



# RESET

A Church Revitalization Process



Matthew 16:18<sup>b</sup>



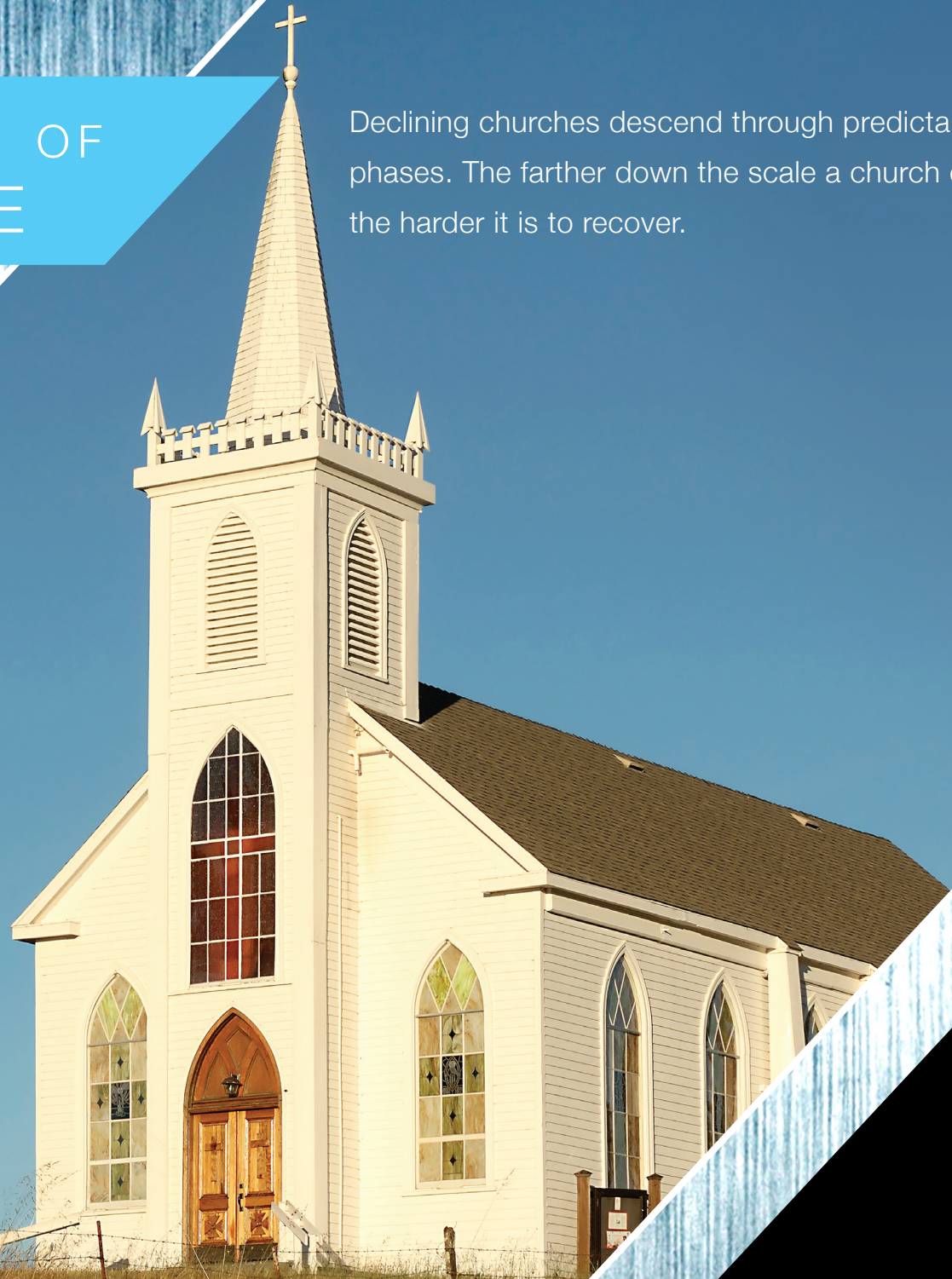
# RESET

Research indicates, at best, 70% of our churches have plateaued or are in decline. In addition, a recent study reveals that 12% of Louisiana Baptist churches might cease to exist in the next 7 years if revitalization doesn't occur. How can a church leader diagnose the problem and what steps should leaders take to correct the situation?





# PHASES OF DECLINE



Declining churches descend through predictable phases. The farther down the scale a church descends, the harder it is to recover.



## Phase One: Nostalgia

In this phase people realize that the church isn't working as well as it once did. The church is pressured on two sides: the glorious past and the scary future. Characteristics of this phase include:

- A. A selective longing for "the good ole days"
- B. A weakened commitment to and energy for the present
- C. A possible bridge to the future if the glorious past is used as a stepping-stone to the future



## Phase Two: Questioning

Doubt about the church itself begins to surface as members become angry, irritable, restless, and increasingly frightened. The actual goals of the church may come under fire.



## Phase Three: Polarization

Battle lines are drawn and conflict is now evident. Struggle divides church members into "us" and "them."



## Phase Four: Dropout

People begin to give up and leave. Apathy reigns supreme.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Dale, *To Dream Again: How to Help Your Church Come Alive*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2004), pp.105-126.



## DO WE NEED REVITALIZING?

The following are 21 questions you can ask about the church you lead or attend separated into three categories: **Perceptions**, **People** and **Programs**. If you answer “YES” to 10 or more of the questions, the church may need revitalization. However, answering “YES” to any of these questions may reveal an opportunity for a strategic ministry shift.



### Perceptions:

1. Would the church be described as declining instead of healthy and growing?
2. Would the church be described as functioning, but not a place where there was a noticeable presence and/or movement of the Holy Spirit?
3. Is the church more nostalgic for the past than excited for the future?
4. Has the church lost its purpose?
5. Does the church have a maintenance mentality instead of a growth mentality?
6. Is there a reluctance to change among church members?
7. Would you or others say there is a lack of a unified direction from the leaders in the church?



## People:

1. Is the community in decline or transition?
2. Has the median age of church members become substantially older?
3. Is there a lack of guests regularly attending the church and becoming members?
4. Have baptisms declined or plateaued in the last 5 years?
5. Have significant numbers of members left the church over the past 5 years for churches that better “meet their needs?”
6. Are there any unresolved conflicts or issues distracting the church from kingdom work?
7. Have the finances of the church declined in the last 5 years?





### Programs:

1. Have Sunday School or Small Group numbers declined or plateaued in the last five years?
2. Does the church lack an effective way to connect with your guests, share the gospel and integrate them into the life of the church?
3. Does the church lack an intentional prayer strategy for the lost?
4. Has the church had three or more pastors in the last 10 years?
5. Would you or others say you do not have a vibrant youth and children's program?
6. Has the church cut any ministry due to financial decline within the last 5 years?
7. Does the church give to missions, but not have many members personally participating in missions or local ministries?

