**An Overview of Church Revitalisation: A Vision and a Process**

Why is church revitalization necessary? Why is it difficult? What are the barriers to revitalization? This overview shows the need for a locally built vision followed by an intentional process to develop the church into a place where Christians learn to love God and to love others in their cultural context.

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1. **The Need for Revitalization**
   1. Statistics
      1. In North America
      2. In France

1. **Some Signs That a Church Needs Revitalization**
2. A gradual erosion
3. Living in the past: nostalgia (“The Preference-Driven Church” parody of Rick Warren’s “purpose-driven”)
4. Focusing on maintenance rather than on the needs of those outside the church
5. Refusing to live in today’s world and be in phase with the neighbourhood around the church
6. Amnesia regarding the Gospel and the Great Commission
7. The church functions by routine (“Going through the motions”)
8. **Revitalisation – a Biblical concept?**

*Old Testament*

*“Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us”* (Romans 15.4).

* Judges 2.10-11
* The kings of Judah and Israel
* Haggai 1.4

*The 7 letters to the churches in Revelation*

* Smyrna and Philadelphia told to be “faithful” and to “hold on”
* The others are told to repent
  + Ephesus: loss of their first love
  + Pergamum: the need to fight against error
  + Thyatira: the need fight against sin and immorality
  + Sardis: the church has the reputation of being alive but it is dead
  + Laodicea: the church is lukewarm
  1. The Ephesus church example (Revelation 2.5)

1 Remember

2 Repent

3 Recover the first things

* 1. The Sardis church example (Revelation 3.1-3)

1 Strengthen what remains

2 Remember

3 Obey and repent

1. **Different contexts of revitalization**

The bell-curve: the stage the church is at

* + 1. A church in danger of extinction
    2. A church in crisis
    3. A stable church

1. **What is a healthy church?**

A healthy church is a fellowship of redeemed believers

* + - who love God with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind, with all their strength (Mark 12:30)
    - who love people (Mark 12:31)
    - in their cultural context

1. The spiritual aspect – loving God

Improving the spiritual health of the Church

1. The social aspect – loving others

Improving relationships within the church and with non-Christians

1. The societal aspect – in our context

Improving the contextualization of the church

**VI. Revitalisation overview: a vision and a process**

A. Awareness of the need

B. A revitalisation team

C. Evaluation of the state of the church

D. Crafting a vision

E. Defining the process

F. Communicating the process in such a way as to get people on board

***Suggested Readings:***

John James, *Renewal,* 10 Publishing (Leyland, UK, 2016)

Ed Stetzer, *Comeback Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2007)

Thom S. Rainer, *Anatomy of a deceased church* (Nashville, B&H Publishing Group, 2014)

Harry L. Reeder, *From Embers to a Flame* (P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ 2004)