

Revitalization Process

Even though I am calling these steps, you need to think more dynamic helix, than actual step one, step two, etc. These should all be integrated simultaneously.

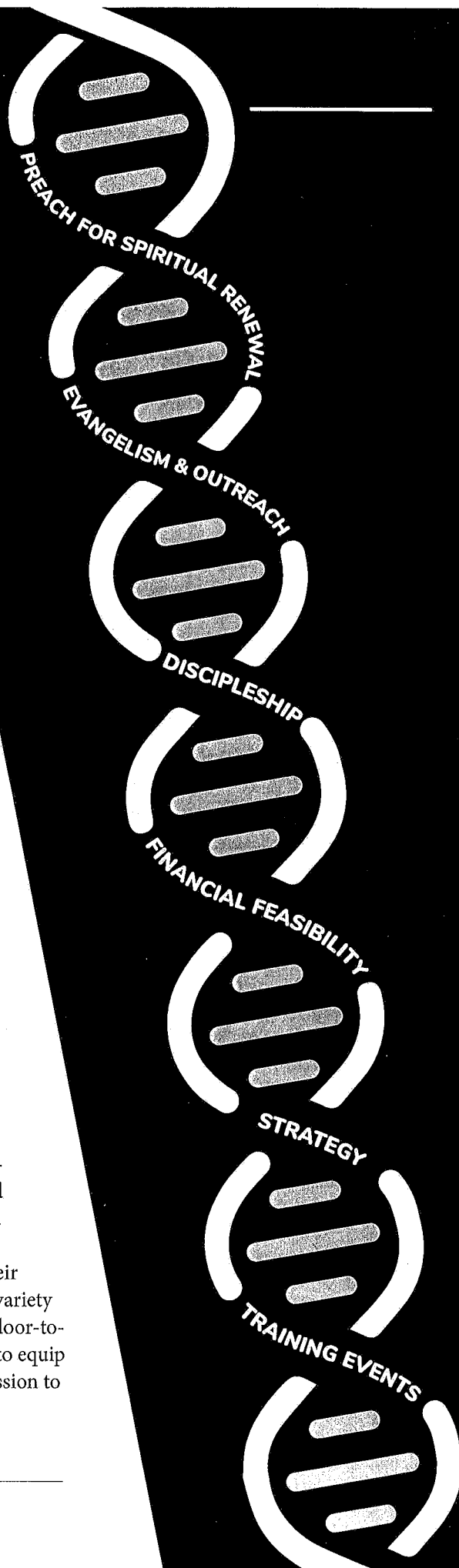
Step One: Preach for Spiritual Renewal*

Many pastors think their church is spiritually healthy because their members know the Word of God. However, if lives are not being changed, professions of faith occurring in the community, then the church is not healthy. The church exists to make Jesus known. As such, salvations are a part of any healthy church. Just because people know the Word of God, does not mean they are living the Word of God. Every church should be focused on a spiritual renewal as a part of their on-going strategy. In a declining church, the evidence is even more prevalent for this to occur.

Preaching for spiritual renewal involves text-driven, life-application oriented preaching. People do not just need to know what the Word of God says they need to know what it means in their respective lives today. How is God's Word relevant to how they live? Preaching cannot be about the past, but must be about the present and the future. Because God's Word says this, you can live today and have assurance of tomorrow.

Step Two: Evangelism & Outreach

The church must be focused on reaching the lost in their community. This can be accomplished in the two ways of this second step. First through evangelism, every member must be equipped to share his or her faith. This should be done through a focus on individual evangelistic style, meaning, allow persons to share their faith how God has uniquely created them to do this. There are a variety of styles of evangelism; relational, conversational, marketplace, door-to-door, etc. Not everyone has the same style. It is up to the pastor to equip congregants based on their style, and then send them out on mission to fulfill the Great Commission.



Second is through outreach. This is the activities of the church which are done to impact the community. These can be done on-campus and/or off-campus. Having a strategy for events is imperative. Establishing boomerang opportunities is the most effective outreach strategy a church can have. By this, every event you host, on- or off-campus, should offer another opportunity to connect...a boomerang. Here is a one-year boomerang calendar focused off of student ministry, therefore using the school calendar:

One-Year Boomerang Calendar

August: Back-to-School Party

While at this event, you promote your Fall Festival Event

October: Fall Festival

While at this event, you promote your Holiday Events; Thanksgiving through New Year's

November: Community Thanksgiving (give out the Christmas Code)

Continue promoting the Christmas and New Year's Events

December: Children's Snow Day (this is a one-day VBS type event for kids which allows working parents a few hours to go shopping).

Continue promoting other Holiday Events: you might preach the Advent, Christmas Eve Service, Christmas Day Service, & New Year's Eve Service. Also begin promoting Marriage/Parenting Conference

February: Marriage/Parenting Conference

Promote Easter Services (give out Easter Code) to include Community Easter Egg Hunt

March/April: Preach Easter Series

Promote Schools Out Party and VBS

May: Schools Out Party

Promote VBS

June/July: VBS (devote the Sunday after VBS as a special service)

On the first day of VBS, begin telling the kids they have to be there Sunday morning to sing all the songs they have learned. Notify the parents, the kids will be performing Sunday morning, you are giving the entire service to the children AND to share what the kids learned that week. Create a special service around VBS. Children will do the music, have them quote scripture they memorized, say the pledges, and then you preach a gospel message, centered on the theme from VBS. Promote the Back to School Party; and your calendar starts over.

Step Three: Discipleship

First, discipleship originates from the pulpit. Therefore all discipleship should flow through intentional proclamation of the sermon in a text-driven methodology. Second, Sunday school and small group material should be connected to the sermon for most effective discipleship of the congregation. Third, the area of discipleship should also focus on the next greatest need of the church. As a pastor, you should be discipling your people based on the areas which need to be addressed in the church through additional teaching opportunities. If you need more Sunday school/Bible study teachers, then create a prospective teachers process and equip leaders in this area. If you need qualified deacons, then invite prospective men to go through a process of discipleship. Focus on one or two needs at a time, go slow, do it right. Whatever your church need is, focus on it.

Step Four: Financial Feasibility

An outside consultant should evaluate the financial position of the church. Determine are best practices in place and are funds being used to the best of their abilities. Just because you have a CPA handling your finances, does not mean this person understands what you should really be spending resource funds on. Allow a consultant to offer guidance on your budget expenditures. Often times in revitaliza-

tion work, the church continues to operate a benevolence ministry. If the church is cutting the pastor's salary, and cannot afford to pay the electric bill, but you are writing a check to someone who came in with a need, your priorities are out of order. An outside perspective can offer best guidance on this.

Step Five: Strategy

Work groups (not committees) should be assembled through the church to accomplish on-going needs. Each work group should have a strategy process for accomplishing the needs of the church. Example: to save money on cleaning the church a Building and Grounds work group, could develop a cleaning schedule and recruit volunteer families to be responsible for a week. Same for lawn care. An Evangelism and Outreach work group can assist the pastor with creating the boomerang calendar; consideration should be given to what is actually possible for this church to do.

Step Six: Training Events

The SBTC offers two events per year for pastors to attend. The Revitalization Retreat (Spring) and the Revitalization Forum (Fall). These are strategic and intentional to assist the pastor in the revitalization process. The Forum is opportunity to develop specific strategies and processes for the next year of the church. Attendance at these events will tremendously assist in the needed turnaround of the church.

Sermon-Based Small Group Resource

sbtexas.com/revitalization

*The SBTC uses a sermon-based small group process. We have a launch series focused on spiritual renewal, which then moves you into a study of the Bible in 100 Days, and then text-driven, Bible book series. Sunday school/Small group material is available which covers the entire Bible. Sermon recommendations are connected with the curriculum (Text and title, not manuscripts, we do not believe in preaching someone else's sermon).

