does more than "just happen." It is thought-out. It is structured. It is designed with care.

Also, it is designed around. . .

The design of the church is centered on something. The programs and ministries revolve around something. They are just not plugged into the church calendar and brochure. Everything is designed around something. And that something is not a nebulous abstract concept. The design for discipleship in a simple church revolves around the process.

A simple church is designed around a straightforward and strategic process.

The process is straightforward. It is not confusing; it is easy to grasp. The leaders know it, and the people understand it. The process is intentionally kept simple. It is not lengthened. It does not change every few months.

The church sticks to the simple process. Complexity is not welcome. More programs are not added to the process. The church rejects the multitude of new programs and models offered to it.

Since the process is the how, it is also strategic. The process is tied to the purpose or vision of the church. The two are closely knitted. The process is built for execution, to impact people. It is designed to be sequential so that people may move through the process.

The process moves people . . .

The simple and strategic process promotes movement. The process flows logically. People are attracted to Christ and the church and then are moved to points of attachment. The programs are used as tools to promote this movement.

And the movement through the straightforward and strategic process has an intentional and intended end result . . .

The process moves people through the stages of spiritual growth.

The goal is to partner with God to move people through the stages of spiritual growth. Changed lives are the bottom line, the intended end result. Christ formed in people is the goal.

A simple church understands that people are at different places in their spiritual journey, that spiritual growth is a process. The church is designed to partner with God to move people through stages of spiritual growth.

Sadly, most churches miss this truth.

They are not simple. They have not designed a simple process for discipleship. They have not structured their church around the process of spiritual transformation. And they are making little impact.

These churches need an extreme makeover. They desperately need a new design for church ministry.

We make these statements with confidence because our research indicates that the simple church strategy is effective. A simple process makes a major difference. The research is convincing.

We need to go back to the beginning, before we became convinced. We need to walk you through how we became advocates for a simple church strategy. Here is how the project was launched and unfolded.

Launching the Project

Two events led to the launch of this extensive research project.

First, as we interacted with vibrant and growing churches, we observed that these churches had a clear process for discipleship. They were streamlined and simple. Conversely, the struggling churches we observed had no clear process. They were complex and cluttered with programs.

We had a hunch.

And this was a hunch based on keen observation, not just a random feeling after dinner. It appeared that there was a relationship between being simple and being effective. Simple seemed to be working, but we had not yet tested it. We decided to put our observation through methodological research.

Second, we continually heard a cry for help from church leaders. Many feel bombarded and overwhelmed. Bombarded with models, programs, and new ideas. Overwhelmed with the busyness and the burden of pulling everything together. They are tired and restless.

Perhaps you are as well.

We saw a simple church design as a solution, and we wanted to advocate it. We wanted to offer it but could not do so without first testing it.

Our observations combined with our burden to offer tangible help to church leaders pulled us into this project. We began an extensive research project involving countless hours of work, the expertise and insight of seasoned church leaders, the processing of data by researchers, and hundreds of conversations with church leaders.

Here is how the research project unfolded.

The Research Phase

We wanted to discover whether there was a relationship between being simple and being effective. So we set out to explore the relationship between a simple church process and the vitality of a church.

We were tempted to adopt a case study approach to our research project. Tempted because it would have been the easy route. With a case study method, several churches are observed, and conclusions are made based on those observations. The case study approach is respected among researchers, but the approach greatly limits the applications that can be made to other churches. So we abandoned that idea.

Instead, we evaluated hundreds of churches so that we could apply the research on a broader scale.

In order to evaluate hundreds of churches, we created a survey that would measure the process design of a local church. We identified several vibrant churches that had a simple process. We studied these churches and concluded that each church had four key elements: clarity, movement, alignment, and focus.

We then assembled a team of seasoned church leaders to develop the survey based on the four key elements. The team consisted of pastors, church planters, denominational leaders, seminary professors, and church consultants. We called the survey the Process Design Survey. It measures how simple the process design of a local church is. It also measures how strongly a church excels in the four key elements.

While we do not claim inerrancy on this survey, the team was strongly united on the items that should be included in the survey. We jokingly refer to the conclave as the Council of Simple because agreement was so strong. It was amazing because the team was filled with strong leaders from a myriad of backgrounds. It was beautiful.

The survey was then tested with a group of churches to be sure it was consistent and reliable. It proved to be highly so. In fact, the survey proved reliable throughout the entire project. If you like stats, the Chronbach Alpha Index on the survey was .97. In case you are wondering, that is good. Most researchers consider .80 to be sufficient. A 1.0 is perfect. A .97 is great when you are using a new survey.

During the first phase of the research, the mean (average) score for the vibrant/growing churches was eighty-five. The comparison churches scored an average of sixty-nine. During phase one, the vibrant churches scored 16 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

The results of phase two were similar and even more convincing. The vibrant/growing churches compiled an average score of eighty-seven, while the comparison churches scored an average of sixty-two. The vibrant churches scored 25 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

Here is the language researchers use of these results: "There is a highly significant relationship between a simple church design and the growth and vitality of a local church." The language that statisticians use for these results is even less enjoyable to read: "The results from the t tests and the correlating p values indicate that there is a highly statistically significant relationship between a simple church design and the growth and vitality of a local church."

While that information is important, we do not want to bore you with this language. We do not want to make these results complex or complicated. That would be painfully ironic since this book is about being simple.

So here is the practical language: In general, churches that are vibrant and growing are simple. The vibrant churches are much more simple than the comparison churches.

A simple church strategy is effective.

The vibrant church leaders proved to be expert designers. They have designed a straightforward and strategic ministry process. Not only did these churches score higher on the overall survey, but they also scored higher on each of the four simple church elements.

The four elements are critical to designing a simple ministry process. All four of the elements are necessary in a simple church design. The research also shows that the four elements are related to one another. In other words, it is hard to have one without the others.

So here is the expanded definition:

A simple church is designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth. The leadership and the church are clear about the process (clarity) and are committed to executing it. The process flows logically (movement) and is implemented in each area of the church (alignment). The church abandons everything that is not in the process (focus).

Clarity. Movement. Alignment. Focus. All are necessary. The flow is simple, something like this:

Clarity → Movement → Alignment → Focus

As you consider your ministry process, you must consider all four elements. Perhaps your church process needs some minor tweaking and decorating. Perhaps your church does not have a process. And perhaps your church is in need of an extreme makeover.

Regardless of your situation, as you design or redesign your ministry, these four elements should be on the forefront of your mind. Consider them to be essential designing tips.

Designing Tips

The Extreme Makeover: Home Edition design team is amazing to watch in action. They are expert designers and expert builders. Remember, you are called to be more than a programmer. You are to be an expert builder (1 Cor. 3:10).

The design team does more than come up with neat concepts. They are also able to execute. They design and implement. They are able to pull all the pieces together to create a great end result.

Their design process contains the same four elements we discovered in our research of simple churches: clarity, movement, alignment, and focus.

They begin with clarity. They first design an overall concept for the home and ensure everyone gets it. This step involves evaluating the present conditions of the home and the needs of the family. The design team sits around a table and engages in some robust discussion about the floor plan and footprint of the home.

They stare at the present blueprints. They dream. They discuss with passion what the house could be. Sometimes, they decide to tweak. Other times the house must come down.

Regardless of how they get there, they finally walk away with a clear plan, a blueprint. They know where they are headed. They pile their hands on top of one another and go for it. You feel like you're watching a team leave the locker room. In a very real way, you are.

The design team also sets up the project in sequential steps so it flows smoothly (movement). The project must move. For them, the project has to flow smoothly because of the time crunch. No time can be wasted. The next group of volunteers or the next vendor must be lined up and ready to go. The efficiency is impressive. And efficiency does not happen without sequence or movement.

The design team also masters alignment. They wisely place all of their resources and volunteers around their design process. Materials and volunteers are strategically placed. Volunteers and equipment are coordinated based on the sequence of the project.

The design team stays completely focused on the task. They cheer one another on. They remind one another why they are at that particular house. They keep their eyes on the goal, the end result. They manage their own passion. They monitor their own commitment.

Clarity, movement, alignment, and focus are all necessary to the design team. Without them, they would be unable to distribute grace to a family. All four elements enable them to design and build a great home.

Our calling is even greater.

Homes are temporal. Lives are eternal.

We are not designing buildings but ministries where people will be impacted by the grace of God. While ultimately Christ builds His church (Matt. 16:18), we are partners with Him. We may enjoy the honor of participating with Him in designing a ministry that transforms people.

According to our research, these four elements are critical in a ministry process that contributes to a vibrant church. These four elements enable leaders to have a simple church. Clarity, movement, alignment, and focus will be discussed in detail in upcoming chapters, but following is an overview.

Clarity

Clarity is the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people. A clear process has ability. It has the ability to be easily communicated and understood. Clarity involves certainty, and it eliminates confusion. For a church to be simple, the process must have a high degree of clarity.

Clarity and simplicity go hand in hand. They are close friends.

*A process that has clarity is clearly defined. The leadership and the people know exactly how the church is structured to move people toward spiritual growth. The *how* is clear. The process (the *how*) is discussed, taught, and illustrated. And the people get it.*

Some churches are not clear on a ministry process because they do not have one. Others have one, but it is too complex. It is too complicated, too long, or too confusing. The process is ineffective because it cannot be understood. Without understanding, commitment wanes.

Understanding always precedes commitment.

If people are to embrace and participate in the ministry process, they must be able to internalize it. To internalize the process, they must first grasp it. Clarity is thus absolutely essential.

Before the process can be clear to the people in the church, it must first be clear to the leaders. This point is where the breakdown most often occurs. As with Pastor Rush in chapter 1 and First Church in chapter 2, church leaders often stumble through an explanation of a ministry process.

Instead of clarity, there is often stuttering.

If leaders are not clear, the people will not grasp the ministry process. If leaders have a difficult time discussing and teaching the ministry process, it lacks clarity. And if the process lacks clarity, the process is not simple.

A lack of clarity ultimately leads to confusion and complexity because there is no coherent direction. When there is no direction, people assume a direction or invent one. The church then moves aimlessly and off course. And there is no course in which to return.

Simple churches have a course in which to return. They possess a clearly defined process. They are certain about how God has led them to make disciples. Their ministry process is a reflection of this certainty.

To be simple, a church must be clear. The results of the research confirm the necessity of clarity.

The clarity section on the Process Design Survey has a range of twenty-four points. The highest possible score is thirty and the lowest is six. The higher the score, the clearer the process.

During phase one of the research, the mean (average) score for the vibrant/growing churches was twenty. The comparison churches scored an average of fifteen. These scores mean that, in phase one, the vibrant churches scored 20 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

The results of the second research phase showed an even greater difference. Vibrant/growing churches scored an average of twenty, and the comparison churches scored an average of thirteen. In phase two, the vibrant churches scored 29 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

Simple churches have a crystal-clear process. They work hard to ensure everyone grasps it. Simple church leaders know their church's process and are able to articulate it to others with conviction. They are able to do so because they own the process.

Movement

Movement is the sequential steps in the process that cause people to move to greater areas of commitment. Movement is about flow. It is about assimilation. Movement is what causes a person to go to the next step.

Movement is the most difficult simple church element to understand; therefore, an illustration is in order.

In a relay race the most important part of the race are the handoffs. Four runners are on the same team, and each runner's speed is crucial but not nearly as crucial as the handoffs. Relay races are won or lost at the handoffs.

Sometimes the teams with the best runners lose, and teams with the best handoffs win. You have seen it. A team is out in the lead, and then someone drops the baton during a handoff. And the team loses.

The handoffs are that important.

Movement is about the handoffs. Movement is what happens in between the programs. Movement is how someone is handed off from one level of commitment to a greater level of commitment. How a church moves someone from a worship service to a small group is movement. How a church is designed to move a person from being an observer to being a contributor is movement.

Sadly, most churches are like poor relay teams. Instead of caring about the handoffs, they are preoccupied with the programs. They pay little attention to how people are moved to greater levels of commitment. They ignore what happens between the programs.

Simple churches pay attention to the handoffs. They have grasped the truth that assimilation effectiveness is more important than programmatic effectiveness. They know that as the flow of a

process increases, so does the potential that people will progress through it. Simple church leaders design a ministry process where the programs are placed as tools along the process.

The vibrant churches we studied have a simple process that produces movement, a process that facilitates the handoffs. The programs in these churches are tools used to promote movement. The leaders focus on what happens in between the programs as much as they do the programs.

Our research confirms that movement is an essential design element in a simple church. According to the data, vibrant and growing churches have already recognized the importance of movement.

The movement section on the Process Design Survey has a range of twenty-four points. The highest possible score on the movement element is thirty, and the lowest is six. The higher the score, the greater the movement within the process.

During phase one of the research, the average score for the vibrant/growing churches was twenty-two. The comparison churches scored an average of seventeen. In phase one, the vibrant churches scored 21 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

The results of the second research phase showed an even greater difference. The vibrant/growing churches scored an average of twenty-two compared to an average of sixteen for the comparison churches. In phase two, the vibrant churches scored 25 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

Winning teams excel in the handoffs, and so do simple churches. They are experts in designing a simple process that produces movement.

To implement the movement element, church leaders must take a fresh look at the weekly church calendar and the regularly scheduled programs. All programs must be placed in sequential order along the ministry process. This is what creates movement in a ministry process.

Alignment

Alignment is the arrangement of all ministries and staff around the same simple process. Alignment to the process means that all ministry departments submit and attach themselves to the same overarching process.

Alignment ensures the entire church body is moving in the same direction, and in the same manner.

When a church is fully aligned, all ministries are operating from the same ministry blueprint. The ministries not only embrace the simple process, but they are engaged in it. Each ministry department mirrors the process in that particular area.

Without alignment, the church can be a multitude of subministries. In this case each ministry has its own leaders who are only passionate about their specific ministry. They rarely identify with the entire church but are deeply committed to their own philosophy of ministry.

In a church that lacks alignment, everyone is competing for the same space, resources, volunteers, and time on the calendar.

In a church that lacks alignment, it does not feel like one body. It feels more like a building that houses a wide variety of ministries.

All churches naturally drift away from alignment.

Most of the times it is not addressed. The reasons vary. For one, it is painful to do so because committed people who have been around for a long time are passionate about their particular way of doing ministry. Sadly, they are more passionate for their area than for the church as a whole. Addressing misalignment also takes time and energy. It costs something to address it.

Unfortunately, it costs more not to address misalignment.

When misalignment on a car is not addressed, the results are damaging. Tires can blow out while driving. Damage to the wheels can occur. The same is true for a church. When misalignment is not addressed, there is damage.

Our research affirms that alignment is essential to being a simple church. Without alignment, complexity is certain.

The alignment section on the Process Design Survey has a range of twenty-four points. The highest possible score on the alignment element is thirty and the lowest is six. The higher the score, the greater the alignment around the process.

During phase one of the research, the average score for the vibrant/growing churches was twenty-two. The comparison churches scored an average of eighteen. In phase one, the vibrant churches scored 17 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

The results of the second research phase showed an even greater difference. The vibrant/growing churches scored an average of twenty-two compared to an average of sixteen for the comparison churches. In phase two, the vibrant churches scored 25 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

Our research indicates that simple churches practice alignment. They intentionally fight the drift into misalignment. They insist that each staff member and each ministry embrace and execute their simple ministry process.

Focus

Focus is the commitment to abandon everything that falls outside of the simple ministry process. Focus most often means saying "no." Focus requires saying "yes" to the best and "no" to everything else.

While movement is the most difficult simple church element to understand, focus is also the most difficult element to implement. It takes deep conviction and guts. Focus does not make church leaders popular.

Simple churches have a clearly defined process. The process is designed to move people to higher levels of commitment, and it is implemented in each department of the church so there is alignment. Clarity, movement, and alignment are essential.

But these three elements are ineffective without focus.

Focus is the element that gives power and energy to clarity, movement, and alignment.

Without focus, the church becomes cluttered despite its process. Without focus the process is unrecognizable because so many other programs and events surround it. Without focus, the process is buried somewhere underneath a myriad of special events and activities.

Simple churches abandon all that is outside of the simple process because it threatens to steal attention and energy from what has been determined as necessary. Events, activities, and programs outside the process cause people to move in multiple directions. A lack of focus leads to scattering.

Simple church leaders are focused people. They are not mean, and they don't necessarily like saying "no." They are just committed to the simple process that God has given that particular church.

Simple church leaders ask the difficult questions. They want to be sure something will fit neatly in the ministry process before it is implemented. They seek to funnel new ideas into their ministry process instead of beginning new paradigms.

They view everything through the lens of the simple process. They admittedly have blinders on. They are sometimes accused of being narrow-minded. They focus on being simple.

According to our research, their focus is justified.

The focus section on the Process Design Survey has a range of twenty-four points. The highest possible score on the focus element is thirty and the lowest is six. The higher the score, the more focused the church is on the process.

During phase one of the research, the mean (average) score for the vibrant/growing churches was twenty-two. The comparison churches scored an average of eighteen. In phase one, the vibrant churches scored 17 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

The results of the second research phase showed an even greater difference. The vibrant/growing churches scored an average of twenty-two compared to an average of seventeen for the comparison churches. In phase two, the vibrant churches scored 21 percent scale points higher than the comparison churches.

Simple churches have focus. Vibrant and growing churches are much more focused than the comparison churches. While focus is necessary, it is not easy. Even after years of establishing a simple ministry process, the focus element will be tested and questioned. Church leaders must have the single-mindedness of the apostle Paul who said, "One thing I do" (Phil. 3:13).

Hezekiah and Makeovers

Hezekiah was a revolutionary for simple. He was extremely focused. He was against cluttered spiritual lives. Evidently God liked this characteristic about him because 2 Kings 18:3 indicates that Hezekiah did what "was right in the LORD's sight."

He returned God's people to the Lord. He brought them through an extreme makeover. He got rid of some things. First, he removed the high places and cut down the Asherah poles (2 Kings 18:4). Basically, he threw out the altars that were set up to make-believe gods. He took out the godless clutter that had been competing for the attention and the affection of the people.

Most church leaders are willing to do that. This move was surely understood and embraced by even the nominal God worshippers in Hezekiah's day. They would expect the leader to insist that the people worship God.

Eliminating pagan idols is one thing, but what Hezekiah did next was controversial. Many church leaders would struggle to emulate his next move. Surely, people in his day struggled with this next change.

He broke the bronze snake that Moses had made—on purpose.

He did not just drop it and claim it was an accident. He broke it into pieces. The mental picture of a baseball player breaking a bat over his knee comes close. Yes, it was the special and sacred snake. The snake that was crafted and held by Moses. The snake that God had instructed Moses to make. The snake that was the source of salvation for the people from their snakebites (Num. 21:6–8).

He got rid of it because it was clutter. It was clutter because the people worshipped it. It took attention away from the real Savior. Bronze was worshipped. A fake snake was adored. What was once a good thing became an idol. It got in the way of their worship of God. The tool for worship became the object of worship.

In many churches the original tools for life change have created too much clutter. Instead of uniting, they divide focus. The programs have become ends in themselves.

Most churches need an extreme makeover and a modern-day Hezekiah.

For Hezekiah, eliminating the bronze snake was most likely not a popular decision, especially with the religious crowd steeped deep in tradition. Most extreme makeovers involving God's people are difficult.

Hezekiah did something that was probably perceived as being on the edge of sanity. It was a radical move. And this pleased God. In fact, there was no king like him before or after his time (2 Kings 18:5).

The church needs some modern-day Hezekiahs.

Would the next Hezekiah please begin the extreme makeover?

Hans Hofmann and Makeovers

Hans Hofmann was another revolutionary for simple.

He was born in Bavaria in the late 1800s. He became an artist and a teacher of other great artists. He learned from legends such as Picasso and Braque. He started and taught art at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts in Manhattan. Hofmann even schooled Robert DeNiro's father in the craft.

Hofmann once indicated that if you want the necessary to stand out, you have to get rid of the unnecessary.

There are a lot of things that are unnecessary in most churches. It is tempting to leave these things alone, to avoid the struggle of an extreme makeover. However, the unnecessary often gets in the way of the necessary. The unnecessary divides attention, resources, and time. The unnecessary can hide the necessary.

And churches need the necessary to stand out.

To be simple you have to eliminate the unnecessary. Most of the things you eliminate will be good things. They were started with a passionate leader and a perceived or real need.

The key is to choose the best. Eliminate the unnecessary and keep the best. "And I pray this: . . . that you can determine what really matters" (Phil. 1:9–10).

So how many churches have successfully become simple churches? Not many at this point. But there is momentum in this simple church revolution. Join us in the next chapter as we visit three of these revolutionary churches.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is our church's ministry process?*
- 2. Is our process clear? Does it have clarity?*
- 3. Does our process effectively move people toward greater levels of commitment?*
- 4. Is our process implemented in all areas of our church? Are we aligned around our process?*
- 5. How focused is our church?*
- 6. What would Hezekiah think of our church?¹*

¹ Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: B&H, 2011).