

WHITE PAPER:
A BETTER CHURCH
REVITALIZATION APPROACH

Church Equippers Ministries Inc.

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A BETTER REVITALIZATION APPROACH

Goal: To develop a practical, transferable, simple and affordable process of sustainable church revitalization for church organizations. This will include . . .

- Assessment for pastors and their churches to prepare to lead them through a revitalization process.
- Competent training for revitalization pastors.
- Competently trained coaches to guide them in the revitalization process.

Rationale: Church networks were born out of mission—planting churches that reached people with the gospel. The churches that resulted have been used by God in their neighborhoods in the past and can be used again today to make a gospel impact. This alone is the motive for revitalization.

Church revitalization is a great need among established churches across all denominations. It is estimated that up to 70% of all churches are plateaued or declining. We call these Stuck Churches. Almost all Church networks have many churches who are stuck, but organizationally there is no system to help them.

While many new churches are being planted in the USA, established churches often lack guidance and a plan to revitalize their efforts as a witnessing church. Churches become inward focused rather than outward reaching. As a result, many of these churches are losing their impact on the community where they are. And most pastors have no training in how to bring change to the church at its core.

Furthermore, partnership between churches and the larger mission is weakened. Struggling churches have fewer resources to invest in a greater outreach. To help these churches, the pastors need real help first.

The current available models for helping these churches are:

- **A Teaching Model**, which involves bringing in pastors and trainers who know how to revitalize churches. The limitation of this model is that pastors hear excellent ideas, then go back to their churches, never to be able to actually implement what they learned.

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- **A Consulting Model**, which involves a church hiring an outside expert to train and coach the pastor and the church's leaders to bring the church back to health. The limitation of this model is that the majority of smaller churches cannot afford the costs of a consultant, which tend to run into thousands of dollars.

In contrast, Church Equippers offers you an **Internal Assessment/Training/Coaching Model**, which trains the pastors of healthy, growing churches in your network to invest in other pastors who lead Stuck Churches by coaching them through a revitalization process.

Benefits of This Revitalization Model . . .

- ✓ Allows many smaller, struggling churches to receive help.
- ✓ Develops greater loyalty in these churches toward the church network.
- ✓ Healthier churches will be able to give back to the mission of the church network.
- ✓ Coaching pastors grow in their leadership ability, adding value to the church network.
- ✓ Pastors giving time to other pastors in a church network makes a greater movement is possible.

Components of the Model

1. **Coach Training:** Two 3 day Coaching seminars to teach those pastors who have been successful in leading established churches to health and growth how to coach fellow pastors of stuck, plateaued and declining churches back to health. (See below for the content of the two seminars.)
 - Coaches will be trained: 1) How to coach pastors in the Gamechangers; 2) How to use the *Increasing Church Capacity* materials developed to help the pastor and church leaders in developing church ministry systems; and 3) How to keep pastors moving forward when things are challenging.
 - Coaches will benefit from the training by learning ways to improve their own church ministry systems.
 - Coaches will continue to meet once every two months to work on their skills and share the progress of the pastors they are coaching.

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- There is a reward to being a coach. Coaching others infers that the pastor wants to see God do more through his or her association of churches than just be successful in their own church.

There are many coach training programs available today, teaching people how to coach others. But pastors whose churches are stuck need more than general coaching. In other words, if you are going to coach football, you need to understand football. Pastors need coaches that can give them clear steps to take and offer tools to help them. This is the kind of coach training Church Equippers offers.

2. **Transformational Pastor and Spouse Retreat:** Prepares the pastoral couple for the spiritual warfare ahead by guiding them in addressing their personal unfinished spiritual business. This will allow them to be exposed to the assessment tools that will be necessary for them to lead revitalization.
 - This is a vital component for church revitalization, but should be available to all pastors regardless of their ability to revitalize a church.
3. **Assessment:** Each pastor who is invited into the revitalization process (or asks for help) will be assessed to determine his or her ability and readiness for revitalization.

Some pastors in place are capable to lead revitalization. Pastors have different spiritual gifts and abilities. Not all pastors have the ability to lead revitalization which, like church planting, calls for a certain set of gifts.

Three steps of Assessment . . .

- The tool Church Equippers uses to identify revitalization pastors is the Birkman® Evaluation. The results will be shared with the leader of the process and his coach.
- The pastor will be examined in the area of spiritual health with the tools used during the Transformational Retreat.
- The *Triage for the Stuck Church* evaluation will be done on the church to discern which of the five critical systems—Spiritual Life, Vision, Evangelizing, Discipling, Leadership Training—will need to be addressed by the pastor and the implementers to bring the church back to health. The health five systems are central to the revitalization of a church.

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4. **Training:** All pastors in the revitalization process will be given training and tools to help them in revitalization. Besides basic leadership issues, the training will address five fundamental issues.
 - 1) **Addressing Unfinished Spiritual Business:** Most revitalization processes are sabotaged either by leaders who have not surrendered their hidden spiritual issues to Jesus, or by unaddressed spiritual trauma that the congregation has not addressed together.
 - 2) **Finding Implementers:** No pastor has all the gifts necessary to build a healthy congregation. The pastor needs implementers, people gifted in building ministry systems and teams, as well as raising up leaders who will run the systems. Most of the time, this leader is already inside the congregation, but has never been identified and recruited to fill this roll.
 - 3) **Redefining and Focusing Vision:** Most vision statements are merely statements of theological truths that every church should be able to affirm. A vision should instead be about the lost people the congregation 'sees' and feels compassion for. When the church does not see the lost, they do not build relationships with the lost. And so they stop sowing the gospel and reaping a harvest.
 - 4) **Multipling Shepherds:** This is the hidden reason why many good churches stay small. When the pastor is the person all attenders must connect with to get all their spiritual needs met, the church will only grow to the amount of people the pastor and spouse can have a relationship with, which is always under 150 people, often much less than that. By multiplying lay shepherds, the pastor increases how many connection points the church has as well as making sure people will be spiritually cared for while he or she offers leadership to increase the gospel impact of the congregation.
 - 5) **Becoming an Army:** Pastors have to make a choice to value making disciples over having an audience. Intentional discipleship, once learned and set into place, will change the culture of the congregation from passive to partners for the sake of the gospel.
5. **Coach Assignment:** The pastor will be paired with the right coach for him.

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- The denominational leader will be the coordinator of this team, although in time another leader may emerge from within the team itself.
- The goal of coaching is not for the coach to reproduce him/herself in the revitalization pastor, but to allow that pastor's strengths and abilities to be revealed and encouraged, as well as helping him/her to find the right partners for the process.

Conclusion

- It will take 18-24 months to help a pastor begin to see the results of revitalizing a church, which is similar to getting a new church established.
- It will take a year to get the basic components into place so that your district can have a sustainable system.
- To help Stuck Churches you will need a partnership with someone who has experience in revitalization.

It is easier to give birth than to raise the dead, the saying goes. For this reason, many young pastors prefer to plant a new church than to revitalize an older congregation. But it is a waste of God-given resources merely to close churches. The historic spiritual investment those churches have had in their community and the people who can regain compassion for the lost are worth the challenge. But revitalization has to be seen for what it is—a huge challenge due to the number of churches which need this kind of help. Trying to piecemeal this process rather than developing a full orb ed approach will only bring frustration and loss of hope.

What I learned in 30 years working with church planting is that a cohesive approach led by church planting practitioners can change the game. The church network of which I was part went from a less than 30% success rate in planting to a better than 90% success in planting and establishing new churches. The same elements of a successful church planting movement chart the course for establishing the systems for revitalization. This is your opportunity to change the future direction of your denomination by seeing stuck, plateaued and declining church become vital partners with you again.

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CHURCH EQUIPPERS REVITALIZATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

1. Assess and Evaluate
 - Evaluate Pastor with Birkman Method to understand usual behaviors and underlying needs
 - Evaluate the Health of Five Critical Systems with Triage
 - Gather Church Information with the Pastor and Church Leaders CheckUps
2. Coach Pastor to address the church's underlying spiritual issues with Unfinished Business
3. Coach Pastor to recruit Implementers
 - Coach them together to develop Eight Primary Teams to get congregation reengaged
 - 1) Mobilization
 - 2) Outreach
 - 3) First Impressions
 - 4) Environment
 - 5) Gathering
 - 6) Follow Up
 - 7) Children
 - 8) Small Groups
4. Coach the Pastor to work with the church's leadership to refocus vision on harvest field
 - Included is how to build a vision strategy to reach their harvest field
5. Coach Pastor and Implementers to build an effective evangelizing system
6. Coach Pastor to identify and train lay shepherds
 - Included is how to develop leadership pipeline for next generation leaders
7. Coach Pastor and Implementers to build a robust discipling system
8. Coach Pastor and Implementers to develop an expandable small group system to help retain more disciples

CHURCH EQUIPPERS 3-DAY REVITALIZATION COACH TRAINING 1 SCHEDULE

Day 1: 12-6 PM

- 12 Noon Lunch
- 12:30 PM Why Are We Here?
- 1:30 PM Coaching Skills
- 3:30 PM Thinking Systemically
- 5:00 PM System Tools

Debrief and Questions

Day 2: 9-4 PM

- 9:00 AM Devotions
- 9:30 AM Starting with Reality: Church Culture
- 10:30 AM Triage for the Stuck Church
- 12 Noon Lunch
- 12:30 PM Pastoral Assessments
- 2:00 PM First GameChanger Essential: Spiritual Transformation Training
- 3:00 PM Doctrinal and Biblical Foundations of Transformation Training

Questions and Debrief

Day 3: 9-3 PM

- 9:00 AM Devotions
- 9:30 AM Overview of Heart Chart (Case Study)
- 11:00 AM Congregational Wounds

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12 Noon Lunch

12:30 PM Small Group Training

2:00 PM Transformational Inventories and Terms

Debrief and Questions

Assignments

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CHURCH EQUIPPERS 3-DAY REVITALIZATION COACH TRAINING 2 SCHEDULE

Day 1: 12-6 PM

- 12 Noon Lunch
- 12:30 PM Reconnect Time
- 1:30 PM GameChanger Essentials Overview
- 2:30 PM 18 Month Coaching Timeline
- 3:30 PM Spiritual Transformation Part 2
- 4:30 PM Congregational Wounds
- 5:30 PM Pastor and Spouse Retreat

Debrief and Questions

Day 2: 9-4 PM

- 9:00 AM Devotions
- 9:30 AM Finding Implementers and Eight Primary Team
- 11:00 AM Vision, Increasing Prayer and One Year Strategic Planning
- 12 Noon Lunch
- 12:30 PM Evangelizing System and Whole Church Strategy
- 1:30 PM High Touch Pastors and Multiplying Shepherds
- 2:30 PM Leadership Training System

Debrief and Questions

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Day 3: 9-3 PM

9:00 AM Devotions

9:30 PM Discipling System

10:30 AM Increasing Connection Points in the Congregation

11:30 AM Messy Middle Coaching

12 Noon Lunch

12:30 PM “What if?” Coaching

1. What if their lack of finances is killing the church?
2. What if they are not retaining visitors?
3. What if the Pastor is having problems with a Church Boss?

1:30 PM Addressing Distractions

2:00 PM Establishing Your Coaching Team

Debrief and Questions