



# **HEALTHY GROWING CHURCHES TOOLKIT**

**A resource for  
church leaders**

Published February 2010

# INTRODUCTION

**This toolkit is a collection of resources and pointers to help church leadership and apostolic teams to steer churches towards becoming Healthy Growing churches and resourcing apostolic bases.**

**The goal is to help local churches to self assess themselves so they can better move forward in their mission.**

**In the context of the 2020vision> we would like all Salt & Light churches to aspire to growing and being healthy so we put together these resources to help encourage churches to find ways to grow and become more healthy!**

**You are free to make use of this toolkit in what ever way you wish. Remember to check the Salt & Light web site for more resources.**

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# HOW TO

**There is no “right way” to become a healthy growing church – there in lies a mystery in why Jesus left the church as his mission to the world!**

**A key goal of the 2020vision> is to see a massive growth in the number of churches in our family - But we also need to keep all of our current churches healthy and growing.**

**These steps are intended to provide a guide as to how to take stock of where you and your church is in order to help take steps to improve it's health and prepare for future growth.**

## Step 1

Take stock personally. Consider your own spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual health as a leader: If you were to state the health level like the RPM gauge on a motor car for each of these areas would you be in the “red zone”?

Remember short spells in the red zone are ok - But if life seems to mean you are constantly living in the red zone then take steps to adjust this.

## Step 2

Read the Core Commitments that we have set out as common to Salt & Light churches. Be prepared to assess the life and health of your church against the doctrinal and theological statements held within this.

## Step 3

Work through the Healthy Growing Churches questionnaire. Prepare your leadership team and give them time to consider review questions or in the case of a particular leadership or pastoral issue, enough pertinent information to prayerfully consider alongside the questionnaire.

There are 2 other resources to consider: An assessment of what training you are currently doing and some questions designed to provoke thinking about your role in your region.

## Step 4

Record carefully the issues that appear to require the most work and development. It is good to involve external input so make time for this if appropriate. Also take time to brief those with prophetic gifting and take time to listen and weigh the advice of these people.

## Step 5

Make CLEAR, well thought through decisions which are specific and measurable and ensure you communicate changes and decisions thoroughly to your leadership teams, elders and people as appropriate. There are a multitude of resources available on how to lead churches through change.

You may find it useful to develop a strategic plan for the next 10 years. What you discover in the process of review will help to inform this.

# INTRODUCTION

## CHURCH REVIEWS

In some cases you may feel that an Apostolic Review is appropriate, perhaps when faced with a major change of leadership, pastoral difficulty or some other situation. It is healthy in itself to build this into the life of a church (perhaps once ever 3 years at least) but often we resort to reviews in crisis times!

Consider whether a review is appropriate: Perhaps if you use the Healthy Growing Churches questionnaire and it reveals there are large gaps in the life of the church that need extra input. Ensure you speak to your apostolic link about when and how but here are some suggestions:

### Who

Your apostolic link should oversee your review but you should be involved with shaping the programme and objectives with them.

### Where

Consider an appropriate venue (and time of day) where you can hold meetings and one-to-one discussions. You may consider it advantageous to hold a review at an “off-site” venue (especially if you plan for it in advance) but in case it is more urgent it may not be possible to do this.

### When

You must judge this but also talk to your apostle. In case of conflict or urgent issues it will be obvious, but consider a regular pattern of review.

### Why

Because it is healthy and we have a biblical model of it in the way Paul and the other early church apostles visited the churches they oversaw to bring encouragement and correction. We are often blind to issues in our own characters and in the same way we can be blind to issues in our local churches!

### What and How

This is dependent on the style of leadership you have and how you work with your apostle but a review process should be well thought through and open-handed. Consider planning timetables for interviews, elders and trustees meetings, space and time for people to reflect. It is important that decisions are noted and plans put into action, so consider how reviews will be recorded and ensure someone is made responsible for doing this.

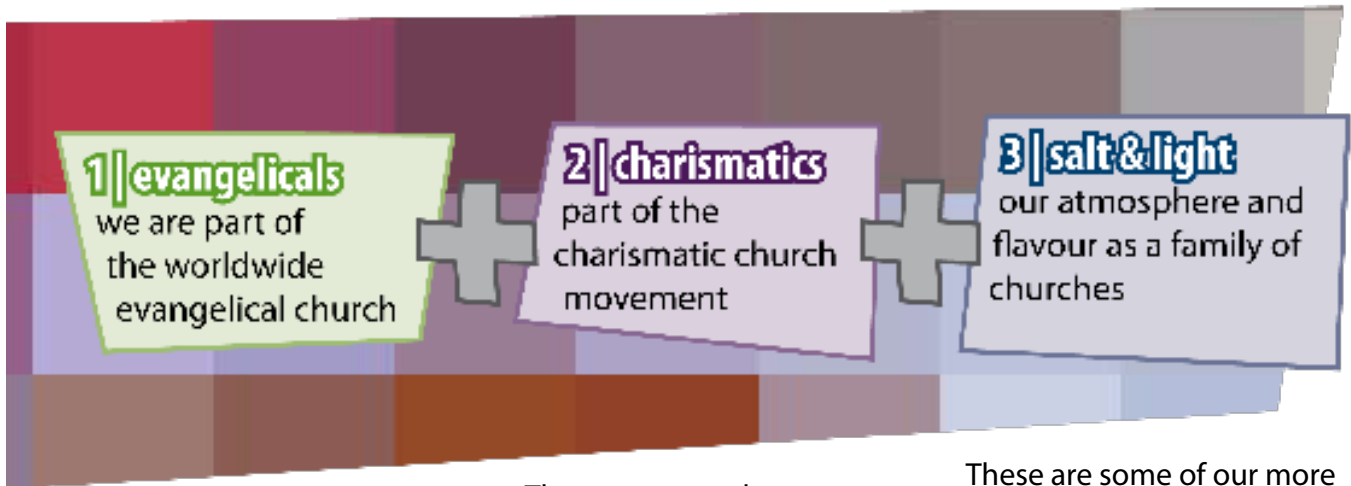
## CORE COMMITMENTS

### A family together!

**The core leadership of our family of churches has certain beliefs, values and commitments. This is how we want to live together in our part of the family of God! As leaders we will live according to these core commitments. We will preach and teach these commitments in our conferences and training, constantly calling up churches to them.**

Our 2020vision> provides a greater degree of mobilisation for the mission God has called us to and has led to a call for greater clarity on what the Salt & Light family of churches stand for and are committed to. These commitments describe us now – the result of walking together relationally for over 25 years – and so they are also the foundation for where we want to go together.

We have explored a 3-stage model, successively setting out our place in God's wider evangelical family, within the charismatic family and our distinctive character as the Salt & Light family. This is simply summarised as:



This implies a commitment to certain beliefs, as set out, for example, in the Evangelical Alliance (UK) Basis of Faith and shared by the vast majority of Evangelicals worldwide.

These are a number of convictions that characterise very many Christian people in all sorts of networks and denominations. They are not specific to Salt & Light and we hope they are non-contentious.

These are some of our more distinctive commitments that characterise our family of churches.

This was originally presented at the European Leaders Conference 2009, Oxford by Steve Thomas and is summarised in it's simplest form above.

As you use this toolkit please make reference to the full Core Commitments document which is available from [www.saltlight.org/europe/resources/core-commitments](http://www.saltlight.org/europe/resources/core-commitments) along with a number of other documents and videos.



# HEALTHY GROWING CHURCHES

**'Health' is a difficult factor to measure. We often use "diagnostic" questions to determine how well functioning something is. In this section there are some diagnostic questions to help leadership and apostolic teams work with churches to bring them to full health – when they will engage in mission and grow!**

## What are the key issues?

In our statement of Core Commitments, we explore our foundational doctrines, beliefs and convictions. These biblical/theological convictions underpin our attitudes and practice.

The diagnostic questions explore practical symptoms in order to identify deeper root causes. The questions are based around what we do and think in our churches – the measurable symptoms. It is hoped that these questions will help self-diagnosis, and lead you to understand whether there are deeper issues that need attention, or whether it is simply a practical matter that needs fixing.

We have been working on the most fundamental definitions of health, bearing in mind that we want it to be relevant for churches of all shapes and sizes.

We have drawn criteria from:

- An understanding of the Trinity
- A biblical overview of the 'people of God'
- Our awareness of church history
- Some knowledge of 'church' in different cultural settings

# HEALTHY GROWING CHURCHES

We have come to five main criteria that are the essential qualities that make up 'church'. We have then added a sixth criterion that is to do with practical governance. They are:

**Community** – the corporate shared lives of believers. Community is where believers find a place of belonging, care, support, function, security and identity.

**Worship** – the central focus for a community of believers is God!! He is at the centre of our individual and corporate lives, and we live lives of worship to Him and for Him.

**Mission** – God's great redemptive plan to restore mankind into relationship with Him is being worked out through His people. The church exists to serve God's mission.

**Discipleship** – every healthy church will have a goal for the growth and development of every believer to become a fully devoted, mature follower of Jesus.

**Leadership** – leaders provide direction, stability, care and focus for the church. There are numerous styles and approaches, but they are also ultimately responsible for the atmosphere and culture of a church. Good governance is essentially to church health.

## QUESTIONS FOR CHURCHES

### How to use this Section

There are a lot of questions as this is intended to be quite thorough.

It is split into 5 areas (according to the key issues outlined on p5). These questions refer back to the statement of Core Commitments.

You may choose to ask individual leaders to consider and record responses to these questions then come together to discuss them or work through the questions in the context of a team meeting or review.

The questions are intended to provoke response but be wary of drilling down to individual matters. You may find it helpful to record on a flip chart or white board important issues for later discussion.

### Community

*(Core Commitments: 2b Building the church, 3a Relationship, 3d Generosity)*

**What is the quality of relationships in the church?** Are we becoming a meeting-centred church, or do people have meaningful, loving relationships? (A good test is to ask how people respond when there is some kind of pastoral crisis. Does the church 'rally round'?)

**How do our structures facilitate the building of relationship?** For example, large churches often need to work on contexts for establishing real relationship.

**To what extent do people have a commitment/belonging/loyalty to the local church,** to see it as 'the hope of the world' and to work together with other believers? Or do they have a consumerist attitude – coming to have their spiritual needs met.

**How inclusive are we as a church?**

**Does our church community have a generous spirit?**

**Is there a culture of service in the church?** Do people get involved with practical service inside and outside the church?

### Worship

*(Core Commitments: 2a Living in the Spirit)*

**What is our strategy to help new Christians or Christians moving into our churches understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit?**

**How are we growing in prayerfulness as a church?** As we pray, is there a flow of prophetic – God's now-word to us – giving encouragement, guidance and direction to the church?

**As we gather for corporate worship, in Sunday or midweek meetings, how are we encouraging a spontaneity and vibrancy in worship?**

**Are we a 'charismatic church', where the empowering and enabling of the Holy Spirit is evident in people's daily lives?** Is there a flow of stories of God and the Holy Spirit helping people?

**Is there openness to prophetic ministry?** Do you see healings, signs and wonders in your church? What testimonies can you bring?

## Mission

*(Core Commitments: 2c Kingdom, 2d Mission)*

**What evangelistic activity is the church currently involved with** (e.g. Alpha course, outreach events)? What fruit is there in these? Is there a culture of evangelism in the church – i.e. do people engage with “loving their neighbour”?

**How would we rate the congregation’s enthusiasm for mission and evangelism?**

**Are we promoting a holistic approach to mission: Words, Works and Wonders?** Which areas are we strong in and which are weak?

**Do we have a plan or strategy for evangelism in the church?** Do we equip and train people in evangelism?

**Are people bringing guests to seeker/guest events?**

**Are we involved with activities and projects that serve the wider community?** What fruit are we seeing from these? Are they sustainable?

**Are we engaged with the community – e.g. local politics, interest and community groups?** Is there a Christian voice in the community?

**What are our relationships like with churches in the locality?** Do the leaders/people work together at all? Do we participate in wider events with other churches?

**Do we work with other agencies (local or national) in serving the community?** Are we working or planning to work cross-culturally or with other people groups who live in our area?

**Are we involved with mission abroad or in other parts of the region/nation?** Do we look to release people into other parts of the world? What fruit are we seeing from these? Are these projects sustainable?

**Are we connected to any other Salt & Light churches in missional activities and projects?**

**How do we rate our social consciousness in relation to stewardship of the world, caring for others?**

## Discipleship

*(Core Commitments: 3e Discipleship)*

**Is there a culture of members of the body becoming disciples?** Is the Bible being used to do this? Is there evidence of one-to-one or small group relationships growing so that people are engaged in discipling relationships?

**Is the Bible regularly used as the formative tool in preaching, teaching and evangelism?** Are people generally literate in their use of the Bible? How do we plan to teach people about studying and living by the Bible?

**Are we, our team and the people in the church open to change and moving forward?** Are we open to the work and movement of the Holy Spirit in all we do?

**Are we training the next generation of leaders?** Do we have plans for who to invest in for the future?

**Are we, our team and the people of the church engaged in regular spiritual disciplines?** Is there regular corporate prayer? Do people tithe and give offerings freely? Do people understand what it means to serve sacrificially?

## Leadership

*(Core Commitments: 3b Family; 3c Leadership; 3d Generosity; 3f Ephesians 4; 3g Wider relationships; 3h Diversity)*

**How healthy is our leadership team? Do we like each other?** Do we say what needs to be said to each other? Are we a real team? Do we defer to each others gifting and perspectives?

**Is there a culture of trust amongst those in leadership?** Are we all able to passionately share points of view without breakdown in relationship? Is everyone committed to leading the church as a team? Do we openly hold each other to account for the roles we play in leading the church? Is everyone focussed on the same vision?

**Are we seeing every member in ministry: a priesthood of all believers?**

**How does the church view the leadership of the church?** Can they strongly identify with and relate to those in leadership roles?

**What is the strength of relationship with our regional apostolic team?** Is it functioning? Are there key relationships which require strengthening?

**Do we have a firm understanding and control over the finances of the church and its associated ministries?** Are there capable people in charge of overseeing this aspect?

**Do we have the right people in place to manage the activities of the church?**

**Do we effectively communicate with the church?**

**Are the governance and leadership structures in place suitable to the church?** Is there a healthy balance between the spiritual and legal governance of the church? Are there any unresolved points of conflict or issues that regularly dominate?

## WHO ARE WE TRAINING UP?

**We see our Goal 3 - To have trained at least 300 new leaders for churches and teams, inspiring, equipping and leading God's people into our vision - as central to achieving all of the others! In which case we all have a lot of work to do.**

**In 2009-10 we spent a lot of time thinking about how we shape training across Salt & Light, working together regionally and nationally. There is much to do still but we want to encourage local churches to consider their response to this goal now.**

Please read the training update document given at ELC 2010 for further information.

In particular, it is important for local churches to assess carefully what training they are doing at Base Level and Level 1

To help do this use the following 2 sets of questions to assess what you are currently doing and to inform plans for future training programmes.

Remember, this is intended to be helpful, not proscriptive. What suits your local church will be different from others so please chose to use or reject ideas given here. Equally, if you have a good idea you would like others to know about please let us know.

### More resources

» **training resources at**  
**[www.saltlight.org/uktraining](http://www.saltlight.org/uktraining)**

### Base Level

#### ***Making Disciples of new Christians***

While there is significant overlap with the Healthy Growing church Questionnaire (p6-7) these questions are intended to help develop the basic discipleship and training we give to our people.

**Do you regularly provide opportunities for people to express commitment to your church**, whatever your model of membership, formal or informal? For example an introductory or commitment course?

**Are you actively encouraging every member in ministry and service in the life of the church?** Are there adequate opportunities for this?

**Do you provide courses for people in the church?** For example nurture and recovery courses, marriage and parenting courses and opportunities to receive teaching and guidance on discipleship.

**Do you have a culture of pastoral care and discipleship** which is easy for people - especially new converts - to engage with?

**What are you doing to actively identify those who are emerging as leaders** who could be equipped and trained further?

**Do you regularly invest in training for those who are running your core ministries?** For example children's and youth workers, small group leaders and ministry and pastoral team members.

### Level 1

***To produce 'general practitioners' who are Emerging Leaders for church ministries, projects and fresh initiatives, and exercising 'kingdom leadership' in daily life.***

**What training courses or programmes are you currently running** which helps to train and identify Emerging Leaders?

*If you are not already running any, consider reviewing the current resource list available from the uktraining mini web site.*

**Do you have plans in the next 12 months** to identify and provide training for potential leaders?

**Have you decided what resources/course/programme you might use?** Do you have adequate people and resources to do this?

*If you have some of this in place, why not consider talking to churches in your area or region that you could co-operate with?*

**If you are already running a programme have you assessed the effectiveness of it?** Are people responding to the input into their lives? Are you beginning to see people exercise leadership as a result?

**Would you consider running this programme again?** How are you going to consider developing your Emerging Leaders further?

**Are you actively encouraging your Emerging Leaders** to attend Salt & Light events such as European Leaders Conference?

# WHAT ARE APOSTOLIC BASES?

**The words “apostolic” and “apostle” are use widely in our leadership meetings and conferences these days and while it is not a new term it is often little understood and seen as perhaps not relevant to local church life. In fact a healthy apostolic influence is critical to the ongoing development and health of any church.**

Our second goal by 2020 is to have increased to 15 regional apostolic teams that strengthen, equip and support churches to reach our communities and regions, and beyond. The shape this takes is not by any means set and this introduction aims to help bring some clarity to what an apostolic base church might be like.

## A working definition

An apostolic base is **“An influential ‘sending’ church that is committed to actively preparing, pioneering, and resourcing new churches and ministries.”**

Traditionally these were cathedrals, responsible for numbers of parish churches but with a regional responsibility. The biblical examples we see are Antioch, Jerusalem and later Ephesus and Rome.

## What are the characteristics of an Apostolic Base?

Apostolic bases are a role model (influential) to those around them. They should have grown and functioned successfully in primary areas of ministry (i.e. five fold ministry). They are usually led by strong, influential leadership team, with a clear visionary leader and are often a larger church with greater capacity for sharing resources.

Those resources are not limited to finances! They should include Ephesians 4 type ministries and people with specific skills; Missionaries, potential church planters and those willing to relocate for the sake of the gospel. There should be financial resource available especially to support developing situations and to release ministry.

An apostolic base should carry a clear vision! This will likely include a desire to make a difference locally through engaging with local community; An intention to ‘reach a region’ with the gospel, primarily by planting new churches; A heart for nations, sending and supporting people overseas. Overall the base should have a vision to affect regions, areas and people beyond its own immediate scope.

Also a significant characteristic of an apostolic base is the training and equipping of people including the development of people into mature ministries. We need to raise up innovative, expansive, influential leaders, in order to release others. Apostolic bases need to provide effective training, to prepare people to “take the gospel where it hasn’t gone yet!”

## How have they developed?

Apostolic bases have a clear, anointed, visionary leadership team that gathers and builds who are usually leading long term! They need to be built around strong teams – a team of diverse ministry gifting, gathered together and functioning together as one. Members of this team should be actively “reproducing themselves” and training others in their area of ministry.

The apostolic base has to have an expansive vision – to see the Kingdom of heaven extended into areas where it is not yet seen! In the early church the vision was clear: to reach Jerusalem (local), Judea and Samaria (regional) and the ends of the earth (nations) - Our apostolic bases should mirror this vision.

Finally they are a place from which to gain external input – strategic advice, counsel and direction at pivotal times. The leadership should also provide on-going assistance to local churches with an objective, mature voice. Ultimately the apostolic ministry should be inspirational and provocative! It should influence churches with ministries and leaders inspiring and provoking each other to be fully effective.

*Adapted from a discussion paper written by Mark Mumford in preparation for the UK Summit II, March 2009. You may also like to read the article by Mark Mumford on apostolic bases in the 2020vision > launch magazine (Summer 2009) available from [www.saltlight.org/2020vision](http://www.saltlight.org/2020vision)*

## QUESTIONS FOR REGIONS

### Introduction

**The UK Apostolic Team developed a simple questionnaire to help them assess and ask the right questions about whether we are developing healthy resourcing apostolic bases.**

This is included for information and provocation – in a local church setting it might be useful to consider if your church is “playing its part” in the region, is there an adequate connection to the regional leadership team (if there is one) and whether there is more to do to work together on a vision for not just the local but the regional.

### How to use it!

Use the questions to provoke discussion about the region. In the context of the local church, try and identify strengths, weaknesses, future opportunities and potential problems you may perceive (based on SWOT analysis).

There is some overlap here with the Healthy Growing Churches questionnaire so try to answer questions in the context of your region.

Record your responses and use them to shape your strategic planning for the local church. It would be helpful to share this with your apostolic link. Ultimately, there is no right or wrong way but it should stir you to consider the mission and vision for your church.

### A regional vision

**Is there a vision for your region?**

If so, do you identify with it, are you on board with it? If not, are you engaged with the Salt & Light 2020vision>?

**Are you as a church actively engaged in working on your own 2020vision>?**

*More specifically can you assess the current situation and progress in respect to each goal. Remember, it is through the regions and local churches engaging with the vision that we will reach goal 1 and 2 but also through dialogue and cohesive working that we meet goals 3 and 4 – i.e. we need to all talk about what we are each doing, what works well, what doesn't in order to keep moving forward.*

### Goal 1

In general terms, what is the Health of the local churches in the region at the moment?

What is the state of pastoral/ apostolic connections with leaders and teams?

Is there growth, new birth and baptisms?

Are there any financial and governmental issues affecting churches in the region?

Are there any major pastoral issues affecting churches and are you equipped to deal with them?

Do any churches need particular leadership input at the moment?

### Goal 2

How would you rate the number and maturity of Ephesians 4 ministries in the area?

Is there a functioning regional team in the area? If not, are there plans to form one?

How could the team be improved?

Is external input required in any area?

### Goal 3

Are efforts being made to identify emerging leaders in local churches?

Do you have enough leaders (from small groups to congregations)?

Are you investing in Base Level and Level 1 training – can you connect to someone who is?

Are there and plans for further training, either regional Level 2 ministry or theological training?

### Goal 4

What current society transforming initiatives are churches in the region involved with?

Are there any new initiatives in the pipeline?

What training and equipping for this area is happening at the present time?

What further resources are required nationally or regionally to equip, train, mobilise people?

# BUILDING A STRATEGIC PLAN

The following are some pointers to working out a strategic plan for your local church and how it will contribute to the Salt & Light 2020vision> The question is: What is the vision for the local church here and what plans and resources do we need to put in place to meet that vision?

## Clarify your vision!

- Get clear on your God Mandate – overall mission.
- Seek God – listen to the prophetic sound – pray!
- Review the current health and life of the church (see p6-7)
- Review this and ask what the vision for the next 10 years looks like.
- Consider how you can break this into a small number of specific goals to reach in this time.

This is your overall vision – begin by communicating it to your leadership teams and encourage people to contribute into it.

## Build a strategy!

To build a strategy you need to determine what you need to do to achieve each goal and then how you will go about doing it.

You could:

- Determine what factors, events or changes will contribute to the goal being met (e.g. a new youth worker appointed to increase number of 11-18's in church).
- Identify if any of them are common to all your goals (e.g. cultivate corporate prayer towards this goal). If so, draw them out as common strategies.
- For each factor, try to put them in order of priority or systematic order (that is the order they have to happen in!).
- Attach a time to each step – be realistic but open to the fact that it can and probably will be flexible.

- Try and identify costs and resources against each step (e.g. cost of employing full time worker per year)
- Draw up a time line for each goal and set realistic mid term (4 yearly) gateways which are significant milestones on the way to the goal.
- Set-up special working groups to target each goal. This must be done with CLEAR and well understood terms of reference to the main leadership team – e.g. a brief is given, there is a strong link to the team and a deadline is given for “reporting” back.
- Continue to share the process with your leadership teams and involve specialists and external teams where appropriate.
- Record all of this in a concise and complete format and set some points to review in details.
- Ensure you remain accountable to the goals you set and keep the main mission in view at all times!

## Implement!

Much is written on this but here are 3 simple principles:

**Capture:** Express the vision and the mission simply in words – this will help when you communicate your vision to others.

**Communicate:** Communication is complex. People receive and understand information in different ways. Consider carefully how to break it down into chunks and take account of different learning styles and styles of influence. People react differently to change and you should take care to understand this.

**Connect:** Connect your mission, vision, goals and your strategies into every part of the life of the church. Vision without action is merely a dream. This starts with the leadership example but should permeate through every aspect of church life.

## 7 tips for discussion facilitators

Use these tips to help your team work through self assessment or strategic planning!

1. Set out the goals for the session and set some ground rules.
2. Ask open questions.
3. Keep focus – don't be distracted by “rabbit holes” or contentious topics – come back to them later if they need addressing.
4. Try and ensure that talkative team members don't take over and equally quieter ones are encouraged to contribute.
5. Nominate some one to record points on a flip chart or notepaper.
6. Pay attention to what is being said – not though words but by body language.
7. Try and stay neutral – if this is not possible consider appointing someone who is to facilitate the discussions.

## More resources

Why not ask others what their journey has been and make use of resources and tools others have used. If you have a particularly good resource that you would like to share with others then contact us at [europa@saltlight.org](mailto:europa@saltlight.org)

» **2020vision> resources at [www.saltlight.org/2020vision](http://www.saltlight.org/2020vision)**



For further information talk with your apostolic connection, visit the web site, or email us  
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