

Characteristics of Churches Transformed by EHS

This document is meant to be a guide to assist you in visualizing a church that integrates EHS principles and tools. The characteristics below are not a list of items to check off as "finished" or achievements to attain. They are descriptions meant to mark a life-journey with Christ. Our grasp and application of these truths only deepen and become more profound with time.

CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUALITY

- The rhythms and pace of people's personal lives are slower and more deliberate.
- People operate out of a contemplative activism, with doing for Jesus flowing out of being with Him.
- Sabbath is encouraged, respected, and valued as a key spiritual formational discipline.
- Church history serves as a rich well of experiences and practices that deepen our relationship with Jesus.
- Scripture is a primary place where people commune with and are transformed by Jesus.
- Prayer is first about a lifestyle of loving union with Jesus.
- Spirituality is integrated into all of life--family, sexuality, relationships, recreation, etc.
- Silence is foundational to remaining centered in Christ.
- Discernment of God's will through sensitivity to what is happening inside of us (consolations and desolations), along with Scripture and wise counsel, is a central focus.
- A theology of delight is thoughtfully applied--personally and corporately.

CONGRUENT LEADERSHIP

- Leaders and pastors lead out of a deep interior life with Christ.
- Leaders' marriages are their loudest gospel message, pointing to each person's eternal destiny of marriage to Christ.
- Each leader experiences Scripture as a deep well for their own soul, and not simply as a tool for teaching others.
- The work of church governance (e.g., the Elder Board) flows out of a discernment process to determine God's will when making strategic decisions.
- Leaders remain connected to others, yet calmly differentiate their "true selves" from the demands and voices around them. They discern the unique desires, vision, and pace the Father has given them.
- The church, and especially its leadership, is aware of the complexity of dual roles in building community.
- Leaders preach and live out of truth, not pretense, spin, illusion, or exaggeration.
- Spiritual authority allows and gives permission for people to ask questions and say "no."

"BENEATH THE SURFACE" DISCIPLESHIP -

- We go back to go forward, breaking the negative patterns from our families of origin and cultures that hinder us from following Jesus.
- Limits are acknowledged and respected.
- There is a profound awareness of and appreciation for our brokenness.
- A healthy love of self that results in good self-care is integrated with our love for God and others.
- The measure of a mature spirituality is love, humility, and approachability, not gifts, power, or success.
- We each make radical, intentional life adjustments to cultivate a relationship with Jesus and not live off of the spirituality of others (i.e., applying a "Rule of Life").
- Losses and disappointments are seen as opportunities to meet God and ourselves.
- The evils of racism, classism, and sexism are addressed out of the deep foundation of the gospel.

SKILLFUL COMMUNITY

- Deep listening is an indispensable practice for loving others well. 0 We check out our assumptions and expectations rather than "mind reading."
- A new language informs our culture (e.g., "I'm puzzled...", " and "I notice...I prefer...") enabling people to respectfully articulate their wants, needs, and differences.
- The skills and nuances of "clean fighting" have been mastered.
- There is a healthy sensitivity to over functioning and under functioning.
- We pursue the unity of the church by respecting individual differences (i.e., valuing different viewpoints, choices, and spiritual journeys).
- Sharing out of our weaknesses and vulnerabilities is encouraged.
- People are invited to take responsibility for their lives without blaming others.

SACRED MARRIAGES AND SINGLENESS

- Both singleness and marriage serve as reminders of our present and eternal marriage to Christ.
- The marriage vow is the first frontier of discipleship for all married people.
- Our oneness with Christ is closely connected to our oneness with our spouses.
- We talk openly about "sacred sex," recognizing that the beautiful relationship between Christ and His church is to be reflected in each person's sexuality.
- We differentiate between "using" and "loving" by distinguishing the interior movements of the heart.
- We accept the marriage paradigm of two differentiated, separate individuals as the pathway to oneness.
- A theology of singleness, and its relationship to each person's spirituality, is embraced and valued

TRANSFORMED WORKERS

- People have a deep sense of God's call to "full-time ministry" in their spheres of work (e.g., home, medicine, construction, finance, law, government, retail, and retirement).
- Work is understood as being part of building God's kingdom, bringing order out of chaos.
- The "sacred" versus "secular" compartmentalization of work and spirituality has been eliminated.
- People are intentionally creating and shaping community within their spheres of influence.
- New skills and a new language for loving well are brought into the workplace.
- Slower and more deliberate rhythms for practicing Jesus' presence at work are developed.
- Practical steps are taken to give and serve others out of, and within, our places of work.