

Jim's Tool Box

How Are We Doing? Where Are We Going? (Part 2)

A Focus on "reFocus"

In last's month's Tool Box article (available at <http://www.capareasouthumc.org/toolboxarchive>). I shared a number of ways that a congregation's leaders could assess how the congregation is doing and discern where God is leading them into the future. This month I want to discuss a program called reFocus.

Recently, Gwen Roberts, Director of Metro Ministries for the West Ohio Conference, offered an introductory meeting for the reFocus process at the conference office. I was not able to attend, but our district was represented at the gathering. Currently, the CAS District Leadership and Visioning Team is in conversation about the possibility of employing this program with interested congregations in the district.

I am going to share some of the basics about reFocus in this article, but you can read more about it by clicking [HERE](#). According to the organization's website, the reFocus program is based on networks of learning communities through which peer mentoring and coaching takes place.

Why reFocus? According to the Church Resource Ministries' (the organization behind reFocus) website:

The challenges facing the church and her mission:

- 80-85% of churches in North America are in plateau or decline.
- The unchurched population of the USA would in itself comprise the 5th largest country on the planet.
- Every year in America, three times as many churches close as open.
- In America, it takes 85 Christians *one full year* to reach one person for Christ.
- Roughly half of all churches in America did not add one single person through conversion last year.
- And, this decline has been going on for fifty years!

[for more information, we recommend [Lost in America](#), by Tom Clegg and Warren Bird]

In a post-Christian era where the church is perceived as irrelevant and out of touch, aligning our lives and our ministries with the missional heart of God requires change:

- Churches must become mission outposts
- Pastors must be missionary-leaders
- Believers must be missionaries

In the first phase of the program (there are two phases to reFocus), the focus is on the pastor as leader. Six to eight pastors meet monthly and focus on strategic issues of ministry leadership, character formation, and skill development in a discovery-based, facilitator led setting. In May, a training session for those facilitators of these networks will be held in Columbus.

The descriptive information about reFocus says that in phase one, participants clarify how God has uniquely shaped them and how they can align themselves with God's purposes as they surrender themselves anew to God's rule in their lives.

Phase Two is focuses on ministry in the congregation. This phase is designed to develop strategic leaders who are personally up to the task and empowered with a process to help their churches discover and move into alignment with God's desire for their next chapter. Phase two deepens the capacity of leaders so that they might lead their ministries to wider kingdom influence.

For the pastor of a congregation in this program the time commitment would be something like the following:

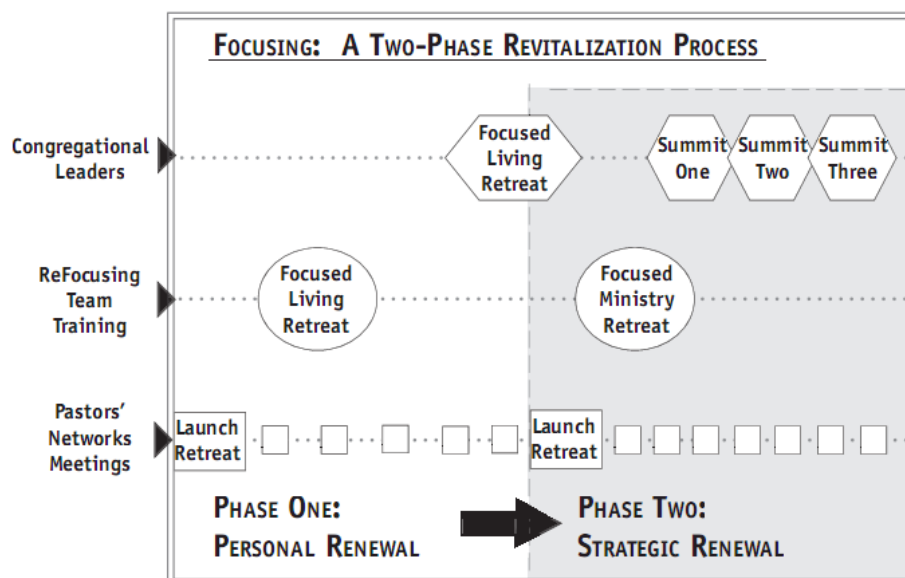
- ✓ A forty eight hour launch retreat per phase
- ✓ Monthly network meetings
- ✓ One hour (monthly) coaching calls
- ✓ One weekend per phase for refocusing Team Training
- ✓ In Phase One there are at least two weekends for events called Focused Living Retreats followed by NEXTStep meetings
- ✓ In Phase Two there are weekly two hour meetings with the reFocusing Team as summits approach
- ✓ Three Saturdays for Leadership Summits
- ✓ Forty eight hour retreat with Church Leadership Team at the conclusion of summits

For pastors who would enter into this process, the reFocus Network group would become that pastor's cluster group for the duration of the reFocus process.

So is reFocus right for your church? Well, if your church:

- Has a healthy leadership base, yet uncertain about God's calling
- Has a vision on paper that does not impact decision-making or is not owned by the congregation
- Is busy with activities but not reaching their community for Christ
- Is committed to a two year process plus the implementation

Here is a diagram of the reFocus process:



This chart gives an idea about the themes of the work that pastors do in Phase One and the work done by the congregation in Phase Two:

Phase One Personal Renewal	Phase Two Strategic Renewal
Focusing Leaders <i>Network</i> Meetings <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Focused Living2. from Calling to Calendar3. Spiritual Battle4. Mentoring5. Sustained Implementation6. Celebration & Commissioning	Focusing Ministry <i>Network</i> Meetings <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Leading Change2. Empowering Others3. Influencing Culture4. Managing Conflict5. Missional Leadership6. Communicating Vision7. Anchoring Change8. Closure and Blessing
ReFocusing Team Training Retreat: Focused Living Retreat	ReFocusing Team Training Retreat: Focused Ministry Retreat
Congregational Leader Retreat: Focused Living Retreat	Congregational Leader Summits: Focused Ministry Resource Kit

If you (pastor or lay person) think your congregation would benefit from this process, please contact me via email (jwaugh@wocumc.org). The Leadership and Visioning Team seeks to gauge the interest in this process among the congregations of the Capitol Area South. Your response by **Monday, April 6** would be helpful.