

A Reconciliation Colloquium for Church Leaders in Suriname

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ABSTRACT

A contributing factor to the ineffectiveness of Suriname's Christian churches in areas of evangelism, church planting and church growth appears to be factionalism and divisions of long standing in the Body of Christ. The purpose of this project was to address the issue of unity with church leaders in two of Suriname's cities, move toward reconciliation, and thereby enable increased missional effectiveness.

The initial phase of the project examined biblical principles related to the unity of the Body of Christ, personal and church reconciliation as foundational to that unity, and spiritual authority as a product of that unity. Researching parallel literature aided the development of an approach to teaching those principles that would contemporize them and challenge church leadership to consider their use. The project's deployment phase sought to organize gatherings of pastors and church leaders in Suriname to present those principles in colloquial settings during which participants were encouraged to dialogue in the context of appreciative inquiry. The assessment phase of the project sought an evaluation of that presentation, in regards both to the researcher's leadership and to the colloquium teaching materials, asking the central question "Does this colloquium present a useful approach to encouraging and developing unity in a regional gathering of church leaders?"

The major implication of the project is that church leaders in a colloquial setting can be excited by fresh vision and challenged to deepen relationships with each other and to activate innovative and appreciative ministries. Trained facilitators, equipped with the foundational, biblical concepts and empowered by a passion for unity, can be used by the Holy spirit to excite

church leaders to examine biblical possibilities for their own areas, to provide action steps toward applying biblical principles of reconciliation, and to challenge leaders to take such steps.