

What is this?

- A network is a “mechanism to facilitate on-going communication and information sharing, helping members of the network do their work more effectively.”¹

The Z-4:10 Network will provide ways for leaders of EPC small churches (averaging 200 or less in

worship) to do just that on the internet and face to face. Its purpose is to affirm leaders of small churches and assist them in understanding their ministries missionally, in discerning their church’s unique strengths and gifts, and in reaching their communities.

- Z:4-10 isn’t a digital camera or a bike chain – which is what a Google search turns up. It stands for Zechariah 4:10, “For who has despised the day of small things?” Small churches are significant parts of the body of Christ and are valued in the EPC. Being missional is much more significant than size in determining ministry success.



Why is the EPC doing this?

- The small church is the “majority church.” About 60% of EPC churches gather with under 200 at worship each Sunday – about 40% gather with under 100.
- Our convictions about connectionalism. As Presbyterians we believe in being connected with each other. The network will offer a chance to connect with leaders in similar contexts across the country by internet and conferences and, for those who desire, face to face with those nearby.
- Small church leaders face similar issues. Small church leaders will benefit from peer learning. The Z-4:10 Network is a way to help that happen.
- The time is right. The EPC is growing in its understanding of what it means to be a missional denomination. Being “missional” has nothing to do with church size. It has everything to do with a church understanding itself and acting as a community of disciples participating in God’s mission in their location and, as he leads, to their region and to the world. Where better to understand what it means to be a community of disciples under the Lordship of Christ in mission in their location than in a smaller congregation?

How does this work?

- In February 2008 the EPC rolled out a major upgrade of its web site - epc.org. The Z-4:10 Network is in the “Ministries” section and gives you opportunities to read and react to articles on the small church

¹ Phill Butler, Well Connected: Releasing Power & Restoring Hope Through Kingdom Partnerships, Authentic Media/World Vision, 2006.





and hear stories of what is happening in other small churches. From a survey of 31 EPC small church pastors, a consensus developed of the 5 most pressing issues facing small church leaders. You can find those on the Z-4:10 page on epc.org. You are invited to share some of the ways you've struggled with and begun to work through these issues.

- The Z-4:10 Leadership Team will be working to establish clusters of small church leaders who will commit to meet together quarterly for encouragement and resourcing. They will also be planning some regional or national workshops on ministry in the small church. You will be receiving a call from one of these leaders this month to get acquainted and let you know about the Network.

A personal note

My first experience in a small church was in Vernon Hills, Illinois during seminary. On one of our first Sundays my wife and I stood up and said "We are new here and we have two boys who love to play baseball. We'd love to meet some new friends." And we met some. Imagine doing that in a large church setting! After seminary I pastored a small EPC congregation in Arizona where I experienced the joys, trials and feelings of inadequacy, discouragement, and isolation that go along with ministry in the smaller church. There wasn't too much written about the small church in the early 90's, but that has changed. Alongside all the small-church wisdom that has been put to paper has come the missional church discussion, which I believe God can use to breath new life into discouraged small churches. The time has come to do away with any notions that small churches are problems to be fixed. The time has come for small church leaders to learn to think and lead in missional directions. I encourage you to be part of the Z-4:10 Network and help it take shape. It's not intended to be a supercharged program. Rather, it's a means of communication for small church leaders so that God can be glorified in His church.

For the Kingdom,

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