

# If Relocation is **Not** an Option

## Processing the Decision: Now What Do We Do?

### Relocation Won't Work

- Most churches that relocate voted it down in previous years
- Lay the groundwork for the future. Present motions in ways that say, "One day it may be necessary to relocate"
- Ask, "What is our mission now?" and "Who does our church exist to reach?"

### Go Multi-Cultural

- Look for untapped, unreached people group
- Requires high percentage of members gifted in transcultural ministry (i.e. missions)
- Requires you to adapt to them—not just them to you. Culture & worship style will change. High level of difficulty.
- Congregation may look like United Nations

### Two Churches: One Location

- Indicated when the community population is transitioning from one people group to another
- Two or more congregations share the facilities
- They have their services at different times
- They have different pastors and staff.
- Congregations are different in culture & worship style—and perhaps language
- Congregations jointly take care of the shared facilities; share custodial staff
- Congregations partner on specific ministry projects
- The first congregation in the building may sponsor the new work. In the event the original church ceases to operate, the new work gets the building

### Go Multi-Site

- One church, two or more locations
- Stay AND Go approach
- Only a healthy church should consider this option; it requires many resources
- They have one staff and one treasury. Legally, one church.
- May have one service a week with everyone from all locations present.
- Sometimes, part of a strategy to expand influence & a larger evangelistic impact
- Sometimes, so the senior adults get to stay at the original location and the pioneers get to establish a new work

### Merger

- If your area is full of neighborhood churches that meet the same niche
- Combines resources to reach critical mass
- You lose some. 100 + 75 usually equals 110, not 175
- Still have to adapt to minister and reach people — or you merely delay death
- Have fair organization to avoid takeovers with a winning church & a losing church
- Sometimes best to merge and relocate

### Adoption

- When the congregation is too weak to pull themselves up, a larger congregation helps in a "friendly takeover"
- The larger church brings its resources to bear
- The weak church gives the property deeds and total control to the larger church.
- The larger church makes changes to start reaching people in the community
- Sometimes, this approach involves starting a second congregation and sharing facilities

Continued

## Lie to Yourselves... and God

- This sounds very sarcastic, but it is the preferred choice of many congregations
- Say, “We’re going to stay and minister to the community”
- Start a clothes closet
- Do a Backyard Bible Club every summer
- Say often, “Those folks are welcome in our church — as long they are here to worship and not cause trouble”
- BUT don’t do anything outside your comfort zone or that costs real money (other than to keep up the building)
- Don’t start a new church to reach new a people group
- Don’t share your facilities with a congregation that could relate to the folks in the community and reach them for Christ
- Instead, go into denial about where your church is and where you will be in 20 years
- Hire a sweet pastor who won’t rock the boat, but who is good to visit
- JUST KNOW you are kidding yourselves

## When It’s Too Late

- Too many of your dreamers, darers, achievers, thinkers, risk-takers, and workers have gotten fed up with the “do-nothing” direction of the church and have left. You can’t make it happen without people like this.
- Too high of a percentage of your members are elderly and desire only that the church is there to bury them when they die. No one wants to join a nursing home.
- You are no longer able to attract talented staff to your church needed to pull this off
- Your church has gone totally “toxic” - looking for someone to blame for their desperate situation. Folks are looking for a church, not a fight. Or the next step...
- You know you are doomed and everyone has come to accept the impending death of the church.

## The High Cost of Doing Nothing

- “If you do nothing in a difficult time, your strength is limited.” - Proverbs 24:10
- Not to decide is to decide
- Godly and talented staff will leave your church to go serve congregations that want to do something that matters in the kingdom.
- Your adult children will move their membership to livelier churches where their children (your grandchildren) will have ministries provided for them.
- The age of your average member will continue to increase, making it more difficult to attract young families.
- You will adopt an ingrown, maintenance ministry.
- You will keep the grass cut and have the building painted – and think you are really doing something.
- You will die a slow, painful, stressful death.
- Eventually, a handful of people and their families will have a final service in the building, and then give the keys to the Baptist Association (or something like that).
- Nothing endures after you—and all along you thought you were protecting the church
- “But the people who know their God will be strong and take action.” - Daniel 11:32