

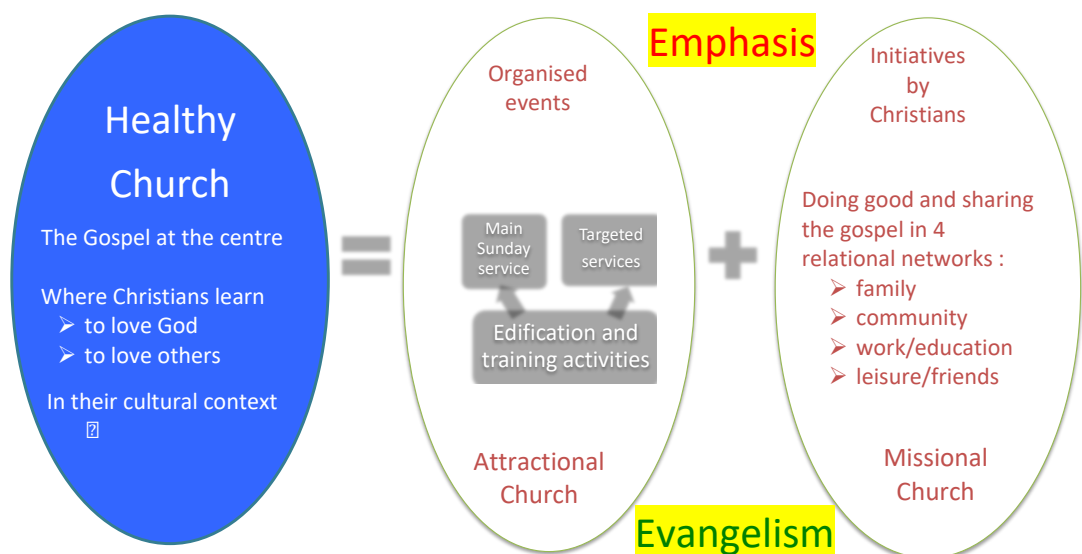
The Vision for Revitalisation – a Healthy Church

The main objective of revitalisation is to bring the church back to good health. This means a Gospel-centred church in which the Christians are learning, as disciples, to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and to love other people, whether they are fellow Christians within the church or non-believers whom they meet in their daily lives. That is the vision for revitalisation but we also need to work out the intentional process by which this can be achieved bearing in mind both the local context and the cultural atmosphere of Europe today.

David Brown planted three churches before revitalising a church in central Paris. For many years he was involved with GBU (Groupes Bibliques Universitaires), the French student movement affiliated with IFES. More recently he has been promoting church revitalisation through his chairmanship of the Evangelism Commission of the French “National Council of Evangelicals” and through his teaching and mentoring at the Bible Institutes in Geneva and Paris and by leading a range of seminars and workshops in France and across Europe.

I. What is a Healthy Church?

- a. The primary aim of revitalisation is to be a healthy church.
- b. What does church life look like now and how has the organization been understood over the past few decades?
- c. What could / should it look like to be healthy in today’s world?



- d. A healthy church is a fellowship of believers, centred on the Gospel, who are learning to
 - i. love God with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind, with all their strength (Mark 12:30)
 - ii. to love people (Mark 12:31)
 - iii. in their cultural context

- e. This is the teaching of Jesus when he identified the most important commandments. This has been the continual challenge for Christians facing each new cultural context as the church spread from Jerusalem into the pagan Roman Empire, and then to the ends of the earth, and as cultures developed through the centuries.
- f. So revitalisation must include simultaneously these three dimensions of a healthy church:
 - i. The spiritual aspect – loving God
 - ii. The social aspect – loving others
 - iii. The societal aspect – in our context

II. The Gathered Church

- a. We meet together to encourage each other to love and good works :
Hebrews 10.23-25
- b. This happens
 - i. through worship – to motivate us as we think of who God is and what he has done and is doing for us
 - ii. through Bible teaching
 - iii. through instruction on how to be good witnesses in today's world

III. The Scattered Church

- a. The scattered church is where we live out the four relational networks which most of us have.
 - i. our family
 - ii. our work / place of education
 - iii. our leisure activities and friendships
 - iv. the wider community.
- b. Our aim in these relationships is to love others, to do good and to share the gospel when that is possible.
- c. That is why the missional aspect of the church is sometimes called incarnational. Just as Jesus took on a human body and became visible,

Christians become visible (and in a sense make God visible) by their practical love for others.

IV. The Implications of This Model for Leadership

- a. The infographic of a healthy church gives equal weight to the gathered and scattered aspects of the church, whereas in reality many churches give far more value to the visible togetherness of their church – the church building, the meetings, the paid ministry. There are three potential dangers:
 - i. The default position to which years of church tradition can bring us : the idea that the important thing in a church is the faithfulness of Christians in attending meetings.
 - ii. That the local church is the only place in which believers can learn and have a ministry.
 - iii. The emphasis of the scattered church on “initiatives by Christians”. The pastoral team may insist on more “accountability”.