

# Karl Vaters, Session 1

## The Grasshopper Myth

### What is The Grasshopper Myth?

The false impression that our small church ministry is less than what God says it is because we compare ourselves with others.

*All the people we saw there are of great size...We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them. – Numbers 13:32-33*

Three undeniable realities of pastoral ministry:

- Reality #1: 80-90% of congregations will never be larger than 250 people
- Reality #2: Virtually all pastors will lead a small congregation for at least some time in our ministry
- Reality #3: You can lead a small congregation well, without settling for less

Don't fall for IKEA Envy

Small is not a problem, a virtue or an excuse

Bigger fixes nothing

The pastoral prime mandate: to equip God's people for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-12)

The three essential elements of a healthy, effective congregation

- Great Commandment
- Great Commission
- Equipping God's people

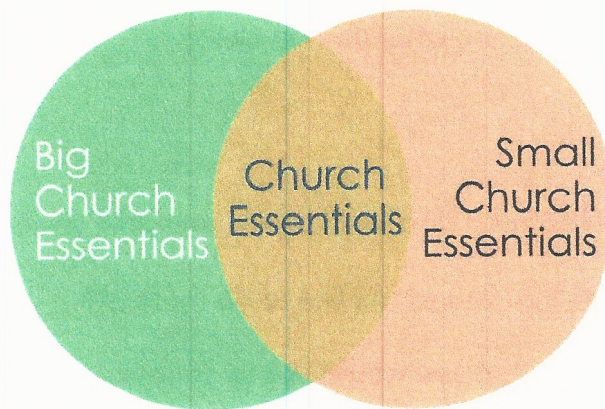
Pastoring a small congregation is not a penalty for doing something wrong

- It's a specialty, and it's worth doing well

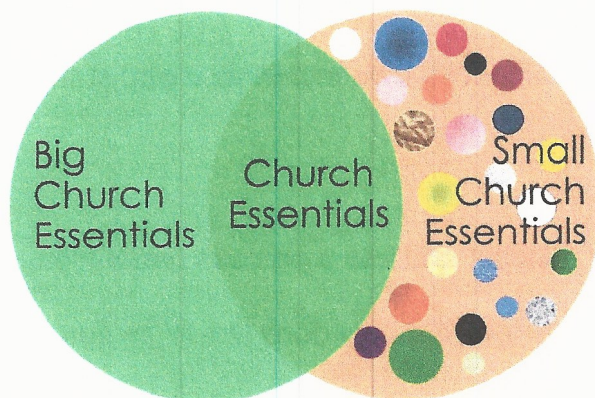
## Karl Vaters, Session 2 Essentials for Small Congregations

“Over 90% of our churches are under 200, over 80% are under 100”

- First Reaction: “*Oh no!*”
- Second Reaction: “*So what?*”
- Final Reaction: “*Now* what?”



Many big church principles don't translate well to a small church context



The law of large numbers: the bigger the crowd, the more predictably they behave

- The smaller the crowd, the more impact each person has – for good and bad

Big church principles center on process, systems & programs

- Small church principles center on relationships, culture & history

It's OK for a pastor's vision to be helping the people fulfill their vision

Discover what your congregation does well, then do it on purpose

- Front-load the value: feature what you do well

Use the "closet rule" for ministries: Don't add a new one until you've dropped an old one

- What do you do well that you would like to do more of?
- What do you do poorly that you would like to do less of?

Find leaders by looking for servants

- Value passion and willingness over experience and status

Move out of a destination mindset and into a process orientation

- People can handle change, but they don't like to be surprised
- Give the leaders time to ponder big decisions

When thinking small saved the world