



New Church Specialties

2008 ReFocusing Research

Reporting of Results

Lonnie Bullock, Chief Operating Officer

General Conclusions from the ReFocusing Research Project:

Churches fell into four groups:

- 20% of the churches showed a greater than 20% growth in attendance
- 56% of the churches showed a growth but under the 20% threshold
- 10% of the churches showed no growth
- 14% of the churches showed a decrease in attendance

Here is what we discovered of those churches showing a growth of more than 20% in attendance:

- 100% attended New Church University
 - It did not seem to matter if the pastor came alone or with a team
 - 78% did some work prior to attending NCU
- 100% used the Church Health Survey as an assessment tool
 - 89% saw their church health scores increase by more than 10
- 67% had an NCS coach
- 100% completed a written action plan
- 78% were highly supported by their District Leadership
- 88% placed a high significance on prayer and renewal as part of their plan
- The average length of time spent developing the plan was 6-12 months
- 67% had been implementing the plan longer than 3 years

Here is what we discovered of those churches showing no growth in attendance:

- 60% attended NCU
 - It did not seem to matter if the pastor came alone or with a team
 - 60% did some work prior to attending NCU
- 75% used the Church Health survey as an assessment tool
 - 55% did not show an increase in their scores
 - 45% saw their scores increase by more than 10
- 40% had an NCS coach and 60% had a district provided coach
- 40% completed a written action plan; 60% are working on their plan
- 60% had high support from their District Leader
 - 40% neither supported nor unsupported
- 20% placed high significance on prayer and renewal as part of their plan
- The average length of time spent developing the plan was 6-12 months
- 60% have been implementing the plan less than a year and 40% have not started the implementation process yet

Here is what we discovered of those churches showing a decrease in attendance:

80% attended NCU

- It did not seem to matter if the pastor came alone or with a team
- 28% did some work prior to attending NCU

58% used the Church Health survey as an assessment tool

- 50% did not show an increase in their scores
- 50% saw their scores increase by more than 10

60% had an NCS coach and 40% had a district provided coach

72% completed a written action plan; 28% are working on their plan

86% had high support from their District Leader

0% placed high significance on prayer and renewal as part of their plan

- 42% did place some emphasis on prayer
- 58% very little emphasis on specific prayer

The average length of time spent developing the plan was 6-12 months

60% have been implementing the plan less than a year and 40% have not started the implementation process yet

General Conclusions and Learning for NCS:

1. **New Church University** is an important piece in the training and equipping of the pastor. Pre-work is essential to attending NCU. It doesn't seem to matter if the pastor comes alone or with a team. The decision to come alone or bring others is going to be driven by the leadership skills and personality of the pastor. We will need to explore and discuss how this might impact our delivery of NCU.
2. **Assessment of current reality** is an important first step in preparing the church for refocusing. The Church Health Survey is a useful tool as the minimum assessment tool. We should require all churches to take a church health survey prior to attending NCU and we must train our coaches to coach to implementation based on the assessment results.
3. **Coaching** is important, but more important is the competency of the coach. We must pay attention to providing highly trained and competent coaches. This is requiring us to **refocus our coaching application** and training process. We began that discussion at our annual coaches gathering this fall.
4. Finishing a **written action plan** is important. We must assure all of our coaches are coaching to the writing of that plan.
5. **District support** is helpful to help pastors and leaders navigate the tough waters of transition.
6. **Prayer and spiritual renewal** is an absolute if refocusing is going to happen. We must put more of an emphasis on this aspect of our training.
7. We need to clearly emphasize to pastors and churches that the plan will take 6-12 months to develop and then **3 years of implementation** before the church will see the full results. Pastors must be willing **to commit** at least **4 years** to the ReFocusing process.