

**Revitalizing Your Church
Through
Strategic Community Outreach**

Rusty Ford

**Revitalizing Your Church
Through
Strategic Community Outreach**

Copyright © 2012 T Ford Publishing

Copyright © 2012 Rusty Ford

Published by Smashwords

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 0989117901

ISBN-13: 978-0-9891179-0

To Jesus Christ who gave his life for us and established his Kingdome here on earth and to every pastor, church leader and Christian committed to advancing his kingdom.

I am providing this book for free.

I hope that it is a benefit to many churches in helping them reach their communities.

If you find the book helpful and would like to make a one dollar donation you can do so with the link below.

<http://community-outreach.com/revitalzing-your-church.htm>

Introduction

Revitalizing Your Church Through Strategic Community Outreach is designed to help both existing churches who are not seeing much growth or who have plateaued as well as for new church plants. Existing churches which are growing can add new avenues of growth as well.

I start the book off with a brief explanation of what strategic community outreach is and then apply it on how to totally change the direction of your church.

I outline the basics of strategic community outreach and how it applies to revitalizing a struggling church. I do not however give solutions to problems or talk about structures. There are different for every church. I also believe you to be smart. You and your leadership team have the tools to do the evaluations and to bring in the people to help you develop the resources to develop your church into a powerful influence in your community. My only purpose in this book is to give you the challenge and a concept to work with. I am sure that even the points I share you will tweak to fit your own situations as it should be.

Please understand that nothing in this book is meant to be judgmental. While I speak frankly to the point it is in now way meant to be insulting. I wish I would have had this during my first two ministries. Since then I as a church planter I have been on both sides of the coin being involved in two very successful church plants and two that ultimately failed. My only purpose in writing this is the hope that it will be an encouragement to you to make what ever changes you need to make for your church to make a powerful impact on its community.

The book does not go into detail about how to run specific outreach programs or provide ideas about outreach programs. It is designed to help plan a back bone strategy for

community outreach. It is designed to be a supplement to my book "Dynamic Community Outreach"

"Dynamic Community Outreach" provides over 250 unique ideas for reaching out to your community. It has nine chapters of ways to reach your community that no other book talks about and the other 18 chapters have 5 to 25 ideas that most outreach oriented books do not mention. Plus the book is full of links to resources to help you develop the different types of outreaches.

While "Dynamic Community Outreach" is not free I have priced it as cheaply as I am willing. It is almost half what the other books that have less one-fourth of the ideas.

You can read the first 10% of "Dynamic Community Outreach" at <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00C01CBB8>

You can find all of the versions at my website for as low as \$5.49 US Dollars.

<http://community-outreach.com/buy.htm>

Rejuvenating Your Church Through Strategic Community Outreach

Section 1

Chapter 1

What is strategic community outreach?

I developed this concept after years of church planting and researching both church growth and church planting. I was disappointed in lack of outreach into the unchurched community even among the fastest growing churches and church plants. I have participated in both.

Two of the church plants I worked with were by most people very successful. They grew from around 30 people to over 150 people in a little over a year. Sounds successful doesn't it?" I was very disappointed after both. Not that I was sad that the churches had grown but that in both there was not one person from the unchurched community that was reached.

When Jesus left this earth he gave the church a commission to go into the world and make disciples. Should we ever be content with church growth that comes from Christians coming from other churches and not include leading people to Christ and making disciples in the community we live in.

It was after these two experiences that I decided that there had to be a way to actually grow a church by reaching people from the unchurched community.

I have spent years of researching churches that were actually effective at reaching people who were unchurched. What I came up with was a mixture of

lifestyle evangelism, friendship evangelism and strategic involvement of the church in the community.

This is a simple concept yet complex enough that it requires totally restructuring your vision and your church to implement it.

Here is the simplicity of the concept.

Develop a strategic plan to reach the community surrounding your church.

Sounds simple? We are already doing that right? The answer is probably no. If so you would most likely not be reading this book nor would you even need to do so.

The problem comes with the strategic part. It means that the church has a detailed plan on how it will reach its community. This plan requires that the church be built around the plan. This includes the leadership, budget and membership. It requires training planning equipping and implementing.

When it comes to outreach we tend to have a shotgun approach. We point the gun out the church door and pull the trigger and hope some of the shot hits a target. Some one has the idea to set a booth up at a fair, we hold a VBS, pass out flyers, open a daycare or any of the 100 or so things we see on the Internet or the 250 unique things in my book. We do these things with no overall strategy on how each of these fits into our plan to reach our community.

Community outreach starts with community

One of the problems many churches face is their initial outreaches start outside their communities. County fairs, street missions in the city when you are in the suburbs

are not your main mission field. The beginning mission is simple. Grow where your church is planted. The more we spread out the less focused we can become with our outreach.

I have read a couple of different studies that say that the average unchurched person can not name 1 to 3 churches in their area. You cannot have that name recognition for a large area unless you spend major money on advertising. How effective do you think your church can be if your church is the one church that 80 percent of the unchurched people in your community could name? Even better if they would be able to name your church not because they heard it in an advertisement but because they or someone they know had one or more positive experiences with your church.

How well do you think your church would do in your community if your church was the church that non Christians recommended people go to. I remember as a young Christian, I worked at a company that built green houses. There were just 3 of us that worked there the owner, another guy and myself. The subject of church came up and he owner said "I love my drinking too much to go to church but I have met several people from _____ Church and they are wonderful people you ought to try that church" to the other gentleman I worked with.

I break down that strategy into 3 phases and 10 steps

The phases are

1. The conception - This is where the vision is conceived.
2. The pregnancy - This is where the vision grows and develops
3. The birth- This is where the vision comes to live in the church and community.

The 10 steps to Strategic Community Outreach

1. Identify the gifts, visions and dreams of the people of the church.
2. Create an over all vision for how your church is going to reach out to your community.
3. Build upon your vision to start by growing where you are planted.
4. Identify all of the community resources you can take advantage of.
5. Develop a community resource development person or team.
6. Do research into ways you can put this vision into practice.
7. Develop a step by step plan to implement the vision.
8. Prepare your church for visitors,
9. Develop a sound follow-up program.
10. Implement your strategy and start off with a bang.

You should expect that it may take a year to implement this vision. If anything is worth doing it is worth doing right. In church planting we always spent a year on preparation and training during the conception and pregnancy phases before giving birth. Here is a simple explanation of the 10 steps.

Conception Phase

1. Identify the gifts, visions and dreams of the people of the church. Each church is different, made up of different people with different gifts and visions existing in different demographics. All of this makes a difference in how you develop the vision of outreach. Your approach will most likely be different if your church is full of young families than if it is filled with retired adults. Here is a list of some of the passions that groups of people in your church may have that could help shape that vision.

- Passion for reaching children or teens
- Passion for the arts
- Passion for reaching seniors
- Passion for reaching the poor.
- Passion for reaching the abused.
- Passion for reaching people and families affected by drugs and alcohol.
- Passion for people with disabilities.
- Passion for one on one evangelism.
- Maybe you have a lot of people gifted in sports.
- Maybe you have a lot of people gifted in technology.

This is just a sample list. You can see how the passions and gifts of your members can help shape the outreach vision of your church.

2. Create a over all vision for how your church is going to reach out to your community. Once you have determined the make up, gifts and visions of the members of the church it is time to develop the vision of the outreach. First the leaders need to develop the over all vision of the church, really this should come before number one but that should be a given. Ideally I think that it is good if the vision of the church is developed with how the church is going to reach its community in mind when it is developed.

The vision is a little more than we want to reach our community. It states areas where you want to have significant influence. It is not an outreach plan but it is what the plan is based on. It outlines where the main focus that the outreach is going to be based on. You can say that it is a guide so that your outreach strategy is not all over the board with no specific focus in mind.

Like all vision and mission statements it should be developed by the leadership with much prayer. It is important that we are about our Fathers business. The

leading of the Spirit may have you focus on areas not represented by the gifting of your members. It has been my experience that when our Father gives a church a vision you find that the gifts of the church will blend in with the vision.

Pregnancy Phase

3. Building upon your vision to start by growing where you are planted. This is a simple enough concept. It is one that has been batted around about people for a couple of decades. It applies just as well for churches. The long-term strategy may be to have a significant impact on your city. For most churches this is a goal to work up to not one to start off with. It is different if you are in a very small town but in a city it is a different story.

One of the problems many small to medium sized churches have is they start their outreach efforts on too large a focus area. If you do a good job of reaching out to your community then you will see growth beyond your community. I like to look at it this way. The church starts by growing where it is planted. It teaches its people to grow where they are planted and then it grows where the seeds fall.

In this process you will start by concentrating on the neighborhoods around your church and training your people you will see that by naturally your church will expand across your town or city. New people will reach family and friends outside the community. Teaching your members how to live lives of love and take the gospel to the workplace and among their friends and family your influence will begin spreading beyond your own community.

Here are some of the places to begin. Some ideas about how will come later.

- Adopt the closest elementary, middle or junior high and high school

- Adopt the closest large apartment complex or multiple small complexes. This could also be trailer parks.
- Identify all the natural places that outreach events can happen within a mile around the church building or its location. Such as parks, recreation centers. as well as a list of events that already happen in your community.
- Do demographic research of the neighborhoods within a mile of your church. This needs to be extensive not just the population and income breakdown. Try to discover the needs of the community as well so you can determine how to best meet its needs.

Here is an example of a church I am associated with. They adopted the closest elementary school several years ago and a very large low income apartment complex both within a half a mile from the church building. They have become so involved in the school that there is most likely no family that is not familiar with the church as well as the apartment complex. The school represents over 400 families and the apartments over 300. Because of how close they are together many of the same families are represented. Three years later there are many families from these two places now involved in the church.

4. Identify all of the community resources you can take advantage of.

- Have someone from your church join the local schools PTA or PTO. Most schools have a shortage of parents participating.
- Have at least one church leader belong to each of the civic clubs such as the Lions, Kiwanis et cetera
- Ask the local fire and police departments how you can help with local fundraisers or community programs.

- See next section

5. Develop a community resource development person or team. Have a person or team that knows all of the community resources that families or individuals can need that the church cannot fill. You can read this section of Dynamic Community Outreach for free at http://www.amazon.com/Dynamic-Community-Outreach-unique-community/dp/0989117901/ref=tmm_pap_title_0

When you are participating in outreaches of any kind you will meet people with needs that your church will not be able to meet. This could be anything from child abuse to housing shelters. This should not be an excuse not to meet the needs that you can. You should also stay in touch with the individuals if possible as to continue the relationship with them.

6. Do research into ways you can put this vision into practice. (Shameless plug: My book *Dynamic Community Outreach* is a good place to start). You can also do research on the internet to see what other churches are doing or just for ideas. You can also look to other churches in your denomination or fellowship of churches to see what they are doing.

7. Develop a step by step plan to implement the vision. Now that you pretty much have the who and what this is where you add the when where and how your are going to put this into practice. Picking the events you are going to participate in and creating outreaches that you are going to put on and who is going to be involved in them.

8. Prepare your church for visitors. This seems to be obvious and you probably think you have already done this but you need to spend a great amount of time evaluating what you are doing and if you can do it better. I will talk more about this in the next section.

9. Develop a sound follow up program. This is where I see most churches fail. I see very few churches with a good follow up program. A lack of church growth can almost always be summed up in two things a failure to keep members and a failure to keep visitors.

If you are failing at either of the either two things above then you need to find a way to correct them before you consider any type of outreach. Either one shows that there is something wrong in your church that needs fixing and no amount of blame shifting will fix the problem. This is most likely a leadership problem. Even if it is a problem inside the membership it is a problem that developed because of a weak leadership.

Birth Phase

10. Implement your strategy and start off with a bang. You have spent months getting ready and everything is in place. You most likely have a few things in motion already. It is time for a sort of grand opening, a really huge event that will bring in a lot of people. Here are few ideas of events you can do. Of course these are just some samples. You can read about these in *Dynamic Community Outreach* or do your own research. Of course you are not limited to just one you can spread out multiple over a month or a couple of months.

- Have an old home coming days type of celebration such as an anniversary for your church or community. If for your church invite everyone who has ever been a part of your church.
- A benefit concert. (For a sick child or for your local school or to fix up a local park.)
- Community arts fair
- Community music festival

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

