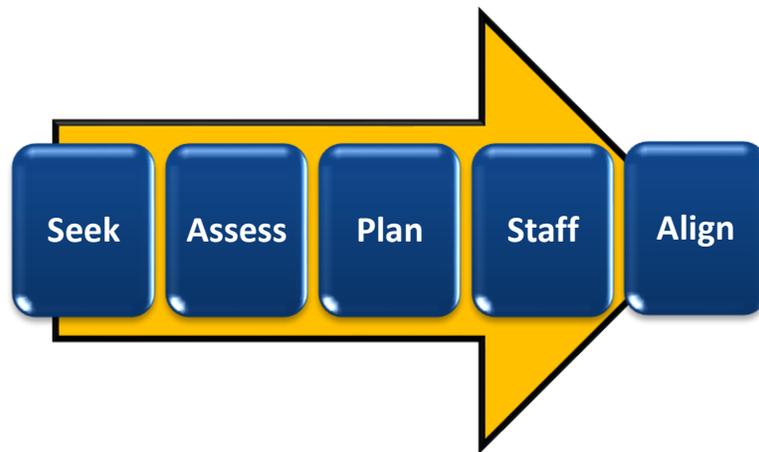


VisionPath

Consulting Service



5 Practices that can Revitalize Any Church

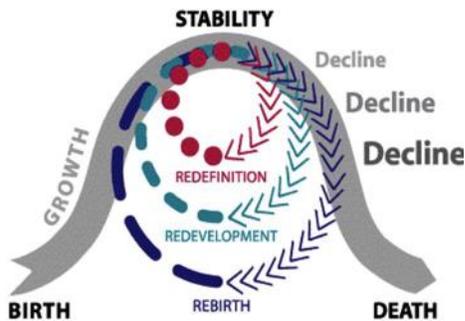


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VisionPath Consulting Service Description

The VisionPath consulting service is a focused two-year effort to revitalize any church. The following are 3 of its distinctive aspects.

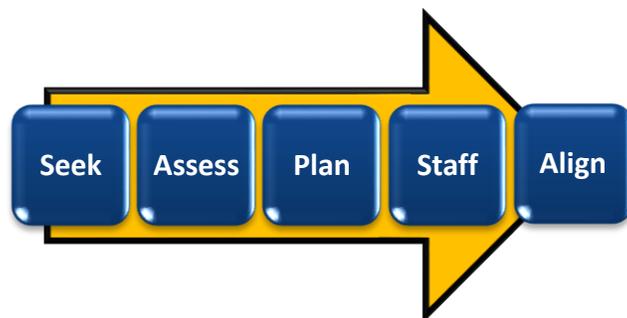
- **Church revitalization is no small task.** In some ways it is like replanting the church. However, as a friend of mine once said, it is more like rewiring the house with the lights on! In other words, in a church plant you have a certain amount of freedom to freshly define your mission, values, structure, programming, and a host of other things. There is much less freedom in the existing church. Traditional ways of doing things and emotional attachment to history and methods can present barriers to change.



- **Church revitalization addresses stagnancy and decline.** The image to the left is a church life cycle curve. It is a reflection of the common trends in church attendance. In the early years a church grows. At some point it becomes stable, but stagnant. Then it begins to decline. Attendance numbers are merely symptoms of

other things. When there are healthy motivations, values, leadership, and actions, more people want to have a relationship with Christ and more attend. When values, leadership, and actions become unhealthy and lazy, people drop out. If nothing is done. The church dies. However, it is possible to follow a path to redefine and redevelop our values and leadership. When we do, a form of rebirth puts us back on the growth side of the curve.

- **Church revitalization requires 5 disciplines.** Something can be done about being stagnant and declining, but it is almost never just one thing. From my ministry and consulting experience, I have found that there are 5 practices or disciplines that can allow any church to redefine, redevelop, and experience rebirth and revitalization. Those 5 things are depicted in the image below and described on the following pages.



Summary Description of the 5 Practices of VisionPath

Approx.
Time

SEEK	A season of prayerful, Bible study and seeking God. Beginning a fresh redefinition of the mission and values of the church. Implementing the <i>VisionPath</i> revitalization.	1 Month
ASSESS	Your consultant will objectively critique the health of the church using a variety of assessment tools and interviews.	3 Months
PLAN	Based on the consultant’s assessment, and the work of a Strategic Focus Team, identifying a short list of 4-7 strategic initiatives that will take you from today’s reality to a preferable future, your vision. Redeveloping your approach to life and ministry. Constructing a three-year ministry plan.	6 Months
STAFF	Informed by your ministry plan, defining the structure you will need to accomplish the plan. This includes governance, paid staff, volunteers, and leadership development practices.	2 Months (1)
ALIGN	<p>Create and follow a rhythm of weekly, monthly, and annual practices that will allow you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually refresh your strategic direction • Annually align your staff and programs • Annually align your financial resources • Follow healthy weekly and monthly practices • Partner with God and each other • See you your vision realized 	12 Months (2)

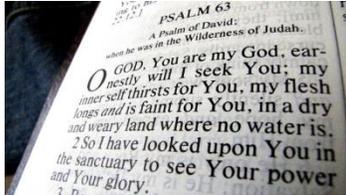
Notes:

- (1) Preliminary work on this could be done during planning. 2 Months following development of your plan is devoted to concentrated effort in redefining and redeveloping your structure. This may include research, training by the consultant, policy writing, and considering by-law changes. Actual final implementation may be dependent upon the approval time of your church polity, and other church priorities.
- (2) Alignment includes a complete 12-month cycle of vision refreshing, staff performance reviews, program planning and budgeting. The amount of consulting time is much less intensive in this second year and consists of coaching and guiding your implementation of training that occurs during planning.

Detailed Description of the each of the 5 Practices of VisionPath

SEEK Events

1. The primary board and senior pastor will work with the consultant to implement the *VisionPath* revitalization.

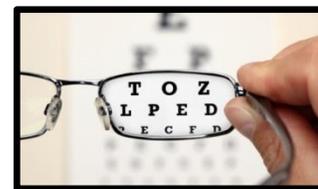


2. Recommended two 2-hour sessions with the consultant. In the first session, the consultant will provide an overview of the entire 2-year *VisionPath* process with a proposed calendar. He will also give the leadership team a SEEK exercise designed to facilitate their personal devotion and engagement of the mission and values of the church.

3. Before the second session with the consultant, the leadership team will conduct the SEEK exercise and evaluate the proposed 2-year calendar.
4. During the second session with the consultant, there will be discussion of the SEEK exercise outcome, a Q&A session for understanding of the *VisionPath* revitalization process, and feedback to the consultant about the proposed 2-year calendar. There will also be discussion of the ASSESS Calendar (see below) and next steps.

ASSESS Events

1. The consultant will provide the 47-page Fishbone Diagram white paper for reading by the leadership team. He will also give the church a detailed data request to be completed within one month. The data request provides the consultant with background information about your history, attendance pattern, budget, programming, congregation ages, congregation home locations, church polity/by laws, discipling practices and methods, leadership development practices, paid staff detail, volunteer mobilization practices, facility expansion plans, and important initiatives the church is pursuing.



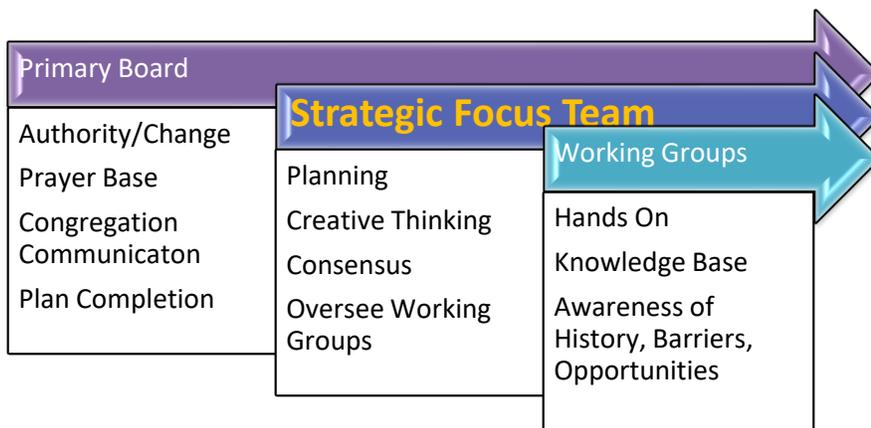
2. The consultant will have the church administer a 160-question Church Health Survey that is based on the values and functions of the church seen in the early church in Acts 2:42-47. This produces a 42-page report. Your consultant will assist you in selecting a 15% sample with stratified representation. The leadership team will also complete an organization survey.
3. The consultant will conduct a demographic and psychographic study within a 10-mile radius of the church. The radius may be adjusted from a simple circle in light of geographical barriers such

as waterways and highways. Your leadership team will direct the adjusted radius based on your knowledge of the church and the geographical location of those currently attending. This purchased study produces a 40-page report.

4. The consultant will conduct 8.0-15.0 hours of interviews of the primary board, senior pastor, other paid staff, key volunteer leaders, those attending the church for over 10 years, and those attending for less than two years.
5. The consultant will be provided a tour of the facility by the most knowledgeable person or people about the history of construction, maintenance, cleaning, and future plans for expansion or remodeling. This room by room tour typically takes 2.0 hours.
6. The consultant will observe and participate in worship on one weekend.
7. The consultant will write a report that is approximately 120 pages in length including the Church Health Survey, the leadership organization survey, and demographic/psychographic study mentioned above. The report will include a Consulting Summary (for the reader who does not have time to read all of the detail). The report will also contain no more than 7 recommendations for change with some sense of priority. These recommendations are in the judgment of the consultant the most important things the church should do for revitalization.
8. The consultant will present his report in a 2-hour session with whomever the leadership team wants to hear the report firsthand. This may just be the senior pastor and primary board, it may include paid staff, and it may include key volunteers or members of the congregation.

PLAN Events

Working with the church leadership team, the consultant helps the church select a **Strategic Focus Team**. This is a group of 20+ leaders seeking to prayerfully arrive at consensus decisions about the future direction of the church. This team is “book-ended” by the authority of the **Primary Board** and the hands on knowledge base of **Working Groups**. The consultant works primarily with The Strategic Focus Team but is also available to work with the Primary Board and the Working Groups as needed. Ideally, the majority of the primary board members are on the Strategic Focus Team. It is imperative that the Primary Board Chairman be on this team. It is also essential that the senior pastor and paid ministry staff be on this team.



The Strategic Focus Team meets with the consultant once a month for 6 months for 6 hours. This can be on a Saturday from 8AM-2PM (or longer) or on a Friday from 7-9PM and Saturday from 8AM-noon. It can also on another day of the week. Your consultant acts as your facilitator in all of these meetings.

Your consultant is also available for another 4 hours per month for other meetings with the primary board or with Working Groups.

The exact content of PLAN meetings is tailored to each church situation. However, a common listing of topics is as follows:

- Prayer time and requests for prayer to be communicated to the congregation
- Mission, Values, Vision, Strategies and development of a strategic vocabulary
- Church health and preparing for growth
- Launching and Reporting of 5-6 Working Groups:

Examples: Disciplemaking, Evangelism, Assimilation, Volunteerism,
Facility Development and Expansion, Finances, Communications

- Launching exercises by the Strategic Focus Team to launch each Working Group
- One or two meetings by Working Groups outside of the Strategic Focus Teams. These meetings are facilitated by one or two members of the Strategic Focus Team.
- Reporting by the Working Groups providing at most 3 recommendations for church revitalization (in their area or function of the church) and any barriers to success
- Report by the Primary Board of decisions being made
- Exercises with the Primary Board to finalize decisions
- How to Write Your Strategic Ministry Plan. The role of the primary board, the senior pastor, and a writing team.
- The importance of Strategic Mix
- How to create a Plan timeline. 1-3 year plans versus 5+ year plans.
- How to assign accountability for the components of the Plan
- How to Communicate your Plan to the congregation and build ownership
- Front-end preparation for any capital campaigns and building programs
- How to Keep Vision and Strategies Fresh
- How to Integrate Vision, Staff Performance, Program Plans, and Budget to ensure execution of your plan.
- Status of planning activity to be communicated to the congregation

STAFF Events



One of the most important leadership tasks is to design the leadership structure of the church to allow the church to accomplish its mission. Similarly, there is no better time to examine your leadership structure than after you have completed your strategic ministry plan. This is not about the people in the structure, but rather assessing the type of people needed in what

roles and relationships with each other.

This begins with your governance model. In the multi-staff church it also includes your paid staff structure and the assignment of ministries to leaders. In all churches, this also includes attention to leadership development practices and volunteer mobilization.

Your consultant will work with your primary board and senior pastor to define which of the following will be addressed in your church:

1. Assessment of the current governance structure for your size church and to allow you to accomplish your strategic ministry plan. Within congregationalism, this includes the role of the congregation members, the role of the primary board, the need for other boards, and the relationship of the primary board with the senior pastor and paid staff.
2. Training in alternative governance structures including recommended reading.
3. Exercises to assist in your evaluation of your structure and to develop a vision for a new structure.
4. Facilitated planning to transition from one governance model to another.
5. Assessment of the current paid staff structure and the reporting relationship of all ministries to staff, the primary board, and other reporting relationships.
6. Assessment and critique of the current leadership development practices.

Note: Although 2 months is allocated to this, the time period for study, training, and facilitation of change may be much longer. A realistic goal will be to identify areas of focus and the necessary action plan.

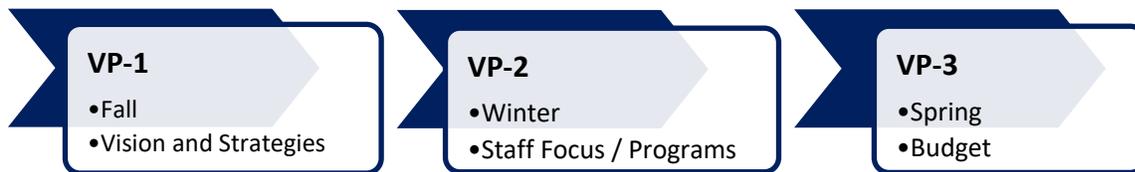
ALIGN Events

After you have redeveloped your leadership structure to give you the best possibility of seeing your vision realized, it is time to align your activities to execute your plan.

The events your consultant will provide you are:

1. An assessment of your current weekly, monthly, and annual practices for overseeing the ministry by the primary board and the senior pastor (and in the larger church the executive pastor).
2. Coaching over one year in a ministry oversight model called Vision and Partnering 1-2-3. Vision and Partnering is a declaration by the leadership team that: we want God's vision for His church, and we will partner with Him and each other to see that vision realized.

The 1-2-3 represents a rhythm of 3 phases of leadership disciplines that are followed every year as follows:



The sequence of the phasing is designed to ensure that staff goals, program plans, and the budget are aligned with the vision and strategies of the church. Stated another way it is an alignment of vision, people, and funding.

The timing during the year for each of the 3 phases is based on the church’s fiscal year end. This document assumes that the church has a June 30 fiscal yearend because: 1) that timing fits the culture of many American ministries which generally follow the school year, and 2) that timing allows for a seamless transition between each phase of VP 1-2-3 with no break for summer. VP 1-2-3 will work with any fiscal year end, however the timing of each phase needs to be orchestrated to allow VP-3 to be last, right before you vote on your budget for the next fiscal year.

3. During your PLAN work with the Strategic Focus Team, you will receive training in this ministry oversight model. At the conclusion of training, your consultant will provide you with a 30-page user guide with sample forms and exercises.

Much more will be covered in training. However, the following are important features of each of the 3 phases of VP 1-2-3:

VP-1: Although you will have developed a comprehensive ministry plan, as soon as the ink dries, life happens! As Proverbs 16:9 says, “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” As you continue to seek His will, the Spirit of God will direct you. He will teach you things you did not see when you put your plan together. As time passes, you will accomplish some things and have room to work on other new priorities. VP-1 is this activity of refreshing your plan every year.

VP-2: After you have refreshed your plan each year, you need to ensure that your primary board and all staff are focused on that refreshed plan. This starts with paid staff performance reviews and goal-setting. It also includes alignment of volunteers, programs, and possibly adding new programs and eliminating others to align programs with your vision.

VP-3: Finally, you will want to align your budget priorities with your plan. VP 1-2-3 allows the “dog” of the plan to wag the “tail” of the budget and not vice versa. In VP-1, one exercise is to set budget priorities that will guide VP-2 and VP-3 events.

4. You will agree with your consultant about changing your fiscal year to June or not (if it is not already your fiscal year end.) Based on that decision, you may need to work on a fiscal year

transition plan. You will also define the first annual rhythm calendar during which you will implement VP 1-2-3.

5. Built into the calendar in #4 above will be on site or remote coaching sessions with your consultant. He will be on call to assist you during this first year.