

Why Is Church Revitalization Necessary?

In many cases congregations are dwindling because they are seeing no conversions from people outside their fellowship. Church life seems to be in a different world to where most people are today and we need to reconnect our churches so that the Gospel really seems to be good news for them. This session will outline how Europeans understand life and suggest some ways to make the Gospel plausible and believable for our non-Christian neighbours.

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Introduction

Stagnation is a natural process – no need to engineer it – for much of human life. That is the background for the important theme of renewal in the New Testament:

- renewal of the mind, Rom 12:2
- inward renewal day by day, 2 Cor 4:16
- renewal of personal relationships, Phil 4:10
- renewal of knowledge about God, our Creator, Col 3:10

The process of stagnation and the need for renewal is always true also for the local church. NB: Church planting and church revitalization are both vitally important in Europe today.

Six reasons for church revitalization

1. Honoring God's work in history
 - historical continuation – God at work for centuries – is important and beautiful
 - we do not need to start from scratch in every generation
2. Changing focus in the church
 - most churches start with an outward looking focus on winning people for the Kingdom
 - most churches gradually tend to have a *status quo* mentality of maintaining
3. Changing world views outside the church
 - new ideas and commitments mean a new set of obstacles and a new set of opportunities
 - from Christendom to a secular and individualistic Europe
4. Changing demographics inside and outside the church
 - age, class, ethnicity, culture
5. Changing cultural forms
 - aesthetics, music, and art

6. Changing learning style

- from trusting authorities to interaction, exploration, and a high degree of subjectivism
- the need for apologetics

In all changes **the word of God** must give **the content** of our message and be **the authority** behind our message.