

The Assimilation Crisis

Have you ever wondered how many people would be attending the church where you serve if everyone who had come into the church had stayed? How is it that some churches have 50 additions for five years in a row and yet the average attendance does not increase? Simply, “how do we shut the back door” and make people “stick?” Our team will attempt to identify ways to more effectively assimilate people into the church.

Mission Drift

Proverbs 29:18 says “Where there is no vision, the people perish...” Mission Drift happens when there is no clear vision or understanding of where the church is (now) or where God desires to take the church (in the future). Some churches “drift” from week to week with no direction or plan, like a ship without a rudder.

This process will assist the pastor and church in articulating their **Core Values**: *Who we are and what is important to us*. They will then formulate a **Mission Statement**: *What are we to do? (The Great Commandment and the Great Commission)*. Out of the Core Values and Mission, the church will develop their **Vision**: *How are we to do our mission where we are?* **Goals and Action Plans** will be developed by the church and pastor to accomplish their mission.

The PBA is your Mission Partner. If this brief description of the Barnabas Project sounds like something your church could benefit from give us a call. We would like to help.

Revitalization, like revival, is a sovereign work of God. No amount of planning, prodding, or promoting can do what only God can do. Unless and until God breathes life into something, it remains dead. However, we believe the church can prepare for God to work and bring new life. As one writer has said, “We can’t control

the wind, but we can set our sails to catch the wind when it begins to blow.”



Three Stages Of Revitalization

1. Preparation - Prepare to Sail!
2. Process - Set the Course!
3. Practice - Launch the Boat!



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The Barnabas Project

Encouraging Churches To Dream Again

re·vi·tal·ize

Verb— *rē- 'vī-tə- līz*: to make (someone or something) active, healthy, or energetic again. transitive verb : to give new life or vigor to.

The Barnabas Project is an effort to encourage churches “to dream again” and to refocus or recapture their dream and vision for ministry. **These are the facts**: Nationwide, each year 1300 pastors are forcibly terminated without a new place to go. 30% of pastors have been fired. 67% of pastors wives are dissatisfied with their marriage. 70% of pastors say they do not have a close friend.

Approximately 80% of churches in the SBC have either plateaued or declined. Many of the remaining 20% need to refocus their vision.

Barna reports that 72% of people born between the years 1964-1981 are not involved in a Christian community. . .this is the first widely unchurched generation in U.S. history. Only 28% of Americans in their mid 20s to early 30s attend church on Sunday, and of those under 24, some claim as little as 8% regularly attend church. So, what is the solution?

The Barnabas Project might be able to help. It is a *process* that might take several weeks or several months.

Church revitalization definition:

Church revitalization emphasizes the missional work of turning a plateaued or declining church around and moving it back towards growth.

The PBA has enlisted and trained a team that will work with the pastor and church leaders to help them become healthy and vibrant. Our team will NEVER work against the pastor or come between the pastor and the church. At the invitation of the pastor we will attempt to help the church discover what are her weaknesses and what are her strengths, to help the church see her opportunities and possibilities.

One might describe it in terms of going to the doctor for a check-up. If one goes to the doctor and a problem is diagnosed, sometimes a prescription will be written. To get well, the medicine must be taken.



For a declining church to become healthy again, they must be willing to make corrections and changes. In fact, the early steps of revitalization is a **church health survey**.

What is church health, and what does a healthy church look like? Church health recognizes that local fellowships of believers are best instruments for the Kingdom Life when the **six purposes of Acts 2:42-47** are *intentional, active, and balanced*: worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and prayer.

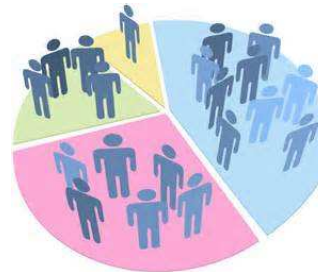
1. **Discipleship** – Disciples growing in spiritual maturity

2. **Worship** - Worship that glorifies God
3. **Evangelism** - People are reached for Christ regularly
4. **Ministry** – Life-changing ministries throughout the church, the community and beyond
5. **Fellowship** - A united and joyous fellowship of believers
6. **Prayer** - A deep burden for prayer

In addition to the *church health survey*, the PBA Team will provide a **ten (10) year profile of the church**, including Sunday School attendance, worship attendance, baptisms, those coming by letter, undesignated giving, designated giving, Cooperative Program giving, as well as the amount given to our special mission offerings.

Your church will be provided a 3-mile or 5- mile radius **demographic study** of your community. This would include things like: the number of households in the radius, the median income level, the number in specific age categories, the marital status, and the faith involvement of people in the radius. As you might imagine, this would be extremely helpful as you plan ministries, events, and strategies to reach your community.

You will be provided tools to gage your church's **readiness for change**, and a growth attitude survey. One of the goals is to help your people begin to "think like a missionary."



Through this process we will talk about **Growth Barriers**, what some of them are and how to remove or avoid them. Specifically, this process will look at the biblical issues involved in growth barriers. For the purpose of this brochure, I will identify five (5) of them. There are many more that will be addressed.

1. **The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20**

This is imperative. It is based on Christ's authority; His presence promised.

2. **The Great Commandment: Mark 12:30-31**

We are to love God with all our being. We are to love others and show Christ's love to them. If the church is inward focused it will not love the lost and the fallen around them.

3. **The Ephesians Four Factor: Eph. 4:11-12**

Here we get to the equipping issue. Pastors are instructed to equip the church to do the ministry. Many churches hit a growth barrier and begin to decline because new leaders are not being developed and trained to keep the work moving forward.

4. **The Acts 2 Fellowship Factor: Acts 2:42-47**

The fellowship factor of church growth is vitally important. We are not to "meet, eat, greet, and retreat." It should drive us outward, not inward. It might surprise us to know how many people who worship together each week do not really know each other. How can we "bear one another's burdens" if we do not love each other enough to have fellowship with one another?

5. **St. John's Syndrome: Rev. 3:15-16**

Jesus had some very harsh words of warning for the lukewarm church. He wants His church to be red hot, on fire. However, He said He would rather His church to be cold than lukewarm. Some time will be spent on understanding what causes this condition and what the remedy is to fix it.

