



## SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH: AN ASSIMILATION SYSTEM

by Glenn Smith

Once your new church is launched and you have begun creating a sense of community among the new people, it is important to start developing your essential systems for health. There are **three critical systems** that every new church needs to develop to be healthy and sustainable:

1. An Assimilation System
2. A Spiritual Formation System
3. A Leadership Development System

What is an **Assimilation System**? This is your process for connecting with people who are far from God, and bringing them into “connection” with your faith community. Of course this involves everyone in your church!

Everyone should be establishing and building intentional relationships with people who are far from God. I encourage every believer to have an “Impact List.” These are people who God has placed in your path who you will be praying for, investing in, and building an authentic relationship. As the Holy Spirit prepares their heart, we look for opportunities to have spiritual conversations. You can learn more about an “Impact List” strategy from Mark Mittelberg’s book *Becoming a Contagious Church*.

Many people think of assimilation as beginning when someone walks through the door on a Sunday morning. However, it begins much earlier. We need to train our people to think and live like missionaries. They should be our primary channel for connecting with people who are far from God and far from the church. The process of assimilation begins when that unchurched person is **first** touched by our faith community, which is typically through a relationship with one of our members.

My experience has been that people may visit, but they are not assimilated until 2 things happen. First, the newcomer begins to feel mutual care from 2 or more regular attenders. Second, the newcomer feels like they make a meaningful contribution to the group. This is usually accomplished best through service teams rather than conventional small groups.

We must think of ways to make these two things happen. It’s really not that hard – it’s usually more about fellowship and relational connections than anything else.

So, be sure to design your assimilation system for results, and then measure its effectiveness at different points. A good coach will help you think these through. They will help you design an assimilation system that connects many new people to your faith community every month.