Our Current Life Cycle Stage: _____

1. <u>Birth</u>: The Birth stage is driven by the expression of a passionate God-given Vision concerning the life of the newly emerging congregation. Relationships, Programs, and Management activities are happening, but they are not fully developed at this stage. Leadership is expressed through vision, and assists in fueling the forward progress of the congregation.

2. <u>Infancy</u>: Vision and Relationships are dominant. The expression of discipleship patterns that focus on worship, spiritual development, and the formation of warm and rich relationship patterns or a sense of true community in the congregation characterize infancy. During Infancy the passion of the congregation to fulfill its vision will increase as people discover their role in this exciting spiritual and strategic journey. Out of this passion people readily volunteer to do the work of the congregation because their congregation has the character of a movement they very much want to enhance and empower. Healthy patterns of worship, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and ministry and missions are established during this stage.

3. <u>Childhood</u>: This stage focuses on Vision and Programs. Childhood is initiated by the realization that the congregation is succeeding, but that its programs, ministries, and activities are unorganized and not developed in a form that will allow the congregation to reach its maximum potential. The energy that was going into the development of deep, meaningful Relationships is now focused on developing and implementing the Programs structure for the congregation.

4. <u>Adolescence</u>: During this stage, Vision, Relationships, and Programs are all emphasized. It is often a time of a great crescendo of qualitative and quantitative growth. The congregation is able to relax following five to six years of program development and implementation. People can enjoy their relationship with God and one another. It is also a time of some chaos as people begin to multiply the dreams they have for the future of the congregation, and the core dream or vision of the congregation may appear fuzzy.

5. <u>Adulthood</u>: Vision, Relationships, Programs, and Management—are all fully developed. The congregation is ready to soar as a fully development spiritual community with great resources and the proper balance or alignment of these resources.

6. <u>Maturity</u>: Maturity is when Vision is no longer dominant or fully developed. The congregation is no longer living out the vision that God has given them. They are, instead, living out the patterns of Relationships, Programs, and Management they have developed. Without the fueling and driving aspects of Vision, the congregation is being motivated by Management. At the same time, Maturity may be a very high quality stage in the life of the congregation. There continues to be a crescendo of quality, even if Vision is diminished. Often congregations will plateau numerically during Maturity.

7. <u>Empty Nest</u>: Empty Nest is when Vision and Programs are no longer dominant. The congregation is experiencing disintegration of the quality and quantity of programs, ministries, and activities. Management is driving the direction of the congregation. Relationships, while still vital, are turning increasingly inward in their focus.

8. <u>Retirement</u>: Retirement is when Vision and Relationships are no longer dominant or fully developed. Management is driving the direction of the congregation. Programs are once again dominant as congregations seek to revitalize their programs, ministries, and activities.

9. <u>Old Age</u>: Old Age is when Vision, Relationships, and Programs are no longer dominant or fully developed. Management is the only factor that is still dominant or fully developed. As such the habit or pattern, generally at a mediocre level, drives the direction of the congregation.

10. <u>Death</u>: Death is when a congregation ceases functioning as a Christ-centric faith community with regular worship, discipleship, and fellowship activity