

σωμα (soma): “one body - many types”

Σ_1 (Sigma 1 Church)

Dedicated facilities for worship, training and programming

Employed staff (pastor, others) either full-time or part time

Recognized by the government as a church (they have legal status)

Formally organized (constitution, by-laws, committee or team structure)

Tend to be attractional (most church-related activities are designed to draw people to the facilities)

Leaders typically receive training outside the church to prepare them to be leaders

Evangelism, outreach tend to be more a program than a lifestyle of the members

Significant financing required to underwrite the ministry of the church

Tendency to related to other churches of similar theology and polity

Size varies from small to mega

May meet in one location or multiple locations

Challenging to reproduce (trained leader, money, facilities needed, others)

Multiplication strategies tend to be focused on small groups (classes)

Σ_2 (Sigma 2 Church)

Facility needed for large group celebration

Small staff (pastor, others) either full-time or part time, most work done by cell/house church pastors)

Recognized by the government as a church (they have legal status)

Formally organized (constitution, by-laws, committee or team structure)

Attractional and incarnation strategies tend to be more balanced (come together for corporate prayer and worship, but most other work done in the cells at the local level)

Senior leaders may receive training outside the church, but the cell pastors are trained within the church structure

Evangelism, outreach tend to be less programmatic and more integrated into the lifestyle of the members

Financing required to underwrite the ministry of the church, but not as much as with type A

Tendency to related to other churches of similar theology and polity

Size varies from small to super-mega

The church meets in one location for celebration and multiple locations throughout the week

Challenging to reproduce, but not as difficult to reproduce as church type A

Multiplication strategies tend to be focused on multiplying cells

Σ_3 (Sigma 3 Church)

No church facility

The pastor is recognized by the church but not employed by the church in that role

This church has no legal status with the government

There is no formal organizational structure

Tends to be very local (incarnational), intimately connected to the community

Leaders receive training within the house church system (unlikely to have any formal training in ministry)

Evangelism is more likely to be integrated into the lifestyle of the members

No financing required to start or sustain the church

Tendency to operate more independently, less connectional

Size of the church is small (12-40 typically)

The church may meet in a designated place weekly or it may move freely as needed

Easy to reproduce

Multiplication strategies focus on multiplying disciples and multiplying churches

CHARACTERISTICS

STRENGTHS

Σ_1 (Sigma 1 Church)

Established and accepted model for church in the western world - familiar, known and accepted

Desired by most North Americans as the preferred model for doing church

Able to offer diverse programming for the whole family

Longevity

Resources available to start and sustain

Recognized by the government for charitable contributions

Σ_2 (Sigma 2 Church)

A proven model in other parts of the world ... some of the largest churches in the world are cell/celebration churches

Σ_3 (Sigma 3 Church)

Easy to reproduce — does not depend upon trained leadership, facilities or money to be reproduced

Gaining respectability and momentum as an alternative to the institutional church (e.g., books by Barna, articles in newspapers like USA Today)

Greater likelihood that every member will be actively engaged in some type of ministry

Closer relationship between the "member" and the pastor/leader, encouraging growth through modeling rather than just gathering information

LIMITATIONS

Dependent upon finances, facilities and staff

Difficult to reproduce

Over time, building may become an encumbrance

Limited number of available clergy

Level of dissatisfaction some feel with the institutional church (evident in growth of alternative models)

A change in the current government policy regarding taxation and/or charitable contributions could significantly affect this model

Requires dedicated space for corporate worship

A less familiar model in the western world, therefore limited training models

People may not think of this as a "real" church (deeply rooted mental model of the institutional church)