



Chapter 2

Alignment

*Laws are like sausages. It's better
not to see them being made.*

Otto von Bismarck

*Finally, beloved, whatever
is true, whatever is noble,
whatever is right, whatever
is pure, whatever is lovely,
whatever is admirable – if
anything is excellent or
praiseworthy – think about
such things.*

Philippians 4:8 (NRSV)

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Congregational life is complex. At times, it is even chaotic. Attempting to organize the church may feel like sweeping up marbles. Because the church is comprised of sinful people, there are many problems; some are just annoying while others are painfully destructive. Even though models are both a simplification and an exaggeration of reality, we will use a model to describe, simplify and ultimately organize our thinking about the unpredictable congregation. It is a *being/doing* model.

Think of all aspects of congregational life and divide them in two directions. Put all of what the congregation IS on the vertical *being* axis, and put all the things that the congregation DOES on the horizontal *doing* axis. This fundamental distinction helps define the alignment of the earthly *doing* of the church with the incarnation of Christ in the *being* of the church. The *being* of the church has a transcendent quality. The *doing* of the church is the human transitory response. Both are essential to mission.