

SERVOLUTION

Starting a Church Revolution Through Serving
by Dino Rizzo (Grand Rapids, Zondervan: 2009)

a book review by Jack De Vries



CRCA MINISTRY FORMATION

"A Church Reforming To Reach the Lost for Christ"

www.ministryformation.com.au

About the author:

Dino Rizzo is the founding and lead pastor of Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This multisite congregation has grown to over seven thousand attendees in several countries. Dino has cofounded the Association of Related Churches, which has planted sixty-three churches across the USA, and Go Global Missions, a group designed to develop missionaries and connect missions organisations. He and his wife, DeLynn, and their three children live in Baton Rouge.

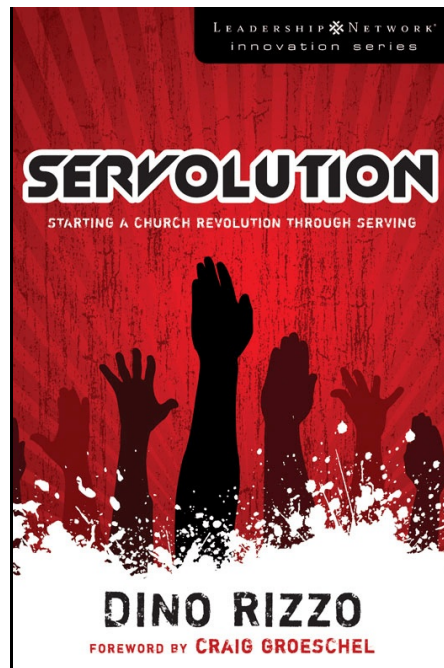
If your church closed its door tomorrow, who would notice? He is not the first one who has asked that question, but in this recent publication from Leadership Network, Dino Rizzo echoes what many others are saying. What impact are our churches having on our communities? This is a recurring question I pose among the churches I serve, the Christian Reformed churches in Australia.

Perhaps this is why Rizzo's book caught my attention. If your church no longer existed at the corner of Main and 5th streets (or whatever postal address it might have), would it be missed by the surrounding community? Would there be a backlash from politicians, city officials, and the media that another church has vanished? Who would notice? The answer to that question tells us a lot about the current health of the local

church. Are we as churches being salt and light, difference makers in our world?

These are the issues that Rizzo's book, *Servolution*, explores. It tells the story of Healing Place Church (HPC) in Louisiana, a church begun by Dino and his wife DeLynn – a church begun with a vision and a \$400 gift and which now expands

over many campuses and a whole range of ministries. But this book is more than another pastor's "success story". Rizzo shares the strategies and resources that have made the ministry of HPC so effective in reaching whole communities with the love of Christ. The key is "servolution", hence the title of the book. It is about bringing about a radical change in a church, a revolution, through serving.



Serving people is not just something we want to do; it's something we need to do. People discover personal healing through helping others.

The **servolution strategy** Rizzo suggests is something every church can implement quite easily. For example, Rizzo suggests a five part plan that will get churches started:

- *Pray.* Ask God to open your eyes to the needs all around you and to help you see His people the way He sees them.
- *Listen.* Find out what God is doing and jump on board.
- *Believe.* Even if you don't have enough

money to accomplish all that needs to be done, you can still start with what God has given you.

- *Act.* Roll up your sleeves and be hands-on in the work. Don't just write the check and run. Get in there close enough to the need that you can touch it, feel it, and smell it.
- *Give.* Give stuff away – as much as you can, as often as you can. Whatever you can get your hands on, give it away. Giving stuff away can be pretty interesting. (page 26)

In addition to outlining the servolution strategy, Rizzo shares both examples and ideas of how churches can impact their communities. While his list of ideas in the appendix is not exhaustive, it does spark some creative thinking about the opportunities available for serving our communities.

A servolution must be an expression of our lives. It's not something to be compartmentalized as only a church experience, a mission trip, or a charity event we hold for our community. We have to live it in everything we do, everywhere we go.

A practical aspect of this book are the discussion questions found at the end of each chapter. This is not a book to read and put on a shelf. This book needs to be discussed and the ideas implemented. It would benefit church sessions, boards, and/or mission committees to use this book as a study guide as they examine how they can be difference makers in their respective communities. Since each church situation will be different, the various ideas might take on a unique shape, but the strategy is the same: find a need and fill it – serving people “whatever, whenever.”

What I appreciated most about Rizzo's book is his commitment to growing the kingdom of God, not his church. He writes:

“All of our outreaches, all of our services, and all of our events must have a kingdom mindset And because servolution is all about Jesus and not just Healing Place Church, we do all we can to partner with other churches who are already leading ... successful community outreaches. We look for opportunities to help build up and strengthen other churches in our communities because we know that when we work together to show Jesus to a community, we collectively are increasing the spiritual appetite for Him in the entire area.” (106-07)

While this book is a must-read, do not expect this book to give you a step-by-step formula for beginning a servolution in your church or community. In fact, this book seems to jump all around the topic of impacting our communities through serving. But perhaps this is exactly why Rizzo has been effective in starting a church revolution through serving. There are no cookie-cutter solutions, no ready made formulas, just a deep commitment to serve people, to reach out to the lost, the least, and the last with the love of Christ. “No more excuses”, just do “whatever, whenever.” May the servolution continue! And the world will notice!

