



Press Packet

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Contents

Church Initiative Overview – 1

History and Biography
Mission and Vision
Core Values
Whom We Serve
What Is Our Motivation?
What People Are Saying ...

Statement of Faith – 6

Church Initiative Overview

History, Mission, Core Values

History and Biography

Church Initiative was founded in 1993 by Steve and Cheryl Grissom. Steve now serves as the president of Church Initiative; Cheryl serves as the ministry vice president. Steve and Cheryl have designed and developed a ministry that equips and serves local churches for frontline ministry to people experiencing life crises, such as divorce and grief due to a death. Church Initiative develops comprehensive, Christ-centered resources to help churches start and sustain effective support group ministries to meet these needs in their communities.

Church Initiative was born out of Steve and Cheryl Grissom's journey of pain and loss. Although they found support in the local church, they realized that an untapped opportunity existed—equipping local churches to offer practical support groups to minister to people facing major life disruptions.

Armed with a new mission, Steve and Cheryl left their careers in broadcasting and pharmacy to pursue full-time ministry—what would eventually become Church Initiative. What began as a two-person nonprofit today has over 30 team members and an international impact.

From the beginning, Church Initiative has combined a unique set of talents: Steve's journalism and business background and his deep passion for ministry. The result—a video-based series built around small group discussion, personal reflection, and a lay-led support structure.

Today, more than 17,000 churches worldwide are equipped with one or more Church Initiative ministry programs.

1994 – **DivorceCare**, a seminar/small group resource to help people hurting because of separation and divorce

1999 – **GriefShare**, a grief recovery support group program to help people grieving the death of a loved one

2004 – **DivorceCare for Kids**, DC4K, designed to bring healing to children of divorce and to give them hope and the tools to develop healthier relationships within their families

2011 – **Single & Parenting**, a care group program to provide single parents with parenting tools and personal support

Church Initiative continues to update its ministry programs. For example, we've continued to release new editions of DivorceCare and GriefShare. The new editions maintain timeless truths and teachings from our favorite experts and interviewees. They also feature new experts, unique insights and fresh graphics that give these powerful curriculums an entirely new look.

Steve's past professional experience began in the telecommunications and broadcasting industries. He founded several satellite communications companies and spent more than 10

years in television news management. Cheryl received a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. She served as a hospital pharmacist until 1994.

Steve and Cheryl live in Wake Forest, North Carolina. They have three daughters: Carrie-Christina (deceased), Shannon and Heather.

Mission and Vision

Church Initiative is a nondenominational, 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt ministry existing to equip and serve local churches for frontline ministry to people experiencing life crises, such as divorce and grief due to a death loss. The ministry develops comprehensive resources to help churches start and sustain effective support group ministries to meet these needs in their communities.

Our focus is on point of pain ministry. Divorce and bereavement can result in broken hearts, lives and spirits; indescribable pain; confusion; and overwhelming emotional turmoil. We provide churches with the tools to help these people cope, heal, grow and move forward in their lives, while experiencing the unconditional love of Christ. In our culture, adults are perhaps most open to spiritual solutions for their lives when they face a major life crisis. This need represents a tremendous outreach and evangelism opportunity for local churches equipped for effective ministry.

Churches offer our programs in thirteen-week cycles that can continue throughout the year, creating an ongoing, lay-led ministry and care environment.

Core Values

Church Initiative is committed to producing small group ministry resources that are:

- Christ-centered
- Biblically based
- Designed for ministry conducted by lay leaders in the local church

A relationship with Jesus Christ is presented as an integral part of healing from the emotional, mental and spiritual trauma that accompanies separation, divorce, bereavement and addiction. During each weekly meeting, the group will view a video featuring insights from professional Christian counselors, pastors, speakers and authors on topics related to the crisis. The videos are interspersed with personal testimonies of people who have been through a similar experience and are moving forward toward healing and wholeness in Christ. After the videos, the group has a time to discuss concepts presented on the video and share questions and concerns. The weekly meeting includes prayer and Bible study. Group participants bring home a daily Bible study and journal to help keep them focused during the week.

Whom We Serve

Church Initiative has equipped churches in all fifty states, throughout Canada, the UK, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and over fifty other countries and territories. Thousands of churches worldwide are equipped with Church Initiative ministry programs.

Churches equipped with our resources are found in both urban and rural areas as well as in both affluent and poor areas. Participants are made up of people of many races, economic levels, denominations and ethnicity. Three of our ministry programs are geared toward adults, and one program is for children five through twelve years of age.

What we provide:

- Extensive lay leader training materials (print and video)
- Planning and startup strategies
- Complete thirteen-week curriculum on DVD video
- Participant workbooks with video outline, Bible study, journal and salvation plan
- Online daily devotions, articles, Bible study and salvation plan
- Online searchable database of ministry groups meeting around the world
- Professionally designed publicity resources
- Web-based leadership support forum
- Online site for program leaders with articles and handouts, advertising resources and other support
- Unlimited free telephone support and consulting: we have a consultant for each ministry program
- Opportunities for regional support and training of lay leaders through Local Network Fellowships
- Social media and online presence, via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs

We offer continuous support to churches using our programs through free telephone consulting, web-based leadership support forums, online articles and handouts, publicity resources, and opportunities for regional support and training of lay leaders through Local Network Fellowships.

We have also collaborated with other Christian organizations, combining our expertise to help create products that effectively minister to hurting individuals. Partnerships have included FamilyLife, Child Evangelism Fellowship and Lawson Falle.

While we do minister to hurting individuals who contact our offices or visit our websites, our main goal is to equip churches to minister to individuals in their communities. With a local ministry, lasting relational bonds and ongoing support is available for these people. We eagerly direct people to the nearest ministering church in their area.

What Is Our Motivation?

At Church Initiative, we believe true healing is only found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Several of our staff members have suffered the pain of bereavement and divorce and have been touched by other life crises, and the rest have a heart for this ministry. We want to share the message with as many people as possible that God is real, He loves everyone and that hope and healing is found in Him.

We believe everyone in a church can minister in some way. As pastors and church staff members can become overwhelmed with the needs of so many hurting people, our materials

enable lay leaders, who have a heart for ministering, to become trained for outreach and in-reach to those suffering from divorce and grief. We believe God's church is meant to be an instrument of hope, help and healing and a conduit of God's love.

What People Are Saying about Our Ministry Programs

"Thank you for believing in the church as a conduit of healing." —Pastor, OH

"I have watched God do miracles in the DivorceCare ministry. Over 70 people attended our last 13-week series. I observed people grow in their walk with God as they were healed by the truth of each session and the touch of caring facilitators." —Pastor, MI

"Our church family has been blessed by GriefShare. The program demonstrates God's comfort by showing that the healing of the soul is meant to be within the community of God's people." —Lay leader, CO

"We are a very small church, but we are having a significant impact in our community that no other church is able to provide." —Pastor, PA

"I am so excited about the DivorceCare for Kids program. I have led another children's divorce recovery program for many years and while it was good, this one has so much more. As an elementary teacher it's so refreshing to see something written for children that addresses their needs so effectively. This is cutting edge material." —Lay leader, TX

Statement of Faith

Church Initiative

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Adopted from the Statement of Faith of the National Association of Evangelicals