

Revitalized Churches

- ▶ Churches that are alive and well after going down a path that seemed destined for death.
 - ▶ Breakout churches
 - ▶ Turnaround churches
 - ▶ Revitalized churches
 - ▶ Revived churches

Revived vs. Dying Churches

- ▶ "The first component boils down to the choice of blame and denial versus acceptance and responsibility."
- ▶ Dying churches blame others.
- ▶ Revived churches accept responsibility.

Who Dying Churches Blame

- OTHER CHURCHES
- WORSHIP STYLES
- THE PASTOR
- THE DENOMINATION
- THE COMMUNITY
- DEMOGRAPHICS

Blaming Other Churches

- ▶ Other Churches, especially megachurches
- ▶ Can't compete with their ministries, music and so forth.
- ▶ There is no responsibility for community outreach or evangelism

- ▶ Demographics (2018)
 - ▶ 20,995 people in Ypsilanti
 - ▶ 13.5% under the age of 18
 - ▶ 65% White, 27% Black, 4% Hispanic, 6.4% Foreign Born
 - ▶ 7,784 Households
 - ▶ Median Household Income \$36, 982. 32% living in poverty

Blaming Worship Styles

- ▶ Typically dying churches are more traditional in worship style
- ▶ Typically growing churches are more contemporary
- ▶ "Contemporary music is not the silver bullet for a turnaround. The real issue for the healthy contemporary churches is their desire to understand, minister, and reach their communities. It's called contextualization."

Blaming the Pastor

- ▶ The Pastor wants to change too many things
- ▶ The Pastor doesn't visit enough
- ▶ The Pastor preaches too long, or not long enough
- ▶ The Pastor is greedy for money
- ▶ The Pastor is lazy
- ▶ The Pastor is a _____

Blaming the Denomination

- ▶ The denomination's resources are inadequate.
- ▶ We can't get a denominational worker to assist our church.
- ▶ The denomination does not care about us.
- ▶ The denomination doesn't have all the free events they used to have.
- ▶ Issues with denominational leadership or staff

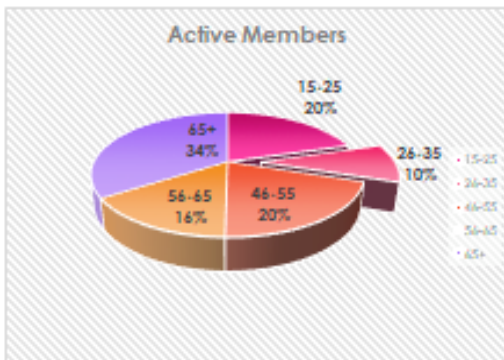
Blaming the Community

- ▶ The Community is not like it used to be.
- ▶ The Community is not interested in what we are offering.
- ▶ They know who we are and where we are.
- ▶ There is no outreach...

Blaming the Demographics

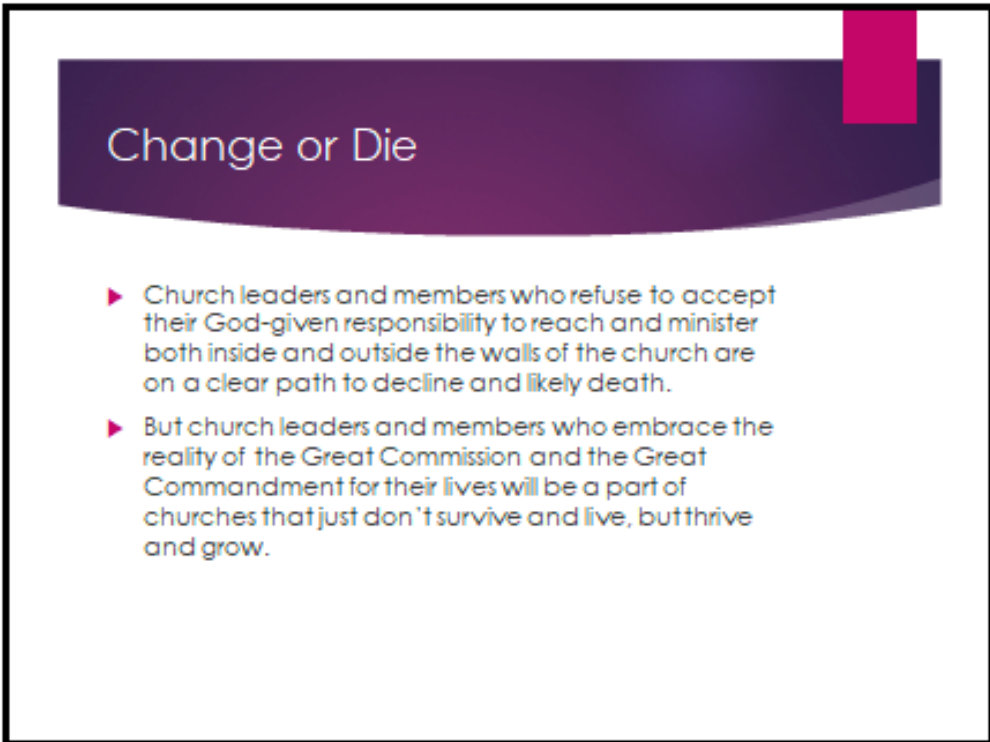
- ▶ There are very few unchurched people in our area.
- ▶ There are too many churches in our area.
- ▶ Everyone who wants a church home has already found one.
- ▶ There is no one left to reach.
- ▶ The population base is too small.
- ▶ The Community is not interested in what we are offering.
- ▶ They know who we are and where we are.
- ▶ There is no outreach...

Second Baptist Church Demographics



“More than eight-in-ten members of the Silent Generation (those born between 1928 and 1945) describe themselves as Christians (84%), as do three-quarters of Baby Boomers (76%). In stark contrast, only half of Millennials (49%) describe themselves as Christians; four-in-ten are religious “nones,” and one-in-ten Millennials identify with non-Christian faiths.”





The Great Commission

▶ **Matthew 28:18-20**

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Great Commandment

▶ **John 13:34-35**

▶ *³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Common Denominator in Turn Around Churches

- ▶ When we did our anatomical study of the churches that moved from a path of decline and death to one of life and growth, we saw a commonality early in the turnaround, indeed before the turnaround became visible.
- ▶ "Usually a few leaders determined in God's power that they would stop blaming others and other situations. They would take responsibility for their own obedience and lack of obedience. The blame game, they discovered, does nothing but increase frustration."
- ▶ They moved from blame to obedience

Turn Around Examples

1. A pastor ...decided to set aside five hours a week to connect with people in the community who were not a part of the church... Ten people became an outward focus and evangelistic force that invaded their community with gospel conversations and ministry.
2. Three women at a church stopped blaming the pastor, staff and lazy church members for decline...and began to pray fervently for God's power in their congregation...
3. Five members of a church began to pray for God to direct them in a positive way...They began to find places in the community to care and love people in their community.

Anatomy Finding #1

- ▶ Blame transforms to words of encouragement, ministry and possibility.

- ▶ Church leaders and members accepted responsibility. In god's power they moved forward.

- ▶ The blaming of others came to a glorious and abrupt halt.

Questions for Prayerful Consideration

Question 1.

- ▶ Read Acts 6:1-7. How did the church in Jerusalem move from blame to obedience?

Question 2.

- ▶ Again look at Acts 6:1-7, particularly verse 7. What were the immediate results of their obedience?

Question 3.

- ▶ What are some common ways you have seen blame expressed in some churches?

Question 4.

- ▶ What does it mean that church members and leaders "accepted responsibility"?

Question 5.

- ▶ Why do you think this finding in the anatomy of a revived church is mentioned first among the others?
