

The Reason for This Network: An Introduction to Revitalisation

Why is church revitalisation necessary? Why is it so difficult? What is the difference between revival and revitalisation? This session will present some of the barriers to revitalisation, as well as statistics from the USA and Europe. Attendees will learn specific steps that we as leaders can take to encourage the revitalisation of our churches.

David Brown has been involved in church planting in France since 1976 and has planted three churches (two in Nancy and one in the Paris suburbs). At present he is “replanting” a church in central Paris (Église Protestante Évangélique de Paris-Cardinet). For many years he was involved with GBU (Groupes Bibliques Universitaires), the French student movement affiliated with IFES, first as General Secretary, and then as chair of the board. He also chairs the Evangelism Commission of the French “National Council of Evangelicals” and teaches church planting and revitalization at the Geneva Bible Institute. He is married to Mary, and they have four adult children and a growing number of grandchildren.

I. The need for revitalization

A. Statistics

1. In North America
2. In France

II. Some signs that a church needs revitalization

- A. A gradual erosion
- B. Living in the past (“The Preference-Driven Church”)
- C. Focusing on maintenance rather than on the needs of those outside the church
- D. Amnesia regarding the Great Commission
- E. The church rarely prays together
- F. The church functions by routine (“Going through the motions”)

III. New Testament examples

A. The Ephesus church example (Revelation 2.5)

1. Remember
2. Repent
3. Recover the first things

B. The Sardis church example (Revelation 3.1-3)

1. Wake up! Strengthen what remains
2. Remember
3. Obey and repent

IV. Different contexts of revitalization

A. The stage the church is at

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

B. The different regions of Europe

V. A five-fold approach is needed

A. Spiritual

Improving the spiritual health of the Church

1. Worship (the first commandment)
2. Trust
3. Obedience (the good fight)

B. Social

Improving relationships within the church and with non-Christians

1. Loving others (the second commandment)

C. Societal

Improving the contextualizing

1. Historically

2. Geographically
3. Culturally

D. Structural

Improving the quality of leadership within the church

1. Vision casting
2. Delegation
3. Bringing about change

E. Strategic

Improving the effectiveness of the church (strategic planning)

1. Deciding what things can be done intentionally
2. Focusing on a few things and doing them well
3. Introducing new ideas

Suggested Readings:

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

Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2007)

Thom S. Rainer *Breakout Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005)

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

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

John James *Renewal* (10Publishing, 2016)