



# Irresistible Church Training

For Disability Ministry

Presented by



## 5 Stages of Culture Change: Inclusive Churches for People of All Abilities\*

A process for Christ-honoring churches to evangelize and disciple people living with disabilities by helping to change church culture, eliminating the gap between people with disabilities and the church.

- 1. IGNORANCE** creates a chasm between churches and people with disabilities. This gap is narrowed by awareness. As churches become aware of needs and discover God's heart for people of all abilities, they will begin evaluating how their church can remove barriers and provide supports for people with disabilities.
  - Takes steps to understand a biblical view of disability, suffering, and God's sovereignty
  - Invites the entire church into an awareness process through prayer, teaching, and training
- 2. EVALUATION** draws churches closer to people with disabilities, but there is still a gap between *wanting* to help and actually helping. This gap is closed by training. The "how-to" will help churches move from an awareness of needs to actively caring for people with disabilities.
  - Communicates a vision for an inclusive culture
  - Establishes disability ministry leadership roles
  - Seeks out families and individuals affected by disability to understand their needs
  - Identifies physical and social barriers
    - Removes barriers
    - Provides supports
    - Creates specialized spaces
- 3. CARE** draws churches closer still, but distance remains because people with disabilities are viewed as the object of service. "We" serve "them." This gap is closed by forming friendships.
  - Provides opportunities for families affected by disability to be in community. Time together = Friendships
  - Offers supports at church events (worship services, small groups, special events, etc.)
  - Invites families affected by disability to share testimonies and stories of their experiences at church, both positive and negative

4. **FRIENDSHIP** is an intimate relationship. The gap has been closed on a personal level, but a final step will move people with disabilities from friendships with their typical peers to also contributing in ministry together.
  - Identifies the spiritual gifts of people with disabilities
  - Identifies potential areas of service and outreach
  - Encourages and celebrates those gifts
  
5. **CONTRIBUTING** alongside people with disabilities is the final step to an inclusive church. There is no longer any distinction between people with disabilities and their typical peers. People with disabilities are not strangers to the congregation, but friends. They are not merely people *who are* served, but people *who* serve, influence, and lead through their presence, gifts, and abilities.
  - Serves the community
    - Churches with an inclusive culture will influence the culture of other churches and the community
    - Hosts network meetings, trainings, and conferences

\*Adapted from “The 5 Stages: Changing Attitudes,” © 2009, Dan Vander Platts. Every church is unique in their movement through the stages.