

A Profile of Biblical Community

by Dwight Friesen

What's a Profile?

A profile is a two dimensional matrix which describes developmental stages of growth in professional practice within selected dimensions of professional action. The creation of a profile begins with the establishment of a goal statement followed by a series of the desired state of these dimensions the profile goal statement. In a profile these categories are called dimensions.

Using the Biblical Community Profile:

I would encourage several worthwhile uses for this profile at both district and local church levels. It can be a basis for pastor's continuing education on a district level, it also can be used as a support to strategic planning processes. Within local churches, this profile of Biblical Community can be used as a resource to support self-directed professional development, mentoring or collegial coaching processes among leaders. And, there is the genuinely transformational experience of producing such profiles.

Senior pastors working alone or with other church leaders, can use this Community Profile as a resource to monitor and support the continued growth of the church that God has entrusted to their leadership. This may occur in a number of ways:

1. A profile may help to focus the church's goals on functioning in a Biblical manner and on the needs of the people.
2. A profile may identify relevant criteria and standards of practice for evaluation, mentoring or coaching purposes in the life of the church.
3. A profile integrates Biblical mandates and the findings of recent research on church effectiveness within detailed and situationally relevant descriptions of church action.
4. A profile may help individuals analyze the amount of change required in their ministry practices into incremental steps leading toward a more mature ministry.
5. A profile may help churches identify, emphasize and justify particular managerial and leadership practices.
6. A profile may provide a framework for predicting the obstacles which may be encountered by churches as they implement changes in their practices.

How To Use The Dimension Pages:

Select the dimension of Biblical Community which is of particular interest. Then, for each sub-dimension on that page, and moving from right to left, pick the box which most accurately describes your present practice. Then determine what kind of action you need to take you to reach your next step.

You may wish to use the blank boxes on the extreme right of the page as a place for personal notes or for describing a level of practice which exceeds the highest level describes in this document. This document is in no way thought to include all that God has for His church, this document has been prepared by fallible people and can only be improved as followers of Christ redeem it.

Some Alternate Approaches:

The dimensional pages can be used in a variety of ways by pastors, leadership teams churches, or districts depending on the purpose of the activity, A few examples are provided here:

Self-Evaluation: The church identifies their degree of performance by selecting the box of text, within each dimension and sub-dimension (moving from left to right), which best describes their current ministry.

Coaching or Mentoring: An individual church leader and their coach or mentor rate the practices of the individual church leader within one or more dimensions. The two partners then compare and discuss their ratings to assess the degree of congruence in ratings, identify growth areas which become apparent, and discuss particularly those sub-dimension where ratings were divergent.

Formative Leadership Development: Individuals or groups assess their own current practices across one or more dimensions as a way to identify appropriate professional development activities.

Illustrating Growth Within Sub-dimensions of the Profile:

It is possible to identify particular developmental growth strands which become apparent in the profile as one moves from left to right on the Dimension pages; from the lower levels of competent practice to a more fully mature practice described in the highest level of the profiles. A comparison and analysis of the descriptive statements reveals the implicit “growth strands” which have been incorporated within their profiles. What follows is a sampling of the growth strands apparent within the profile:

- From a tendency towards reactive responses to proactive responses.
- From reliance of self, to mimicry of others, to attention on outcomes, to sensitivity to multiple environmental influences.
- From rigid adherence to fixed procedures, to procedural flexibility, to philosophical or conceptual fidelity.
- From denominational focus, to in-church focus, to church within the community-at-large focus.
- From a limited repertoire to a broad repertoire of strategies.

The Church as a place of Celebration...

Will authentically worship God for who He is, for what He has done and for what he has promised He will do.

...all true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth. John 4:23-24 (NIV)
God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, the fullness of Him which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:22-23 (NIV)

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Christ Centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church preaches and teaches about Christ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church cherishes the celebration of the Lord's Supper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members get to know Christ through personal and small group study of Jesus' teachings, life and ministry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By abiding in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit members live life with the constant question, "How would Christ _____ if He were in my place?" and actually live like Jesus. 	•
Corporate Worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church regularly gathers for a time of worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church strives to make worship fresh and alive, often incorporating new songs and using a variety of expressions in worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leading worship come well prepared yet remain sensitive to how the Holy Spirit is working during times of worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church eagerly anticipates times of corporate worship, and have numerous ways to participate. 	•
Preaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church places high value on God's Word and boldly proclaims it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the needs and health of the church a preaching plan is laid out so that the critical issues are addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members anticipate that God will in fact speak through the proclamation of the Word and are eager to receive what God has for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirit anointed teaching inspires a senses of awe for God, inspires personal study, inspires people toward life change, and applies to live. 	•
Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church teaches the importance of prayer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs are in place that assist people in the discipline of prayer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in the church model lives of expectant prayer, anticipating that God will in fact guide, direct, intervene, sustain, and respond to His people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer is seen and understood as two way communication with God that can take place anywhere at anytime, that moves the hand of God, and prepares the heart of the person who prays to change. People pray and initiate prayer with others as an extension of living and loving together. 	•
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of music is a regular and important part of worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is sensitive to the artistic gifts God has given and provides some opportunities for the expression of those gifts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church takes risks, experimenting with different mediums of expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arts are seen as a gift from God and are utilized to powerfully communicate His truth humbly and with excellence. 	•

The Church as a place of Community...

Will intentionally strive toward oneness with God and oneness with each other, enabling individuals to love and be loved, know and be known, serve and be served, celebrate and be celebrated.

It was [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV)

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<p>Love</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is aware of its need to be a loving community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church has programs in place to help members express care for one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having received love and grace from God the church desires to express that same love and grace to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church success is determined by the growth of its love for God, for one another and for those outside of the faith. An attitude of genuine care, acceptance, forgiveness and service permeates everything the church is and does. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Fellowship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church has coffee times, fellowship hours, and social gatherings for community building purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church believes it is important for followers of Christ to connect with each other in relational settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members gather in small groups to spur one another on to maturity in Christ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every person who comes to the church is relationally connected to other Christians in small groups where growth into Christ-likeness is expected and where loving accountability is present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Spiritual Gifts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church teaches that God gifts His people with at least one spiritual gift for the edification of the whole church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church helps its members identify the spiritual gift(s) which God has given them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church helps its members use the spiritual gift(s) God has given them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members recognize and utilize the diverse gifts God has given His Body, and mobilize ministry based on the gifting of individuals in the church while championing gifts of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Ministry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers are responsible for various ministry tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members take ownership for areas of ministry passion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every member sees their role in the larger church ministry and joyfully contributes the uniqueness that God has provided through them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members who see needs that are unmet raise up new ministries to address the changing needs of the church. Initiative for significant ministry does not solely begin with staff, rather staff are equipping and freeing members to serve in their area of passion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Benevolent Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money is provided to those who are in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church is mobilized to provide immediate care in the case of an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With an attitude of grace the church walks with people through difficulties, counseling, training, and retooling people for handling future crises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the church keep a constant eye open for opportunities to serve one another. When someone is hurting members instinctively provide love and support doing all they can to express grace and worth to the person in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

The Church as a place of Commission...

Will recognize Christ’s Great Commission as the purpose of the Church in the world, and see its fulfillment the primary mission of the Body of Christ.

Jesus said: *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)*

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Evangelism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paid staff do evangelism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church has special evangelistic events and ongoing programs that are evangelistic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church recognizes that evangelism is a team effort, and that every person in the church plays a vital role in it. Evangelism is seen as the natural expression of a heart that has received God’s grace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church trains its members to be ready to see evangelistic opportunities, how to create opportunities and to present their faith in a personal and authentic manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Relationship Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members develop deep relationships with other Christians in the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members are acquainted with non-Christians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members foster relationships with non-Christian family and friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members intentionally pursue relationships with people who have not come to know Christ yet. Not simply as evangelistic projects but as mutual benefactors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Sensitivity to Spiritual Seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church assumes seekers are attending the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is readily available to answer questions which seekers might have regarding Christianity and the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekend services are made “seeker-friendly.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities are specifically designed to assist seekers take their next step in their spiritual journey to Christ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Cross-Cultural Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money is sent to support missionaries in various parts of the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missions receive a high profile in the church, and the church has an annual missions conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church provides opportunities for members to meet, develop relationships with and support missionaries on a personal level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church members are personally involved in cross-cultural ministry, whether a different culture in North America, a short term project in a different country or career missions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are individuals who are actively involved in the “community at large.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church promotes involvement in other organizations that make a difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church regularly sends money to organizations that help the poor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While remaining non-partisan the church creates avenues for its members to have a positive impact on societies problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Leadership in the Biblical Community...

Will function according to God-given spiritual gifts, understanding its role to be that of serving God and serving people (the church is people).

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. Corinthians 3:9-11 (NIV)

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Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No one person carries the leadership responsibility for the church, there is a plurality of leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals meet the requirements for leadership in the Bible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fruit of the Spirit are seen vividly in the lives of leaders, and are growing in their ability to love other and to express that love and grace to those around them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons functioning in leadership roles exhibit God given gifts of leadership. 	•
Servanthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership is viewed as a function of serving God and serving the church rather than simply a position of authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership ask: "What is best for the long term health of the church?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serving as a leader is a joyous response for who Christ is and what He has done that motivates those functioning as leaders to value people the way Jesus values people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church leaders look to Christ's humble servant leadership as the perfect model of leading. Leaders keep an eye open for unwashed feet. 	•
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership value the smooth operation of the church organization and its programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership accord particular importance to avoiding interpersonal conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership strictly adhere to the mandates found in the Bible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership value people, because they are created in the image of God, Christ sacrificed Himself to save people, and people are eternal. 	•
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership look to the Bible as their source for vision development and as the evaluation tool for any new direction proposed by the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership are continuously taking the pulse of the church evaluating which aspect(s) of the church need further transformation into God's ideal laid out in Scripture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership develop tangible strategies which would enable transformation to occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership move vision from "dreams" to reality, communicating the vision in such a way that the church owns the vision and gives itself to the realization of that vision. 	•
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership provide staff and members with information about the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church leadership provide information and occasionally seek input from members, adherents, and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly seeks input from, and shares information with individuals and groups with the church and the "community at large." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership ensure that individuals and groups within the church and larger community have opportunities to communicate openly and effectively for the betterment of the church and the "community at large." 	•

The Pastor in a Biblical Community...

Will serve as an under-shepherd of the flock, providing visionary leadership, in the pursuit of Biblical community, modeling a Christ-like life and equipping others for service.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God. Acts 20:28 (NIV) also see 2 Timothy 2:2

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Discipleship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor teaches and preaches the importance of growth into Christ-likeness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor follows up on new converts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor is involved with a small group of Christians on an ongoing basis dealing with deeper life issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor takes a proactive role in reproducing ministry leaders who will multiply themselves in the lives of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor maintains a Godly lifestyle in the public eye. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor's life is marked by a genuine spiritual maturity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor is known personally by the members as a person who follows Christ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor is transparent and real; a person in process of becoming all that God has in mind. When the pastor makes mistakes the pastor asks for forgiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Visionary Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor possesses selected or isolated ideas and views which may become the components of a vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor formulates, and articulates for the leaders and members a vision for the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor collaborates with the leadership to articulate a church vision which provides purpose and direction to church affairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor collaborates with representative members of the church and leadership to articulate a vision which provides purpose and direction to church affairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Change Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor senses a need for change within the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor initiates changes based on the pastor's articulated vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the leadership and staff, develops and implements appropriate strategies to effect such change as may be required to realize church goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor collaborates with leadership and staff to develop and implement strategies aimed at achieving church goals; with particular attention to the ongoing professional development of the church leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Shepherd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor provides the primary "pastoral care" for the members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor sacrifices time, energy and self to serve those in the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First concern is for the people in the pastor's care. Thus the pastor enables other members to meet needs that one pastor could never meet alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pastor seeks to feed, guide, comfort, lead, direct, protect, equip and love the congregation understanding that Christ is the Good Shepherd. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Church Government in a Biblical Community...

Will serve the church body in its pursuit to become a Biblically functioning community, being strong enough to help navigate through challenges and flexible enough to give freedom to the various ministries of the church.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. James 1:4 (NIV)

→ Moving Toward Full Maturity →

<p>Membership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership is seen as a right which gives members a legal vote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership carries with it a sense of accountability to the larger body of Christ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership is understood to be an act of obedience before God, committing oneself to other believers, through both the good and hard times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership is seen as a privilege which carries responsibility. It is a means of personal accountability in the following areas: conversion, continued growth in Christ, being relationally right with others, serving, and stewarding their resource. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Discipline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church has a discipline policy in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church strictly adheres to and enforces the discipline policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church uses the discipline policy to develop a sense of responsibility and problem solving skills among its members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church has developed and utilizes Biblical polices, and procedures to ensure that all members are respected, learn to accept responsibility, and see discipline as an essential ingredient in the discipleship process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are brought in from outside the church and hired to fill a specific job description. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are given opportunities for continued educational experiences, book allowances, and seminars to keep them on a growing edge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church considers the volunteer leadership that is already in place and builds its staff with people who have shown themselves selves to be faithful, competent and who already have a working knowledge of the ministries of the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church makes a covenant with individual staff members to develop the person to their greatest potential and adjust job descriptions according to the ongoing development of gifts, interests and ministry passions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Regulations and Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on support and guidance of district superintendents and ministry professionals to interpret regulations and polices as they relate to the daily operations of the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an awareness of ministry and board procedures, polices, and regulations, and acts when they impact on the daily operations of the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is knowledgeable as to the constitution, policies, regulations which is reflected in church based plans and goal setting processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates the requirements/priorities of the denomination, constitution, bylaws, and values into the daily operation of the church in a manner consistent with the church's vision, mission, strategy and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Budget</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the basic operating needs of the church within established budge guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks input from leadership and members in setting some budget priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves the leadership and members in setting priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements a collaborative process to develop a church budget which reflects vision, mission, accountability, long term planning, efficiently, and the current economic climate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

