

“Church Growth”

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Text: Acts 8:1-4

Theme: To discuss the practical principles involved in church growth.

Introduction:

1. Recent flurry of emphasis on personal evangelism.
2. It causes us to think of church growth.
3. The Bible refers to church growth in different ways.
 - a. Daniel 2 - the stone, v.35.
 - b. Matthew 13:31,32 - parable of the mustard seed.
 - c. Acts 5:14.
4. And yet some congregations of the Lord's people don't seem to grow.
5. Many factors, both negative and positive in church growth.

Discussion:

- I. Must be a proper understanding of the church.
 - A. No accident -
 1. Ephesians 3:10,11.
 2. Matthew 16:18 (Luke 19:10; Ephesians 2:16).
 - B. The price paid -
 1. Acts 20:28.
 2. Ephesians 5:25
 - C. Christ is the head - Ephesians 1:22,23.
 - D. It is the body of the saved - Ephesians 5:23.

II. Reasons why churches sometimes don't grow.

- A. Lacking the zeal and fervor of the 1st century evangelism -
 - 1. Acts 8:1-4 [Their commitment caused them to be scattered and, when scattered, they went preaching].
 - 2. We need not only to restore the truth as taught in the 1st Century but also the fervor of 1st Century evangelism.
- B. Lack of knowledge -
 - 1. Philippians 1:9; Acts 17:11 ; I Peter 3:15.
 - 2. Ignorance is worthless - Hosea 4:6; II Timothy 2:15.
- C. A lack of optimism -
 - 1. Must believe we can do the Lord's will.
 - 2. II Corinthians 5:58 - must move on faith.
- D. A failure on the part of leadership -
 - 1. The apostles taught publicly and from house to house, Acts 20:20.
 - 2. Elders, deacons, Bible class teachers, preachers all need to be soul winners and set the example for all the other members.
- E. A failure to stand for the truth -
 - 1. Antiism and liberalism divide the church - they don't make churches grow.
 - A. Antis have to spend their time defending their pet doctrines - Listen to them and then compare Galatians 3:10; James 1:27.
 - B. Liberals end up making the church look like a denomination - it loses its distinctiveness.
 - 2. We must follow the word of God.
 - A. I Peter 2:11.
 - B. John 8:32.
 - C. John 17:17.
 - D. Hebrews 4:12.
 - E. Romans 1:16.
 - F. Can't court the false teachers.
 - 3. The power is not in us but the word of God.

III. Ways to make churches grow.

- A. It will take dedication to the effort -
 - 1. Every member a missionary.

- a. Ill. - a member said to me, "I want to go to a bigger church."
 - b. I told him I did also and that that is why I was committed to winning souls and invited him to be also.
2. Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47.
3. This is God's method of spreading his word -
 - A. The early brethren went everywhere preaching.
 - B. Every case of conversion in the book of Acts emphasizes the teaching process.
 1. Peter - Acts 2.
 2. Philip - Acts 8.
 3. Cornelius - Acts 11:14.
- B. A lot of prayer is involved -
 1. I Thessalonians 5:17 - far from unimportant [involves righteous living - I Peter 3:12].
 2. Romans 10:1.
 3. Jesus - "Father forgive..." Matthew 23:37.
 4. Stephen - "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" Acts 7:60.
- C. Blood, sweat, and tears -
 1. Need to kill the TV.
 2. Need less workshops, and more work sessions.
 3. Mention different work programs in other areas.
 4. Mention local programs.

Conclusion:

- 1 Christ's blood, our sweat and tears.
2. This is the proper formula for church growth.

Invitation: