

Church Revitalization Task Force

The Church Revitalization Task Force was commissioned in 2013 to respond to the needs of churches that may ask for presbytery help to become healthier.

The EPC Book of Government states that the responsibilities of the presbytery include:

- 1. To *encourage* evangelism and renewal within its bounds as a first priority. (BOG paragraph 16:16f)**
- 2. To provide services to the particular churches within its bounds, to offer *encouragement, training, and other helps* in conjunction with the General Assembly that the particular congregations may be effective in such areas as evangelism, education, stewardship, officer training, member instruction, and other facets of an effective Christian life and ministry. (BOG paragraph 16:16k)**

These two tasks boil down to the requirement that EPC presbyteries will encourage the work of evangelism, disciple making, and renewal throughout the presbytery. Every church does evangelism, discipleship, education, and missions with some effectiveness. The Revitalization Tasks Force seeks to foster a presbytery culture that encourages constant improvement in these important areas of church health.

It is the responsibility of the Revitalization Task Force is to create opportunities for the sharing of ideas and lessons learned; to recommend resources; and offer training to encourage church health in the Presbytery of the West in accordance with the BOG. If you have an approach or a resource that you have found helpful in your life and ministry, then please let us know about it. We will evaluate your suggestion and add it to our list of resources.

Recommended Resources (We look forward to adding to the list as resources are recommended and evaluated.)

“The Gospel App”

One course developed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the Lord and His gospel of grace is called *“The Gospel App”*. This course is grounded in the theology of Martin Luther and the preaching John Calvin. It also includes the best knowledge of human behavioral science. It employs a mentoring model to help people apply the gospel of grace to the stresses of day-to-day life. From the first lesson you can see the fruit of the spirit begin to form as people begin to smile more. They smile more and more as they realize how much the love, grace and power of God apply to their life. It does not take long before new health emerges as measured by the fruit if the Spirit.

As with any course, the information in *“The Gospel App”* can be read by individuals or delivered by lecture to many. The theory of the course is orthodox, powerful and logical. It will appeal to the mind. The ultimate target of *The Gospel App* however is the heart. The truths of the gospel must be preached to the heart and applied to the internal life of each person. When the heart realizes that the gospel is true then the fruit of the Spirit begins to emerge and lives are transformed.

Teachers of this course must be grown not just assigned. The task of the teacher of *The Gospel App* is to equip students to apply the gospel of grace in the trenches of their lives where worldly fear and performance addiction currently have the upper hand. Every teacher must receive grace in their own lives before they try to teach others about it. This delicate and sacred work cannot be done quickly and will not be done by human power, but by the power of God.

The Gospel App is designed for small groups with a syllabus of nine one and a half hour lessons. The course material is worthy to be the heart of discipleship to all ages to people in every life situation. The Gospel App can be introduced through a weekend experience for prospective leaders and followed by the 9 week course. A webinar is also being developed to serve as an introduction to the course.

Partial Bibliography for *The Gospel App*

Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther
At the Pulpits of Geneva: The Sermons of John Calvin by John Calvin
The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification by Walter Marshall
Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control: A Love Based Approach to Helping Children With Severe Behaviors by Heather T. Forbes, LCSW B. Bryan Post, LCSW