

A MINISTRY ADVANTAGE

Helping Churches Reach Their Maximum Potential

by Jack De Vries



CRCA MINISTRY FORMATION

"A Church Reforming To Reach the Lost for Christ"

www.ministryformation.com.au

Some churches just seem to have an advantage. You visit them and they seem to have “it”. You can’t really put your finger on what it is, but they have it. Because they have it, people keep coming and the church is growing. They seem to know where they have come from and where they are going. They have a clear sense of direction. Decisions, both major and minor, are made with razor sharp precision. It appears that the leaders of these churches proactively follow a well thought out roadmap as they journey into the future. Bumps along the road do not unsettle them; they just get back on track.

Then there are other churches. I’ve met many of them; some years ago I was called to lead one. These churches have no sense of direction. For a while they might go in one direction following one leader. But not everyone is happy in the church.

When the leader leaves the church goes in an opposite direction, hope to please another segment of the church. Most decisions are reactive. And the church actually goes nowhere, spinning its ecclesiastical wheels. Church attendance is a roller coaster, and many people drop off. People check these churches out but leave by the back door as quick as they come. Clearly these churches do not seem to have an advantage.

What’s the difference? The churches with an advantage have a clear, planned, well thought out ministry strategy! They are following a ministry plan and implement change in keeping with that plan. These churches are gearing for ministry growth. The others churches are simply trying to maintain what they have.

Now these differences might not be so clear cut as I have outlined. But this is what I have observed in my years of

ministry in Canada as well as in my role with Ministry Formation in the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA). Churches which are purpose driven for the most part have an advantage over those who are not.

There are some pastors and church leaders who just seem to know how to lead. Some have it intuitively; others have received training. But there are many ministers who need some help in developing

a clear ministry strategy for their church. They need guidance to walk a church through adaptive change. They require coaching, someone who knows a bit more than they do to assist them to lead a church through uncharted territory.

This is where partnering with **Ministry Advantage** can make all the difference for a local church and its leaders. For the past ten years **Ministry Advantage** has been assisting pastors and churches worldwide to turn their vision into reality. **Ministry**

I was introduced to Ministry Advantage two years ago and told this ministry would give me the how-to steps of leading a church in our ever changing society. So I signed up, and our ministry effectiveness at Bray Park Community Church is a direct result of the coaching-system this ministry provides. As well as a seasoned mentor walking with you in ministry, you have access to specific resources to help your church reach its full redemptive potential. The network that opens up to you once you join is very helpful. If you want your church to grow in health and kingdom effectiveness, then I recommend this ministry.

John Hoogenhout, CRCA Pastor & Coach

Advantage provides a comprehensive approach which mentors individual church leaders through a process of learning to create and implement effective ministry strategies. Pastors are coached using three methods that work together to ensure effective mentoring and implementation of change within their church. These methods include personal coaching, providing key resources, and participating in strategy workshops.

Ministry Advantage focuses on seven areas of a church's ministry:

- Strategic Planning and Implementation
- Leading Change
- Organizing & Delegating

- Maximizing Key Ministry Positions
- Systems for Outreach & Assimilation
- Maturing Your Church Financially
- Developing Leaders & Teams

Willow brought **Ministry Advantage** to Australia and have adapted these seven training modules for the Australian churches and context. Check out the **Ministry Advantage** website for a complete description of these modules:

www.ministryadvantage.org

A growing number of CRCA pastors have been trained as coaches with **Ministry Advantage**. This training is organized and sponsored by Willow Australia through an

The value of Ministry Advantage (MA) is that it gives you as a minister something you don't get at theological college, practical on-the-job leadership training. It fills a gap that I have noticed many of our CRCA ministers struggle with, which is how to lead our churches in such a way that we align with the CRCA vision to be "a church reforming to reach the lost for Christ". How do we become more missional, or develop training in our churches, and so on? MA is not another book, or conference to attend or a course with an essay to and application to your own walk through the process week you'll have practical apply directly to your own coach, who is, most likely colleagues, will encourage you through the practical to do in your church with MA does not provide you a how to manage change. biblical principles. A key local pastor change from everything (and often who can develop a plan & that they own together (this change that isn't



develop teams and ministry in a way that is faithful to Ephesians 4:11 "pastor/teachers are to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ is built up". If I think of conversations with colleagues who, like myself at times, have been overwhelmed with where to start in developing the four fold task of the CRCA vision in their own congregations, this is certainly a tool worth looking at. I can't think of anything more encouraging as a minister than to have some one ring me every week, some to love me, encourage me, pray with me and help gently move me along in providing leadership to and with my session and congregation.

Leo Douma, CRCA Pastor and Coach

intensive four day event. This is followed up with ongoing coaching with the staff of **Ministry Advantage** in the USA. Dave Groenenboom (Redlands CRC) and John Hoogenhout (Bray Park Community Church) were the first CRCA trained

I have been coaching with Ministry Advantage since January 2008. MA offers an excellent combination of resources, clearly delineated structure, and the capacity to tailor coaching sessions specifically to the needs of the pastor being coached and the local church he serves. The two pastors I coach have very different contexts: one is a sole pastor of a smaller traditional church, the other a senior pastor of a large contemporary church. MA is great for both. Each MA module and section has tried and tested content & resources which are easily adapted to suit varied situations. Finally, being a well structured program means the pastor is never guessing where he's up to, and it also means there's excellent capacity for accountability and staying on task.

Dave Groenenboom CRCA Pastor and Coach

coaches. Recently I attended the training along with Leo Douma (North Ryde CRC) and Wayne Crouch (Bray Park). Each one of these church leaders have made a commitment to be personal coaches to one or more pastors. As requests come from CRCA pastors, they can be linked up



Wayne Crouch, Jack De Vries, and Leo Douma at the Ministry Advantage Training Seminar held 17-20 November 2008 at Pearl Beach, New South Wales

directly with a CRCA coach. (See separate side bars for personal reflections by these pastors.)

I am convinced that **Ministry Advantage** will be a useful resource in the CRCA as we work toward our goal of raising up church leaders and working toward healthy churches which reach out to the lost for Christ. If any pastor or church leader would like to know more about **Ministry Advantage** or would like to apply for coaching to begin, they can contact the Ministry Formation office at mtc@crca.org.au. An application can be obtained from the resource area of the Ministry Formation website under "Train".

I recently attended a Ministry Advantage (MA) 4 day training event for coaching in Sydney. Most pastors I know are well trained theologically but have little or no training in the practical application of strategic planning and implementation. I was involved in corporate management for 9 years both in South Africa and Australia before going into full time ministry and found MA's training and range of resources exceptional and uniquely based on biblical principles. I will start my coaching journey in 2009 and hope to use my experience, the training I received, and the available tools from MA to assist pastors turn their Church's vision into reality. I believe I will learn a great deal in the process and have the privilege of teaming up with pastors who also want to make a serious impact for the Kingdom of God.'

Wayne Crouch pastor at Bray Park CC