

PASTOR MARK WITH & WITHOUT ReNew

The following example shows the impact that ReNew Partnerships can have in the life of a Christian leader. The details are fictional but based on typical situations. Learn more about our work at: renewpartnerships.org/about/purpose

PASTOR MARK WITHOUT ReNew



Mark grew up in a mostly-white, suburban community. In high school he had a few Asian and African American friends but he didn't talk with them much about their cultural backgrounds.¹ He attended a strong, Bible-preaching church with a dynamic youth group. There was very little ethnic diversity in the congregation and cultural issues were rarely preached on or discussed except in regard to foreign missions.²

Mark attended a Christian university that also had little ethnic diversity. The students of color on campus tended to keep to themselves and nearly all of Mark's closest friends and professors were white. His professors rarely spoke on ethnicity-related issues. When they did, their opinions were almost always in line with what he heard growing up from his parents, church, and the other Christians that he knew.³

After graduating, Mark became the youth pastor at a large church in a suburb of a rapidly expanding city. The neighborhood around the church contained a large and growing population of African Americans, Asians, and Latinos.⁴ Mark's attempts to connect with the young people in these communities did not go well. When young people of other ethnicities visited the youth group they would typically not return or leave after only a few weeks. Mark had no idea why.⁵

After seven years as a youth pastor, Mark was asked to serve as the pastor of a small, multi-ethnic congregation in an urban neighborhood. He arrived with excitement, passion, and a strong desire to impact the community for Christ. But, he quickly learned that it would not be as easy as he hoped. He struggled with how to relate to the diverse group of people in his church and surrounding community. He felt ill-equipped to work through the ethnic challenges and conflicts that continued to surface. He eventually decided to leave and serve as an assistant pastor of a mostly-white church.⁶

¹ Many Christians grow up in ethnically-homogenous environments.

² Ethnic relations is rarely preached or taught on in many churches.

³ The majority of Christian college students do not receive a significant amount of training in how to handle ethnic relations in a biblical way.

⁴ Many leaders end up ministering in communities that are much more diverse than the neighborhood where they grew up or went to college.

⁵ Many leaders are surprised, confused, and discouraged when they attempt to reach out to other ethnic groups and it doesn't work out.

⁶ An increasing number of ministry positions require leaders that can effectively work with people of a variety of ethnicities.

PASTOR MARK WITH ReNew



Mark grew up in a mostly-white community... (see left column)

Mark attended a Christian college which utilized our e-learning sessions to train their students and faculty in biblical ethnic relations. Therefore, Mark learned about how to interact cross-culturally in a biblical and effective way throughout his college education. There was an open and healthy dialogue between students of different ethnicities on campus which helped him to build cross-cultural relationships and become more comfortable talking about ethnic issues.¹

After graduating, Mark became the youth pastor at a large church in a suburb of a rapidly expanding city. When trying to decide how best to reach out to the diverse communities around his church he Googled "multi-ethnic Christian resources". He found our website, renewpartnerships.org, which contained videos, articles, and books by pastors serving in similar communities.² He subscribed to our monthly e-mail newsletter to receive on-going encouragement and resources.³ Mark's youth group eventually became very diverse and had a powerful impact with the families in their community.

After seven years as a youth pastor, Mark was asked to serve as the pastor of a small, multi-ethnic congregation in an urban neighborhood. He knew it wouldn't be easy, but was excited about the opportunity to impact a diverse community with the love of Christ. He turned to the help of other multi-ethnic church pastors as well as e-learning sessions and other resources on renewpartnerships.org. After attending a workshop led by our staff members at a national conference⁴, he asked our team to lead a training at his church. Our staff conducted a training with his congregation that helped them to lay a biblical foundation for dealing with their cultural differences.⁵ His congregation continued to thrive and serve the spiritual and physical needs in their community.

¹ We are currently in the process of creating e-learning sessions specifically designed for Christian college students and faculty that will be incorporated into curriculum and help to facilitate discussions.

² Our website, renewpartnerships.org, contains over 800 resources on multi-ethnic topics and receives about 3,000,000 hits each year.

³ There are ~1400 people currently subscribed to our newsletter.

⁴ Our team leads workshops and training programs at conferences as often as we can.

⁵ Our team has facilitated training programs for church plant teams, youth groups, ministries, college ministries, board of directors, etc.