

4-1-2024

## Review of Fanning the Revitalization Flame: Leading Your Church from Smoldering Embers to Revival Fire by Robert Beckett

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### Recommended Citation

Shepherd, R. (2024). Review of Fanning the Revitalization Flame: Leading Your Church from Smoldering Embers to Revival Fire by Robert Beckett. *Great Commission Research Journal*, 16(1), 109-110. Retrieved from <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/gcrj/vol16/iss1/9>

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## Book Review

### *Fanning the Revitalization Flame: Leading Your Church from Smoldering Embers to Revival Fire*

By Robert Beckett

WestBow Press, 2022

176 pages

US\$15.99

Reviewed by Robert Shepherd (M.T.S, M.Div.), a doctoral candidate at Liberty University who serves as the lead pastor of New Heritage Baptist Church in Sherman, Texas.

“It is my hope and my prayer that this book may be able to help in some way to encourage and ignite the fire in a congregation and/or pastor again so that they can be an effective and contributing neighbor in the neighborhood” (xiii). With this statement, Robert Beckett sets the stage for everything that is to come, fanning the flame of revitalization fire within the Western church. *Fanning the Revitalization Flame* argues that a change of mind, attitude, and focus is required by churches to make disciples. This is the foundation of revitalization. While he breaks no new ground, Beckett does effectively communicate Scriptural truth mingled with practical application throughout the book.

Beckett’s contribution to churches engaged in revitalization can be summed up in one word: encouragement. Throughout *Fanning the Revitalization Flame*, he takes every opportunity to speak life into the hearts of pastors and congregations struggling with their purpose or level of community impact, at one point encouraging leaders to “change from thinking of lack to thinking of supply” (29). The author believes that

We need new ways to look at church health and growth that go beyond numbers and counting people in the pews. We must be looking at measurements of health, vitality, outreach, and creating touchpoints. Instead of saying our church is small, so what? We need to say our church is small, now what? (30)

In essence, this approach turns traditional church health metrics—focused on numbers—on its head, and instead, it invites pastors to focus on making disciples who make disciples. While no single church is great at all things, all churches are commanded by Jesus Christ to make disciples who make disciples. Thus, a church will never fail when discipleship is at the heart of its revitalization program.

The strength of Beckett's book, again, is in his ability to encourage small churches who understand their need for revitalization. Beckett argues, "We must recognize who we are as a church, and anything different than what God says we are is missing the mark" (47). He lists three ways in which churches can be all they can be. First, small churches must believe that they can be everything God intends for them to be. Second, small churches need to understand what purpose God has for them. Third, small churches need to be unapologetic in obedience (47-48). Once a church comes to terms with who they are before God—beloved and secure—they begin to walk in faithful obedience intent on fulfilling Christ's command to make disciples. Church size has no bearing on a church's ability to make disciples. An intentional discipleship program takes very little funding, promotion, or massive programming. It is simply one mature disciple pouring biblical truth and wisdom into another Christ follower.

Beckett does an excellent job of capturing the need for revitalization. He also neatly and concisely presents a path forward for churches in need of revitalization, focusing on discipleship to achieve this end. However, Beckett's work is not without its share of weaknesses, chief among them is the style of writing. Oftentimes, Beckett's writing is dry. While the content is solid, it is not a very engaging book. This should not dissuade pastors or lay persons from reading *Fanning the Revitalization Flame*, as it will encourage and equip all who pick it up.