

Session Ten : outcomes of the process

The revitalisation process may have several outcomes, although the concept of a healthy church is valid for all of them. We have seen that the stages of the process are almost identical to those described in the theory of change management, but churches have the additional resource of prayer and the assistance of the Holy Spirit. And the implanted desire the other members of our new spiritual family : “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4.8).

As we come to the end of this brief 10 week course, my hope is that you will launch out by faith to apply the teaching to your church and see new life and enthusiasm taking root. So by way of conclusion, may I remind you that we need to ensure that we bear in mind these six key elements.

- Shared vision
- Motivation
- An action plan
- Discipleship
- Support networks

1. The shared vision

The existence of the vision of a healthy church, approved by the members, is the foundation to the whole process. The vision presented in this course is both fundamentally Biblical and missiological. The vision concerns the whole of our lives both as a gathered community of Christians, learning to honour God and to love the men and women he has created, but it also shows how we can reach out to secular Europeans who need to see the plausibility of the Christian faith demonstrated by Christian believers in all areas of their lives.

2. Motivation

Understanding and accepting the vision is essential for motivating church members to work through the process. The infographic is a constant reminder of where we want to go. It is easy to remember and provides motivation as Christians see that the marks of a healthy church are so fundamental in God’s plan for the universe. And we have the privilege of being part of this right now, here on this earth, in the present age.

3. An action plan (strategy for change)

Some sort of action plan will be drawn up by the revitalisation team with the active participation of church members. This strategy for change will identify the next practical steps on how we can glorify God when we meet together and remain salt and light all through the week (Matthew 5.13-16). They are visible, concrete actions we can take and which we can evaluate to see whether we are growing in our Christian lives -

- “And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, **growing** in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might” (Colossians 1:10)
- “But **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” (2 Peter 3.18)

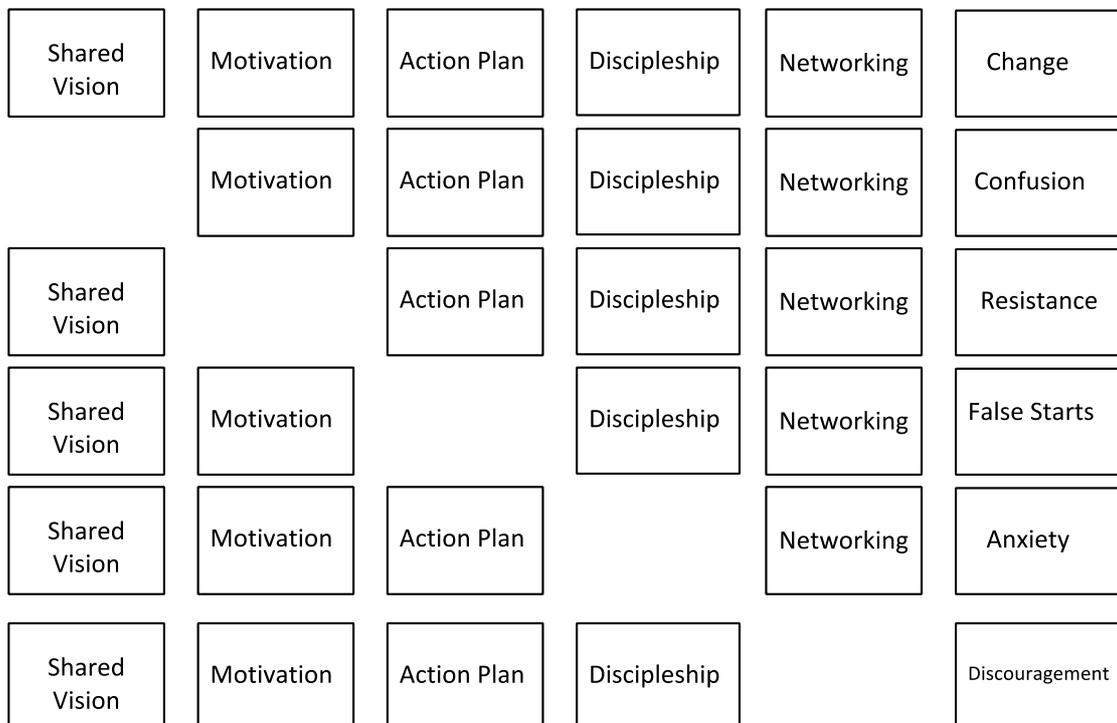
4. Discipleship

The heart of the action plan is discipleship in the social, societal and spiritual areas – this is where the fire of change is fuelled. A disciple is a learner, and so discipleship consists of supporting and training church members in these three areas of change. It doesn’t presume any particular method so it will include preaching and teaching, the example of a well-lived lives, one-to-one mentoring, training, encouragement and practical advice on how to engage in regular Bible study and prayer. Or anything else which will help the Christian to live out his role in the church and in society, according to his gifts.

5. Networking

Networking refers to all types of coaching from outside the church. This may be formally put in place by the denomination with a facilitator and include regular meetings with other leaders of churches involved in revitalisation. Or it may be a whole range of informal types of mutual encouragement, such as contact between likeminded people, or the support of a nearby healthy church, or interaction via books, social media, visits or conferences.

Church Revitalisation Change Management (adapted from T.Knoster 1991)



The end result

If any of the components are missing, the end result may well be very different.

- ❖ If there is no vision, the end result would be confusion. Nobody knows where the church is going.
- ❖ If there is a lack of motivation, there will be resistance to the whole process.
- ❖ If there is no action plan, there is the likelihood of false starts. Church members will be motivated for change but they will not see how this will come about.
- ❖ Without discipleship, anxiety will ensue about reaching objectives. People need encouragement and also to see living examples and receive training.
- ❖ A lack of networking could be a major cause of discouragement. Revitalisation can be a long, slow (and for some people) painful process. We need to exhort each other to keep going, and to get positive feedback from people we trust (so that the church will trust us as leaders).

Question

Are you ready to start the revitalisation process? If not, what obstacles do you need to overcome? (Personal challenges? Church situation? Understanding the process?)