

The Comprehensive Guide to Church Consultant Training



Your Training Guide Contents

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The Purpose of this Guide

Dear Christian Leader,

Since 2002, the Society has trained over 1,600 people in nearly every state in the U.S. and many international countries. Like them, God may have directed you to read this because he wants you to help a specific church – possibly the one you currently lead. Or maybe you already work with one or more congregations, and you want to sharpen your consulting skills or earn credentials through certification.

If you have a passion to help revitalize churches, this guide will help you determine whether consultant training is your next step. It will also help you gain a better understanding of how a relationship with the Society can help you move closer to your church consulting goals.

There is a desperate need for church consultants and leaders interested in facilitating revitalization. Most of today's churches don't know how to break free from mediocrity, and many don't realize how they could benefit from outside help. There are lots of great books where pastors can read about how to turn around their churches, but sometimes it takes a hands-on approach by an unbiased consultant to effect real change.

The Lord has given us a prescription for church health in His Word. And He wants us to participate in building the kingdom through healthy congregations that take care of their own and reach those beyond their walls.

The purpose of this guide is to help you see how the Society is ready to equip you to become an effective and useful church consultant, or a better leader for His Church!



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The Growing Need for Church Consultants

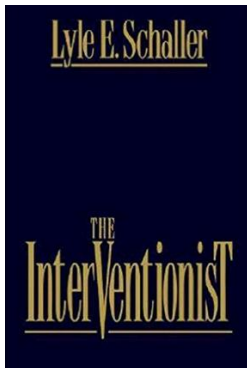
The State of the American Church

In a September 2014 blog post on his consulting website Aubrey Malphurs wrote this: “The State of the American Church concerns me. 80-85% of churches are plateaued or declining.” He goes on to quote both Thom Rainer and Gary McIntosh among others to back up his concern.

There is some evidence that the revitalization work of many is helping turn this tide. For example, in June 2017 Thom Rainer conducted a study using data from 2013-2016 in the Southern Baptist Church. His studied, reported on thomrainer.com, showed that 65% were declining or plateaued, while 35% were growing. Nevertheless, the need is still great.

There are many ways that we can address this concern. For example, seminaries can equip in new ways. Christian leaders can lead in fresh ways. And, church consultants can be equipped and deployed to help with church revitalization.

What is a consultant and how can they help?



In his book *The Interventionist*, Lyle Schaller, arguably one of the most prolific and effective of all church consultants, provided us with his characteristics of a consultant including the following:

- An outside third party
- Gifted for it or learned skills or both
- Able to formulate relevant questions
- Active listener
- Able to offer a diagnosis

In our Society training we use this definition of a church consultation:

A church consultation is a process in which an individual or a team provides insights, recommendations and guidance to improve the overall health of a church, or to assist in a specific area of church need.

We also contrast consulting with coaching. Both can help with church revitalization, and as an individual you may be both. However, while a coach helps individuals formulate and stick to their personal goals, a consultant operates with an ecclesiology, or what Schaller called a conceptual framework, from which he or she can provide recommendations to a church leadership team. Consultations may also include facilitating the implementation of recommendations or the discovery of a path toward church health.

An Overview of the Society for Church Consulting

Our Mission and Values

Our mission is to revitalize and advance churches by training leaders and certifying consultants. We are a membership organization, although you are only required to become a member when you become certified.

We hold to a Statement of Faith, and all our certified consultants must agree to conduct themselves according to a Code of Ethics. Both documents can be read in detail on our website at <http://churchconsulting.org/about-us/mission-and-history-statement-of-faith/>.

Our Training and Certification Path

We accomplish our mission primarily by training you or equipping you to become a certified church consultant. Our consultant equipping has three phases: Training, followed by an actual consultation project, followed by other requirements for certification.



Later in this document, we provide you with much more detail on this. However, in summary, these are some important things to understand about each of these phases:

Level 1-4 Training This can be accomplished in live sessions in person, live online, or by downloadable recordings from previous live sessions. Each of these three methods will satisfy your training phase.

Level 5 Project This is an actual consultation conducted in one of two ways. You may find a church that wants to use your services and you will be coached through that. Or, the Society may present to you options to “shadow” or follow a certified consultant on one of their consultations. You can do that by teleconference, phone and email or possibly on site with the certified consultant.

Certification Becoming certified by the Society is a significant achievement. The requirements are listed in detail later in this document on page 13.

Membership in the Society for Church Consulting

The Society has both Basic Membership and a Premium Membership. Each type of membership provides benefits to the member and the premium level provides you with the most benefit for those on the path to certification.

You are not required to become a member of the Society to take our Level 1-5 training. However, as you can see below, there is a significant amount of value in doing so.

	Basic Membership	Premium Membership
Annual Membership Dues	\$139	\$395
Benefits:		
Monthly Member Newsletter with a free consulting tool each month	✓	✓
Discount on Church Health Survey	✓	✓
Discount on Organizational Health Survey	✓	✓
Discount on Percept demographics	✓	✓
Free Church Health Encyclopedia	✓	✓
Free Fishbone Diagram white paper	✓	✓
Discount on Level 5	✓	✓
Free Future Trends Report	✓	✓
Customizable consulting documents	✓	✓
Casual email access to President	✓	✓
Discounts on training	10%	20%
Annual casual coachup upon request	✓	✓
Discount on <i>Church Consulting Starter Kit</i>	20%	50%
<i>Consultant's Development Plan Template</i>		✓
Development Plan Interview by President		✓
Tailored Development Plan Input by President		✓
Up to 6 more Development Plan phone follow up calls during the year		✓
24/7 email or text access with quick response (within reason)		✓

Self-Assessment Quiz - Am I cut out for church consulting?

If you're not already involved in part-time or full-time paid church consulting, this quiz will give you some perspective on your readiness for this potential new chapter in your life. It was developed by those active in the field of church consulting and is based on their observation of success factors.

As with any matter of discerning the will of God, we of course also recommend that you prayerfully approach this matter, and that you get wise counsel from those who know you well.

The following seven yes/no questions and self-scoring instructions will give you a quick affirmation to move forward or consider other options. Like most assessments you have ever taken, it will be most meaningful if you complete it with sincerity about your actual experience and circumstances.

1. Do you have more than five years of experience serving on a church staff?
Yes _____ No _____
2. Do you understand how a church can be unhealthy?
Yes _____ No _____
3. Do you feel a deep desire to help churches become healthy?
Yes _____ No _____
4. Do you currently have an adequate source of income?
Yes _____ No _____
5. Do you have any experience in the business world?
Yes _____ No _____
6. Do you know of at least three churches that are in significant decline?
Yes _____ No _____
7. Have you ever been involved in resolving serious church conflict?
Yes _____ No _____

Give yourself one point for every "Yes" answer.

What is your total score: _____?

Now go to the next page and find our feedback associated with your score.

Self-Assessment quiz interpretation and feedback

SCORE: 6-7

You have the highest chance of success if you decide to pursue church consulting. You have the experience, desire and opportunity necessary to help struggling churches. You are a natural candidate for professional training. You may also want to consider establishing a consulting business after a time of “trying it out.” However, if you’re between jobs, we don’t advise that you jump into consulting as a primary source of income.

SCORE: 3-5

You have a good chance of success if you decide to pursue church consulting. If you scored in this range, you should *not* consider becoming a full-time consultant, but you still have what it takes to revitalize churches. If you work at it, you may secure some paid consultations, but don’t limit yourself to doing only those. You have some qualities that can and *should* be used in churches, regardless of their ability to pay. We recommend that you investigate various resources and training to equip you for this work.

SCORE: 0-3

You have a modest to low chance of success if you decide to pursue consulting. As you evaluate your next steps in ministry and life, we advise that you consider focusing your time, efforts and resources on your home church rather than consulting others. Investing your talents in your own congregation will probably be more fruitful because you know the people, issues and opportunities in an intimate way. Consultant training can refine your skills, but your main goal should be to support your church’s leadership and laity in every way you can.

No matter what you scored, remember to pray, and listen for the Lord’s leading. Search the Scriptures. Talk to pastors and other church consultants. And take stock of what you really expect out of your consulting efforts. If your main goal is income, you are likely to be disappointed for a while. Make sure you can support yourself while you build your clientele.

Finally, while you may never be involved in the activity of the complete list of these seven questions, we can suggest a healthy exercise. Think through the spirit of each question. Ask yourself why each question might have been put on this list. Then ask yourself if there is an actionable takeaway for you and your future.

Details of Society Training and Certification (pages 9-14)

Comparison of Training Tracks (only one is required)

<u>TRACK:</u> <u>Characteristic:</u>	Generalist	Revitalization
Satisfies certification Levels 1-4 requirements	YES	YES
Summary Description	A broad treatment of many church health topics for denominational leaders, pastors and aspiring consultants, including the Healthy Church Model and the <i>Church Health Survey</i> .	Seven tools for revitalization including the <i>Fishbone Diagram of Church Health</i> . Ideal for denominational leaders, consultants and pastors.
Outline of Content	Scroll to page 10	Scroll to page 11
Instructor(s)	Dr. John Ewart (90%+) Dr. David Bowman (< 10%)	Jim Barber Former Society President
Approx. Run Time	20 hours	15 hours
# of PowerPoint Slides	370 (all are used in training)	500 (all are used in training)
Year this training was recorded	2013	2020
Pricing	Nonmember \$995 Basic Member \$895 Premium Member \$795 Student Member \$495 Audit Nonmember \$495 Audit Member \$450	SAME

Notes: (1) Certification requirements: <https://churchconsulting.org/certification/>

(2) A Student Member is a member of the Society that also provides evidence of enrollment in a degree program of any kind.

(3) If you have previously completed Levels 1-4 through the Society, you can audit the training as a Nonmember or a Member.

Outline of Generalist Track Training Content

Changes in American culture
The State of the American church
Definition of church consulting
Healthy Church Model
Guiding a church toward evangelism
Principles for making disciples
Leading a church through change
Handling church conflict
Getting started with prayer!
Consulting code of ethics
Church consultation process
Conducting interviews
Winning strategies
The Church Health Survey™
Comprehensive Consultation Areas
Mission and Vision
Growth Barriers
Congregational Analysis
Data Analysis
Community Analysis
Church Finances
Church Budgets and Financial Ratios
Financial Borrowing
Leadership
Strategic Planning
Small Groups and Sunday school
Facilities Evaluations
Assimilation and Follow up
Discipleship Issues
Leadership Development
Writing a Consulting Proposal
Acquiring Clients, A-Z
Building a Resource File
Writing the Consulting Report
Assessing the Consultation
Church Consultation Fees
Your Consultation Report Presentation

Outline of Revitalization Track Training Content

7 Church Revitalization Tools

1. The Church Lifecycle Curve
2. The Fishbone Diagram Method for Assessing Church Health (12 Components) includes approx. 50-page white paper of substantiating research, analysis, and conclusions
3. The Church Health Survey
4. The BCC Organizational Health Survey
5. How to Analyze External Culture
6. How to Action Plan Church Vision
7. How to Align and Achieve Church Vision

How to Revitalize each of the 12 components of health in the Fishbone Diagram

Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Evangelism, Ministry, Prayer

Strategy, Structure, Leadership, Outreach, Onboarding, Resources

The Society Certification Path

Types of Church Health Assessments

Consulting Specialties

How to Conduct a Comprehensive Church Health Assessment in 15 Weeks

How to Facilitate Strategic Ministry Planning using the Malphurs Method

How to Start a Church Consulting Practice

Level 5: Church Consultation Project

The purpose of Level 5 is to provide the aspiring consultant with the opportunity to apply the training received in Levels 1-4. It is an important part of your path to certification.

The Society offers two options for Level 5: A coached consulting project, or shadowing of a certified consultant when they complete a qualifying consultation.

The chart on the follow page compares being coached through Level 5 versus you shadowing a certified consultant.

Level 5: Coached vs. Shadowing

The following aspects of your Level 5 training are in sequential order	<i>Coached by a Society Representative*</i>	<i>Shadowing a Certified Consultant</i>
Who initiates a relationship with a church for the consultation?	You	A Certified Consultant
Who defines the details of the consultation?	You, but... must be a comprehensive consultation**	A Certified Consultant, but... must be a comprehensive consultation**
Who defines the contractual relationship and fees with the church?	You	A Certified Consultant
Who approves your Level 5 project?	Society President, Mark Lenz	Society President, Mark Lenz, but Certified Consultant must accept you as a Shadower
Society registration cost for your Level 5 project (required before commencing).	Nonmembers \$395 Members 10% off	Nonmembers \$395 Members 10% off
Are there any other Society fees in addition to the Society registration fee	No	The Certified Consultant may require a fee
Who defines the Level 5 project activity?	Society President, Mark Lenz	Society President and Certified Consultant
Who approves the completion of your Level 5 training?	Society President, Mark Lenz	Society President in consultation with Certified Consultant

*You are usually coached by Society President, Mark Lenz, but the Society may provide another coach.

**A comprehensive consultation is defined by our Levels 1-4 training.

Becoming a Certified Consultant

About Certification

For most, the completion of Levels 1-4 Training and the completion of your Level 5 consultation project are prerequisites for applying for certification. The only exceptions we allow for that are:

- If you have been consulting churches for the past five consecutive years and you give us evidence of that with a sampling of consulting reports, or
- You demonstrate that you have completed the equivalent of Society Levels 1-5 with another training organization.

The Benefits of Certification

1. You will have recognized "Certified Church Consultant" credentials
2. We grant you the use of the Society logo to use on business cards, web sites, brochures, etc.
3. We will list you and your consulting practice in our online consultant directory on our website. See: <http://churchconsulting.org/search-consultants/>
4. The Society presents you with a frameable certificate



Society Certification

Requirements for applying for Certification

1. Must be a Society member in good standing
2. A required minimum of five consecutive years in consulting work OR complete Levels 1-5 training with the Society or the equivalent from another body (and provide proof of training and/or client work)
3. Submit a 1,000-word paper on your philosophy of consulting
4. Complete requires beyond Level 5 in one of these four ways:
 - Conduct a comprehensive consultation on your own and submit the final report for review.
 - If you were coached for Level 5 you can shadow a second consultation, or if you shadowed for Level 5, you can shadow a second time. The shadowing fee must be paid for this experience.
 - If in the past 3 years you completed a comprehensive consultation like what we describe in our training, you can submit to the Society for review the written report that you gave to the church from that consultation.
 - The Society offers instructive online [webinar case studies](#) \$99 each. You must complete two of these case studies. The webinar will require written work and participation in the online webinar.

5. Submit three ministry reference letters
6. Agree to abide by the Consultant's Code of Ethics

Initial Certification fee: \$189

Annual renewal: \$238 which includes membership and certification. We also ask you to give evidence of continuing education, a listing of consulting work in the past year, and any published works.

Training Calendar: When Can I Get Started?

The answer to “When Can I Get Started?” depends on what type of training you are interested in. The following gives you guidance on each type of training and how to proceed.

If you want to enjoy member discounts, please become a member first, then register.

Type of Training	When you can get started
Live Events	Our live events are offered at a variety of times. Stay in tune with these opportunities on the Training tab of our website.
Online Cohorts (Revitalization Track)	We generally offer at least one opportunity for this starting each year. Stay in touch at this link: <u>Online Cohort Training</u>
Self Paced, Video Downloads	You can start at any time by going to one of these links: <u>Revitalization</u> or <u>Generalist</u>
Level 5 Coached or Shadowed	You generally must have completed Levels 1-4 Training first by one of the methods above. Then you can follow the guidelines in this document.

Guidelines for Starting a Consulting Practice

You may be very passionate about helping churches. You may have ministry and business experience that you are certain will be useful to others. Or, you may be a seasoned, long-term pastor that has become sought after by others. These things are good preparation for church consulting. But many consulting veterans urge a slow approach to exploring a consulting career. It is not for everyone. Obstacles like lack of money or experience can cripple a promising consultant before he or she accepts client number one.

Before you chase your dream, pause to consider the following strategies that may increase your chances of success.

1. Get professional training. By now you know about the training options offered by the Society. We also recommend theology classes especially if you've never had that training or worked in a church setting. Many seminaries and universities offer convenient distance-learning courses.

2. Read leadership and consulting books. From this training guide and from Society training, make a list of books that others say will help you. Discipline yourself to work through those. The saying that "leaders are readers" is abundantly true for aspiring church consultants.

3. Voluntarily make yourself available to other churches. If you are not already doing so, find a willing church that could use some free help. You will learn what you know and don't know, and you will simultaneously develop a voice to speak into other church leaders. There is no substitute for experience. Eventually, you should charge for your services. But free at first is not a bad way to start.

4. Write. Writing will force you to develop your conceptual framework for consulting. It will help you take your passion and put it into words. Try blogging or write a manual. Try to become published.

5. Write a business plan. Answer these questions: "If I went into consulting full-time, what would my practice look like? What kinds of churches would I work with? What would be my area of expertise?" Think about how you would promote your services and find clients. Consider how much you'd charge. Now, scale it back and fit a separate paying job into the picture. If you can build a practice on the side, rather than putting full-time financial pressure on it right away, you'll find more joy and success. If you would like help with your plan, consider purchasing our [Church Consulting Starter Kit](#). The *Kit* includes a comprehensive planning tool and we offer coaching to assist you in your planning.

May the Lord greatly bless your personal dream of revitalizing His church. The Society is here to help you. You are very welcome to reach out to us as you seek His will. Our contact info is: mark@churchconsulting.org 763.744.7338.