

# Scenarios for Revitalization



## Where are we now?

Mapping a path forward must start with pinpointing our current position. In *Comeback Churches*, Ed Stetzer & Mike Dodson suggest a diagnostic tool.

A church needs...		If it is...
Refocusing	<div> <div>Less</div> <div>↑</div> <div>CHANGE</div> <div>↓</div> <div>More</div> </div>	...stagnant in size. (It needs to have a clearer focus on evangelism and outreach.)
Reenergizing		...declining in size. (It needs to deal with some internal issues and begin to reach its community again.)
Restructuring		...a church that has experienced substantial decline. (It needs large internal changes and a new outreach strategy).
Restarting		...near death. (Churches with a long history of decline that will close if current trends continue. It needs to restart with new leadership or an entirely new church.)

How do we Re-focus & Re-energize?

## **Steps to Revitalization: Assessment, Alignment, Advancement**

### **Step #1: ASSESSMENT.**

- ☐ Discover needs of community and potential new ministries.
- ☐ Assess Leadership capability and needs.
- ☐ Identify Church Systems in need of restoration. Nelson Searcy of Church Leader Insights identifies Eight Systems of a Healthy Church:
  1. The Weekend Service System,
  2. The Outreach/Evangelism System,
  3. The Assimilation System,
  4. The Small Groups System,
  5. The Ministry Mobilization System,
  6. The Stewardship System,
  7. The Leadership Development System,
  8. The Strategy Planning System.<sup>1</sup>
- ☐ Research legal documents and history. History and legal documents need to be researched in order to identify potential threats to growth.

### **Step #2: ALIGNMENT.**

- ☐ Recover Faith Factors. In Chapter Three of the book Comeback Churches, Ed Stetzer identifies three faith factors that are essential to church revitalization: 1) A renewed belief in Jesus Christ and the Mission of the Church, 2) A renewed attitude for servanthood, 3) Strategic Prayer Efforts.<sup>2</sup>
- ☐ Discover/Recover the unique, God given Mission, Vision, Values. The revi team should participate in Church Planter Basic Training & take advantage of coaching networks & suggested reading lists to help discover a vision for the community.
- ☐ Make necessary identity changes. Name? Signs? Location? What identity changes may be necessary to birth new vision & energy in the church?
- ☐ Restore needed Church Systems for life and health. See above comment about Church Systems. What systems will need new energy & attention going forward?

### **Step #3: ADVANCEMENT.**

- ☐ Vision Renewal Launch Service. Plan for a Vision Renewal Celebration as the church moves into a period of advancement and growth.
- ☐ Plant, water, and bring in the harvest. The church should experience some growth as systems are slowly restored and outreach, assimilation, small groups move people to Christ and spiritual maturity.
- ☐ Multiply disciples, leaders, and ministries. A new generation of leaders will begin to emerge that will carry the Church into the future.
- ☐ Partner in Acts 1:8 Missions. The Church will be capable of taking on missions endeavors beyond its Jerusalem and potentially assist other churches with revitalization/renewal.

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<sup>1</sup> Nelson Searcy, "Healthy Systems, Healthy Church," available from [www.churchleaderinsights.com](http://www.churchleaderinsights.com).

<sup>2</sup> Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), pages 54-75.

How do we Re-Structure & Re-Start?

## **Steps to Revitalization: Decision, Death**

### **Step #1: Decision.**

The congregation must decide if large internal changes are possible or is it time to close the doors & allow something new to be born. All living things are born, they live, & they die. No New Testament Church still exists today. But even if a church continues it must die to its current way of thinking, so that a new vision can develop. Living things experience death as they age & mature & adapt to changing environments. Death happens when we are unable to continue to adapt & grow through challenges faced.

Questions:

- ☐ Can we afford the large internal changes that are needed?
- ☐ Do we have the resources, energy, & determination to dream a new dream for our community?
- ☐ From where we are, can we adapt to the changes of our current environment?

### **Step #2: Death.**

Once the decision to die has been made there are two options:

- 1) **Adaption by Re-Structuring.** Deciding to adapt/re-structure & grow means dying to the current model of ministry & mission. Scenarios for adaptation:
  - Reverting to Mission Status & submitting to the authority of another congregation that can assist in dreaming a new dream.
  - If resources are available, working with the local association to develop a plan to Assess, Align, & Advance the mission of the church.
- 2) **Closure to Re-Start.** Deciding to close/re-start means laying to rest the current church so that a brand new ministry can be started in its place. Scenarios for closure:
  - Formally decide to close the church, giving the assets & liabilities to the local association.
  - Formally decide to close the church, giving the assets & liabilities to another local church with ties to the local community.