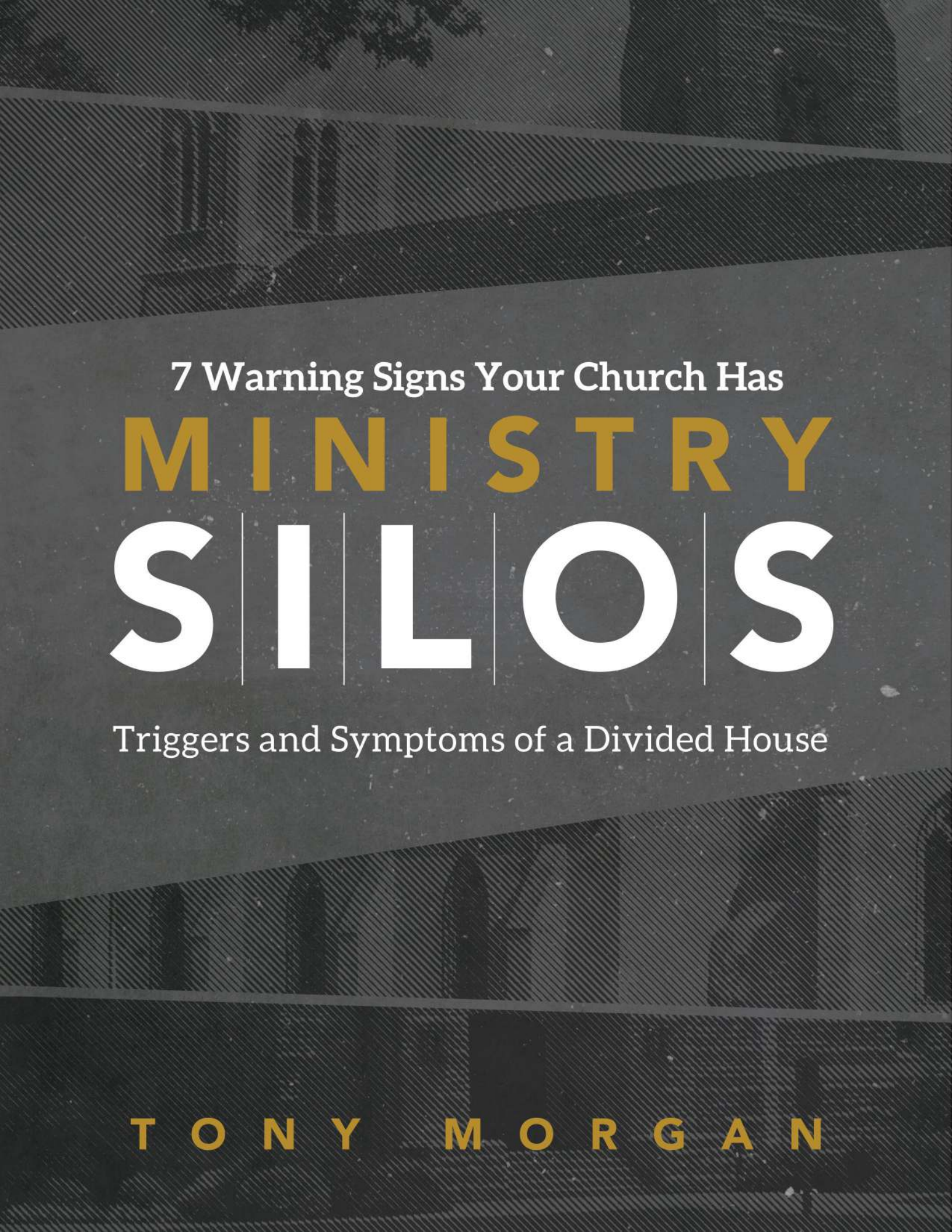
7 Warning Signs Your Church Has
MINISTRY
SILOS
Triggers and Symptoms of a Divided House
TONY MORGAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3
—
Introduction

5
—
Chapter 1: The Vision Problem

8
—
Chapter 2: The Leadership Problem

11
—
Chapter 3: The Structure Problem

14
—
Chapter 4: The Culture Problem

16
—
Chapter 5: The Communication Problem

19
—
Chapter 6: The Systems Problem

22
—
Chapter 7: The Accountability Problem

24
—
Conclusion

26
—
Discussion Questions

INTRODUCTION

Same House, Separate Lives

There are six of us in the Morgan family. Let's pretend that while we all shared the same house, we each lived in separate rooms. We only engaged in individual activities. We never spoke to one another. We never shared our future dreams. And, with the exception of one meal together each Sunday, we always ate on different schedules. Would you consider us a healthy family? Absolutely not.

Unfortunately, this is a very typical picture of life inside the house we call "church." People and ministries share the same roof but do nearly everything in isolation. Outside of Sundays, they rarely combine their efforts. Like members of a dysfunctional family, most church staff members know their team isn't healthy. But they've learned to cope and get by, living separate lives within the same house.

I'm tired of seeing churches in which the children's ministry, student ministry, choir, women's ministry, men's ministry, discipleship program, local missions team, and other departments are each operating independently of the rest. Healthy businesses would never allow one business unit to compete against another. Healthy churches don't allow that either.

This problem is very serious, but it isn't brand new. The Apostle Paul wrote the following to an early church hindered by the issue:

> *I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather,* ***be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.*** (1 Corinthians 1:10, NLT)

Throughout time, the Church has continued to be held back by this challenge. The issue shows up in today's churches in the form of *ministry silos* — undeclared divisions between departments. It's not hard to tell when a church has silos. The difficult part is discovering and eliminating their true causes.

That is exactly what this eBook is meant to do. Based on our experiences with hundreds of churches, the team at **The Unstuck Group** has identified seven major causes of ministry

silos. We'll explore each problem in the coming chapters, along with the symptoms of each and steps you can take to begin addressing them. But before we get started, let's pause to remember how much is at stake:

- What could happen if leaders within churches began putting a unified purpose ahead of personal agendas?
- How might the Kingdom advance if wins for the team were really more important than protecting turf?
- Who could be reached if we cared more about ministry and less about maintaining our individual platforms?

Now, let's not waste any time trying to find out. My hope is that this eBook enables your team to truly *be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.*

CHAPTER 1

The Vision Problem

The first major cause of ministry silos deals with one of the most frequently discussed church leadership topics. However, despite numerous conference sessions, blog posts, and books, most churches continue to experience this problem...

Silo Issue #1. The vision isn't clear.

While most churches have a mission statement, it isn't enough. The mission answers in ten words or less, *"Why do we exist?"* In addition to mission buy-in, though, everyone needs a clear answer to the question, *"Where are we going?"* That is the vision.

Vision pulls a church toward something bigger than the next Sunday service. It challenges a team to pursue new methods and opportunities for greater impact. The vision has to be specific and measurable. It will probably be reflected in several statements that define a clear picture of where God is taking your church in the future. If you have a solid vision, it will both rally people and repel people. You want that. When you are very clear about where you are going, there are usually people who aren't up for the journey.

Don't confuse your values with your vision. You can value hospitality, but hospitality is not a vision for the future.

Don't confuse your strategy with your vision. You can embrace authentic worship as part of your strategy, but authentic worship is not a vision for the future.

Don't confuse your doctrine with your vision. You can believe in biblical authority, but biblical authority is not a vision for the future.

So what does vision actually look like? Let me give you some examples.

Part of Granger Community Church's vision is this:

> We will utilize our fabulous Children's Center and launch a weekday faith-based preschool and/or daycare to meet the growing needs of parents as they try to raise their kids with virtue.

That's specific. That's measurable. Everyone knew part of their vision to equip parents and encourage healthy families was to open a Children's Center, and they did it.

Here's another example. NewSpring Church includes this statement about their vision:

> NewSpring Church has a passion to continue growing, impacting lives and using technology and the arts to reach 100,000 people for Jesus Christ.

That's specific. That's measurable. Because they believe God is calling them to reach 100,000 people for Jesus Christ, everything they do today reflects that vision.

Just to explain this clearly, many churches have a mission statement, core values and a discipleship strategy. (For example: Love God. Grow Christ-followers. Serve others.) To be honest, many churches are fairly similar in these areas. In contrast, very few churches have a clear, bold vision for where they are going in the future. Vision can and should be the most differentiating component among churches. It is what can make each church truly unique. Frankly, one key reason leaders don't go there is because clear vision also creates accountability.

After you establish the vision, you have to nail down your strategy. If vision defines where God is leading us in the future, strategy answers the question, *"How are we going to get there?"* The strategy requires action. It should focus time, money, space, leadership, prayer, etc. When the strategy is clear, it's much easier to determine *what is important now*.

To most effectively eliminate ministry silos, you need to engage this vision and strategy process through cross-functional planning. In other words, this isn't a top-down edict. Instead, leaders from across the ministry gather to establish future direction…together.

So, how are you doing? Do you have a clear vision? Does everyone know how you're going to fulfill it? If not, that's the first reason your church may have ministry silos.

Symptoms of a Vision Problem

- When people talk about "vision," they're really just re-articulating the mission.
- Individual departments have separate vision statements, and they do not connect.
- The vision doesn't express the uniqueness of your church.

Steps to Begin Uniting through Vision

- Pull the leadership team together and ask, "Where we do we want to go? How will we know when we get there?"
- Have conversations with your staff to discover the unique opportunities they see available to your church from their vantage points.
- Put together a strategic plan with clear action steps to make the vision a reality.

CHAPTER 2

The Leadership Problem

Establishing a clear vision is the first step to eliminating ministry silos, but a church will only travel as far as its leadership is willing to take it. That's what brings us to the second major cause of ministry silos...

Silo Issue #2. The leadership isn't focused and committed.

Focus and commitment needs to be reflected at three different levels beginning with the senior pastor.

Senior Pastors

The senior pastor is the chief vision caster and culture creator. Whether senior pastors want to hear this or not, I've never seen a situation where these roles have been successfully delegated to someone else. In other words, if you are not the primary champion of vision, no one else can assume that role.

The challenges begin when, for whatever reason, the senior pastor disconnects. Sometimes that happens when the senior pastor isn't in a healthy place spiritually, physically or relationally. Other times that happens when the senior pastor's attention is drawn to competing interests outside the church's mission. Whatever the case, when the senior pastor doesn't cast a clear and compelling vision, ministry silos will likely develop.

Because of this, the senior pastor needs to fight against becoming an isolated leader. As your church grows, you can't separate yourself from your team by staying in the confines of your office or your green room. You need to engage with your key leaders. They need to see you and hear from you often. If you don't engage the team, team members will not engage with each other.

Senior Leadership Teams

I've addressed the responsibility of senior leadership teams in the past. My eBook, ***Take the Lid Off Your Church***, is all about helping these key teams embrace a new leadership role.

One critical sign of unhealthiness is when senior leadership teams begin to value "reporting what happened" more than "focusing on what's next." Reacting to the past will never move your ministry forward.

A focus on future vision and strategy forces leaders to work together. If you fail to do that, it's very possible to operate in silos. Putting out fires and responding to what happened yesterday captures all of your time and attention. The more you shift from assigning blame to taking action, the more unified your team will become.

Staff Leaders

Finally, you also have to be cautious about the staff leaders you hire. Hopefully, you are focused on adding people to your team who believe in the mission, vision and values of your church. They've fully embraced your unique strategy. That's what captures their heart. That's what drives their commitment.

If you're not intentional, though, you may end up hiring staff who are not team players and want to build their own kingdoms or platforms. As soon as you bring someone on the team who has their own agenda, even if it's a genuine call God placed on *their* life, you begin to sacrifice the greater mission of the church.

How are you doing with this test? Is your leadership focused and committed? If not, that's the second warning sign that your church may struggle with ministry silos.

Symptoms of a Leadership Problem

- No one is sure when the Senior Pastor will be in the office.
- There is uncertainty about who is and is not on the senior leadership team.
- Meetings focus on reviewing what has happened far more than they do on leading what is next.
- Some individual staff leaders are clearly pursuing personal goals through the church rather than pursuing church goals with their gifts.

Steps to Begin Uniting in Leadership

- If you're a senior pastor, ask yourself, "Am I presently focused and committed to our church? Am I taking personal responsibility for the vision and culture?"
- Schedule an off-site meeting for leaders to dream together. Focus on what God could do through your church as a whole rather than through your individual departments.
- Set goals for leaders based on your unified vision. Make sure everyone sees their part in accomplishing something bigger than themselves.

CHAPTER 3

The Structure Problem

With a clear vision and committed leadership, a church is ready to take on the third major cause of ministry silos. This issue is the one you're least likely to hear about at a church leadership conference. That's probably because it can be the most painful to address. However, it is the very framework that underlies most silo problems.

Silo Issue #3. The staff structure isn't aligned with the vision and strategy.

When a church approaches our team because it is stuck, we always force the leaders to think about vision and strategy before they consider structure. In this case, form follows function. When a church tries to reverse the order, the priority typically becomes preservation of an existing structure. Forcing a church to consider what the win really looks like naturally requires leaders to revisit *who* does *what*.

This is often a big deal because within churches, structure is sacred. Usually pastors and ministry leaders have spent years fortifying their own ministry program. (Think student ministry, children's ministry, women's ministry, etc.) Obviously, the more the structure is built around individual ministries, the more likely it is that silos exist.

Similarly, and maybe even more damaging, many churches have also established their structure around different steps in the discipleship path. They have a discipleship department that is really only focused on Bible knowledge. There is a missions department that often focuses on getting people on international trips. There is a fellowship department that gathers people for events. While each of these elements is an important piece of spiritual formation, the departments end up competing with each other for time and attention.

Until the structure is formed around a unified vision and strategy, the natural tendency for church leaders will always be to form protective walls around their own ministry areas. They will try to position their ministries to get more platform time, promotions, money, facility space, volunteers, leadership investment, etc. The ministries with the strongest leaders will get the most resources…even if that is not what is most important for the overall health of the church.

6 Questions to Help You Evaluate Your Structure

When The Unstuck Group helps churches think about their staffing and structure, we use questions like the following to help shape a healthy organizational structure:

1. What is your strategy to accomplish your vision?
2. What are the strengths of your current team?
3. What is the leadership capacity of people on the team?
4. Have you developed a senior leadership team?
5. Does every program, service, or product connect to the senior leadership team?
6. Does your structure support future growth?

Click here to read more about each of the six questions.

Two Specific Challenges

Two specific challenges I repeatedly see within churches are "flat" structures and centralized functional leadership.

1. "Flat" Structures

In an attempt to eliminate silos, some churches try to keep the leadership structure as flat as possible. The thinking is that if everyone is reporting directly to one leader, it will be easier to keep everyone on the same page. (As a sidenote, this is usually a sign that the senior pastor has major control issues; but that's a topic for another time.)

In one case, I saw the senior pastor of a large church directly supervising 25 different people. It wasn't healthy for the pastor or the people he was trying to lead.

When the leadership team becomes too large, it is no longer able to function as a team or be led as a team. I recommend no more than eight people be on the senior leadership team. In mid-sized churches, that consists of ministry leaders. In larger churches, that group becomes the leaders of leaders. **Click here** to read more on determining who should attend senior leadership team meetings.

2. Centralized Functional Leadership

As more and more churches embrace a multisite strategy, new challenges are faced in the area of staff structure. One of the most common tensions develops when a church must decide who has authority. Is it the campus pastor or the ministry leader at the "sending" campus? For example, does the children's pastor at the sending campus have authority over the children's pastor at the new campus? Or does the campus pastor have authority over the children's director?

I have embraced a philosophy that I first heard from Mac Lake during his time at Seacoast Church, a multisite ministry in South Carolina. In healthy multisite structures, the campus pastor has *authority* and the ministry leader/champion has *influence*.

While campus pastors have direct leadership responsibility for the ministry directors at their campuses, centralized leaders must still be involved. If campus pastors are the only leaders, functions (i.e. children's ministry, small groups, communications) will be executed in a siloed fashion at each campus. You need the centralized influence of ministry champions who are leveraging the synergy of ministry leaders working together across campus lines.

Now that we've taken a deeper look at the area of structure, how do you feel you are doing? Is your structure aligned with the vision and strategy? If not, that's the third warning sign that your church may have ministry silos.

Symptoms of a Structure Problem

- Any leader has more than 6-8 people reporting to him/her.
- Staff members often wonder who has the authority to make a certain decision.
- The top layer of leadership is broad across functional areas rather than narrow and focused on strategic components.

Steps to Begin Uniting through Structure

- Print or draw your current organizational structure. Draw borders around the areas that operate within ministry silos.
- Identify the 3-5 key components of your church's strategy and establish a high-level leader to oversee each of them.
- Make a list of typical situations when people are asking, "Who has the authority to make this decision?" Clarify job responsibilities in each of those areas.

CHAPTER 4

The Culture Problem

I'm very competitive, and I like to win. Whether I'm on the basketball court, playing a family board game, or in the marketplace, I just like to win. My wife gets frustrated with me at times because I don't play games "just for the fun of it." From my perspective, it's not worth playing a game unless you (and your competition) are trying to win.

Competition is valuable when you're trying to beat the other team. But when individuals become so focused on winning for themselves that they do not care about the success of other teammates, there is a problem.

If our competitive spirit is misplaced, it can be a very dangerous thing. That brings me to this fourth major cause of ministry silos.

Silo Issue #4. There's an internal culture of competition.

Even in ministry, a competitive instinct can be healthy if it's focused on an external challenge. In ministry, external challenges might include reaching an unchurched culture, feeding people who are hungry, trying to lower the divorce rate in the community and so on. It's a good thing if the entire team rallies together to conquer an external challenge.

Unfortunately, that's not the typical type of competitive spirit that is displayed in churches. Instead, the competition occurs internally between individuals and ministries. The student ministry is competing with the children's ministry for space. The women's ministry is competing with the men's ministry for promotions. One missions initiative is competing against another missions team for money.

Rather than having conversations around how each ministry can support the broader mission and vision, each ministry is an island. In words they may communicate "we're in this together," but when it comes time to get a platform announcement, budget money, volunteer help, time on the calendar and space in the building, it's every ministry for themselves.

One example of this is with volunteer engagement. Ideally we would encourage people to identify their strengths and passions and then plug them in where they best fit. Instead,

a church with ministry silos competes over the "best" people as opposed to leveraging a strategy that allows individuals to serve in their areas of giftedness.

How do we eliminate unhealthy competition? We have to get everyone focused on the same win. Again, that's where a focused mission, vision and strategy come into play. Without a clear game plan, individual teams will naturally gravitate toward focusing on what is happening in their own ministry areas. An "us against them" culture will settle in.

Competing Against Other Churches

As I mentioned earlier, it can be a very good thing when churches rally together to address a specific external challenge. We need to remember, however, that other churches are not the competition. In my experience coaching and consulting with church leaders, I've never found a church that had health and a growing impact in the community by trying to "beat" another church.

When we recognize that other churches in our community are on our team, it opens the possibility for partnerships to tackle *real* external challenges. And, it forces each church to identify their unique contribution to the greater mission. That's a good thing, leveraging the power of unique vision.

How are you doing in this area? Is your competitive spirit focused on a specific external challenge? If not, that's the fourth warning sign that your church may have ministry silos.

Symptoms of a Culture Problem

- In meetings, staff members fight for things that affect their individual departments harder than they fight for things that affect the vision.
- Leaders resign themselves to the fact that organizational politics are necessary to success.
- Departments rarely sacrifice their own resources or time to help another team. Instead, they work hard to gather resources for themselves.

Steps to Begin Uniting in Culture

- Begin evaluating leaders on how well they support and contribute to the work of other teams in addition to their own.
- Constantly highlight stories of staff members or teams who act selflessly toward other departments.
- Model a team culture by sacrificing your own interests for the sake of bigger wins for the church.

CHAPTER 5

The Communications Problem

You may have read the title of this chapter and thought it was about your church's communications strategy…or maybe the lack thereof. That can be an issue that leads to ministry silos, but public-facing communication problems are only the result of a much deeper problem: siloed internal communications. That's the core of the next major cause of ministry silos.

Silo Issue #5. There's not an intentional communications strategy to encourage trust.

Internal communications can become challenging as a church grows. The natural reaction is to get everyone in the room for every conversation and every decision. Of course, that's not practical. Once you get more than eight people in a conversation, the quality of communication and decision-making is compromised.

The challenge, of course, is that you can't build a culture of trust without transparent communications. Inherent to transparency is the necessity for communication to happen in both directions. In other words, top-down communication is important, but there has to be a way for people at all levels of the organization to share their thoughts and questions. Communication has to go both ways and must address three critical questions:

1. Where are we going in the future?

The vision and the strategy have to be crystal clear. As I shared in Chapter 1, they must be specific and measurable. You cannot just roll out the vision one day and assume everyone will remember it forever. You need to share it, then repeat it and then repeat it again.

For this to happen, you must meet together. There has to be an environment in which the entire staff team gathers together on a regular basis. Then there must be opportunities for each ministry team to meet regularly. Finally, there have to be opportunities for each staff member to have one-on-one connections with their leader. These environments help everyone move forward together despite their different roles and responsibilities.

It really is possible to keep everyone informed without inviting everyone to every meeting. The key, though, is that every person in the organization fully understands how their contribution directly connects to the overall vision and strategy.

2. What's most important today?

This is where leaders and managers make their mark. As ministries grow, there will always be competing priorities. Good leaders and managers acknowledge that and help the team focus on what's important right now. That means you'll have to say, "We're going to stop doing that for now, so we can focus on starting this."

Those are difficult decisions, but, believe it or not, you will gain trust from your team if you display the courage to make them. Of course, there is huge value in including others as you develop your strategy for the future. Their contribution makes the plan stronger and builds ownership and trust. I can assure you, though, that everyone on your team is craving a clear understanding of what's important now.

3. Is what we're doing having an impact?

This is where transparency is key. The team needs accountability. You'll need to identify your key metrics to monitor the health of your ministry. I shared more about this in my ebook, ***Vital Signs: Meaningful Metrics that Keep a Pulse on Your Church's Health***. Once you've determined your metrics, you need to routinely keep the team in the loop with how you're doing.

These metrics should include the financial picture. I see a lot of pastors trying to hide the financial information of the ministry. In most cases, I sense this is because the pastor is wrestling with control issues. Whatever the reason, hiding financial information leads to distrust. Good leaders involve their team to help build the plan for resourcing ministry. That helps them own the financial plan and make better decisions about how they engage their part of the mission.

Storytelling is also important to this third question. You need to celebrate the wins happening across departments. This will help you build a culture that appreciates the way every ministry helps accomplish the overall mission and vision. Stories serve as the glue that holds the team together. Take time in every gathering to share what God is doing in people's lives.

So how are you doing in this area? Is your internal communications strategy building trust on the team? If not, that's the fifth warning sign that your church may have ministry silos.

Symptoms of a Communications Problem

- Staff members are often surprised to hear about decisions long after they were made.
- Different team members are operating from various sets of priorities.
- There is a cloud of suspicion around how decisions are made. This includes but is not limited to financial decisions.

Steps to Begin Uniting in Communications

- Establish an aligned organizational meeting rhythm/schedule to clarify when and how often all staff meetings, department meetings, and one-on-one meetings will take place.
- Provide space for the entire staff to tell stories of ministry wins that reflect the vision.
- In meetings, regularly ask, "Who needs to know what we discussed or decided?"
- Create a clear and systematic way for staff members to communicate their feedback up the organizational ladder.

CHAPTER 6

The Systems Problem

When churches are small, systems can seem almost unnecessary. Everyone knows everyone, and it's easy to connect new people to the right individuals. If someone wants to get involved in a ministry, you know who to introduce them to on Sunday.

However, when churches grow beyond a few hundred, it becomes difficult to connect people to the next steps you're encouraging them to take. Different leaders naturally begin creating their own processes to get people connected. Though good-natured, when multiple leaders create multiple approaches, ministry silos begin to develop. Everyone has "their way" of doing things and no one is interested in changing their approach. It's this "my way or the highway" mindset that leads churches to encounter the sixth cause of silos.

Silo Issue #6. The systems don't encourage unity.

Here's a simple way to determine if you have healthy systems in place. Consider every next step people take at your church. This may include connecting in a Bible study, volunteering, checking in a child for the first time, joining a small group or participating in a community missions project. When someone new to your church asks what they should do to take one of those steps, how do you respond? If you say, "Go see Joe or Sue," you don't have a system–you have a person.

Just having a person helping people take their next steps works when everyone already knows that person and that person is always available to respond. Once new people start showing up, that doesn't work anymore. And it certainly won't work when the church grows into multiple services and potentially multiple locations. Joe and Sue can't be in multiple places at the same time.

This is where churches get into trouble, because they continue to embrace small-church thinking even after they've grown to hundreds or thousands. If effective systems aren't established for the entire church, ministry teams start creating their own. Competing systems will lead to ministry silos.

Some common systems that growing churches need to consider include:

- Scheduling ministry programs and events (including facility scheduling)
- Communications and promotions
- Budgeting and purchasing
- Tracking people and their next steps (database)
- Connecting into your discipleship process (small groups, Bible studies, classes, etc.)
- Volunteering
- Giving

Without a scheduling system, whichever ministry signs up first gets the space.

Without a communications system, whichever ministry is loudest gets the most attention.

Without a budgeting system, whichever ministry asks for the money first is most likely to get it.

Without a tracking system, every ministry keeps its own database or its own spreadsheet. That means it's impossible to look at the overall health of the church, because there's no central place to track spiritual next steps.

I think you probably see the point. Without systems, it's every ministry for itself…even if that ministry isn't the most critical to helping people take their next steps toward Christ.

Let me speak specifically to systems during times of transition in people's lives. This is especially important in "generational" ministries like children's ministry, middle school ministry, high school ministry, young adults ministry, etc. Each should be working together to transition people toward the next ministry as they enter new phases of life. The systems for transitions are huge and require teamwork between ministries.

So how are you doing in this area? Do you have effective systems in place that encourage unity? If not, that's the sixth warning sign that your church may have ministry silos.

Symptoms of a Systems Problem

- Each ministry has a different database or spreadsheet to keep track of the people involved.
- If someone wants to get involved in multiple ministries, they have to go to multiple places and engage multiple processes.
- Critical ministries sometimes struggle to get needed financial resources or facility space because another department asked first.

Steps to Begin Uniting in Systems

- Create a "one stop shop" where anyone can go after weekend services to get involved with any ministry. Eliminate multiple kiosks.
- Utilize a shared database that allows the entire church to engage with multiple ministries through synchronized processes. I personally recommend **Church Community Builder**.
- Draw a "ministry map" that shows every ministry program. Include the steps one must take to get involved with each program along with the steps one can take from one program to the next. Look for as many opportunities as possible to simplify and synchronize those steps.

CHAPTER 7

The Accountability Problem

As soon as an organization grows beyond one person, it runs the risk that different people will begin pulling in different directions. It is natural for individuals to interpret your missions, vision, and strategy with various nuances. Everyone sees them from a different perspective and will undoubtedly understand them differently.

Those differences are not inherently wrong. You want people using their unique wiring to engage the mission. God has designed each person with a distinct personality, experiences and strengths that make the team better. But if appropriate accountability isn't in place, even the person with the best intentions can pull the team in the wrong direction. And that brings us to this final major cause of ministry silos:

Silo Issue #7. There's a gap in accountability.

We think of accountability being primarily for the person responsible for getting tasks completed. In reality, leaders and managers are really the key players. They must provide clear expectations and then make sure follow through really happens.

Beyond that, though, we also need to consider accountability for the organization and not just the individual. In other words, the win needs to be clear for the team in order for it to be clear for each person.

Here are a few tips to improve accountability on your team:

Start with your mission, vision and values. Having these statements eliminates a lot of the guesswork. They become the guard rails that make it easier for your team to know where they have boundaries and where they have freedom. The values, in particular, make it possible for more people to make better decisions without waiting for the boss to make the call. They also enable more people to protect your culture by pointing out when something is out of bounds.

Begin with the end in mind. Make sure you are focusing on clear, immediate initiatives that fulfill long-term goals for growth and health. When the team feels a healthy sense of pressure to produce in the present, they'll also take on greater responsibility and ownership contributing to the win.

Build around cross-functional initiatives that involve the entire team. In other words, don't let your goal-setting foster a silo-mindset. Begin with the "wins" for the entire ministry, and then work backwards to set team and individual expectations. As an example, the fact that a student ministry meets all their objectives doesn't necessarily make a healthy church–all the ministries need to be pulling together to make a healthy church. By developing organizational goals first, department goals second, and individual goals last, you can make sure everyone is contributing to the cross-functional initiatives most important to the health of your church.

Create a simple scoreboard for the entire team. What are the goals that everyone is working together to reach? What are your key metrics for the entire church? If your only focus is on metrics at the ministry level, that can foster an "us" versus "them" culture. Measure, monitor and celebrate the metrics that reflect the overall health of your church. For more on this topic, read ***Vital Signs: Meaningful Metrics that Keep a Pulse on Your Church's Health***.

How are you doing with this test? Does your organization have a gap in accountability? If so, that's the seventh warning sign that your church is suffering from ministry silos.

Symptoms of an Accountability Problem

- Staff members do not interpret the mission, vision, and values in the same ways. In meetings, they use the same language to justify differing decisions.
- Ministry leaders tout metrics specific to their individual areas of ministry but fail to celebrate organizational wins.
- Ministry initiatives/projects generate short-term successes. They don't strategically connect to move the church forward in a consistent direction over time.

Steps to Begin Uniting in Accountability

- Create an organization-wide scorecard and set of goals. Then break those down into ministry scorecards and goals. Ensure that everything connects back to organizational wins.
- Evaluate your mission, vision, and values for possible misinterpretations. Clarify for the entire staff what each of them means, what they look like in action, and what they are not.
- Begin eliminating ministry programs that poorly reflect or distract from your true mission, vision, and values.

CONCLUSION

Sharing One Mind

Is your team *of one mind, united in thought and purpose*? Or does it behave more like dysfunctional family members sharing one roof with very different mindsets?

Maybe your church has just one silo. Maybe every department operates as independently as possible, only engaging each other when they need something. Regardless of where you fall on the silo spectrum, I am confident that you can eliminate the divisions. The team at The Unstuck Group has seen hundreds of church teams take steps to remove silos and there is no reason why you cannot do the same.

The best place to start is with your leadership team. Begin a conversation about where silos exist and how they are holding you back from fully reaching your community. The next section provides a set of questions to help you generate healthy discussion.

As you go along, consider drawing your church's silos on a whiteboard. (Don't worry. Your artwork won't be graded and silos are fairly simple to draw.) With a visual of your silos, review each of the seven major causes that might be contributing to them. For each silo, write out one to three causes you believe are responsible for the most damage.

With a better understanding of the root causes underlying your church's silos, you will be ready to do something about them. Bring together the people closest to the problems and develop a plan to eliminate the gaps. If there is anything The Unstuck Group can do to help, please do not hesitate to ask. Our **Strategic Planning Process** is designed to help you lead your church as a whole entity, not a collection of parts. It guides your team to clarify your mission, vision, and core strategies—and then sets next steps with accountability to move forward through prioritized action initiatives. The **Staffing and Structure Review** builds upon that to put the right people in the right positions to best fit both your ministry strategy and the individuals involved.

Wherever you are and whatever your silos, I'm excited to see your team take steps to become of *one mind*. When you are clear on what God has called you to do and how He has designed you to work together, there is no limit to the impact you can make in your community. Our

world needs more churches like yours moving forward with a united front. Let's not waste any more time operating with silos so we can get back to the real mission at hand — reaching people and leading them to Jesus.

> *I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather,* ***be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.*** (1 Corinthians 1:10, NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you say our church staff operates with one or more silos? Why or why not?

2. Think of a project or season when our staff worked the most as a unified team. What was unique about that situation? What difference did it make?

3. After reading the description of what vision is and is not, do we have a true vision for where we are going in the future? Is it specific, measurable, and clear to everyone?

4. Are there any ongoing struggles because our team is unsure of who holds the authority to make a particular decision?

5. Is our competitive spirit focused more on external challenges important to our mission or internal challenges important to our individual ministries?

6. Do we create enough of the right environments for the entire staff to come together for vision-casting and story-telling?

7. Does everyone in this room agree on "what's most important today" for our church? Does everyone on our staff understand that?

8. Have we outgrown any systems that worked fine in the past?

9. Do we have an organization-wide scoreboard that measurably defines the wins that everyone is working toward? Or does each ministry define success differently?

10. Do we set organization-wide goals that become the basis for departmental goals? Or does each departments set goals independently?

THE UNSTUCK GROUP®

— WE HELP CHURCHES GET UNSTUCK. —