



# Growing Churches

**CHURCH REVITALISATION PROJECT**



## Acknowledgement

Many people from the various organisations and connected churches have contributed to this booklet and we are extremely grateful for their time and help.

## Use of the word “church”

To keep things simple, throughout the booklet we have used the word “church” when referring to a local assembly or company or fellowship of believers who are under a structured leadership.



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Defining renewal  
and revitalisation  
in the local church

# 1. Introduction

We all long for our local fellowships to be thriving, disciple-making communities and being effective in reaching our local towns and villages with the life-changing Gospel. When we look at our own church or assembly, most of us feel that we need revitalising. A clearer sense of direction or a few more resource people may be all that is required, but we will also know of some churches that may need to move from “life support” to “resurrection”! One of the tragedies of recent years is where churches leave it too long before they seek help and are beyond revitalisation.

There may be a number of different options that are available for revitalising your local church. There is no one solution that fits all situations and this booklet will help you consider the stage you are at, the different options available and what you need to do next to find an appropriate solution. It is vital that you seek help as early as possible.

Church Growth Trust (CGT), Counties and GLO (together originally with Partnership) are running this Church Revitalisation project and this booklet will help steer you in the right direction for the help you need. The project enables the combined resources of these service groups to network key workers and local churches in support of individual churches who are currently struggling to develop. Many churches could benefit from this resource, not just those that are facing closure. It is hoped that churches that have resources to support revitalisation in other churches will be willing to consider their role in the process too.



## 2. Definitions

Renewal or revitalisation means different things to different people and is often linked with replanting or planting churches. It is therefore important to be clear what revitalisation (as distinct from replanting and planting) means in the context of this booklet.

### a. Revitalisation of a local church

This is where an existing church goes through a process to reverse decline, moves into a phase of new growth and becomes an increased blessing in its local community or spheres of influence. While the extent may vary, this involves a clear degree of continuity in terms of both membership and leadership. Practices and methodologies may radically change (including a name change), but the existence and identity of the Christian witness is viewed by the church and by the community around the church as a continuation of the previously existing local church.

## b. Replanting a local church

This is where new leaders are appointed from other sources (possibly a group with a calling to work in that area), with old leaders stepping down, but most, if not all, of the membership remaining, and perhaps others joining them. It will normally involve a closure of the existing church (whether a literal or virtual closure and ideally a good one). However, unlike a church plant, there is a continuity of evangelical witness, in that, from the local community perspective, a gospel witness is maintained, and the replanted church will be able to reap from seed previously sown.

## c. Church planting

This is where a new church is started in an area, whether defined by geography (e.g. a town or a suburb) or a language or ethnic group, where there has not previously been an evangelical witness.

We believe that a good starting point in all these considerations is that there is a thorough review of a local church's current situation, as a means to gaining clarity as to how a church may be strengthened and revitalised, or whether things like a strategic closure with a possible re-start would be the best way forward for witness in that area. Getting the review process off to a good start is what this booklet is focussed on.



### 3. Revitalisation is great

Jesus loves revitalisation as we see from Revelation chapters 2-3. In fact, the experience of many involved in revitalisation has been that it carries with it great blessings, which we have the privilege of seeing God use for His glory. Here are six reasons why revitalisation is great.

Firstly, revitalisation grows us in our love of Jesus. Churches do not end up dying by accident, and those hanging on through a long process of decline can feel incredibly disillusioned and weary. Revitalisation is an opportunity to rediscover our first love.

Secondly, revitalisation builds on the past. As one church leader put it, "For us, if revitalisation had not taken place, the wider church would have lost a building in a strategic location, 75 years of history with a community, and a not insubstantial sum of money in the bank which was given over many years to see people reached locally".



Thirdly, revitalisation often establishes an intergenerational church from day one. Most church plants are crying out for older people to join them. Most dying churches are praying for young families.

Fourthly, revitalisation empowers forgotten believers. Often people in struggling contexts will be left at sea if their church closes. However, as God breathes life into their fellowship, He breathes life into them, to continue using their gifts to serve in new ways.

Fifthly, revitalisation values marginalised communities. While churches in all areas at times need help, it is perhaps amongst our poorest, most needy people that there is some of the greatest need for revitalisation. These are often the kinds of communities where church plants struggle to gain traction, but where a revitalisation strategy might be just the right thing.

Finally, revitalisation uncovers a hidden gospel frontier. Folks involved in revitalisation often assume they have two jobs: 1) try and turn around the church and 2) try and reach new people. What amazes them is the large, hidden fringe of people who are somehow already connected to the church, and who renew their interest in Jesus as revitalisation takes hold.

Assessing what  
kind of renewal  
and revitalisation  
you need

## 4. Assessing where you are

Each local church situation will be different and yours will not be exactly the same as another one down the road. The important thing is to be honest in assessing where you are.

The following options are a guide to help you and your local church consider your own situation:

### a. Vitamin tablets

*The body is generally healthy, but may need a bit of help and a bit of a lift.*

Perhaps your church has 25+ in fellowship, with mature leaders in place and potential younger leaders that need encouraging/training, as well as active members of the body. A “Church Health Check” (see section 5 below) would help to clarify vision, identify areas of improvement and put in place strategies for strengthening the church and growing numerically, which may include others locally coming alongside you.



## b. Taking the medicine

*There are some signs of sickness.*

Does your local church have perhaps 20-30 in fellowship with some mature, but elderly, leaders and no prospect of younger leaders being raised up from within the fellowship? Some outside help may be required. Again, a Church Health Check would identify needs and help to reset vision.

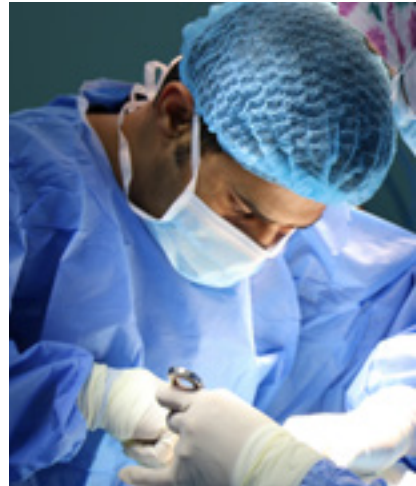
It is likely that new leadership will be required, perhaps by recruiting a part-time or full-time worker (the role would depend on the identified needs) or leaders provided from nearby churches to form a transitional leadership<sup>1</sup>. The **Transitional Leadership** would work with the existing elders in recognising the past and agreeing a fresh vision, identifying specific God-given areas of growth for the future. **Resources**, including leaders, some help with additional people and funding, can sometimes be provided by other local churches and other bodies.



## c. Surgery required

*The situation is more serious.*

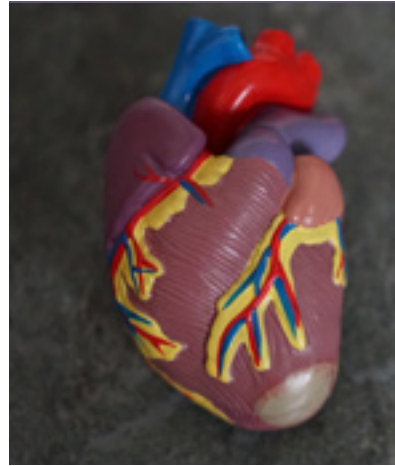
Are you unlikely to be able to continue on your own as a local church? This might be because of decreasing numbers, increasing age, declining health or lack of leadership. **Merging** with another local church can provide stronger leadership, more resources for active outreach and a stronger core from which to grow. Merging takes time to build relationships, to work through issues relating to leadership, doctrine and church practices (each party discussing and setting out their "lines in the sand") and agreeing a timetable and process for joining together. This would also include discussions on resources (e.g. buildings, equipment and funds) and legal issues (e.g. charity governance, employment and property ownership). The Church Revitalisation project can help you work through this process.



#### **d. Heart transplant**

*Urgent care is needed to survive.*

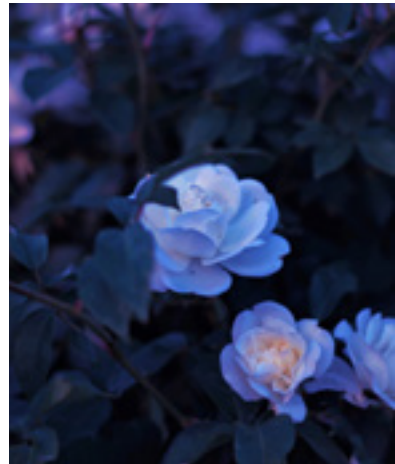
If the congregation is down to a few in numbers and without (or soon to be without) effective leadership, you are likely to be the junior partner with any new church coming alongside. The expectation is that the new church will bring in their own leadership and style of church practice. However, it is hoped that they will take into consideration the things that you as the older fellowship hold dearly (e.g. breaking of bread weekly) and try to incorporate these within the life of the church. Doctrinal “lines in the sand” would need to be discussed and the timetable and process of handing over the reins would need to be agreed. This would include any transition period, legal and governance matters (as mentioned above) and any rebranding. The Church Revitalisation project or Church Growth Trust (in cases where it is involved with the property) can help you work through this.



#### **e. End of life care**

*Leaving a living legacy.*

If you are a local church that is small, elderly, without effective leadership and unwilling (often for good reasons) to come under another church, there remains a positive option to consider: the fellowship could close and hand over the use of the building to another church. Church Growth Trust can help you do this. While this can be a painful and difficult decision, it is as valid as any other in enabling Gospel work to continue in the locality as you leave a living legacy for the next generation.



# 5. Church Health Checks

Church Health Checks have been offered to independent churches in the past by Partnership and the Church Strengthening Initiative. This efficient process has been developed by the Church Revitalisation project and has benefited many churches, and would be of value to all churches. Whilst making no claims to scientific accuracy, the combination of a set of standard questions guided by an experienced external adviser adds a measure of meaningful objectivity to assist realistic reflection and strategic planning.



## **a. Questionnaire and church consultation**

The Church Health Check begins with the church leadership completing a questionnaire. This can be done together or completed in sections by individual leaders, according to the leadership's preferences. The Church Revitalisation project will propose an adviser, generally an experienced Christian worker from the locality, who is not intimately involved in the regular ministry of the church. At an initial meeting with the leaders, the adviser will recommend a church consultation process tailored to the church's needs in light of the questionnaire, and agree with the leadership how this can be most appropriately delivered. The consultation will normally be with members of the local church. Results of the church consultation are analysed by the adviser, with anonymised feedback to the church leadership.

The adviser then prepares a Church Health Check report with recommendations which he discusses with the leadership before an agreed report is given to the church, providing a platform from which the leadership can steer the way ahead. Just as your GP practice would make clear, church 'health checks' are intended to help you make your own decisions for future health.



### **b. Adviser**

Generally, a warm relationship develops between the leadership and the adviser, and advisers are often willing to help implement church health check proposals – or suggest resources or others whom the leadership might like to invite. Even if churches do not need a full revitalisation programme, a period of interaction with an adviser (perhaps attending alternate leadership meetings) is often enormously beneficial typically for periods of 2-3 years depending on matters that are being worked through.

Where a church leadership is serious about implementing change, they can add to the effectiveness of a Church Health Check by inviting review sessions with the adviser after a year or two. Depending on local circumstances a further Church Health Check is recommended every 5 to 10 years.



### **c. Costs**

It is appreciated if the church can contribute to and where possible cover the adviser's time and travel expenses involved in carrying out a Church Health Check (CHC). Currently Counties manages the CHC process and there is a standard fee of £300 charged to the local church and where possible any travel costs of the adviser are covered by the local church too (direct to the adviser). Costs would be discussed at an early stage and will be kept to a reasonable level. If additional advice is requested, the financial arrangements would be discussed at that stage and are often a matter of agreement between the church and the adviser. However, if your church really cannot afford to pay the above contribution for a CHC, but this is something you feel would be of benefit, please do contact us as we would not want to see finances being an obstacle to revitalisation.

## 6. What you need to grow



On the one hand, it is fully recognise that the Church belongs to Christ, and the resources for the Church's growth are divine, rooted in the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. However, Christ has mandated discipleship (which is at the heart of what church is – communities of disciples) to us, His disciples. So, there are things we need to do, because church growth is not automatic. There are no guarantees. However, if it is to happen, there are several key ingredients that must be in place.





### **a. Leadership**

First and foremost, there must be capable leadership. Proverbs 29:18 (AV) declares that “where there is no vision, the people perish”. The same is true for churches. If the members of a church have no idea where they are going; if they lack purpose, inevitably discouragement will set in. Alternatively, if there is a vision to follow; if people can be excited and united behind a core purpose, then they will be motivated and willing to make a contribution.

Ultimately vision comes from the leadership. They may take advice. They would also prayerfully ask God to lead and guide, but they have to produce a vision that people in the church are willing to follow. However, good leadership is not just about producing a vision statement; communication is also vital. Unless everyone understands the vision and also their role in fulfilling it, nothing will happen. Communication is much more than just conveying information; it should be done in such a way that people will want to respond and make sacrifices in order to achieve the vision. In other words, as leaders communicate the vision, they need to be inspiring. Vision is caught, not taught.

Leadership also involves facilitation. Every church has its members, and all will have spiritual gifts and practical skills that they can utilise for the benefit of the church. There are also needs to be met, jobs to be done and challenges to overcome. It is the job of leadership to see how the manpower available can be the answer for the needs that exist.





### **b. People**

As well as good leadership, a church needs to have willing people in order to function properly. We are, as church members, the body of Christ. It is our job to serve so that the church can be blessed and grow. While it is true that every Christian has spiritual gifts, it is equally the case that there needs to be a willingness to use these gifts, before they can become effective. Every church needs willing workers. Nothing can happen without them and they need to be dependable and committed. It is of only secondary importance how old or young or how many church members there are. True, a larger church will have a greater capacity to do things, but the example of the 12 disciples shows us what can be achieved if a few ordinary but motivated people set out to serve Christ. A handful of willing workers will be more effective than a much greater number of passengers.



### **c. Buildings**

A third thing that growing churches need is a place to meet and from which to operate. Here we are not necessarily talking about using purpose-built church buildings. Indeed, the early church did not build purpose-built buildings for a couple of centuries. They were much more inclined to use public buildings such as the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9) or to meet in homes (Acts 2:46). Today it is common for churches to use schools, community centres and restaurants, as well as houses, to meet in. The major factor to consider is practicality. If whatever building that is being used is fit for purpose, then it is a good location for the church to use. A building should be a servant to the church, not the main focus. If the building is not fit for purpose, or in the wrong location, then consideration should be given to changing it to improve the existing building or, in some cases, to relocate.

# 7. Identifying and maintaining core values

Whether you are considering bringing in new leaders or merging with another church, the core values that your church or assembly holds dear and puts priority on must be clear in order that open and straight-forward discussions can be had with the incoming leaders or church. Clarity and transparency will illuminate the many difficulties and misunderstandings. Core values may be deeply held biblical beliefs or leadership structures. They may also be ways of worshipping that you are familiar with or traditions that have been weaved into your church life. Not only is it important that you consider which of these are priorities, but also whether they are truly biblical or merely what you have got used to; whether they are appropriate for reaching this generation with the Gospel and whether they would be acceptable to another church working with you.

Discussing and writing down these priorities will help you decide what is core and what is not. When considering priorities, the following may be helpful:

**Fundamental** - Things that are absolutely fundamental to the fellowship that you are not prepared to compromise on. This could be for instance breaking of bread/communion being a core part of your identity. Whether this should be every week, as a separate meeting and in a particular long-established format, will also need to be considered.

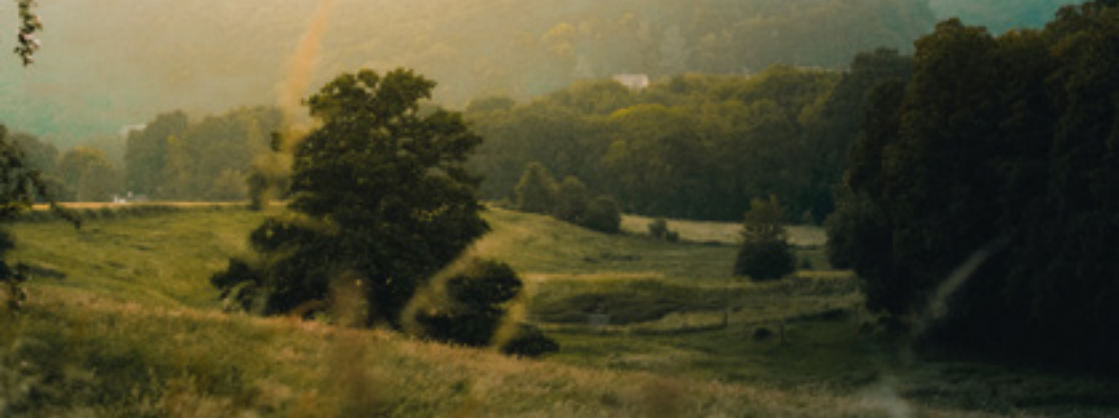
**Some flexibility** - Areas where you would be prepared to be flexible. This could be for instance the Bible translation used or women speaking at or leading meetings.

**Changeable** - Current practices that you would be happy to change. This could include times, formats and content of main church meetings.

## 8. Models of renewal and revitalisation



Every situation is different, and it can be unhelpful to try to fit everything into certain models. However, examples of where revitalisation has taken place will hopefully help you consider the options available to you.



## MODEL 1

# Regrowing churches

There are natural cycles in the life of a local church over the decades that relate to demographic changes, cultural changes in society as well as the ups and down of quality in leadership and membership ability and commitment. Whether a church has declined or has historically always been on the small side, there comes critical points when courageous decisions need to be made or a new vision grasped and activated, so as to enable a church to regrow or actually to move out of a perceived ceiling of growth into a new season of development. Often outside input is crucial in change phases, whether in the form of helping with a review or Church Health Check, or by providing a sounding board or sense of accountability for an eldership seeking to work through ideas and developments.

This is an example of regrowing a church. The fellowship that met at and still uses a Gospel Hall in South Wales was planted by a young couple who were dissatisfied with the lack of passion for Jesus and the Gospel in their local Baptist church in 1915. This group became linked with other Brethren assemblies in the Swansea area and saw good growth in the early decades before perhaps becoming more inward looking.

During the 1970s and 1980s, despite an excellent children's outreach and developing youth work, the fellowship itself remained fairly inward looking and conservative in its ecclesiology also. It seemed to be drifting along and finding it hard to grow much beyond its core group of about 25 people. Here are a some of the key factors in this assembly being turned around and becoming what it is today; a vibrant growing evangelical church of over 150 meeting in the nearby local school:

- In the mid-1990s the elders took the courageous decision to allow one of their number who had been commended to serve in Zambia as a missionary, while on furlough, to take the assembly away for a weekend to examine scripture on two main aspects – the role of woman in ministry and the use of spiritual gifts. Though a small number left the fellowship as a consequence of subsequent changes made, this time away proved to be a major turning point.
- In 1999 the assembly decided to call back another young couple, who had been commended to the work with OM and then with Counties, to use the Gospel Hall as their home base and provide some further strategic leadership in the church especially in the area of outreach and teaching.

- They developed a change culture and engaged with a range of things that help develop community and fellowship, such as monthly Sunday lunches, investing in the training and mentoring of young people (alongside engagement in camp work OM Teen Street, GLO teams and One to Lead), and running regular outreach groups like Alpha and Christianity Explored.
  - In 2005 a move was made into a local school for their main Sunday meetings, where, as well as providing more space to meet and for Sunday School and youth work, it allowed local people to come to a perceived neutral space.
  - They engaged with the JW Laing Trust's Church Strengthening Initiative's process, which involved having an outside adviser to help relook at the direction of the church and then seek part-funding of a church worker, who became the first employed member of staff for the church. This has led (after this worker left to pastor another church) to the recent employment of someone in a full-time assistant pastor role.
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## MODEL 2

# Resource churches

Resource churches may not consider themselves strong enough to plant a new church, but may be in a position to come alongside another struggling local church to provide resources (leadership, people, ideas and finance) to see that church revitalised.

A local church may have declined for a number of reasons and the one providing resources may want a large say in how the church will now move forward. What is negotiable and non-negotiable has to be honestly spelled out at a really early stage; otherwise people will be confused and there will be many misunderstandings.



“The leaders of both churches spent much time having open and honest conversations about the struggling church.”

This particular example of the resource church model starts with a familiar story: there was a local church that was both aging and declining in numbers. The two elders who had been serving had decided that in the fairly near future they would be moving from the area. This led to some honest conversations between the two men and they decided through Church Growth Trust to ask a local FIEC church for some help. This did not happen in one or two meetings, but required a number of discussions. Building good relationships is key.

Moving on from those open discussions, the local FIEC church sent one of their pastors to preach on most Sundays and to lead the midweek prayer meeting. At this early stage the rough plan was that the pastor would eventually bring a team of people from the FIEC church. However, the recipient church had to agree that they could accept this man's preaching and that it would be a good fit. This stage took about three months. At the same time, some other elders from the FIEC church agreed that they would come along with the pastor and start to meet with the members of the recipient church.

It is worth making clear that no new initiatives were started at this stage in terms of evangelism or youth work. The new team were watching how life operated. At the next stage the elders and pastor from the FIEC church started to gather a team of people who would move church.

They have found in this case that geography really matters and if you want to reach a community it is best to live there. They said to those who wanted to be part of things, either they had to live in the area or move into the area.

Slowly, at first, and over a period of another three months, the team coming from the FIEC church and the older church began to be integrated into one

local church with a pastor and elder-led model.

To integrate people, all sorts of events were planned. As well as the Sunday gatherings, there were work days, meals together, and a number of Saturday mornings. On those Saturdays the mission of the church was clearly set out again. There was also room given for people to ask questions and say how they felt about things. Do not shy away from this, as you will learn how people are feeling. Although a thick skin will be required.

The elders decided to re-name the church and to launch over a weekend with a community open day on the Saturday and the service on the Sunday. Lots of local invitations went out and many people came.

Since the launch, they have decided to focus on a few key ministries but do them really well and resource them appropriately. For example, while it would have been hard for the previous church to run and staff a local toddler group, or a café, or an older folks' lunch, having a few more people around means they were able to do this.

## **A number of valuable lessons can be learned by this process, including:**

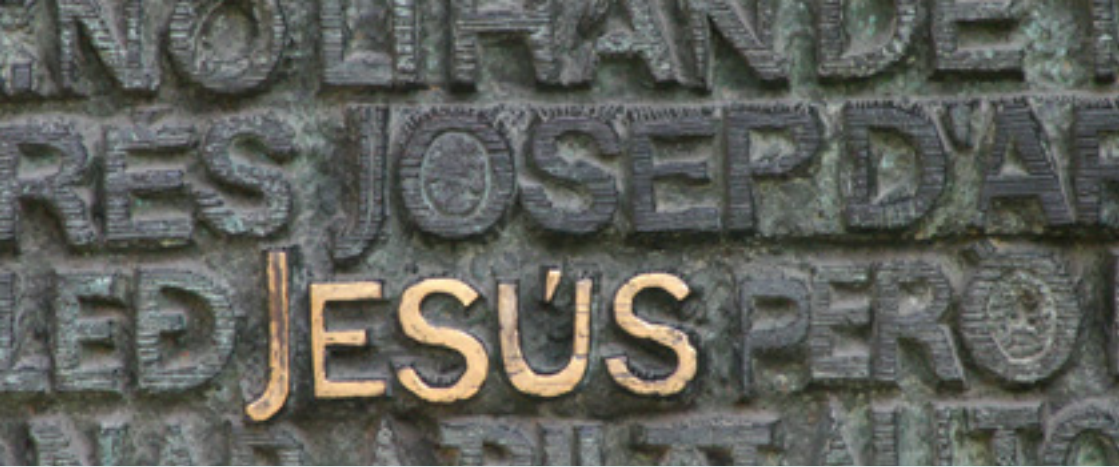
- **Patience** - From initial conversations to launch can take 12 to 18 months. This should not be rushed. It was worth it to build relationships and trust.
- **Compromise** - Not ever on the Gospel, but perhaps it is not such a big deal to compromise on the way the seats are put out or the time of the service or the music or a new carpet or the mugs. This is a two-way street of course and all parties will need to be willing to do this.
- **Joy** - Older saints from the original church will often find it a joy to see a new lease of spiritual life for the church, and new opportunities for service as they worship and serve beside some younger people.



### MODEL 3

## Merging with another church or churches

Two or more small churches, perhaps with different strengths, can decide to come together to strengthen each other. This is an account of three churches who took the decision to come together to function as a new church.



“First and foremost, the role of a church is to live as a people who love God and seek to evangelise their community.”

This is an example of churches merging. In this specific situation there were three churches in a locality, all functioning and all small in terms of numbers. They were not effective in their outreach. In two of the churches at least it had been a long time since someone became a Christian, was baptized and added to the church from outside the existing church family. One church did have a good youth work.

Someone from one of the churches wrote to all three expressing a burden and desire for the three to become one church; the aim being to reach out to their dying community and be effective in their outreach. The initial response was fairly negative, but the contact did result in the elders from two of the churches meeting regularly, praying for direction and guidance in the matter.

They met for about four years praying – getting to know each other better. These meetings progressed from praying to having discussions about formats, barriers and potential ways forward.

Even when the elders of these two churches had decided to come together, a lot of detail was discussed before they spoke to the two respective churches. This was a really important process. They essentially went back to scripture

and sought to agree what a new church would look and feel like. This had the effect of doing three things:

- Stripping out the traditions that had built up which were just that, and not based on what God's Word tells us about a church;
- It also reaffirmed the essentials (from Scripture) of what the church would look like and how it would function;
- It helped them see that without coming together with a renewed energy for outreach they would be shutting the doors and selling the buildings.

It was a positive experience and the elders took the detail to the respective congregations. There were lots of logistics which were worked through (e.g. what building to use and what to do with the other one). These are just things to fix, which they did.

The first meeting as one new church was a morning meeting where they remembered the Lord Jesus in the Lord's Supper.

The third church joined with them a few years later.

There is a danger we judge success from a human perspective and jump to numbers. This is not always helpful. Those involved in the example given have been operating as a new church for about 15 years now. Their outreach is varied from youth, families and older. They are visible in the town and people walk past having a better idea who they are and what they believe. God has added new converts to their number, and they give Him all the glory.

As one of the leaders says: "If we had focussed on the original response to the letter or on what we liked and wanted to preserve, we would have never come together. Who knows where and what those three churches would be like now? There was no doubt looking back that for our context there "was such a time as this". I'm glad we took that decision all those years ago and I'm humbled to say God has undoubtedly blessed that decision to come together".



## MODEL 4

# A different church taking over and becoming part of a new church

Even the very word “takeover” seems to have negative connotations and often meets with resistance. However, in some circumstances this is the best option for a local church that is struggling without any leadership or leadership limited due to age and capacity, or with a congregation that is getting older and smaller, and hence severely restricted on what it can do to reach the local community with the Gospel. This option should be seen as positive and, when carried out well, is very effective. Church Growth Trust has helped a number of local churches achieve this.

“One example was of an assembly that still had 20-25 members, but the main leader had been ill for some time and was having to move for the sake of his health.”

This is an example of another church taking over the work. There was no-one else in the assembly to take on the mantel and they were facing the possibility of closing. A New Frontiers church nearby was introduced and they were able to offer leadership and additional (as well as younger) members. The New Frontiers church was very sensitive to the existing fellowship, who were mostly elderly, observing their normal practices and agreeing not to change anything for at least six months. They provided consistent teaching at the Sunday meetings, continued to run mid-week meetings, offered pastoral support for the existing members and encouraged all who were willing to take an active part in church life. They then started new activities to reach the local community and built on existing relationships that the assembly had, encouraging as many as possible to get involved. The new church has also encouraged others from the old fellowship to be on the “wider leadership team” and therefore have a sense of ownership for what is happening. Changes have been introduced to the main meetings, but these were done in an atmosphere of trust and established relationships.

Six years later, all of the existing fellowship are still part of the church and there has been significant growth, with 70 in fellowship, 15 youth and 12 children, requiring a portacabin for some of the children’s work.

**In these situations,** spotting people of influence in the old assembly and ensuring they are on-board with the new leadership and any changes is important, as they can bring the rest along with them. It is not possible to please everyone all the time, but it is possible to carry the majority, if the leadership is sensitive and inclusive. It is helpful to hold church meetings, in order to set out vision and to allow open discussion of concerns and solutions to be worked through. Often things will brew under the surface and a forum to allow these to surface, if handled well, can be very beneficial. As the whole church catches the vision and see the fruit of growth, the changes are not considered to be a problem and are much easier to embrace.

*It is helpful to hold church meetings, in order to set out vision and to allow open discussion of concerns and solutions to be worked through.*





# Taking action



## 9. What to do now

**Having read this booklet, what should you do now?**

**If you recognise your church situation in any of the examples do not do nothing!**

If you are concerned about the future growth of your church, struggling with a succession plan for your church leaders or are generally sensing the need for help, then church revitalisation should be considered. Even if things are generally going well, but you sense there is so much more that could be done or that you as a church could get more involved in renewal and revitalisation work itself, then get in touch. This is a vital time for you to grasp the opportunity and see new life breathed into the Gospel work locally, to see your assembly or church thriving again and to see many coming to know the Lord and to receive eternal life and freedom in Christ. We are living in what seems an increasingly God-less society, but people are still hungry to know the Living God. Despite the national press giving the view that churches are dying, there are many that are growing and being very effective at reaching this generation with the message of salvation.

The first action is to seek help to carry out a brief, but honest, self-assessment of where you are as a church (see section 4 above). You are welcome to get in touch with any of the three organisations behind this revitalisation project (see section 11 below) or simply email [revitalisation@countiesuk.org](mailto:revitalisation@countiesuk.org).

**Do you want to be part of this?**

**If so, do not delay. Act now!**

# 10. Making contact

Whatever stage of growth your church is at, taking time out to review where you are, and prayerfully seeking the Lord's guidance for the future is a valuable process to work through. The **'Growing Churches – Church Revitalisation project'** would be glad to discuss with you your particular circumstance and, if appropriate, arrange a Church Health Check with a trusted adviser.

This could be the first step for your church in a journey of understanding more clearly the way forward.

If you would like to take the first step towards this process, please email us on [revitalisation@countiesuk.org](mailto:revitalisation@countiesuk.org) or write to Counties at the address on page 38, giving details of the church, its address, approximate number of those in fellowship and the details of the main contact (name, telephone and email). We will get back to you to arrange a meeting to answer any questions you may have and discuss the process with you.

# 11. ReNew

We would suggest you may want to look at the reNew resource which is available to download free of charge from

[www.counties-training.org/renew-course-church-revitalisation](http://www.counties-training.org/renew-course-church-revitalisation)

ReNew is a series of short videos together with workbooks to help you as a leadership or wider congregation think through Bible principles and practical steps towards revitalisation. Simon Ladd, who produced ReNew and is a Counties Regional Co-ordinator, has had over 35 years of experience in church leadership. The course has an introduction and then five main sessions:

**1. Get real!**

**2. Change**

**3. Mystery Shopper**

**4. What is a church?**

**5. Vision, Strategy and Mission**

## 12. Additional information and resources

There are many books on church planting and revitalisation. Some suggestions for further reading are as following:

**“Renewal: Church Revitalisation Along the Way of the Cross”** by John James and published by 10Publishing (ISBN-10: 191-1-272-07-1 ISBN-13: 978-1-911272-07-6). This book should be placed in the hands of any church leader contemplating or even not contemplating a church revitalisation.

**“Fresh Shoots in Stony Ground – the challenges of church planting”** by Stephen McQuoid and Neil Summerton and published by Partnership Publications (ISBN: 978-0-9570-0177-1-9). This book is aimed more at church planters, but has many good examples that are relevant for revitalisation.

**“Learning to Share the Good News”** by Stephen McQuoid and to be published by Partnership UK in 2019.

**“The Unstuck Church”** by Tony Morgan and published by Harper Collins (ISBN-10: 071-8-094-41-7 ISBN-13: 978-0718-0944-1-6 and e-book ISBN 978-0718-0772-6-6). A brilliant book on the life cycle of church. It is American so needs to be contextualised for the UK and for your type of church.

**“Autopsy of a Deceased Church – 12 ways to keep yours alive”** by Thom S Rainer and published by Broadman & Holman Publishers (ISBN: 978-1-4336-8392-3). An excellent book for spotting the danger signs. Again, it is American so certain aspects need to be contextualised for the UK scene.

**“Comeback Churches”** by Ed Stetzer and published by Broadman & Holman Publishers (ISBN-10: 080-5-445-36-6 ISBN-13: 978-0-8054-4536-7). This book again is American, but is the fruit of extensive research into 300 churches who came back from the dead.

**“The Purpose Driven Church”** by Rick Warren and published by Zonderman (ISBN: 978-0-310-20106-9). Best seller book and used by many growing churches in the UK.

**“Nine Marks of a Healthy Church”** by Mark Denver and published by Crossway (ISBN: 978-1-4335-3998-5).

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There are also a number of books and e-books on the shape of church and discipleship, including the following:

**“Imagine Church”** by Neil Hudson and published by Inter-Varsity Press (ISBN-10: 184-4-745-66-X ISBN-13: 978-1-8447-4635-4)

**“Real-Life Discipleship”** by Jim Putman and published by NavPress (ISBN-10: 161-5-215-60-3 ISBN-13: 978-1-61521-560-7).

**“Discipleshift”** by Jim Putman & Bobby Harrington and published by Zonderman (ISBN-10: 031-0-492-62-9 ISBN-13: 978-0-310-49263-4).

**“What Jesus Started”** by Steve Addison and published by IVP USA (ISBN-10: 083-0-836-59-4 ISBN-13: 978-0-8308-6643-4).

**“Invest in a Few”** by Craig Etheredge and published by discipleFIRST (ISBN: 978-0-9993439-3-7).

**“Growing healthy churches”** by Jonathan Lamb through Partnership UK. An essential book for church leaders and any Christian who is concerned for the health and growth of biblical Christianity worldwide

## Organisation details



your experts in church properties

### a. Church Growth Trust

Church Growth Trust (CGT) partners with independent evangelical churches to grow the Kingdom of God, by helping these churches thrive in their mission within the heart of their community and keeping church buildings for their original use and fit for purpose.

CGT is passionate about offering its skills, experience and practical support in a way that serves the Church and sees God's Kingdom grow. CGT's vision is: "We aspire to glorify God by securing for Gospel use independent church properties and together with churches making them fit for their God-given purpose".

#### **To fulfil its vision CGT:**

1. Holds and accepts independent church properties (as owner or trustee) and:
  - Blesses churches which occupy its buildings by granting concessionary rents;
  - Helps these churches to keep their properties in good condition, compliant with legislation and suitable for modern church use, including helping to fund building projects;
2. Provides professional property and architectural services and guidance in church practice and governance, including encouraging churches to make best use of their properties;
3. Supports church planting and revitalisation of independent churches.

#### **Contact details:**

Church Growth Trust

1 Manor Farm Barns, Baines Lane, Seaton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 9HP

**Tel:** 01536 201339

**Email:** [enquiries@churchgrowth.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@churchgrowth.org.uk)

**Website:** [churchgrowth.org.uk](http://churchgrowth.org.uk)

**Contacts:** Giles Arnold, Chief Executive and John Duffield, Property Manager



## **b. Counties**

For more than 100 years, Counties has been sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with communities across the country. It does this through three main areas of work – evangelism, training and resources.

Evangelists are all self-employed, but receive monthly gifts from Counties as funds allow. They work in counties across England and Wales in a variety of activities. These include: church planting, leading school assemblies, visiting prisons, witnessing at agricultural shows, leading holiday clubs and camps, manning market stalls, running café churches and evangelism courses and community door-to-door visiting.

Counties equips the church through its extensive range of training. Day conferences, seminars, workshops, as well as one-to-one mentoring sessions are held throughout the year to help churches grow through evangelism and local mission.

From major mobile exhibitions through to books and leaflets for the individual, there are plenty of Counties resources available to help people share the good news. Its innovative Life and GSUS Live exhibitions along with its new Key to Life? have reached thousands of school children with the story of Jesus.

### **Contact details:**

Counties

30 Haynes Road, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 3HD

**Tel:** 01373 823013

**Email:** [office@countiesuk.org](mailto:office@countiesuk.org)

**Website:** [countiesuk.org](http://countiesuk.org)

**Contacts:** Martin Erwin, CEO



### **c. GLO**

Historically known as Gospel Literature Outreach, GLO exists to serve God by bringing the gospel to Europe and encouraging Christians to be a witness in the world through Evangelising, Establishing, Resourcing and Training. It is a Christian mission organization dedicated to bringing the good news of Jesus to a world that is lost. Its vision is to establish Church Planting Teams throughout Europe and to support them through Short Term mission trips. It is also committed to training and equipping Christians for mission and ministry so that they can effectively serve God and share their faith.

GLO's training department is Tilsley College which offers a range of courses under its 'Training for Service' programme. The one year accredited (CertHE) residential course combines theological and biblical reflection with ministry practice. This can be taken forward for a further two years (DipHE or Baccalaureate), enabling students to continue with study while gaining practical experience in association with a local church. Part-time study is also possible through its Open Access courses at the college and through the church-based training 'Joshua Programme', which is also live-streamed as evening classes.

GLO also has a Christian Bookshop to resource churches and individuals, conferencing facilities and a coffee shop which provides a service to the local community.

#### **Contact details:**

GLO

78 Muir Street, Motherwell ML1 1BN

**Tel:** 0168 263483

**Email:** [admin@glo-europe.org](mailto:admin@glo-europe.org)

**Website:** [glo-europe.org](http://glo-europe.org)

**Contact:** Stephen McQuoid, Chief Executive

