

Communicating the Urgency and Forming a Revitalising Team

Successful church revitalisations are dependent upon the existing church leaders recognising the urgency of the need for change before the church does, and the formation of a suitably gifted team to envision and implement change. This session will consider how church revitalisers, denominations and networks can persuade churches to accept the need for revitalisation without alienating those who have served in the church for many years. It will also consider the character and competencies required of those who will undertake the revitalisation, and address some of the challenges that might arise amongst the church revitalisation team. The session will draw on biblical teaching, practical examples, and case studies to show how careful attention to these issues is crucial to achieving transformation of the church.

John Stevens is the National Director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, a family of over 500 Bible-centred churches in the UK, a position that he has held since 2010. Prior to this he was one of the founding pastors of City Evangelical Church Birmingham, which was planted in the centre of the UK's 2nd largest city in 1999. He was instrumental in starting the Midlands Gospel Partnership, was the course Director of the Midlands Ministry Training Course and is a visiting lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College. John is also one of the pastors of Christchurch Market Harborough, a church he helped to plant when he took up his current role. He was converted whilst studying law at Cambridge University, and after taking a post-graduate degree at the University of Oxford worked for 16 years as a University Lecturer, ending his career as Deputy Head of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. John is married to Ursula and they have four children aged between 12 and 7. He blogs at www.john-stevens.com on theology, church life and ministry, culture and politics.

1. A Biblical Pattern for Revitalisation

2 Kings 22-23 – Josiah's reforms

2. Why Does the Church Need Revitalization?

Revelation 2-3 – 7 churches that need revitalisation!

Loss of gospel vision

Declining numbers

Aging congregation

Change of context

Some examples:

Grace Church Stirchley-Cotteridge

Carley Evangelical Church Leicester

3. How is the Church Resistant to Revitalisation?

Leadership resistance

Cultural resistance

Pride resistance

4. Communicating the Urgency of the Need for Revitalisation

What will happen to the church in 5 years if there is no revitalisation?
Help people see the future for themselves
Engage their love for the church
Gentleness and respect
Realism plus optimism

5. Sharing a Hopeful Vision of the Potential of Revitalisation

How might the church grow?
What ministries might the church establish?
Realistic but aspirational

6. Establishing an Effective Revitalisation Team

1 Corinthians 12
Acts
The importance of teams
The benefit of teams
The balance of teams
The perseverance of teams

7. Membership of the Revitalisation Team

Leadership
Gifting and experience
Team members from outside the church
Team members from within the church

8. Making the Whole Church the 'Revitalisation Team'

Not a 'them and 'us'
Not an outside 'take over'
Not a 'membership within a 'membership'

For further reading:

David Brown, Reconnect Your Church: A Practical Handbook for Church Revitalisation (IVP)
John James, Renewal: Church revitalisation along the way of the cross
Ric Thorpe, Resource Churches: A story of church planting and revitalisation across the nation
Thom Rainer, Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive
Patrick Lencioni, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable (John Wiley)
Patrick Lencioni, The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues (John Wiley)
John C Maxwell, The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork (Struik Christian Books)
Simon Sinek, Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't (Penguin)