

**Church Revitalization in the Northern Missouri District of the  
Assemblies of God: A Training Seminar for Pastors**

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ABSTRACT

Forty-eight of the ninety-five churches in the Northern Missouri District of the Assemblies of God functioning at the beginning of 2000 were plateaued or declining in attendance and active membership. Of these churches, 70 percent are below one hundred in average attendance, and 28 percent will have lost enough members to be closed or barely surviving by 2010. Understandably, some of those churches are in small towns and rural areas with a declining population. No amount of church revitalization work will bring the population back that has been lost from their communities.

The district leadership has recognized, however, that for churches that are in viable locations and good social circumstances to survive and be healthy, there must be able, trained, and motivated leaders. The goals of this project were to: (1) research and report district attendance statistics for the years 1990-1999, (2) survey the district's ministers to discern their felt needs in the various aspects of church leadership and personal development, (3) do research to discover the biblical characteristics of a healthy church, (4) discern the biblical responsibility of church leaders in keeping churches healthy, and (5) delineate methods and means to begin the process of teaching pastors of churches that need revitalization how to be empowering leaders.

As an initial step in the process of teaching those pastors to lead their churches to revitalization, a four-hour seminar was developed. "The Pastor as an Empowering Leader," was presented in each of the district's six sections. Sixty-one percent of the senior pastors in the district attended one of the presentations. Twenty-seven pastors of the forty-eight declining and plateaued churches participated in the presentations.

Participants in the seminar presentations were asked to evaluate the presenter and the content of the seminar. Professional educators also evaluated four of the six presentations of the seminar. The evaluations indicated that the seminar presentations were well-received and generally considered effective in helping many district churches and church leaders to start the important process of bringing new life to churches across Northern Missouri.