

# ***The Synergistic Church***

**By**

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## Chapter 4

### The Synergistic System of Church Growth

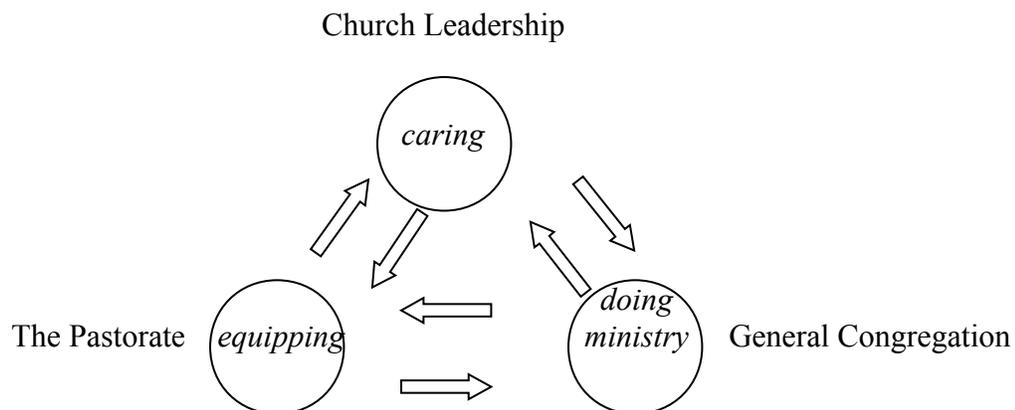
#### Introduction

So far we have demonstrated the correspondence between the corporate triune image of God and that of the triune church. We have found that the local church is indeed in the corporate image of God. But in addition to our being able to show how directly and completely this correspondence is must we now examine the implications of this new discovery in terms of the functioning local church. The purpose of this section is to explore how the Synergistic Church may be understood and used to great advantage by the implementation of the Synergistic System of Church Growth in the actual body life of the local church.

#### A Biblical Correspondence

As we have seen, the corporate church body may be divided up into three main parts. These main parts are called Ministry Groups, they include: Church Leadership, the Pastorate, and the General Congregation. What is most interesting is that, in addition to the triune church body being made in the image of the triune God, the primary function of each Ministry Group comes directly from the Bible. In the case of Church Leadership “*caring*” for the church is found in Acts 20:28. In the case of the Pastorate “*equipping*” the church is found in Eph 4:11. And finally, in the case of the General Congregation “*doing works of ministry*” is found in Eph 4:12.

Three Main Parts:



## **Church Leadership**

The primary function of Church Leadership is to *care* for the church. Church Leadership is able to perform this function because, as the *trustees of the church*, they possess the spiritual and legal authority to provide this service. Thus in the Synergistic System, Church Leadership *care* for the Pastorate by providing the spiritual and legal resources necessary to support the *equipping* function of the pastor. Similarly, Church Leadership *care* for the General Congregation by providing the spiritual and legal resources necessary for it to *do ministry*.

## **The Pastorate**

The primary function of the Pastorate is to *equip* the church. The Pastorate is able to perform this function because, as *fully trained professionals*, they possess the spiritual maturity and education to deliver this service. Thus in the Synergistic System the Pastorate *equips* Church Leadership by imparting Bible knowledge for the purpose of developing leadership. Similarly, the Pastorate *equips* the General Congregation by imparting Bible knowledge for the purpose of *doing works of ministry*.

## **The General Congregation**

The primary function of the General Congregation is to do *works of ministry* in, and outside, the church. The General Congregation is able to accomplish this function because as *wholly obedient members*, they qualify themselves to be able to perform these services. Thus in the Synergistic System the General Congregation willingly submits to the *caring* ministry of Church Leadership and the *equipping* ministry of the Pastorate to be able to *do works of ministry*.

## **The Synergistic System**

It is this three-way reciprocal relationship that makes up the core of the Synergistic System. A synergistic system may be defined as “the combined action of agents or groups that increase each other’s effectiveness”. In our Synergistic System each Ministry Group possesses a particular function that directly contributes to the well-being of the other two. Each Ministry Group is essential, and must perform its function fully. When each Ministry Group is performing its primary function the local church body is able to achieve maximum ministry effectiveness.

## **Primary vs. Secondary Functioning**

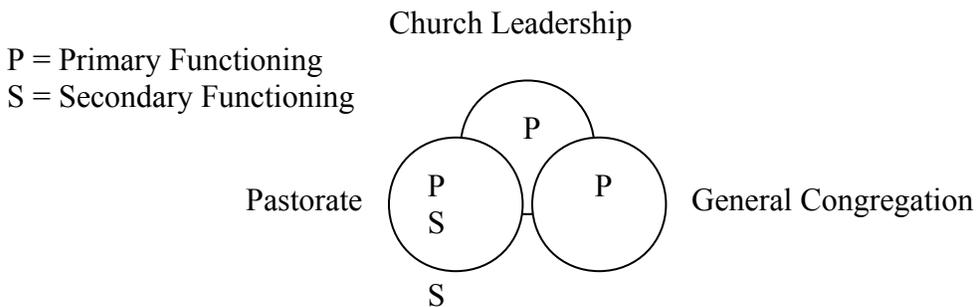
In the Synergistic System all three types of functioning, that is *caring, equipping* and *doing works of ministry* must be present and operating if the local church body is to function properly. When each Ministry Group is able to perform the functioning that comes out of their particular identity they are performing their *primary functioning*. But when one or more Ministry Groups is unable to perform their primary functioning, another Ministry Group must perform this task. This latter Ministry Group will then be performing, in addition to its primary functioning, *secondary functioning*.

## **Becoming Synergistically Intentional**

At all times the goal of each Ministry Group is to perform its primary functioning. Therefore the performance of secondary functioning, which is most often performed by the Pastorate, should take place as little as possible. In order to insure that secondary functioning is kept to a minimum, and that the church is maximizing its ministry resources the local church body must become *synergistically intentional*. This is done by churches constantly monitoring the activities of all Three Ministry Groups, and when possible, making changes in the allocation of ministry resources that are consistent with the Synergistic System.

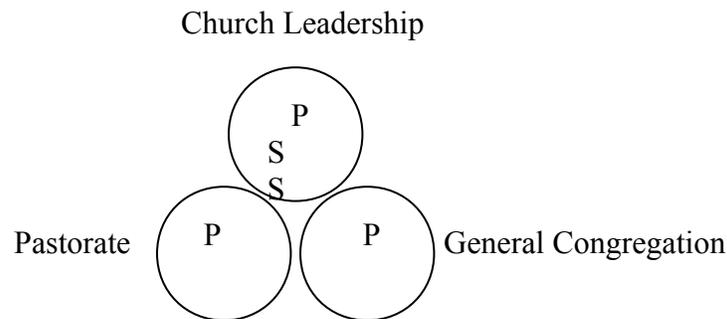
## **The Proto-Synergistic Growth Phase**

In the Synergistic System there are three phases of reciprocal growth. The first phase is the Proto-Synergistic Phase. The Greek term “proto” refers to something that is original, or first. This Phase is representative of the new or smaller church that does not have the people or resources to facilitate the complete separation of Ministry Group functions. Therefore this church will have *both primary and secondary functioning*. Churches that require either the Pastorate or Church Leadership to perform 50%, or more, secondary functioning are churches that are in the initial, Proto-Synergistic Phase of their development.



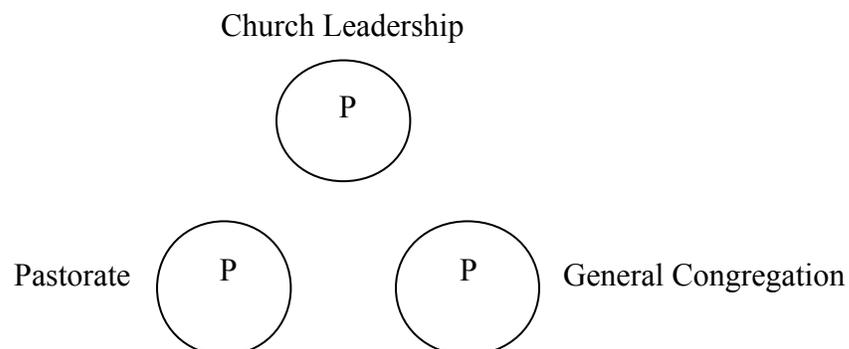
## The Meta-Synergistic Growth Phase

The second phase is the Meta-Synergistic Phase. In this case the Greek term “meta” means something that is in between, or that is coming into. This Phase is representative of the growing smaller church that has the people and resources to begin the separation of Ministry Group functions. This church will have *both primary and secondary functioning, but to a lesser degree* than the Proto-Synergistic church. Churches that require either the Pastorate or Church Leadership to perform up to 50% secondary functioning are churches in the middle, Meta-Synergistic Phase of their development.



## The Pan-Synergistic Growth Phase

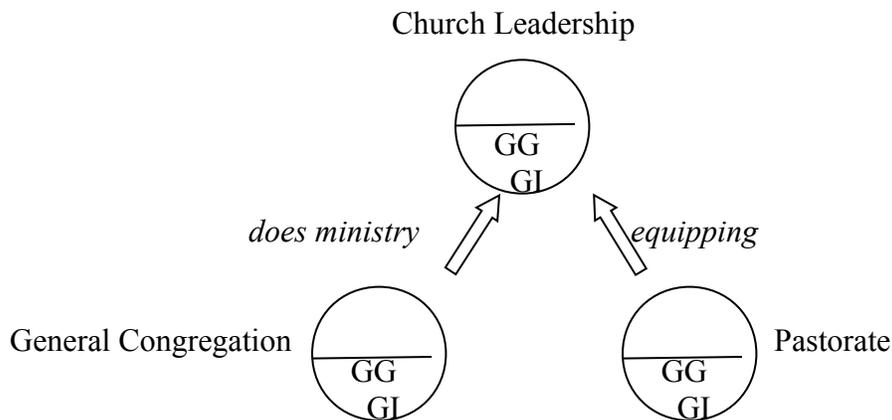
The last stage of synergistic development is the Pan-Synergistic Phase. The Greek term “pan” refers to something that is full, or complete. This Phase is representative of the church that does have the people and resources to achieve the complete separation of Ministry Group functions. Thus the Pan-Synergistic church will have the *performance of primary functioning only* on the part of each Ministry Group. The Pan-Synergistic Phase may be considered the ideal state for the maximization of church growth. This is because the complete separation of functions allows each Ministry Group to focus all of their attention in their intended field. Churches that do not require the Pastorate or Church Leadership to perform any secondary functioning are in the final, Pan-Synergistic Phase of their development.



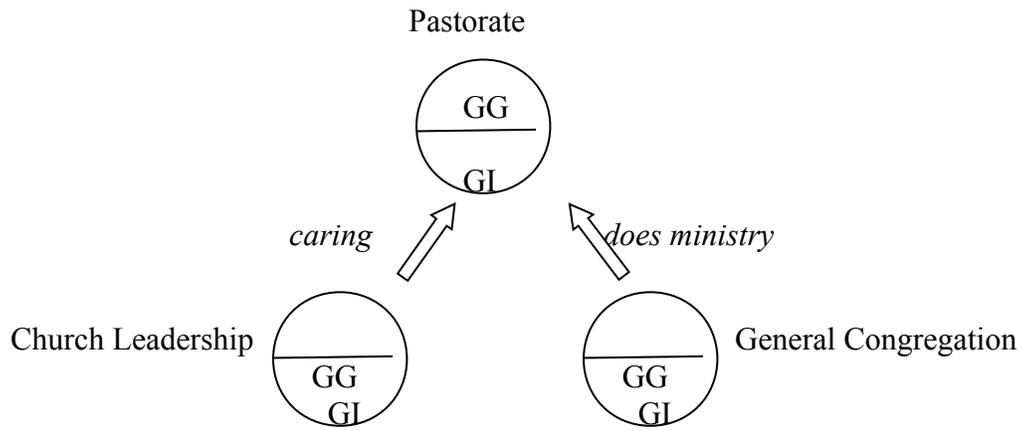
## **Ministry Group Reciprocity and Church Health**

In the Synergistic System, Ministry Group Reciprocity represents the First General Mechanism for corporate church functioning, and therefore for determining the functional health of the local church. (The Second General Mechanism, which is Church Body Dialogics, will be considered later.) Each Ministry Group consists of two basic components. These components are 1) Group Integrity and 2) Group Goals. Group Integrity is, in turn, made up of two parts, Group Identity, and the maintenance of that identity. Group Goals, on the other hand, actually represent the primary functioning of that Ministry Group. In the Synergistic System, it is only when Group Integrity is healthy that as a Ministry Group it is able to perform its Group Goals, that is, its primary functioning. Thus Church Leadership *cares* for the Integrity needs of the Pastorate and the General Congregation. The Pastorate *equips* for the Integrity needs of the General Congregation and Church Leadership. And finally, the General Congregation *does works of ministry* for the Integrity needs of Church Leadership and the Pastorate. We can see that in the Synergistic System the identity and the maintenance of that identity, that is, the health and well being of each Ministry Group, is *directly dependent* on the primary functioning of the other two. This is the essence of the three-way reciprocal relationship between Ministry Groups, and explains why the church body as a whole is able to remain healthy and strong.

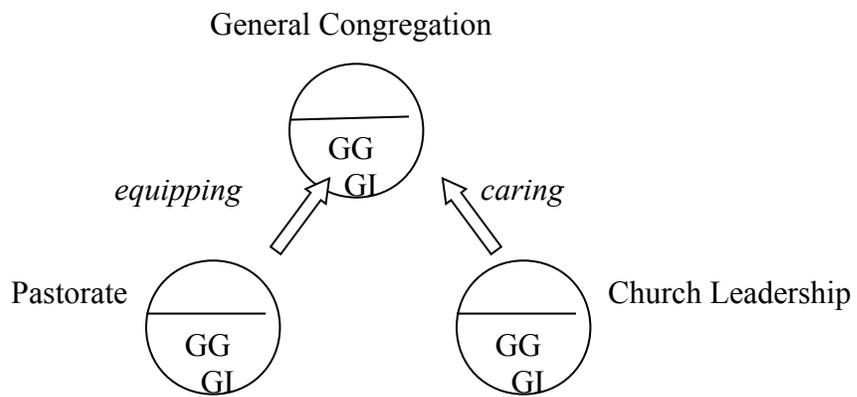
A Healthy Church Leadership:



A Healthy Pastorate:



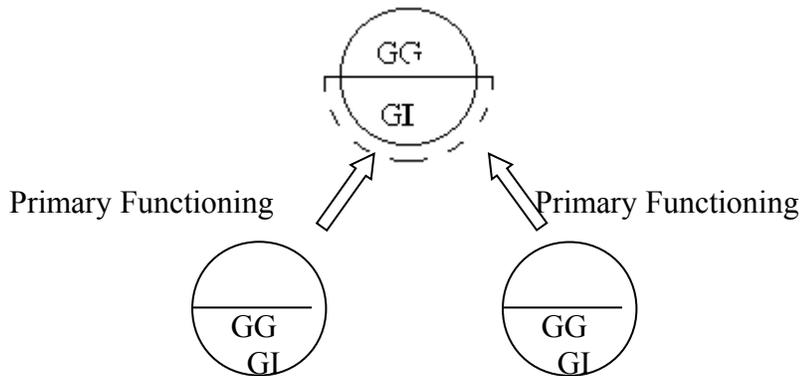
A Healthy General Congregation:



## Ministry Group Reciprocity and Church Growth

But the significance of the Synergistic System is not limited to the maintenance of church body health. In addition, the three-way reciprocity of the Ministry Groups also serves as our *primary mechanism for activating church body growth*. As each Ministry Group reaches out in the performance of its Group Goal, that is, its primary functioning, to the Group Integrity needs of the other two Ministry Groups, real growth occurs. This growth will take place with the expansion of existing ministries and the initiation of new ones. The trigger for all growth resides with the primary functioning of the Pastorate. This is because the *equipping* function is able to train for church leadership and train for church ministry, which provides the opportunity for growth in Church Leadership and the General Congregation, respectively. Though the Pastorate has a critical task to perform in the preparation for growth, it is the three-way reciprocal relationship between the Ministry Groups that is the primary mechanism for all church body growth.

Step 1 - The Performance of Group Goals:



Step 2 - The Strengthening of Group Integrity:

