



Dying to Restart

Dan Turner

“I hope I go like that!”

Church Restart

An effort by a long-declining church in which the church chooses a strategic death so that a new church can be launched in its place, using its existing members and assets.

A restart is characterized by a rapid shift in vision, culture, and ministry approach with the purpose of reaching a new target group in its community.

A restart combines the approach of church planting with the pastoral work of leading change.

There is a Crisis!
Is My Church Part of It?

The Church Landscape



New churches average 4-12% growth in their early years.



Typically after their 40th anniversary they begin a long, sustained period of decline.



80% -90% of churches are believed to be either stagnant or in decline.



Only 15 percent of SBC Churches are healthy, growing and multiplying.

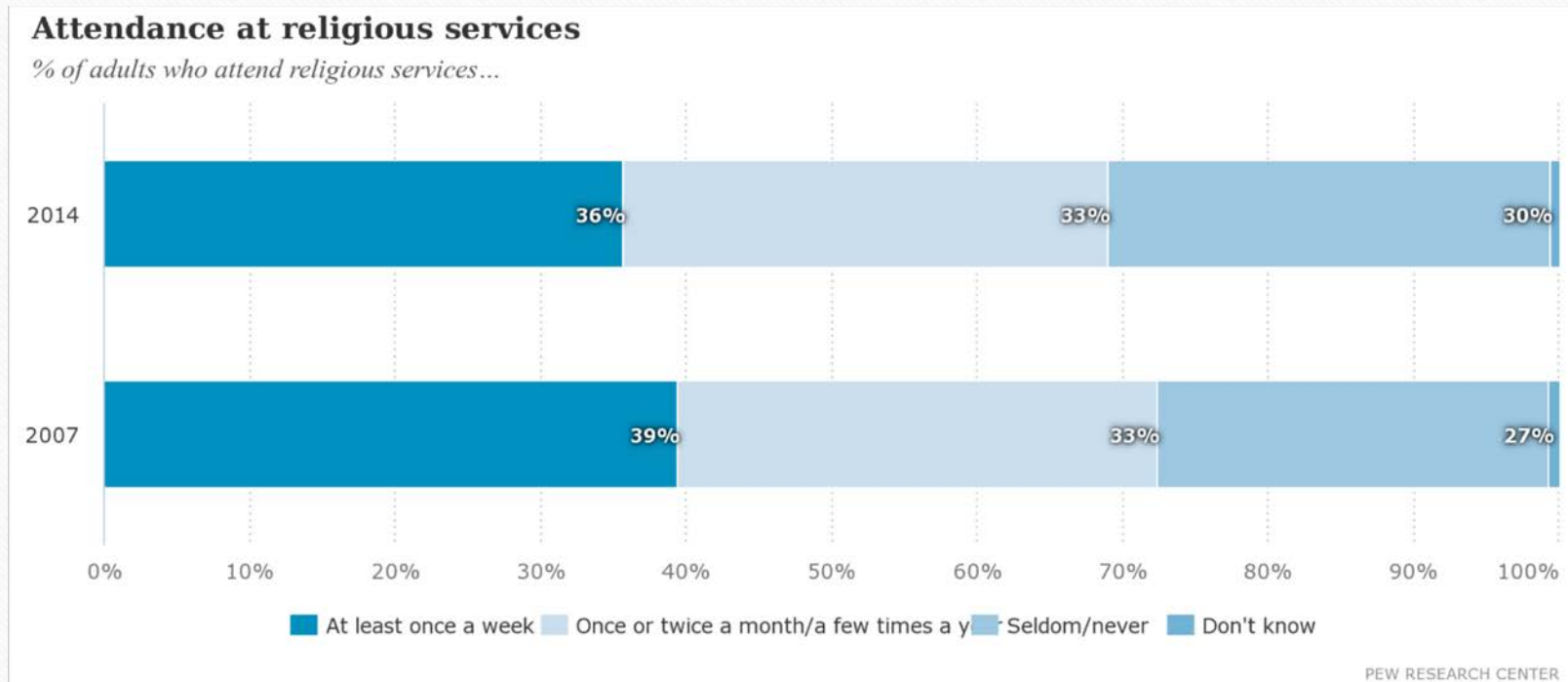
About 3,000 - 4,000 more churches will close this year.

For the Southern Baptist Churches, 90% of closures are in cities.

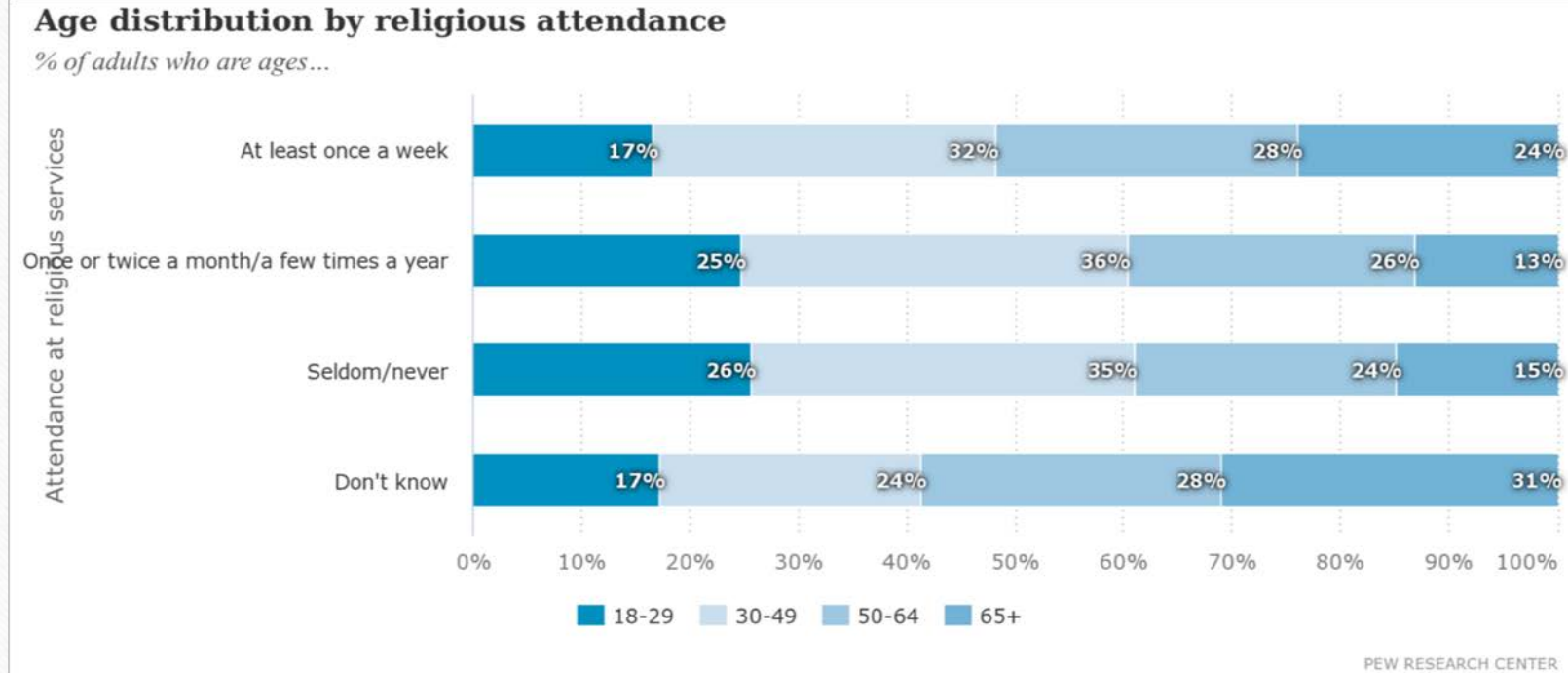
As population increases, we are losing ground quickly.

The Church in America is in Crisis!

Church Attendance Trends



Who's Going to Church?



Is it Time for Your Church to Restart?

Ten Signs that Point to a Restart

01

More than 7
years of
sustained
decline

02

Numerous
failed or short-
lived
revitalization
attempts

03

Disconnected
from Context

04

Weak or
Absent Vision,
Relationships,
and Ministries

Ten Signs that Point to a Restart (cont'd)



5. Little to no spiritual fruit



6. Loss of critical mass in worship



7. Sense of looming crisis

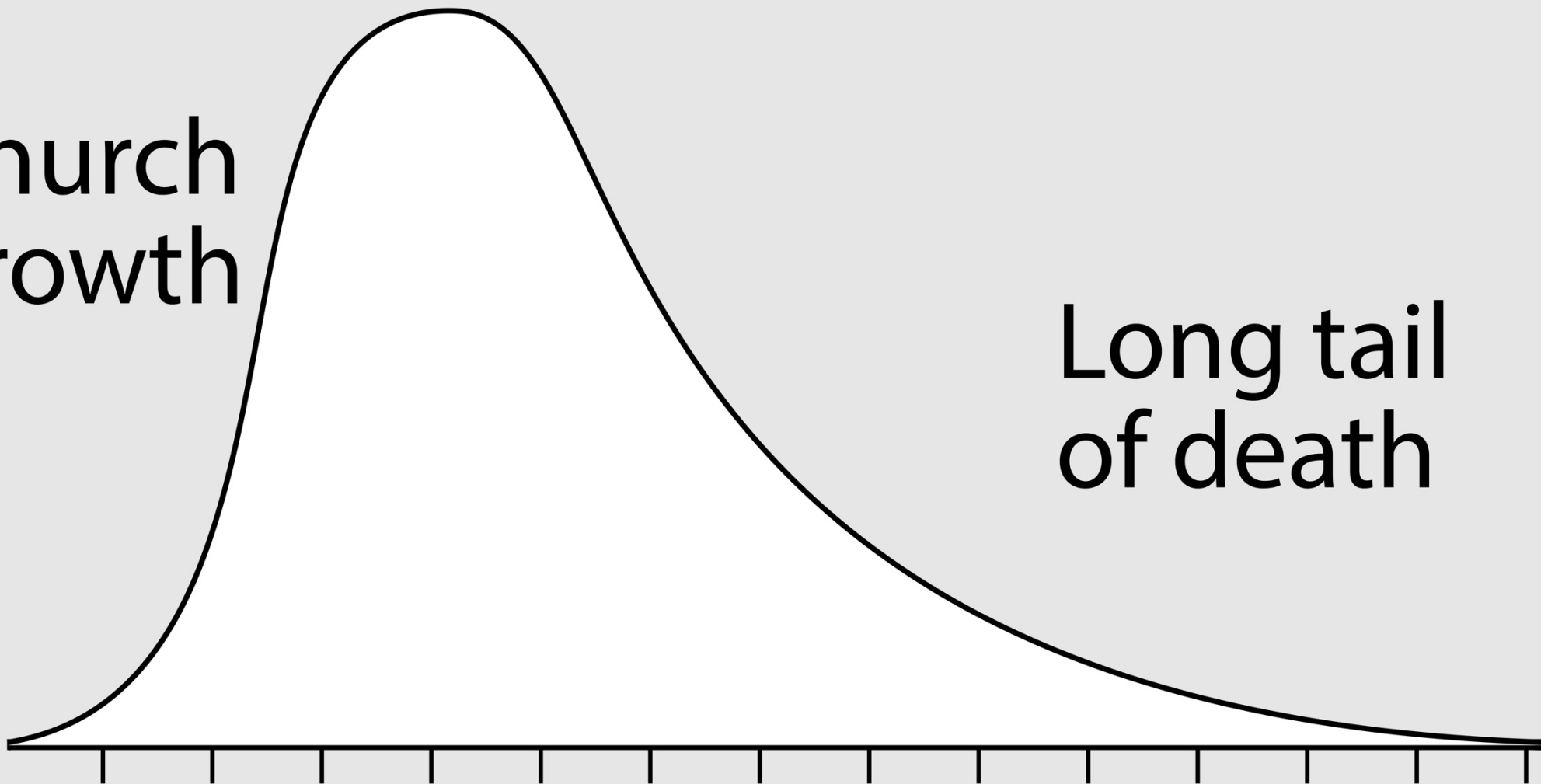


8. Identify on the death part of life cycle

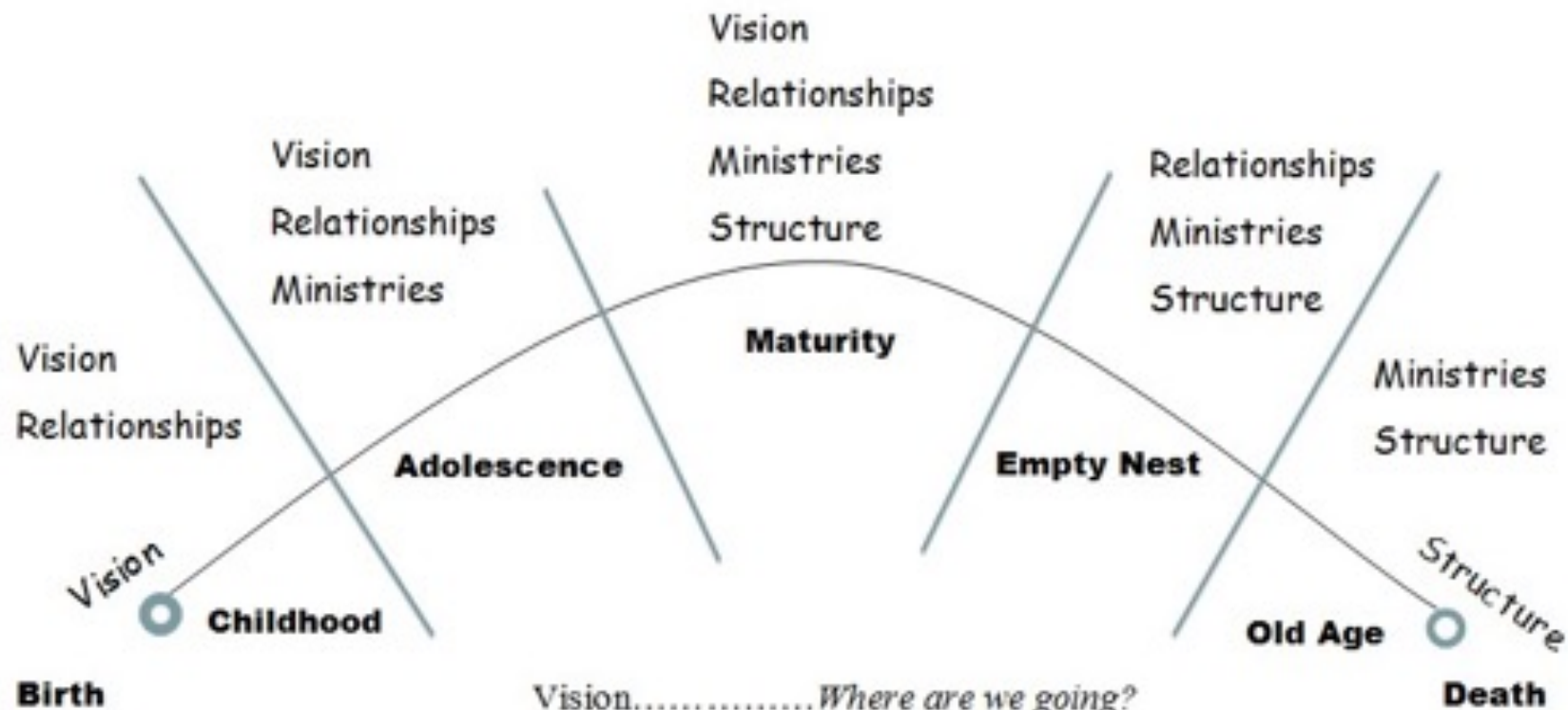
Church
growth

Long tail
of death

Time



Life Cycle of a Church



Vision.....Where are we going?

Relationships.....Who is going with us?

Ministry.....How do we get there?

Structure.....What do we control?

Ten Signs that Point to a Restart (cont'd)



9. Lack of healthy leaders



10. Church or pastor could not survive required changes

**Why can't we just revitalize
without dying?**

Simply hiring a new leader isn't a fix-all

Too many changes...too little time

Revitalization assumes the existing culture is essentially healthy.

Revitalization assumes no one needs to leave.

Revitalization happens utilizing existing systems

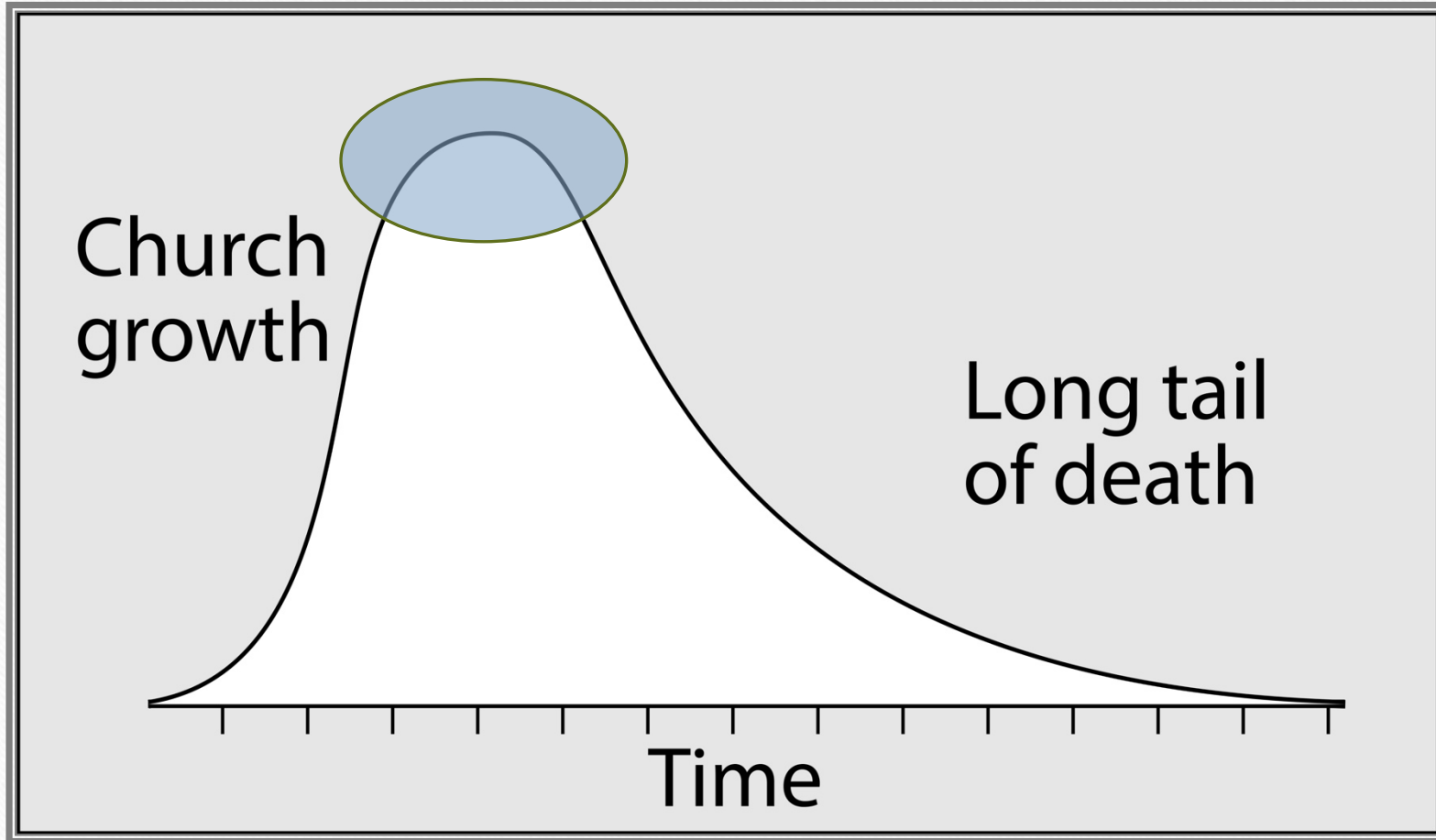
The leader nor the church could survive the surgery!

Restart expects some people will leave

Some considerations

Can My Church Help a Struggling Church to Restart?

Adoptive Churches



Fairfax Community & NWCC

Invested \$40,000 over a 5 year period.

Lead or Associate Pastor served on Advisory Board for a decade.

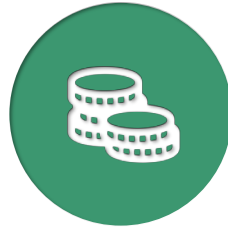
Provided musicians and a small seed group for the grand opening and a few months after opening.

Helped with technology, graphics, décor, etc.

Provided systems for children's ministry, small group ministry, etc.

Ongoing relationship continues.

Your Role in a Restart



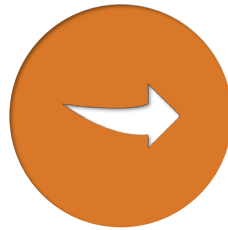
Funding
Source



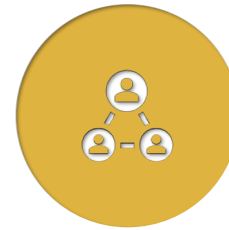
A Seat At The
Table (With A
Vote)



Provide Some
Ambassadors
From Your
Church



Provide Some
Talent From
Your Church



Connect
People To
Help Advise
On
Technology



Prayer
Support

Different Models

- Becomes a campus with your brand.
- Maintains its own identity but becomes part of your network.
- Walk with the church just for a season until it is established.
- Merge the churches together.
 - The healthier church has a larger role in determining the new DNA.
- Catch and Release.

Cautions

- Make sure the changes in structure are reflected in by-laws and corporation papers.
- Insist on a covenant adopted by the restart church.
- Be open to the possibility that a new leader may be needed.
- Establish expected benchmarks for financial support.
- Talk about the end game that may include diminishing financial support.
 - Restart churches are weening off of the support of their core that might leave or withdraw after changes are made. Older congregations will lose funding after each death.

Advantages

- You basically get a church plant with a much smaller investment.
- The ability to multiply healthy DNA.
- The possibility of partnering with churches in higher needs areas that can be a base of ministry.
- Provides a lower risk proving ground for rising leaders in your church.
- The encouragement to you and your church of seeing God use a church many had given up on.

Where to begin

Existing, strong relationships.

Speak with your local jurisdiction.

Most dying churches won't want to be approached about the topic.

Let churches know in your network that you are willing to be a part of a restart and let them respond to you.

Quick Overview of the Restart Process

DYING

- Dissolve the church board and suspend the by-laws, creating the opportunity for a completely new approach to decision-making.
- Often a gestation period of 4-6 months (“going dark”).
- Often members are released.

PREPARING

- New leaders to be placed in control of the congregation that are mission-focused.
- Clearly delineate the available assets and resources and who is in control of them.
- Previous programs and ministries are evaluated by lens of mission.

PLANNING

- Vision
- Target group
- Outreach strategy
- Discipleship strategy
- Culture and Philosophy
- Facility Plans

PLANNING

(a voice from the trenches)



RYAN SIDHOLM



RIVER CITY
CHURCH,
VANCOUVER

RESURRECTING

New name

New staff

New children's
program

New worship
style

New approach
to outreach/
evangelism

New
marketing
approach

SHEPHERDING REMNANT

Pointing towards mission

Facilitating the blend of cultures

Helping to grieve

Discerning who can lead

Is Restarting Effective?

SIGNS OF LIFE

Restart churches live for mission

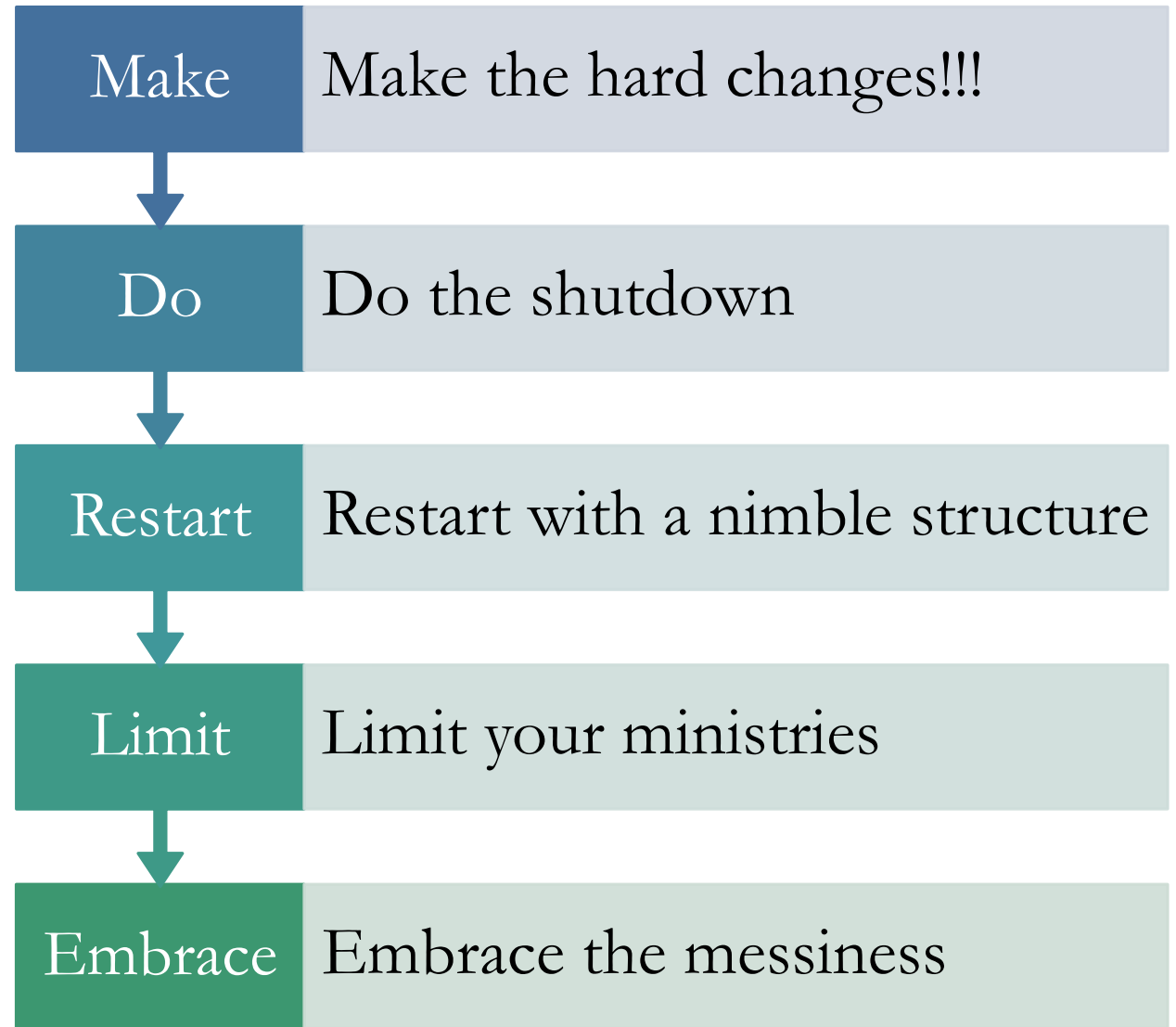
Remnant is transformed by the experience

Disciples are being made

A vibrant community emerges

The church is a vital neighbor

LESSONS LEARNED



Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must **deny** themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will **lose it**, but whoever loses their life **for me** and for **the gospel** will save it.”

Mark 8:34-35

GREG WIENS AND DAN TURNER

DYING TO RESTART

CHURCHES CHOOSING A STRATEGIC
DEATH FOR A RESURRECTED LIFE

