

FROM our Current Coaching Model
TO our New FEST Mode of Operation ("Our New Normal")

Issachar rightly noted that we are at an inflection point. What we have done in the past should be celebrated, and, some of what we will do in the future will build off those strengths. Embracing this opportunity means that we must not practice "better sameness." There is a real possibility (danger) of us slipping back into how we have always done things and missing this inflection point. This section will delineate the changes in how we will move forward by juxtaposing them with our past (Coach) model.

In various iterations of field research, the question, "what's different with this new Issachar model" came up several times. This section answers that question and defines what our "new normal" will look like.

It should also be noted that these contrasts are to be viewed more as a continuum rather than binary positions of emphases. Another way of putting this is by acknowledging that in the past we have had some emphasis on the "TO's," and in the future we will not absolutely move away from the "FROM's."

As rightly highlighted in Issachar, these "FROM – TO's" are shaped by the cultural context of the sociological transition from what some have identified as "Christian Canada" (or Church at the Centre) to what some are coining "post-Christian Canada," (or Church at the margin).

A very current item of note is that this report is being written in the context of COVID-19. This reality shapes our immediate staffing and ministry priorities. We are aware that COVID-19 will also shape our future staffing and ministry priorities as well – which we do not yet fully understand. Within that context the "continuums" provided here are best understood to represent our past (FROM) Coaching Model and our Future (Issachar/New Normal) delivery system.

In no specific order, here are the items of note.

FROM

In Our Previous Model ...

Bringing Capacity

We had high capacity Coaches show up with answers for most (not all) issues faced by our churches.

Chaplaincy

Our Coaches functioned as pastors (chaplains) to our pastors... "how are you ... and how can we care for you?"

TO

In Issachar ...

Building Capacity

The major emphasis will be on building the capacity of lay and pastoral people/volunteers within our local churches and regions. They will be more effective in their own churches and be equipped to serve other churches in their areas of expertise.

Developing

Those connecting with our churches will be highly relational, but it will move beyond simply caring for people (that will be there!) and include a major emphasis on developing our Licensed Workers, Board of Elders, and churches.

Within the context of deep relationships, the new conversation will sound more like "how are you developing yourself to serve even more effectively in this new day and age ... and how can we help you (LWs and BOEs) develop?"

FROM

In Our Previous Model ...

Central Office

All Field Staff were based in Calgary, which hindered accessibility, increased the financial burden on the WCD, and exacted a physical toll on Field Staff.

A Few Teaching Voices

We had coaches, and a few other voices, speaking into the mission and ministry of our churches.

“Shot Gun”

The WCD made a necessary corrective towards a “yes face” culture, and we began many good (but not necessarily greatest Kingdom impact) initiatives.

This is so much the case that our coaches spent approximately half of their time on nonessential activities that are not directly related to big three.

Dialogue

Coaches would endeavor (with varying degrees of success) to have the Pastor/BOE set the agenda.

TO

In Issachar ...

Regional (Incarnational) Presence

Field Staff will be placed in regional proximity to more of our churches, including having staff in Edmonton.

It is possible (based on locale/family, etc.) that Field Staff would serve out of temporary locations for shorter bursts of time (i.e. a few weeks to a few months).

Beyond providing greater accessibility and minimizing the financial and physical toll created by the existing model; our Field Staff will have their finger on the pulse of the region and realities of local church life.

Multiple Teaching Voices through “Impact Hubs”

There will be regional and virtual Impact Hubs that will profile and create a platform for multiple teaching voices, model ministries, and premium resources to be shared between leaders and churches. Our Innovation Team will also provide ‘voice’ and resources through the hubs.

These hubs also function as a leader development incubator.

“Rifle”

We will endeavor to embrace the culture of doing the right and best things well. This is implicit in the “clarity” value.

We will prioritize initiatives that empower greatest Kingdom impact and say “yes” to the very best and “no” to some good initiatives.

Discernment

Amidst a “listen before speaking” posture, we will facilitate discerning God’s agenda (mission) for each worker, BOE, and church to have the greatest Kingdom impact.

FROM

In Our Previous Model ...

TO

In Issachar ...

Generalists

We had high capacity coaches serving in many ways. Yet Issachar was clear that no one person can have the subject matter expertise for our evolving needs as a family of churches, so, some needs were not being met or were inadequately met.

Attracting Attendees

We lived under the influence of the Church growth movement that often caused us to believe that adding attendees to our weekend services was the goal.

An Affiliation of Churches

It was one Coach working with their church, this resulted in individual churches relating to the district office without ever having to relate to other sibling churches.

Transactional Relationships

The WCD office operated in somewhat of a transactional relationship: the churches give their DOB and then the WCD provides the churches with “on demand” goods and services for their consumption.

Lead Pastors and Board of Elders (BOEs)

Coaches and WCD personnel would focus primarily on Lead Pastors. This was efficient – and sometimes effective when the Lead Pastor would integrate their staff – but resulted in many non lead pastors feeling left out.

Specialists

The role of the FEST Staff will be to Discover, Develop, Deploy, and Deputize appropriate subject matter experts who will serve our churches and seek to grow capacity within the churches they serve.

Multiplying Disciple Makers

Our goal will be to equip people for Christ-like mission and ministry. We will focus on developing people to live like Jesus in the world, fulfilling the call of Jesus on our lives. All of this will be done in the spirit of the Great Commandment. In other words, we are more interested in impact than attraction.

A Family of Interdependent Churches on Mission Together

We will move towards more interdependent relationships between churches resulting in shared local and global mission and symbiotic ministry with each other.

Collaborative Genuine Relationships

The focus will shift towards real relationships marked by mutuality and collaboration. This will take place between churches and the district office and between churches and other churches.

Licensed Workers and BOEs

There will be greater emphasis on all workers and BOEs. What became very clear from the field research was that many staff members felt very disconnected from the WCD family of churches.

Under Issachar, greater effort will be put into connectivity for non lead pastors, not necessarily with someone from the district office.