

The Car Model

Helping us find our place in the Church's Lifecycle

Prior to doing this exercise, it is helpful to view the PowerPoint presentation called "The Car Model". It will provide a basis for understanding the process and value of this exercise.

The CAR model assessment provides an opportunity to engage in healthy dialogue related to church effectiveness, and to help a group of people to understand and articulate where it is that they perceive themselves to be on the Typical Church's Lifecycle. By the time this assessment tool is completed, you will gain understanding of the four organizational principles always present and at work in your church. You will also be able to determine which one of these principles is the 'driving' force in your church at this time, and which are not part of what is driving your church.

THE CAR MODEL

The **CAR** model is a useful tool in helping people realize which organizational principle is giving direction to or controlling the life of a church. It is also a helpful in determining which stage a church finds itself on the 'church life cycle.'

This tool explains there are four organizational principles always present, to different degrees, in the functioning of every church. Understanding the relationship between these four organizational principles provides a lens through which we understand how and why the church functions the way it does.

The four organizational principles are:

VISION (V)

The principle of Vision refers to the presence of Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values in the church. It has been said that many churches have vision statements, but few churches truly have vision. The key to understanding this organizational principle is in realizing 'vision' is not a statement but a 'focused forward movement.'

RELATIONSHIPS (R)

Relationships focus on the bonds between people that create not only a sense of community but an environment where growth in discipleship can take place. This principle relates to the living 'organism' of the church.

PROGRAMS (P)

Programs relate to the visible/tangible side to the relational dimension. It includes all events/ministries/services/activities in the church. This principle

refers to the logistical 'organization' of the church; what a church does in meeting the needs of its members and community.

MANAGEMENT (M)

Management refers to activities in the church that hold people accountable; maintain systems and keep track of resources. Someone has described this organizational principle as focusing on "bodies, bucks, boards & buildings"

Understand how the model works:

Imagine a car with four seats; two seats in the front, one of which is the driver's seat, and two seats in the back. Each seat is occupied by one of the organizational principles. (VRPM) The challenge of making this model meaningful is in our ability to understand where these organization principles are seated in the car.

Considering how things are going in the church will give you a 'gut reaction' as to the seating configuration of the organizational principles. A simple yet profound question you need to answer at this point is... **What is Driving Our Church?** It is critical to church health & effectiveness to understand how these four elements are configured or emphasized in the life of your church.

How to use this tool:

1. Each participant should take time to personally reflect on the four questions on the next page. Give each question a score on the scale provided.
2. Once each person has completed this exercise, meet together as a group to discuss the presence of the four organizational principles and create a 'team score' for each principle. Often this can be done by simply creating an average number based in the average of the participant's responses. Merge groups together and repeat the process until there is a 'group' number for each of the 4 principles.
3. On the final page you will find an actual 'CAR Seating Model.' Based on your team scores for each principle. Assign seats to your scores as follows: Place the letter (VRPM) from your highest score in the driver's seat; second highest in the front passenger seat and the other two letters in the back seat.
4. In light of your findings, consider the sections listed under:
 - a. Understand how the model works
 - b. Possible seating plans
 - c. Interacting with the CAR Model
 - d. Further Insight – use with the LIFE CYCLE model.
5. As a group consider your 'next steps' in light of the findings of this tool.

Possible Seating Plans...

The ideal seating plan for an effective church would find Vision & Relationships in the front seat with Vision in the driver's seat. Vision is 'leading the way' and Relationships make the adventure of vision a meaningful adventure because they are taking the journey together. In this configuration meaningful Programs and Management provide the supportive environment that allow Vision and Relationships to thrive in the 'front seat'.

Another potential seating configuration will find Management driving accompanied by Programs in the front seat. If Vision is lacking in the church and there isn't a real sense of community, we substitute activity (doing) for the reality of being! Management & Programs are essential in the framework of the church but if they are driving, you end up with a bureaucratic organization, not a living organism! Emphasizing programs & management is walking by sight whereas vision & relationship is walking by faith.

Interacting with the CAR Model

Meet with a team of church leaders/members for the purpose of having an honest and healthy discussion in understanding 'what's driving your church.'

Have each person fill in a 'CAR seating plan' privately from others. Then have people compare their seating configuration - this leads to discussion and perhaps will expose differing seating plans. Allow people to share why they placed the principles in the seats that they did.

Further Insight...

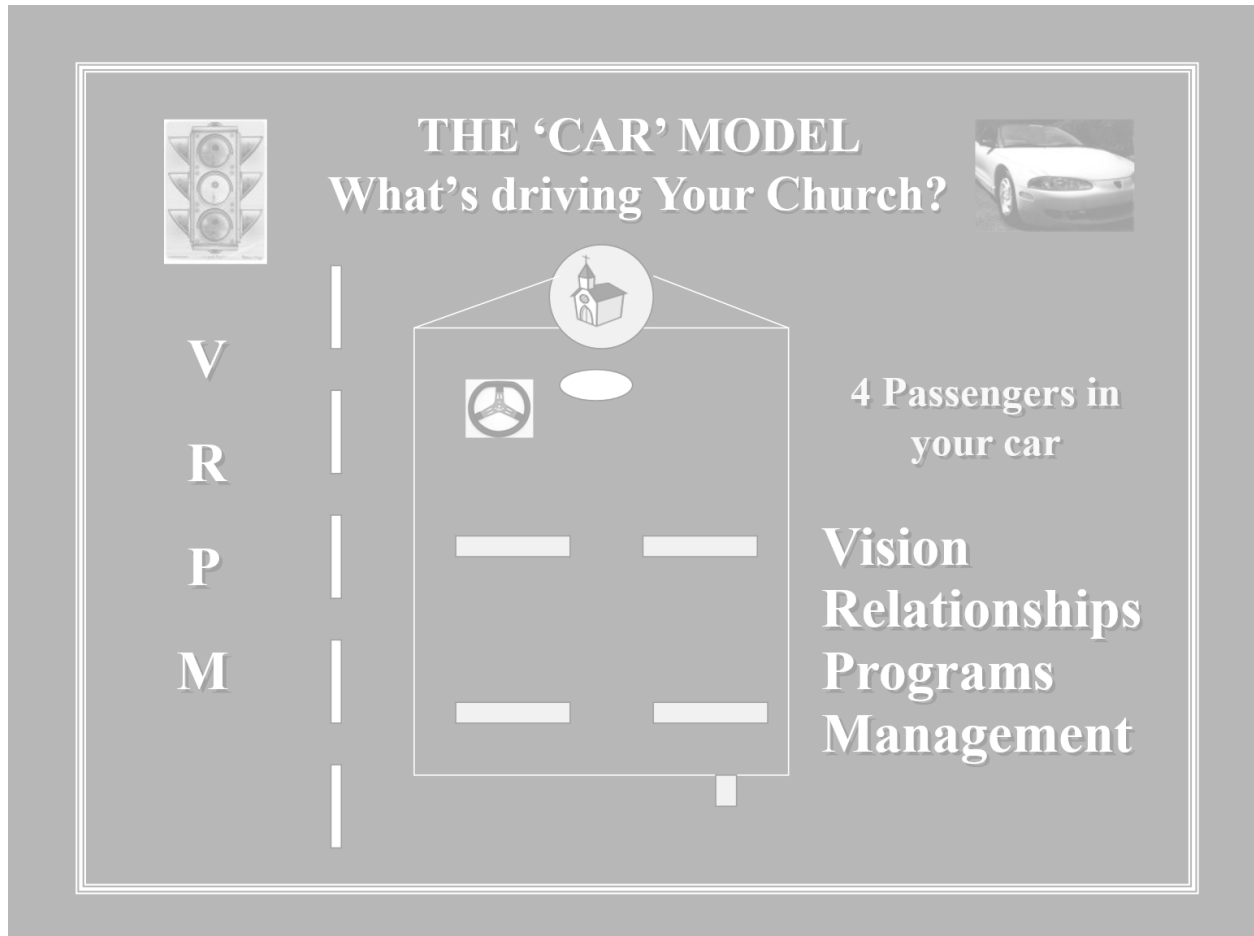
This model can be used in understanding the development stage a church is on as noted by the Church Life Cycle. (Developed by George Bullard) In this model it is noted for the first 20 years of a church's existence, **Vision** is always dominant in leading a church to healthy development. It is noted however that between 18-22 years into the life of a church, unless there is a continual 'revisioning' process (every 5-7 years), **Management** naturally moves into the driver's seat and provides a 'controlling element' to the nature of future development in the church.

Seating Plan Template...

Duplicate the following tool allowing each leader to personally consider and commit to paper their perception of the relationships between the four organizational principles present in their church.

V - _____ R - _____ P - _____ M - _____

What is Driving Your Church?



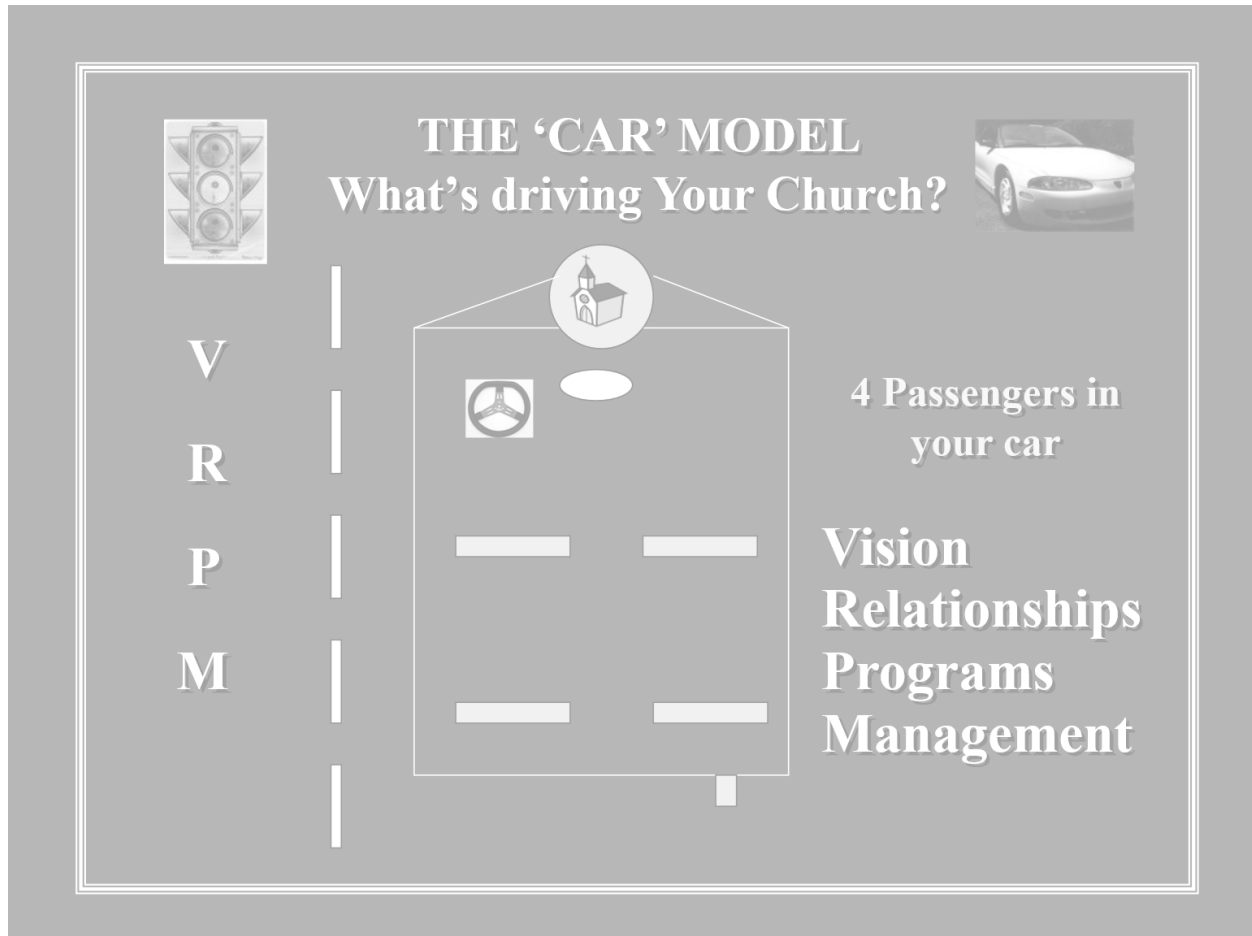
Place each organizational principle... V – R – P – M, based on your numeric values in one of the car seats to reflect the 'driving forces' in your church at this time.

Team Seating Plan Template...

Duplicate the following tool allowing each group to consider and commit to paper their corporate perception of the relationships between the four organizational principles present in their church.

V - _____ R - _____ P - _____ M - _____

What is Driving Your Church?



Place each organizational principle... V – R – P – M, based on your averaged numeric values in one of the car seats to reflect the 'driving forces' in your church at this time.