



ReStart Your Church

Dottie Escobedo-Frank

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As a result of the near-death experiences of many congregations today, denominational leaders are looking for ways to “revitalize” churches. The act of revitalization often starts with the assumption that what was once vital can be vital again, if church leaders simply do the same better. So congregations increase programs, budgets, and formulas. They look back in time, trying to recapture a period when the church’s role in society was vital. A church, seeking revitalization, typically does more of the same, but faster.

However, the central story of our faith is the story of both death and resurrection. Followers of Christ like to live out the resurrection part of our faith, but they often aren't very comfortable dealing with what must come before resurrection - death. The church must be willing to live out its entire story, from beginning to end.

The church needs to trust that God will bring to life what God wants to. This book suggests shifting away from the language of revitalization toward the story of death and resurrection. Escobedo-Frank focuses on ten specific “re-“ words to outline a strategy for dying and resurrecting again - for restarting the church:

- Recognize
- Realize
- Restore
- Review
- Reform
- Resensitize
- Release
- Reinvigorate
- Reemphasize
- Rebirth

If you are as sick of hearing clichés about leadership, strategic planning, and entrepreneurship as I am, you will love this book. A hard, candid look at the church, Escobedo-Frank calls us to death, to fail into success, to resurrection. The stories alone are worth the price of the book.

--Tex Sample, Robert B. and Kathleen Rogers Professor Emeritus of Church and Society, Saint Paul School of Theology

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