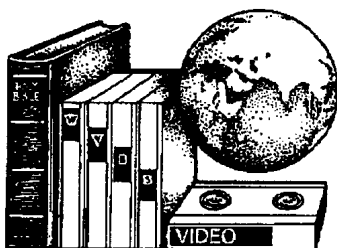


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



CHURCH GROWTH



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**WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL
CHURCH GROWTH
STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

I. GENERAL:

- A. Instructor: Warren Wilcox.
- B. Number of DVDs - 4.
- C. Thirteen 38 minute classes.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

- A. This is a study of church growth principles and methods.
- B. Attention will be given to practical application for any size congregation.

III. PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

- A. This course is designed to help a congregation grow numerically by doing the following:
 - 1. Learn how to discover and develop prospects for study and conversions.
 - 2. Involve the congregation in Biblical works to create an active church and to avoid drop-outs.
- B. In addition the student will learn obstacles that must be overcome in order for the local congregation to produce a growth pattern.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- A. To be able to detect problems in a congregation which need improving in order for it to grow.
- B. To understand the principles and methods which have been proven effective throughout the United States which encourage church growth.

V. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE:

- A. Keep a notebook: this notebook must be neat and well organized. The notes must be full, accurate and understandable so that it will be a valuable tool for years to come.

The notebook is due at the beginning of the class period set aside for the final exam. This notebook must fulfill all school requirements.

- B. Outside reading: as assigned by the local instructor. See bibliography for source material.
- C. The student must conduct a local congregation survey as given with the course and propose effective methods for growth based on good church growth principles.

VI. TESTS:

- A. The local instructor may choose to give tests based on the taped material.
- B. He will determine the percentages for assignments, reading and tests.

VII. DISCLAIMER:

Since the majority of material available for principles and methods for church growth has come from the denominational world, and since so few in the brotherhood have written on this valuable subject, some of the copied work that comes with this course will have denominational terminology. A few times even a denominational concept is incorporated in otherwise good material. The author expects the student to be able to discern which is and which is not in harmony with true Biblical teachings and use the material accordingly. The author is in no way encouraging or promoting any unbiblical concepts, teachings or practices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPECIAL NOTICE: Because this notebook is made up of handouts there are no page numbers assigned to the document as a whole. The handouts appear in the order they are presented in the videos. Page numbers, where they appear, are assigned to the individual handouts only.

Student Instructions

General:

- Single File
- Excuses, Excuses
- Survey Results
- Reasons So Many Christians Leave The Church
- Steps Toward Church Growth
- Ministry Analysis Questionnaire
- Using Others' Programs
- Church Of Christ Questionnaire
- Congregational Survey
- Flow Chart
- Church Growth Reading List

Evangelism:

- Where Are You On The Growth Development Scale?
- How to Use "Steps To A Successful Family"
- Prospect Sources For Sowing And Reaping
- "Target Group Evangelism" - Unlocking A Secret To Growth
- Tuesday School
- Baptizing Behind Bars
- Benevolence Handout
- Evangelistic Program - "The Area System"
- International Student Evangelism And You

Visitors:

- Determining Our Openness Quotient

Reaching Different Ages:

Ways To Build A Moral Powerful "Youth Ministry" In A Small Church
Sensitivity: Growing Singles Population Requires Attention
America Is Getting Grayer
More Adults And Fewer Youth!

Drop Outs:

Reclaiming "Lost Sheep" Should Be A Major Area Of Evangelistic Thrust
Drop Outs: Solving the Problem Before it Occurs
Savage's "Dropout Tract"

Sunday School Growth Ideas:

20 Ways to Double Your Sunday School Class
Rules For Making Every Visitor Feel Welcome To
Get New Visitors
What Are First-Time Visitors Looking For?
How To Attract First-Time Visitors
Seeing Your Visitors Return
Predicting Your Church Growth Or Decline By Visitors
How To Have A Church Attendance Drive

Incorporate / Assimilate:

Incorporating And Assimilating Your Newcomers
Improving Your Member Incorporation Strategy
The Characteristics Of An "Incorporated Member"
The New Member Class

Visitation Program:

Barnabas Program
A Fellowship Group Approach To Accomplishment Of The Lord's Work

Worship:

Editor Warns To Be Careful With The Worship Assembly
Relevant Thoughts On Making Corporate Worship The Time Of Our Lives
Six Ways To Increase Your worship Attendance

Advertising:

Can Advertising Help Your church?
How We Serve Your Neighborhood

Small Church:

Building On Strengths Of The Small Church
Small Church Survey Conclusions

Changes:

How To Get Your Members On Board
Your Mission Statement
The Big Dream
Measuring Your “Great Commission Conscience”
Understanding And Encouraging Change

Small Groups:

Small Groups
Small Groups Can Provide Instruction And Help Build Relationships

Plateaus:

Attendance Plateaus
Is Your Church In A Mid-Life Crisis?
Breaking Out Of Mid-Life Crisis

Involvement Ministry:

To Improve Church’s Involvement, Increase The Number Of Ministries

Extended Family:

A Secret Of Growth
Six Reasons For Focusing On Your “Extended Congregation” And Five Ways To Minister To Them
Target Group: Friends And Relatives
Develop Your Own Web
Registration
I’ve Been Reading About You

SINGLE FILE

It's unbelievable, but if all the unsaved people in the world were to line up single file at your front door, the line would reach around the world 30 times. And horror of horrors! This line would grow by 20 miles each day! If you were to drive 50 miles an hour for 10 hours a day, it would take you 4 years and 40 days to get to the end of this line of lost souls. And by then it would have grown by 30,000 miles!

Look out your front door!

See lost souls!

EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES . . . FOR TURNING DOWN NEW IDEAS
(Reasons why we don't grow like we should!)
or
(It won't work!)

The following is adapted from the corporate relations department of Southland Life Insurance Company:

1. We tried that before.
2. This is different.
3. It costs too much.
4. That's not our responsibility.
5. That's not my job.
6. We're all too busy to do that.
7. It's too radical a change.
8. We don't have the time.
9. We don't have enough help.
10. That will make what we're doing obsolete.
11. Let's think about it some more.
12. Our office is too small for that.
13. It's not practical.
14. The members will never buy it.
15. Bring it up in six months.
16. We've never done it before.
17. It's against our policy.
18. It runs up our overhead.
19. We don't have the authority.
20. That's too "ivory towerish."
21. Let's get back to reality.
22. That's not our problem.
23. Why change it, it's still working O.K.
24. I don't like the idea.
25. You're right, but...
26. You're two years ahead of your time.
27. We're not ready for that.
28. We don't have the money, equipment, room, personnel.
29. It isn't in the budget.
30. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
31. It's a good thought, but impractical.
32. Let's hold it in abeyance.
33. The deacons won't like it.
34. The elders would never go for it.
35. Let's put it in writing.
36. We'll be the laughing stock.
37. Not that again!
38. We'd lose members in the long run.
39. Where'd you dig that one up?
40. We did all right without it.
41. That's what we can expect from the staff.
42. It's never been tried before.
43. Let's shelve it for the time being.
44. Let's form a committee.
45. Has anyone else ever tried it?
46. The preacher won't like it.
47. I don't see the connection.
48. It won't work in our church.
49. What you are really saying is ...
50. Maybe that will work in your department, but not in mine.
51. The Education Committee will never go for it.
52. Don't you think we should look into it further before we act?
53. What do they do in such'n such a church?
54. Let's all sleep on it.
55. It can't be done.
56. It's too much trouble to change.
57. It won't work.
58. I know a fellow who tried it.
59. It's impossible.
60. We've always done it this way.

SURVEY RESULTS:

Jesus never said, "Knock doors," or "Use the press," or "Hold meetings!"
He did say, "Make disciples!"

Please observe the following statistics:

TYPES OF CONTACTS AND RATES OF CONVERSION IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST:

Rates of Conversion. Types of Contacts

.00125%	Buildings and programs
.00125%	Fair Contacts
1%	General Contacts
.005%	Advertising Contacts
.0075%	Bus Contacts
2%	Preacher Contacts
1%	Visitation Contacts
2%	Workmate Contacts
92%	Friends and Neighbors

Stats from Ivan Stewart, Sept. 1983

Others:

A recent Gallup poll showed that 58% of those who now go to church regularly, first began when invited by someone they knew. Conversely, 63% of those who do not go to church report that none of their friends or acquaintances ever invited them.

Dr. Winfield Arn of the Institute for American Church Growth has interviewed some 4,000 converts primarily on the American West Coast:

- | | | |
|----|-----------|---|
| 1. | 1% - 2% | were first visited by church members (visitation program) |
| 2. | 2% - 3% | came through the church's other programs |
| 3. | 3% - 4% | came through a Sunday School class |
| 4. | 3% - 4% | came out of a special need (counseling, etc.) |
| 5. | 6% - 8% | just walked in |
| 6. | 8% - 12% | were attracted by the preacher |
| 7. | 70% - 80% | were invited by relatives and friends. |

Lyle R. Schaller, who has done 18 years of research into growing and non-growing American churches (probably the most extensive researcher of American churches) has found that between 66% and 75% are members because of friendship or kinship ties.

In the most rapidly growing congregations, 66% to 87.5% of the recent adult members first attended at the invitation of a friend or relative. In rapidly growing churches, friendship ties are mentioned far more often than are kinship ties. In declining congregations kinship ties are more substantial than friendship ties.

Either our programs, etc., are very poor, OR our greatest asset are friends and relatives. What can we do to encourage and promote this kind of outreach?

"I MUST DO SOMETHING" WILL ALWAYS SOLVE MORE PROBLEMS THAN
"SOMETHING MUST BE DONE."

Is "inviting" them really the best way to get them here?

In a survey this question was asked, "Why did you choose the particular church with which you are now worshipping?" The results were:

9% Because of the architectural beauty or the building.

18% Because of convenience to their homes.

3% Because of the ministers of the church.

22% Because there were people in the church whom they respected.

34% Because neighbors or friends invited them to that church.

Combine the last two answers and you have major reasons why people choose a church. YOUR life and invitation are vital ingredients to the growth of the church.

REASONS SO MANY CHRISTIANS LEAVE THE CHURCH

1. Marriage to a non-Christian spouse - or to an alienated Christian spouse. This is also the source for converts to Christ, but it must be pursued. Approximately 25% of all who leave the church do so because of marriage to non-Christian mates.
2. Mobility - Christians moving to a new location and failing to identify with a local congregation. 20% of the American people every 12 months. If contact is not made with the church within the first 6 months after arrival, the Christian is almost certain to drop out.
3. A personal or family quarrel - with a church, a brother or sister, a minister, a physical act of abuse, a real or fancied insult, or an act of rejection by a religious leader.
4. Deterioration of Christian family life - the family's increasing inability in the face of secular value systems to pass on to the children the Christian way of life and practices.
5. Diminishing loyalty to a specific congregation - shopping around for compatible personalities and worship styles results in a less personal commitment in and with each move.
6. Crisis of authority and its consequent confusion - caused by liberal theology and a lack of understanding of God's Word.
7. Impersonalism - created by congregations who have no small group interaction opportunities for Bible study and greater fellowship.

Name: _____

STEPS TOWARD CHURCH GROWTH

- I. STEP ONE: CONDUCT A CHURCH GROWTH SURVEY.
 - A. Gain the approval of the elders/leaders and have them appoint a committee to accomplish this.
 - B. Train the Survey Committee by showing them what is to be accomplished with each chapter of the survey:
 1. Chapter 1 "Geography and History of the Region."
 2. Chapter 2 "The People Living in the Region."
 3. Chapter 3 "Growth of the Local Church."
 4. Chapter 4 "Analysis of the Membership."
 5. Chapter 5 "Evaluation of and Recommendations for the Work of the Local Church."
 6. Chapter 6 "Goals and Objectives for Increased Growth."
 7. Chapter 7 "Conclusions."
 - C. Appoint various Survey Committee members to gather the data for each of the first three chapters (only). Probably a minimum of three and a maximum of five people should serve on each chapter. Then have two people serve as editors of the entire work; they will determine the format and edit each chapter to provide continuity of style.
 - D. Write a Church Growth Survey.
 1. Write an Introduction to the Survey.

Define the study. State the purpose and scope of the study.
Determine the area and religious bodies to be covered.
 2. From local sources, give a brief history of the area, how it started, how it grew, statistics on its present size, and any unusual growth

or decline and its cause (large company moved in, or mine shut down, etc.). This will be **Chapter 1**.

3. From demographic companies, the Chamber of Commerce, etc. determine the people or peoples (i.e. different groups if desired) to be covered and their characteristics. This will be **Chapter 2**. See "Currents."
4. Compile the Necessary Growth Statistics of the Local Church. This will be **Chapter 3**.
 - a. Membership totals - for each year for a least ten years.
 - b. Attendance totals - gather them for all services and classes for ten years.
 - c. Annual gains and losses in membership. Plot on both bar and pie graphs.

Types of Growth:

- 1) Biological.
- 2) Transfer.
- 3) Conversion.

Types of Decreases:

- 1) Deaths.
- 2) Transfers out.
- 3) Reversions to the World.

- d. Contribution totals and distribution - building costs and upkeep, outreach, supplies, etc.
- e. Units within the congregation:
 - 1) Racial mixture.
 - 2) Age groups.
 - 3) Division by sex.
 - 4) Geographical analysis of membership. Plot on a map of the area.
 - 5) Socio-economic groups.

- 6) Special groups within the congregation. Plot on pie graphs.

(Use pie graphs when working percentages because they are part of a whole.)

f. Communicants Plot on pie graphs.

- 1) Non-christian children of Christian parents.
- 2) Spouses favorable to the church.
- 3) Bus children or other children attending Bible classes, VBS, etc.
- 4) Relatives of members who live nearby.
- 5) Active prospects, etc.

g. Family Analysis. Plot on pie graphs.

- 1) Full Families.
- 2) Half Families.
- 3) Singles (both old and young).

h. Three-Circle Analysis of Membership. Plot on pie and line graphs.

- 1) Hard-core.
- 2) Mainstream.
- 3) Outer-fringe.

i. [If this is for a study beyond the local congregational level you will need the following:

- 1) Field totals (i.e. of all other statistics you are comparing).
- 2) Membership totals of each homogenous unit (i.e. of similar statistical groups).

3) Individual local church totals.

4. Write This Study in a Readable Form. This will be **Chapter 3**.

II. STEP TWO: CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHURCH'S MEMBERSHIP.

- A. Determine what you wish to measure with your analysis and then construct your questionnaire. [See sample(s).]
- B. Set up the procedures for tabulating the information.
- C. Have the elders determine what Sunday morning you will administer the questionnaire. Have them take a leading role in explaining the importance of gaining more information about the congregation so they may do a better job of shepherding the flock.
- D. Administer the questionnaire in connection with the Sunday morning services. Otherwise you will not get the needed information since other services are usually appreciably less attended and therefore would not include input from all who come to the morning service.
- E. Compile the pertinent information from the questionnaires, construct the necessary graphs. This will be **Chapter 4**.

III. STEP THREE: EVALUATE EVERY ASPECT OF THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.

- A. Have the elders select some of the men from the Church Growth Survey Committee to interview committee chairmen, every deacon and elder involved in leadership roles in the local church, (if no elders and deacons, other leaders), for example, those heading up the youth work, education program, personal evangelism, visitation committee, etc.
- B. Then, for each area describe the current program. Take one program at a time. Have the committee write up recommendations for possible improvement based on the results of chapters 3 and 4. They may need to consult an organization chart to make certain that they get a clear picture of each area of work.
- C. Compile all of these evaluations and recommendations. Write an introduction and a conclusion to this study. This will be **Chapter 5**.

- IV. STEP FOUR: PROJECT THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.
 - A. Share the results of the survey thus far with the elders and get their input in setting goals for the church.
 - B. Get the elders to share this survey with the members and get them to participate in the goal-setting stage.
 - C. Consider the graphs showing past growth (or lack of it) and make faith projections as to what can be done in every area of work in the future.
 - D. Bathe the matter in prayer and fasting during a two-week period. Then present it to the entire congregation in a positive, optimistic way.
 - E. This will be **Chapter 6**.
- V. STEP FIVE: WRITE YOUR CONCLUSIONS.
 - A. Write your conclusions to the church growth study.
 - B. This will be **Chapter 7**.
- VI. STEP SIX: PREPARE A WORK PLAN.
 - A. Write out your goals and priorities for the church in detail.
 - B. Prepare a 5-year strategy with a PERT Chart for the work.
 - C. Secure, train and put to work the personnel to carry out the plans.
 - D. Give God the glory for any growth or success.

Ministry Analysis Questionnaire

Instructions

1. Complete this analysis for each ministry or program area in your church.
2. Check YES or NO after each statement, based on the most accurate assessment of that ministry.
3. Total the YES items checked in each of the four areas below. On the "Scoring Guide" circle the number on each continuum which represents the number of YES items checked.

Service

Giving time and talents to Christ through using time and talents to benefit others

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. There is an ongoing effort to identify and provide meaningful roles and tasks for persons involved in our ministry or program area. | YES | NO |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. We provide training for our members prior to their assuming a role or task. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Our ministry area helps members identify and use their spiritual gifts appropriately. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. We provide appropriate roles and tasks for friends or relatives of members, and seek to invite and involve these people. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Our group or ministry has a procedure for identifying persons who are in need in the church or community, and providing appropriate assistance. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. At least once a year our ministry area sponsors a service project in which a large number of persons from the church participate. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Outreach & Assimilation

Reaching out to, and involving newcomers in the life and ministry of the church

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. At least once each quarter our ministry area sponsors an event specifically planned and promoted to reach out to unchurched persons in our community. | YES | NO |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. We have had an evangelism training course specifically for the people in our ministry area during the past year. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Specific prayer for unchurched friends, neighbors, and relatives is part of our regular meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Our ministry has a purpose statement which includes outreach to unchurched people. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Our ministry has an active and effective procedure for identifying prospective new members. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. There is a person(s) specifically responsible for greeting visitors and newcomers, introducing them to others, and making them feel welcome at all functions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Our group or ministry has a method for obtaining the names of potentially interested church members, and contacting them about our programs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Our group sets yearly membership and attendance goals. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. We have started at least one new group in this ministry or program area within the past two years. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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P.O. Box 541, Monrovia, CA 91016 • 1-800-423-4844

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Permission is granted to reproduce this questionnaire for local church use.

Christian Formation

Enabling men and women to grow toward Christ likeness

	YES	NO
1. We have at least one Bible study or small group meeting each month for every 25 members, other than what is available through Sunday School.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Our group or ministry area plans specific learning experiences to help members apply their Christian faith to real-world issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Every activity we sponsor has a component to help members develop in their Christian life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Our members are learning about prayer, and are encouraged to grow in their personal and group prayer life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We have a plan in which each group member is individually prayed for each month.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Members of our group or ministry are encouraged to attend our worship service regularly, and attendance records are reviewed by group leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Our church provides resources (print, audio, video) related to spiritual growth, which our group members know about and use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. We sponsor at least one missions experience each year for our members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fellowship

Building close friendships and relationships among members

	YES	NO
1. We have at least one social event each quarter for the persons in our ministry area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We have an intentional strategy to help members build stronger relationships with each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. At least once a month every member receives a contact from the church or representative in our ministry area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We have a way to identify members with a special need, and a way for members to respond and get involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We encourage our members to spend time together informally outside the regular meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Our group keeps records to recognize and celebrate special occasions in members' lives (i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, promotions, new children or grandchildren, honors, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. We have a method or program designed to build and strengthen relationships with newcomers in our group or ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ministry Area Effectiveness Scale - SCORING GUIDE

Circle the number of statements in the YES column for each of the four ministry areas.

Service:	6	5	4	3	2	1			
	Very Effective					Ineffective			
Outreach/Assimilation:	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Very Effective							Ineffective	
Christian Formation:	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	Very Effective							Ineffective	
Fellowship:	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
	Very Effective						Ineffective		

If the number you circled is on the right side of any of these four scales, determine to move the NO items to YES in the coming year, and identify specific activities to do so. The result will be an increase in the enthusiasm of your members, the effectiveness in your ministry, and number of unchurched people you reach for Christ and His church.

Using Others' Programs

Here are a few reasons why borrowed programs that work well in one congregation may not work well in another one.

1. The real philosophy, mechanics, and nature of the program may not be completely understood. Some move too quickly in adopting new programs.
2. In some cases the leadership is not prepared to properly handle the program. This is vital in borrowing programs.
3. Members do not fully understand the program or their role in it, thus, they are not sold on it. Proper communication must ensure that everyone has been informed.
4. Your context (i.e. socio-economical conditions) may not be the same as the church you are borrowing from. A big city program may not work in a rural community.
5. The Biblical basis for the program may be questionable. Just because someone else is successfully doing it does not guarantee it is Scriptural.
6. Proper education and preparation has not been completed.
7. The congregation does not have the right talent-mix to implement and maintain the program.
8. It may merely be a fad that has died and is being resurrected by an uninformed novice.
9. The program may not be working as well as you think. Zeal and the quest for new programs can blind us to some key factors, such as results.

10. The program may serve only to inflate the adapter's ego and have no real sustenance for the church's future or its growth.
11. Your congregation may not be spiritually, financially or numerically able to handle the new program.
12. The same degree or amount of faith required for the program's success is not available in your congregation.

There may be a deeper reason why borrowed programs have such a hard time in being adapted. As we search for programs, we are, as a general rule, starting in the wrong place. We are looking without instead of within.

The beginning of church growth is within the heart of each member. The truth is exemplified in the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:15. The Master church builder said, "These are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast and bear fruit with perseverance."

CHURCH OF CHRIST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How often do you attend Sunday school?
_____ regularly _____ sometimes _____ never
_____ usually _____ seldom
2. My impression of Sunday school is that it is:
_____ well organized and growing.
_____ losing its effectiveness.
_____ generally good.
_____ poor.
3. More people would attend our Sunday school if:
_____ we had better teachers.
_____ the classes were smaller.
_____ we had greater variation in our curriculum.
_____ the classes were more relevant to everyday living.
_____ the biblical content was stronger.
4. How often do you attend Sunday morning worship?
_____ regularly _____ sometimes _____ never
_____ usually _____ seldom
5. Worship would be more inspiring if:
_____ more attention was given to the Lord's Supper.
_____ there was more variation in the songs we sing.
_____ the service was shorter.
_____ the service was longer.
Other: _____

6. The pulpit ministry of our preacher is:
_____ meaningful and meets my needs.
_____ unrelated to the problems we face today.
_____ too long.
Comments: _____

7. I believe our pulpit minister is fulfilling his responsibilities according to the following scale:
_____ excellent _____ fair
_____ good _____ poor
Comments: _____

8. In my observation I believe our pulpit minister needs improvement in:
_____ preaching.
_____ working with people.
_____ visitation.
_____ organization and administration.
Other: _____

9. How often do you attend Sunday evening worship?
_____ regularly _____ sometimes _____ never
_____ usually _____ seldom
10. I would attend Sunday evening worship with greater regularity if:
_____ there was more diversity to our program.
_____ it was more relevant to everyday life.
_____ it were not so boring.
Other: _____

11. How often do you attend Wednesday evening Bible study?
_____ regularly _____ sometimes _____ never
_____ usually _____ seldom
12. My attendance on Wednesday evening would be more regular if:
_____ the teachers were better prepared.
_____ the meeting time was changed.
_____ the classes were smaller.
_____ the class topics were relevant to everyday life.
Other: _____

13. The youth program of our church is:
_____ meeting the needs of our junior high and senior high young people.
_____ a vital part of our church.
_____ not attractive to our young people.
_____ not effective.
Comments: _____

14. Our youth program needs more:
_____ interested people of the church to work in it.
_____ activities.
_____ opportunities for our young people to serve the Lord.
_____ spiritual depth.
Other: _____

15. I believe our outreach program needs to be improved in the following ways:

- ☐ develop an effective soul winning program.
- ☐ invite a speaker for a church growth seminar.
- ☐ follow up on visitors to our services.
- ☐ do direct mailing.
- ☐ find prospects through a religious survey.
- ☐ subscribe for a bundle of Church Growth magazine.

16. On a scale of 1 through 10 (1=poor, 10=excellent), how would you rate our elders individually?

- (name of elder)
- (name of elder)
- (name of elder)

Comments:

17. How could the elders more effectively serve you?

- ☐ by greater availability to counsel.
- ☐ by more personal involvement with the congregation.
- ☐ by more visitation.

Comments:

18. In my opinion the greatest strength of (name of church) is:

19. In my opinion the greatest weakness of (name of church) is:

20. I contribute to (name of church) :
 regularly sometimes never
 usually seldom

21. I would give more generously to _____ (name of church) _____ if:
 _____ we were involved in more missionary work.
 _____ I knew how the funds were being spent.
 _____ I had more input into how the funds were being spent.
 _____ I knew more about the works we support.
 Comments: _____

22. I give to other Christian organizations, programs, missionaries, etc., besides
 _____ (name of church) _____.
 _____ yes _____ no
23. How many times in the past year has someone, other than a family member,
 visited _____ (name of church) _____ as a result of your invitation?
 _____ once _____ three times _____ never
 _____ twice _____ four or more times
24. Would you consider _____ (name of church) _____ a “friendly” church?
 _____ yes _____ no _____ moderately
25. How can we improve to become a friendlier church?
 _____ include a time for greeting each other in the assembly.
 _____ have more social functions.
 Other: _____

Optional

I am: _____ male _____ female
 I am: _____ single _____ married _____ widowed _____ divorced

How long have you been a member at _____ (name of church) _____ ?
 _____ less than 1 year _____ 4-10 years _____ 15 or more years
 _____ 1-3 years _____ 11-15 years

How far do you live from the church building?
 _____ less than 1 mile _____ 4-10 miles
 _____ 1-3 miles _____ more than 10 miles

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION: To be completed by each individual member of the Lord's body.

A. Circle the number to the left of the answer that best communicates your answer to each question or sentence completion. Note: If more space is needed for a response making a suggestion, please continue your suggestion on the back of the last sheet beginning with the number of the item.

Q1. I am:

- 1 ... a male
- 2 ... a female

Q2. My age is:

- 01 ... 12 years or under
- 02 ... 12 to 18 years
- 03 ... 19 to 25 years
- 04 ... 26 to 30 years
- 05 ... 31 to 40 years
- 06 ... 41 to 50 years
- 07 ... 51 to 60 years
- 08 ... 61 to 70 years
- 09 ... 71 or more years

Q3. I am: (family status)

- 1 ... single (never married)
- 2 ... married
- 3 ... married and a parent
- 4 ... a widow
- 5 ... a widower
- 6 ... a single parent
- 7 ... divorced
- 8 ... divorced and remarried
- 9 ... single college student living away from home during school

Q4. I became a member of the body of Christ by being baptized for the forgiveness of my sins:

- 1 ... during the past year
- 2 ... 1-2 years ago
- 3 ... 3-5 years ago
- 4 ... 6-10 years ago
- 5 ... 11 or more years ago
- 6 ... I have never been baptized

Q5. I moved to this area and identified with this congregation:

- 1 ... during the past year
- 2 ... 1-2 years ago
- 3 ... 3-5 years ago
- 4 ... 6-10 years ago
- 5 ... 11 or more ago

Q6. I have been a member of this congregation:

- 1 ... 0 to 1 year
- 2 ... 2 to 4 years
- 3 ... 5 to 7 years
- 4 ... 8 to 10 years
- 5 ... 11 to 15 years
- 6 ... 16 or more years

Q7. Circle the number to the left of the answer that best describes your condition when you became a member of this congregation.

- 1 ... I was converted to Christ at this location but my parents were not members of the Lord's body.
- 2 ... I was converted to Christ at this location and my parents were members of the Lord's body.
- 3 ... I placed membership here from another local Lord's body.
- 4 ... I moved here from another city and identified with this Lord's body.

Q8. The ministry of the church that had the most influence toward my conversion (becoming a member of the Lord's church) was:

- 1 ... influence of friends
- 2 ... influence of relatives
- 3 ... the Bible classes
- 4 ... the preaching
- 5 ... personal evangelism
- 6 ... the friendliness of members
- 7 ... visiting during a special event

Q9. I try to study the Bible at home:

- 1 ... daily
- 2 ... two or three times a week
- 3 ... at least once a week
- 4 ... hardly ever

Q10 I spend about the following number of minutes, per day, developing a personal relationship with God through prayer and study:

- 1 ... 5 to 10 minutes
- 2 ... 10 to 30 minutes
- 3 ... 30 to 60 minutes
- 4 ... none

Q11 My formal education level is:

- 1 ... less than 9 years
- 2 ... 9 - 12 years
- 3 ... 13 - 16 years
- 4 ... more than 16 years

II. PERSONAL EVALUATION OF THE CHURCH AND ITS WORK: (Circle the answer or the number on the scale that most closely represents your evaluation of the following: 1 = low in value and 7 = high.)

A. BIBLE CLASSES:

Q12. The length of our Bible class periods are:

- 1 ... too long
- 2 ... about right
- 3 ... too short

Q13. The times of our Bible class periods are:

- 1 ... good (9:00 am Sunday, 7:30 pm Wednesday)
- 2 ... not good
- 3 ... May I suggest: _____

Q14. The curriculum for our Adult Bible classes is:

- 1 ... equipping me for my needed spiritual growth
- 2 ... providing the opportunity to obtain good Bible knowledge
- 3 ... in need of improvement
- 4 ... May I suggest: _____

Q15. I believe the teachers of my Adult classes are:

1 ... doing a good job

2 ... are not adequate and should be replaced

3 ... May I suggest: _____

Q16. I believe that the church's Bible class curriculum for the Cradle Roll through Teens is:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Not meeting needs

Very Effective

May I suggest: _____

Note 1: Please list some specific Bible class topics which you believe would help equip you for spiritual growth: _____

4

Q17. I believe that the teachers participating in the church's Bible classes for the Cradle Roll through Teens are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Not adequate

Doing an excellent job

May I suggest: _____

Q18. I believe that our provisions for New Christians to be integrated into our Bible classes and providing Christian classes is:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Not adequate

Doing an excellent job

May I suggest: _____

B. WORSHIP ASSEMBLIES:

Q19. I believe that the length of our worship assemblies are:

1 ... too long

2 ... about right

3 ... too short

4 ... May I suggest: _____

Q20. I believe that the times of our worship assemblies are:

1 ... good

2 ... not good

3 ... May I suggest: _____

Q21. The balance of time used for praying, singing, teaching, giving, and partaking of the Lord's supper is:

1 ... about right

2 ... needs improvement

3 ... May I suggest: _____

Q22. I believe that the song leading and singing in our public assemblies:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Needs improvement

Is excellent

May I suggest: _____

Q23. I believe that our conduct of the Lord's Supper is:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Needs improvement

Is conducted in a worthy manner

May I suggest: _____

Q24. I believe that the sermons being presented at our assemblies are:

1 ... providing sound messages for the equipping us for spiritual growth

2 ... edifying

3 ... encouraging

4 ... motivational

5 ... good for our non-member visitors

6 ... could be improved

7 ... May I suggest: _____

Q25. I think that our assemblies for public worship are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Discouraging

Extremely uplifting

May I suggest: _____

Q26. I believe that a children's Bible hour for ages 2-5 on Sunday mornings during the sermon only is:

- 1 ... needed
2 ... not necessary
3 ... needed and I would participate in such a ministry
4 ... needed and I would serve in support of such a ministry

Q27. I think that our evangelistic ministry toward the community is:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Dead Active and working

May I suggest: _____

Q28. I think that our efforts in non-local (USA) missionary work are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Ineffective Very effective

May I suggest: _____

Q29. I think that our efforts in the foreign missionary work are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Ineffective Very effective

May I suggest: _____

Q30. I believe that our missionary works:

- 1 ... are good and necessary works for the Lord
- 2 ... have a good influence upon the congregation
- 3 ... need to be promoted more by keeping the congregation better informed
- 4 ... receive too much unnecessary attention

May I suggest:_____

Q31. I believe that our ministry of training preachers, missionaries, leaders, personal
workers, and song leaders is:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Not worth the cost and efforts

Very worthwhile

May I suggest:

Q32. I believe that the staff assembled to conduct our work of the church is:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Poor Excellent

May I suggest:

Q33. I think that the potential for personal and numerical growth, considering our present location, membership, and staff is:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Poor Excellent

May I suggest:

Q34. I believe that our spiritual leaders (shepherds), in their conduct of the oversight of the church, are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Doing a poor job Doing an excellent job

May I suggest: _____

Q35. I believe that our spiritual leaders (elders) in their conduct of the shepherding of the flock are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Not concerned Very concerned

May I suggest:

Q36. I believe that our spiritual leaders (elders) in their contacts with the members:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Are lacking Doing a good job

May I suggest:

Q37. I believe that the utilization of our elders in their teaching roles:

- 1 ... needs to be increased
- 2 ... is well balanced
- 3 ... are being used too much well

May I suggest:

Q38. I believe that our Christian (social) activities outside our worship assemblies e.g. High School Banquets, Showers, Bible class and special group activities are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Are lacking Excellent

May I suggest:

Note 2: I would be willing to serve on a task force to generate ideas for reaching our community with the Gospel.

Yes No

C. ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Q39. Concerning our involvement ministries and work programs. I believe we are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Lacking Doing an excellent job

May I suggest:

Q40. Concerning our involvement ministries and work programs, I believe we:

1 . . . need more emphasis on:_____

2 . . . need less emphasis on:

May I suggest:

Q41. Our deacons and/or work team directors are:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Not performing Performing well

Q42. Our deacons and/or work team directors are being delegated:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Too little authority The right authority
to function to function

May I suggest: _____

Q43. I believe that the use of our proposed and budgeted church funds:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Needs improvement Is conducted in a worthy manner

May I suggest: _____

Q44. I believe our use of our bulletin boards as teaching and motivational tools:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7
Needs improving Is excellent

May I suggest: _____

Q45. Concerning our public attempts to communicate information to the congregation at the beginning of public worship assemblies. I believe these announcements are:

1 ... aided by the use of the Overhead Projection on the screen
2 ... necessary and needed to keep the congregation informed
3 ... too long
4 ... are impersonal
5 ... are awkward

May I suggest: _____

Q46. I believe that our church bulletin:

- 1 ... is informative and easy to read
- 2 ... contains good teaching articles
- 3 ... is a good information vehicle to keep the brotherhood informed about the work at this location.
- 4 ... Needs to be improved and/or revised

May I suggest: _____

III. PERSONAL EVALUATION OF My INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CHURCH AND THE WORK OF THE CHURCH. (Circle the number on the scale that most closely represents your personal evaluation of the following:)

Q47. I normally try to assemble with the church for Bible classes: (Circle all that are applicable.)

- 1 ... Sunday morning classes
- 2 ... Wednesday evening classes
- 3 ... I do not attend because: _____

Q48. I normally try to assemble with the church for the worship assemblies: (Circle all that are applicable.)

- 1 ... Sunday morning classes
- 2 ... Sunday evening
- ... I normally sit in the auditorium:
- 3 ... near the front
- 4 ... in the middle
- 5 ... near the rear
- ... I am distracted during worship:
- 6 ... occasionally, because: _____
- 7 ... often, because: _____

Q49. Concerning my financial contribution to the work of the Lord's body here: (Circle all that are applicable.)

- 1 ... I cooperate with the church's planning routine by providing the elders with my purposed plan for giving.
- 2 ... After purposing, I give weekly as the Lord has prospered me.
- 3 ... I normally give only when I am in attendance.

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Outer limits Inner circle

May I suggest: _____

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Burdensome Very enjoyable

May I suggest: _____

Seldom 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 Regularly

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

I am a failure I look forward to opportunities

May I suggest:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Very shaky Very solid

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7

Struggling Soaring

May I suggest: _____

Q56. If given the opportunity to train for some type of an outreach or teaching ministry through the church I would:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7	
Choose not to get involved	Choose to get involved

Q57. When it comes to understanding my talents and using them for the glory of Christ and His church:

1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7	
I do not know what to do	I am confident that I am using them

May I suggest: _____

NOTE: If you have a suggestion or comment that you think would aid us as a congregation in this evaluation of ourselves as a part of the Lord's body, please include it in the space below:

FLOWCHART WORKSHEET

OF _____

A grid of 56 empty rectangular boxes arranged in 7 rows and 8 columns. Each box is intended for a dot plot. The boxes are arranged in a 7x8 grid. Each box has a small tick mark on its top, bottom, left, and right sides, indicating where to place dots. The grid is intended for a dot plot.

CHURCH GROWTH READING LIST

Anderson, Andy. *Effective Methods of Church Growth*. Nashville Broadman Press, 1985.

Arn, Charles, Donald McGavran, and Win Arn. *Growth: A New Vision for the Sunday School*. Pasadena: Church Growth Press, 1980. 150 pgs. The first book to make explicit application of church growth principles to the growth of the Sunday School.

Arn, Win. *The Church Growth Ratio Book*.

_____, ed. *The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook*. Pasadena: Church Growth Press, 1979. 220 pgs. A very interesting compilation of articles that have appeared in *Church Growth: America* magazine over the last few years.

_____. ed. *The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook. Vol II*. Pasadena: Church Growth Press, 1982. 191 pgs. More of the above. An excellent and practical source.

Arn, Win and Charles Arn. *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples*. Pasadena: Church Growth Press, 1982. 176 pgs. One of the key concepts of church growth theory is to identify people movements that travel along lines of natural webs of relationships. The Arns call this "oikos" evangelism and develop the principle in detail in this excellent book.

Arn, Win & Nijquist, Carroll, *Who Cares About Love*. Church Growth, 2670 S. Myrtle Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016.

Arn, Win. *Live Long and Love It*. Church Growth Institute, Arcadia, CA 91006.

_____ *The Church Growth Ratio Book*. Church growth, Inc., Monrovia, CA 91016.

Baker, Brown, and Dale. *Reviving the Plateaued Church*.

_____ *Sunday School Board*. SBC, 127 9th Ave, Nashville, TN 37234.

Barna, George. *Church Growth: Practical Steps That Work*. The Barna Research Group, 1989.

Barna George. *Marketing The Church*. Nav. Press, Colorado Springs, CO 1973. (262.1.)

Bast, Bob. *Attracting New Members*. Church Growth, Inc., Monrovia, CA.

Bast, Robert. *The Missing Generation*. Church Growth Inc., Monrovia, CA.

Buttry, Daniel. *Bringing Your church Back to Life*. Judson Press, Valley Forge.

Carl, George and Robert Logan. *Leasing and Managing your Church*. Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979.

Clark, Stephen. *Building Christian Communities: Strategy for Renewing the Church*. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46446, 1972.

Dale, Robert. *Keeping the Dream Alive*. Broadman, Nashville 1981.

Dale, Robert. *To Dream Again*. Broadman, Nashville, 1981.

Davenport, D. Dewayne. *The Bible Says Grow: Church Growth Guidelines for the Church of Christ*. Church Growth/Evangelism Seminar, Box 314, Williamstown, WV 26187, 1978. Donald McGavran writes the introduction to this fine summary of church growth principles contextualized for the Restoration Movement Churches. (Xn)

Easum, William. *The Church Growth Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1990.

Galloway, Dale. *20/20 Vision: How to Create a Successful Church*. Portland: Scott Publishing Company, 1990.

Gibbs, Eddie. *Body Building Exercises for the Local Church*. London: Falcon, 1979. 80 pgs. A creative application and adaptation of Wagner's church pathology to churches in England. This book models how church growth principles can be contextualized.

_____. *I Believe in Church Growth*. Eerdmans. 1982. This is the most complete introductory textbook on church growth available. Gibbs, who has a D.Min. in church growth from Fuller, writes from a British perspective, but his insights are universal.

Goldtrap, George. *The Madison Story*. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1987.

Hadaway, C. Kirk. *Church Growth Principles*. Broadman, Nashville.

Harre, Allan F. *Close The Back Door*. Concordia, St. Louis 63118, 1988.

Heck, Joel. *New Member Assimilation*. Condordia, St. Louis, 1988.

Hunter, George, III. *The Contagious Congregation*. Abingdon, 1979. 150 pgs. Hunter has provided fresh insights into local congregational growth. The book has become an Abingdon best-seller.

_____. *Your Church Has Doors: How to Open the Front and Close the Back*. Church Growth Center, 1983. 103 pgs. Church growth expert Kent Hunter expounds on eight

“keys” to open doors to growth in your church: faith, aftercare, incorporation, integrity, assimilation, accountability, pruning and amputation.

Hunter, Kent. *Foundations for Church Growth*. Church Growth Center, Caruna, IN.

_____. *Friendship Evangelism (Heart to Heart)*. Same, (video).

_____. *Introducing Church Growth Today*. (tapes)

Huffard, Everett. *Church Growth Principles on II Corinthians*.

Jackson, Neil E.. *100 Great Growth Ideas*. Broadman, Nashville.

Jenson, Ron and Jim Stevens. *Dynamics of Church Growth*. Baker, 1981. 200 pgs. This adds to church growth literature by bringing to bear the Campus Crusade insights, laying a strong biblical base, incorporating management principles, and offering practical suggestions for action at the end of each chapter.

Kelly, Dean M. *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*. Rev. ed. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986. 180 pgs. This was probably the most discussed religious book in the seventies. It deals with the function that churches have in society and shows how liberal churches usually turn out to be socially weak institutions. It is a must for students of church growth.

Logan, Bob and Jeff Rast. *Church Planting Workbook*. (They offer seminars.)

McGavran, Donald and Win Arn. *How to Grow a Church*. Regal, 1973. 180 pgs. In a question and answer format, McGavran sets forth his thoughts on American church growth. This is the best selling church growth book to date with over 125,000 copies in print.

_____. *Ten Steps for Church Growth*. Harper & Row, 1977. A substantial sequel to *How to Grow a Church* with many new insights from the authors.

McGavran, Donald and George G. Hunter, III. *Church Growth: Strategies That Work*. Abingdon, 1980. 120 pgs. One of the best primers on the Church Growth Movement, this book also provides practical tips on motivating people for growth, training laity, helping small churches grow and planting new churches.

McGavran, Donald and C. Peter Wagner. *Your Church and Church Growth: A Self Study Course*. Rev. ed. Pasadena: Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, 1982. Six audio cassettes and workbook. The condensation of MC500 or MC520, the fundamental church growth course with Wagner's comments on McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth*. A 25-hour self study experience.

Miles. *Church Growth: A Mighty River*. Broadman (esp. for CG literature).

Mylander, Charles. *Secrets for Growing Churches*. Harper & Row, 1979. 140 pgs. This book draws many practical applications for American churches from general church growth principles. Written by a pastor who is seeing it happen in his church.

North, Ira. *Balance*. (Xn) Gospel Advocate Publishing Co., Nashville, TN.

North, Ira. *You Can March for the Master*. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1959.

Pepper, Clayton. *Church Growth Today*. Quality Press, Abilene, TX, 1998.

Peterson. *Evangelism As A Lifestyle*.

Redford, Jack. *Planting New Churches*. Broadman, Nashville, 1978.

Reeves, R. Daniel. *Prescription for Church Growth*.

Reeves, R. Daniel and Ron Jenson. *Always Advancing*. Here's Life Publishers, 1984. 196 pgs. An up-to-date book introducing church growth principles with new information on church typology and philosophy of ministry.

Schaller, Lyle R. Schaller is undoubtedly the most knowledgeable and skilled church consultant in America today. A United Methodist by affiliation, he works both for the Yokefellow Institute and independently. He comes to the church from the field of city planning. Schaller writes a book a year with Abingdon as well as editing the influential *Creative Church Leadership* series which adds four books per year. His books are all highly relevant to the student of church growth. Eight of his latest books are listed here:

_____. *Activating the Passive Church*. Abingdon, 1981. 160 pgs.

_____. *Assimilating New Members*. Abingdon, 1978. 130 pgs. (254.5)

_____. *Effective Church Planning*. Abingdon, 1979. 170 pgs. (262)

_____. *44 Ways to Increase Church Attendance*. Abingdon, 1988.

_____. *Getting Things Done*. Abingdon.

_____. *Growing Plans. Strategies for Increasing Church Membership*. Practical. Abingdon, 1983. 176 pgs.

_____. *Hey! That's Our Church*. Abingdon, 1975.

_____. *The Small Church is Different*. Abingdon.

Schuller, Robert H. *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*. Regal Books, 1975. 200 pgs. In this book Schuller articulates sound church growth and goal-setting principles and inspires the reader with possibility thinking.

Shenk, Wilbert. *Exploring Church Growth*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1983.

Sisemore, John T. *Church Growth Through the Sunday School*. Broadman Press, 1983. 156 pgs. Southern Baptists have used the Sunday school as a primary structure for growth better than any other denomination. Here is how they do it. This excellent book takes a balanced view of church growth and then stresses adult evangelism and the adult Sunday school as practical keys. You will not want to miss this one!

Sullivan, Bill. *Ten Steps to Breaking the 200 Barrier*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas, 1988.

Towns, Elmer L., John N. Vaughn, and David J. Seifert. *The Complete Book of Church Growth*. Tyndale, 1981. 400 pgs. An amazingly thorough textbook on various case studies of growth analyzing a number of approaches to ministry in American churches including a substantial chapter on "The Fuller Factor."

Trexler, Edgar. *Ways to Wake Up Your Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.

Turner, J. J.. *Christian Leadership Handbook*. West Monroe, LA, Howard Publishing Company, 1991.

_____. *The Leadership and Church Growth*. Lambert Book House, Shreveport, LA 71104.

Vaughan, John N. *The World's Twenty Largest Churches*. Baker, 1984. An amazing piece of research which identifies, describes and analyzes the top super churches. An indispensable resource for the church growth student.

Wagner, C. Peter. *Church Growth: State of the Art*. Tyndale, Wheaton IL.

_____. *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*. Regal, (Gospel Light) Ventura, CA.

_____. *Effective Body Building*. Here's Life Publishers, Box 1576, San Bernardino, CA.

_____. *Helping Your Church Grow*. (tapes \$39.95)

_____. *Leading Your Church to Growth*.

_____. *Strategies for Church Growth*. Regal, Ventura, CA. 93006.

_____. *Your Church Can Be Healthy*. Abingdon, 1979. 120 pgs. A description and analysis of the causes and symptoms of eight major growth-inhibiting diseases of American churches.

_____. *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church*. Regal, 1976. Rev. ed. 1980. 170 pgs. Wagner's first book on American church growth has now become a basic document in the field. It is in its 13th printing with over 100,000 copies in print.

Waymire, Bob and C. Peter Wagner. *The Church Growth Survey Handbook*. Santa Clara, CA: global Church Growth Bulletin, 1980. 40p. This 8 ½ X 11 inch workbook is a step-by-step methodology for doing church growth research. It is the authors' hope that it will serve to standardize the recording and reporting of church growth worldwide.

Werning, Waldo. *Vision & Strategy for Church Growth*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1977.

Williams, Jack H. (Ed). *Church Growth God's Way*. Williams Publishing, 16105 E. 40th, Independence, MO 64055.

Yeakley, Flavil R., Jr. *Why Churches Grow*. Anderson, 1977. 85 pgs. A social scientist summarizes his Ph.D. dissertation on the reasons for growth among the Churches of Christ. (Xn)

Zunkel, C. Wayne. *Growing the Small Church: A Guide for Church Leaders*. David C. Cook, 1982. 110 pgs. This is an extremely practical manual with extensive professional artwork for teaching its contents to others. It is much more than theory. If its principles are followed, the progress for growth in almost any small church will be good.

Where Are You on the Growth Development Scale?

Ignorance	Information	Infusion	Individual Change	Institutional Change	Awkward Application	Integration	Innovation
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Why can two or three churches attend the same church growth seminar, apply the same strategies, and one church will show results, while another may not?

Through the “Two Year Growth Process” (conducted by CHURCH GROWTH, Inc. for individual and clusters of churches) we have found that an appropriate strategy for church growth will depend on a number of factors. A growth strategy for one church may be highly successful ... the same strategy for another could cause a church split!

I recently developed what I call a “Church Growth Development Scale.” Locating your congregation on this scale can help you determine the appropriate steps to take in moving your church forward in growth. As you study the “Church Growth Development Scale” keep the following insights in mind:

1. Growth requires moving from one step on the Scale to the next. A church cannot jump over a step, although sometimes leaders inadvertently try, and encounter problems.
2. Individuals change before organizations change. Some church leaders try to change the organizational structure prior to changing individuals, and encounter frustrations.
3. Correct strategy for growth will vary depending on where the church is presently located on the Scale.
4. Movement on the Scale may be forward or backward.
5. Leadership in a church may be a different place on the Scale than membership. This may create problems if it is assumed both groups are at the same point.

On the next page is a more detailed description of each stage. Can you identify where your church presently is? Which direction it is moving?

(continued)

1. *Ignorance*

Congregation and leadership are uninformed of mandate to make disciples. Departments / ministries have no unified direction or sense of mission. The congregation tends to be self-centered and self-serving.

2. *Information*

General interest in learning more. Questions arise as to what results “church growth” might have for our church. If no further action is taken, increased indifference and apathy toward the Great Commission develops.

3. *Infusion*

Penetration of new ideas into the status quo may cause confrontation with apathy, prejudice, tradition. Tendency is to focus on problems. The need is for a *dream* to carry the church to the next step.

4. *Individual Change*

“Church Growth Eyes” begin to develop in some leadership. Growing number of questions arise on whether present church activities are bringing satisfactory results. Little institutional reinforcement exists for members advocating change.

5. *Organizational Change*

Church’s goals reviewed and clarified in light of growing mission priority. New activities and ministries are introduced in response to the new focus. New committees and structures may be formed.

6. *Awkward Application*

Some failures and some successes experienced. Initially limited applications of church growth thinking. Some mistakes are made, learning process is rapid. Need for additional knowledge, training, resources becomes apparent.

7. *Integration*

Growing comfort in understanding and application of church growth principles. Fewer dramatic changes, more refinement of previously initiated changes. Growing sense of accomplishment and secondary wave of results and success occurs.

8. *Innovation*

The base of support and involvement by membership and application of principles expands to other areas. Significant results are achieved and growth begins to perpetuate itself.

Suggestions for Moving Forward on the Growth Scale

Once you determine where your church is on the “Growth Development Scale,” how do you move forward? Here are some suggestions ...

Ignorance to Information

- Show church growth films • Precede leader/committee meetings with study of church growth books • Emphasize growth/outreach in sermons • Establish biblical base that “It’s God’s will that His Church grow” • Study growth and the early church in adult education classes.

Information to Infusion

- Establish a church growth task force • Study church’s growth patterns • Formulate and communicate a “dream” for the church • Sponsor a church growth seminar • Conduct a diagnostic study of the church/community • Seek support of all leadership • Expand reading / study in church growth.

Infusion to Individual Change

- Share information from church diagnostic process • Ask what are appropriate responses to diagnostic information • Use church growth consultants • Give high visibility to church’s dream • Seek public commitment to growth by all leadership • Conduct survey to identify areas of need and opportunity for outreach.

Individual Change to Organizational Change

- Establish/review statement of purpose • Involve members in setting growth goals, objectives • Identify needed new groups, new roles, new tasks • Continuing education for task force • Keep the “dream” in front of membership • Emphasize changes as additions not replacements • Use proven growth methods.

Organizational Change to Awkward Application

- Publicly recognize and appreciate growth leaders • Closely monitor growth projects • Quickly recycle potential failures • Communicate early successes • Preacher/Staff model commitment.

Awkward Application to Integration

- Encourage and inform “middle adopters” • Provide growth events for larger congregation to become involved • Expand number of roles available in outward-focused areas (Class II) • Sponsor a second church growth seminar for updating.

Integration to Innovation

- Enlarge staff with director of evangelism/church growth • Celebrate God’s blessing • Share credit with all • Enlarge the dream • Build disciples and mature Christians from new members.

An Outline of the Lessons:

Steps to a Successful Family is an eight lesson correspondence course designed to introduce families to six characteristics of strong families. These four stimulating sections are included in each lesson:

- *The lessons begin with a short essay describing one characteristic of a strong family.*
- *"Taking Action" provides practical suggestions for implementing this quality in the recipient's household.*
- *"Challenging the Brain" contains thought provoking questions which encourage deeper reflection on this characteristic.*
- *"Letting the Bible Speak" helps to apply the eternal truths of scripture to the problem.*

The eight lesson course includes the following titles:

- Lesson 1: Learning From the Experts
- Lesson 2: The Most Important Need:
Appreciation
- Lesson 3: Finding the Glue:
Commitment
- Lesson 4: Making it Work:
Communication
- Lesson 5: The Priceless Commodity:
Spending Time
- Lesson 6: Surviving It:
Dealing with Crisis
- Lesson 7: Finding the Center:
Religious Orientation
- Lesson 8: Just the Beginning



For More Information Contact:
Nebraska Campaigns for Christ
1225 East 10th Street
York, NE 68467
(402) 362-4590

Address Correction Requested



How to Use



"Seeking the Lost in the Heartland of America."

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Touching America Where She Hurts

The Need is Basic

If Jesus were walking the streets of America today, where would he minister? How would he minister? We believe that strengthening the home would be one place he would serve. We hear much about what is wrong with the family in America. We are told by ministers, sociologists, psychologists and counselors that the home and parents have failed. Even the number one social problem of today, drug and alcohol addiction, can be largely traced to the destruction of the positive power of homes. Jesus would not have stood idly by and let the destruction continue.

Many of our churches have begun to realize this and are following in His footsteps. Yet many of our efforts have been kept to ourselves. In so doing, we have missed one of the great evangelistic opportunities of our time. A recent Gallup survey found virtually unanimous support for an increased emphasis on traditional family values in American culture. *Steps to a Successful Family* will help the church fill the void.

Steps to a Successful Family is an eight lesson correspondence course written for use by churches across America. Designed for use on each individuals schedule, it can, with the proper follow-up, provide a real reason for people to explore the message of Jesus Christ for their lives today. Once they begin to see the power of Jesus to transform their families, they will be more open to accepting the requirements of being his disciple.

Step 1: Scatter the Seed

If the world is to be won, Christ must be presented to the masses as the answer to their hurts. "So, how's the family?" is a brochure crafted to introduce people to *Steps to a Successful Family* and provide them with an effortless means to enroll in the series. This brochure can be sent to people by direct mail, stuffed in every door in an area or used as a contact piece in door-to-door work. Upon enrolling, each contact receives all eight lessons at two week intervals.

Step 2: Cultivate the Soil

After receiving these lessons for four months, the contact is ready for more intense communication. At this point, the church should invite each contact to a special event related to the family. A weekend workshop by a family expert, the showing of a film on parenting, or numerous other options are available to continue the cultivation. These events should be strongly promoted within the church and advertised to the community. Special efforts should be made to contact those enrolled in *Steps to a Successful Family*. Both a personal letter inviting them to the event and a follow-up phone call should be attempted. The location of this event at a city auditorium or other neutral site will often increase visitor attendance.

Step 3: Give it time to Grow

This step is crucial to the continuing cultivation of the contact. The special event needs to be designed so personal contact with those attending is maximized. These new relationships need to be encouraged. Planned support groups need to be formed at the end of the special event. These groups need to meet at various times for a six to eight week period. During this time, multiple friendships within the church should be developed by visitors. Those enrolled in *Steps to a Successful Family* but not attending the special event should be invited to join a group as well.

Step 4: Gather the Harvest

By now it has been close to six months since people where first enrolled in *Steps to a Successful Family*. During this period they have been touched at least three different times by the this effort. It is now time to start to teach them more about Jesus and His demands upon his disciples. Even though the greatest response will be expected from those most active in the program, every one who enrolled in the series should be contacted.

For More Information

This has been only a brief introduction to the uses of *Steps to a Successful Family*. Many other uses are possible. Some churches may want to send the series to every visitor to services in appreciation for their attendance. Other churches may wish to offer the series to every newcomer to the area. If you are interested in finding out any more information about the availability, cost and use of the series, please contact Larry Deal at Nebraska Campaigns for Christ.

PROSPECT SOURCES FOR SOWING AND REAPING - THE INDIVIDUAL
CHRISTIAN

1. Non-Christian mate
2. Non-Christian children
3. Non-Christian relative
 - a. Those close to you
 - b. Those with stresses and problems in their lives
 - c. Those with special times in their lives
4. Non-Christian friends
 - a. Friends that have problems and stresses in their lives
 - i. death
 - ii. divorce
 - iii. family problems
 - iv. business problems
 - v. sickness
 - vi. other
 - b. Friends you work with
 - c. Friends you play golf with, fish with, etc.
 - d. Friends you shop with, have exercise class with, go to the beauty salon with, etc.
5. Classmates at school, college, art and craft classes, etc.
6. Neighbors
7. Business contacts
 - a. People you commonly do business with
 - b. People who commonly do business with you
 - c. Employers
 - d. Employees
 - e. Fellow employees
8. Casual contacts
 - a. The friendly postman
 - b. Waitresses, gas station attendants, store clerks, etc., that commonly wait on you
 - c. Your barber or hairdresser
 - d. Other

9. People in need of benevolent aid that you know well or casually
 - a. On your block
 - b. At work
 - c. At school
 - d. Other
10. Newcomer
 - a. On your block
 - b. At work
 - c. At school
 - d. Other
11. Home contacts
 - a. Guest in your home
 - b. Those attending Bible study in your home
 - c. Those attending a party at your home
 - d. Delivery people
 - e. Workers who knock on your door
 - f. Other
12. Those seeking your help
 - a. Counseling
 - b. Encouragement
 - c. Benevolent
 - d. Other
13. Friends or relatives in hospital or rest/convalescent home
14. Friends or relatives of friends or relatives in hospital or rest/convalescent home
15. Referrals
 - a. Fellow worker
 - b. Parents of children's friends
 - c. Friend of another friend
 - d. Prayer list (non-Christians)
16. Questioners – someone who has questioned you about religious matters
17. Objectors – someone who has objected to the church
18. Parents of children for whom you babysit either at your home or their home

19. Contacts at births
 - a. Friends or relatives who have a new child
 - b. Friends or relatives who visit you when you have a new child
 - c. Individuals you meet at the hospital who have a new child at the same time you or your friends or relatives
20. Wedding contacts
 - a. Relatives, friends, or others attending your wedding
 - b. Relatives, friends, or others attending your children's wedding
 - c. Contacts at weddings of relatives, friends, or others you attend
21. Funeral contacts
 - a. Relatives, friends, or others attending the funeral of your loved one
 - b. Contacts at funerals of relatives, friends, or others you attend
22. House-to-house contact
23. Delinquent denominational church member
24. Delinquent Christian
25. Those who are ill
26. Friends and relatives of those who are ill
27. Those who have stress or problems in their lives
28. Hospital contacts.

PROSPECT SOURCES FOR SOWING AND REAPING - THE LOCAL
CONGREGATION

1. Prospects from individual Christians
2. Non-Christian mates
3. Non-Christian children
4. Other non-Christian relatives of members
5. Delinquent Christian
6. Visitor to worship
7. Visitor to Bible school
8. Visitor to Ladies' Bible Class
9. Visitor to VBS
10. Visitors to World Evangelism Forum
11. Visitor to group evangelism meetings
12. Visitor to seminars, workshops, film showings, etc.
13. Visitor to Monday night classes
14. Visitor to neighborhood Bible studies
15. Visitor to social activity of Christians
16. Visitor to fellowships
17. Visitor to youth programs and events
18. Visitor to classes, graduations, etc.
19. Visitor via bus evangelism
20. Visitor to witness baptisms
21. Newcomer to city

22. Neighbor (or special) Bible class
23. Those responding to invitation for further study, etc.
24. Referral - prayer list
25. Counseling - those seeking help
26. Bible correspondence course enrollee
27. Hospital contacts
28. Rest/convalescent home contacts
29. Those who are ill
30. House-to-house contacts
31. Benevolent contacts
32. Referrals to the church for whatever reason
33. Day school contacts
34. Youth camp contacts
35. Bible Chair contacts
36. College ministry contacts
37. Radio contacts
38. TV contacts
39. Newspaper ad contacts
40. Herald of Truth contacts
41. Heartbeat contacts
42. Obituaries in newspaper
43. Divorces in the legal section of newspaper
44. Wedding section of newspaper

45. Engagement section of newspaper
46. Birth announcements in newspaper
47. Individuals in newspaper undergoing disaster, etc.
48. Contacts at births
49. Wedding contacts at church building
50. Funeral contacts at church building
51. Business contacts of local congregation
52. Fair booth contacts
53. Jail/prison contacts inside
54. Jail/prison contacts outside
55. Youth contacts
56. Religious survey
57. Contacts from direct mail work
58. Contacts from tract distribution or display
59. Parents and workers of Cub Scout den
60. Parents and workers of Boy Scout troop
61. Parents and workers of Explorer post
62. Contact with persons having alcohol problems
63. Contact with persons having drug problems

“Target Group Evangelism” - Unlocking A Secret to Growth

Churches desiring significant evangelistic results and membership growth in the coming decade will need to become effective at what I call “target group evangelism.” This is a strategy of outreach which identifies one or more specific segments of the surrounding community (“people groups”), and then researches, communicates with, and builds bridges to persons in that group.

There are hundreds of “target groups” in America today. “Baby boomers” are probably the most publicized. (See the new book, *The Missing Generation*, by Bob Bast.) But there are myriad more; plenty to go around for all churches, and then some.

In this issue of the *Growth Report* we will suggest some universal principles of “target group evangelism,” then look at two groups in particular.

Let’s begin with some common steps for effective “target group evangelism:”

1. Determine which “target group/s” you intend to focus upon. A reasonable way to start is to examine your present membership and identify your present strengths - the people groups you are already attracting and ministering to. And, by enlarging your focus to other target groups, you can stretch your church’s growth potential in new areas and ways.
2. Abolish your evangelism committee ... and replace it with “target group task forces” - one for each group you are focusing upon.
3. Have each task force develop a timeline and then implement the following activities:
 - A. Define the “target group.” The more specific, the better. “Singles” is not a good target group definition. “Widowers” or “divorcees” or “never marrieds” improves it. Adding age, gender, geographic location, etc. will make the definition better still. Remember, “target group evangelism” is a rifle shot, not a shot gun.
 - B. Know your audience. This is a research project. Interview at least 15 persons representing this group; more if possible. Conduct mail and/or phone surveys. Visit the local chamber of commerce, real estate offices, library. Learn as much as you can about who these people are, where they live, what they do in their spare time, what their attitudes are on relevant issues, what they think about, worry about, etc. The more you know about this “people group,” the better.

- C. Communicate with your “target group.” Focus on an issue *they* feel is important (not one you feel is important). Here’s where your research comes in. Use at least three “communication vehicles,” such as mail, phone call, personal invitation, flyer, radio spots, newspaper ads, articles, etc.
- D. Provide an opportunity for response. Whether it’s a coupon to tear out and mail, a phone number to call, or an event to attend, provide a way to let them say, “I’m interested in learning more.” Be sure to make the opportunity for response easy. Don’t make people take one “giant step,” let them take several “baby steps.”

The less threatening the response, the more people you’ll see respond. To elicit the response, you will need to offer something of interest/value. It may be a free booklet, a Saturday morning seminar, a brochure on a church program, etc.

- 4. Identify your church members who share common characteristics (i.e. they are in the same “people group”) with those persons who have just responded.
- 5. “Link” the persons in your church with prospects who have responded to your communication. The “linking” process should be based on common characteristics between the prospect(s) and the member(s), such as age, interests, marital status, family status, occupation, location, etc. The more things in common, the better. (For example, a member is asked to contact “John Doe” and plan an informal get-together based on their common interest of golf. The member calls up two other golfing friends in the church, and sets up a Saturday foursome.)
- 6. Start one (or more) new groups specifically for your identified “target group. “Don’t plan for these newcomers to become assimilated into your established groups. A few might, but most won’t because of the difficulty in breaking the relational history already established in the group. See the resource book: *How to Start & Grow Small Groups*.

(Note: #5 & #6 can and should go on concurrently.)

TUESDAY SCHOOL...

Applications for Tuesday School are now ready. Tell friends, neighbors, and relatives who have a three or four year old about it. (Tuesday School is not for children of members of the church.) There is no cost to parents; it is absolutely free. We will be starting Tuesday School on September 15, and it will be each Tuesday that public school is in session. Our school will begin at 9:30 A.M. and end at 12:00 Noon at the building. Transportation will be provided by the parents of the Tuesday School children. There will be five classes taught each Tuesday and they are the following:

BIBLE

ABC's

ORGANIZED GAMES

ARTS and CRAFTS

REFRESHMENTS, SINGING, AND STORY TIME

To enroll a child, the parent can come to the church office from 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon and 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. It won't take but a few minutes of their time to fill out the application.

HELP MAKE TUESDAY SCHOOL A SUCCESS.

Baptizing Behind Bars

OKLAHOMA CITY – The annual study of prison ministries coordinated by College Church of Christ reports 1,985 baptisms in 1988, which is a 29% increase from 1987.

A total of 368 congregations in 37 states report prison ministries. The study was presented in June at the 16th Annual Jail and Prison Ministry Workshop at the Westlake Church of Christ in Indianapolis.

TOP 10 CONGREGATIONS IN NUMBER OF BAPTISMS FOR 1988 OF PRISON WORKS						
City	Congregation	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Oklahoma City	* Fishers of Men	•	•	•	•	301
Huntsville, Texas	* Prison Ministry	183	117	178	122	205
Plainview, Texas	Garland St.	•	•	•	137	201
San Antonio, Texas	Northside	•	•	•	•	192
Madison, Tenn.	Madison	67	93	142	120	151
Amarillo, Texas	* Prison Ministry	216	215	202	226	147
Corpus Christi, Texas	Windsor Park	•	152	161	137	112
Jacksonville, Fla.	San Jose	•	•	•	•	91
Houston, Texas	Bammel Road	•	•	•	44	59
Stuart, Fla.	Lake Street	•	•	54	•	55

*Multi-congregational ministry

Used by Rick Walker to hand out to those coming for food, commodities and clothing (once a month or quarter, etc.).
Begun 6/93

(THE POWER FOR MANKIND)

1. Romans 1:16 *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

YES - NO Is the gospel of God powerful enough to save everyone who believes?

YES - NO If we reject God's gospel, will we be rejecting God's power to save us?

(THE PROBLEM OF MANKIND)

2. Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

YES - NO Have we ALL sinned and fallen short of God's glory?

(THE HOPE OF MANKIND)

3. Romans 5:8-9 *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified (made righteous) by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. "*

YES - NO Though we are sinners and deserve His wrath, in love, did God allow Jesus to die for us?

YES - NO Is it true that no matter how sinful we are, God can make us righteous by Jesus' blood?

(THE RESPONSE OF MANKIND)

4. Romans 6:1-4 *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that allow us who have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."*

YES - NO As our response to Jesus, are we now to consider ourselves dead to sin?

YES - NO Are we also to respond by being buried in baptism to show that we have died to sin?

YES - NO After our baptism are our lives new, i.e., we get to start over again?

YES - NO Have you been immersed/buried in baptism so that you may begin your life anew?

(THE DECISION OF MANKIND)

5. Romans 10:9 *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."*

YES - NO Once we have died to sin, are we to make the decision that Jesus is Lord of our lives?

YES - NO Can we be saved if we don't make Him Lord, or if we don't believe in His resurrection?

(THE LIFE OF MANKIND)

6. Romans 12:1-2 *"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living, and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

YES - NO By making Jesus Lord, can we continue to live by conforming to this world's standards?

YES - NO Might this change lead us to sacrifice our bad habits which are not acceptable to God?

(THE CHURCH FOR MANKIND)

7. Romans 16:16 *"Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you."*

YES - NO Do we read about the church of Christ in the Bible?

YES - NO Is this the church that is made up of people who have accepted the HOPE, RESPONSE, DECISION, and LIFE of mankind?

If you would like to check your answers or if there are any questions or decisions with which we may help you, PLEASE give us a call at the ----- church of Christ. We want to be your family's church!

EVANGELISTIC PROGRAM THE "AREA SYSTEM"

Use these ideas and adjust them to those that will work best in your area.

I. ORGANIZATION

- A. Divide the congregation into four alphabetic groups (if there are more than 30 in each group, have two organizations with 15 - 20 in each which would then cover twice the area).
- B. Have two leaders over each group for one year.
- C. Assign leaders a certain geographic area they become completely familiar with (streets, demographics, etc.) within the "target area" of your building/meeting place.
- D. Promote regularly by a systematic (not helter-skelter) way the necessity of everyone in the group coming *every time* their group is to work.
- E. Each group would be responsible for work once a month on a Saturday. 5th Sundays would be used to make up when holidays came for certain group's regular meeting days (example: 4th of July, etc.).
- F. The time would be 9:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. on Saturday; if a Sunday is used the time would be 2:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.
- G. Not everyone would be able to come each time, but each person would probably come 4 to 7 times a year (which is more than many of us are doing now).

The advantages of this program could be one or more of the following:

- 1. Makes the community aware of our existence, who we are, and what we do and teach.
- 2. Results in the salvation of many.
- 3. Causes a greater fellowship among a mixed segment of the church.
- 4. Shows all of us that there is more to Christianity than just church attendance.
- 5. Causes some who are "proud" to become humble as they "lower" themselves to do service for the Lord.
- 6. Shows us the need to study more as we see we don't know the answers to everything we're asked.
- 7. Shows us how to depend on each other more as we are challenged and attacked by those who ridicule our work.
- 8. Gets the congregation to begin teaching.
- 9. Causes the congregation to grow in spirit, size and quality.

II. PREPARE A FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM SECOND TO NONE.

III. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES (Can be done door-to-door, by phone, or by mail.)

- A. Pass out brochures, ads for upcoming events, etc.
- B. Set up BCC's.
- C. Set up home studies.

- D. Offer help (financial, transportation, repairs, maintenance, etc.).
Look for those to help, not just money food and clothing, but any kind of help. This would make our door to door work different than the J.W.'s and Mormons. Ours would be to serve.

IV. POSSIBLE SURVEY FOR COMMUNITY

The advantage of this kind of approach is that THEY are the ones who are doing the input; you are not telling them anything. People respond better to this approach.

- A. Are you an active member of a nearby church? (This is your target audience.)
- B. What do you think is the greatest need in _____ (our town)?
- C. Why do you think most people don't attend church?
- D. If you were looking for a church in the area, what kinds of things would you look for?
- E. What advice would you give churches in our area if they wanted to be helpful?
- F. TWO OPTIONS FOR THE ENDING
 - 1. We offer _____ (one of the things they mentioned they liked) at Hometown church of Christ. We'd like to leave this brochure with you to tell you more about it and invite you to come find out for yourself.
 - 2. Would you be interested in meeting with us and helping us develop that kind of church?

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EVANGELISM AND YOU

Christians Concerned About International Students

One million international students attend universities outside their native countries each year. Currently close to 350,000 from 185 countries are enrolled in American colleges and universities. They come from Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, India, countries of Europe, and other nations.

These internationals speak English, work on their degrees from 2 to 5 years and are curious about the American lifestyle. Although their first priority is their own academic studies, they want to learn about American culture, economics, music, art, family life, and religion.

New to our city, life for many international students becomes somewhat lonely and self-contained on the campus. In their tenure at a university, many are never once invited into an American home. More important, these “world citizens” need to see what an American Christian home is like. They should upon graduation leave our city with Christ in their lives and God’s Word in their hearts.

Without doubt here is a “mission field” in our own back yards in countless cities in 50 states where congregations surround universities. For the future redemption of the foreign student it’s time we opened our homes, shared our food, gave out Bibles, discussed the Christian life, and converted these lovely citizens from abroad.

How about volunteering as a host Christian or host family, befriending one international student? This is a natural friendly way to introduce the Christian life and Biblical teaching to another human being. This does not mean that you would have him or her living in your home. Nor would you be responsible in any way for their financial support.

Methods of Contacting Internationals

Remember that college students, young married couples, middle aged couples with children, and “classics” (60s to 70s) can befriend and eventually teach Christ to the foreign student. They are open to friendship, cross-cultural learning, and building with the personal ties of mutual appreciation.

One way of contacting the international student is through the “host family” program of the university near you. In this approach the foreign student office of the university provides the student with a questionnaire. The student checks a question which asks him or her, “Would you like to have an American host and be invited to an American home?” If they answer “yes” then the international friends office sends out material to civic organizations and churches. You simply fill out a form with your name, address, occupation, etc. Indicate your preference for a male or female student and from what country. Return the form to the office of the university, and they will send

you the name, address, telephone number, and background information on your student. Then you either contact your student by letter or by telephone.

Another way to attract foreign students is to solicit a group of English teachers in the congregation. These teachers do not have to be professional teachers nor have previous experience in teaching conversational English. The ideal teacher-student ratio is one Christian teacher to two or three students. Usually college students have more time on weekends, so 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday nights, or 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday afternoons is a convenient time. The study area can be a home, Bible Chair facility, or a church building. Materials used can be conversational English textbooks, newspaper and magazine articles, books on American proverbs, as well as the English Bible. God will be with you as you “bond” yourself to the heart of the international student. You also provide a realistic need for the student – learning how to express himself in English.

College students can also form an international outreach group where each Christian “adopts” only one or two foreign students. Limiting to one or two students, quality time can be spent in leisure, meeting needs, discussing life’s problems and introducing Biblical teaching. Where international students eat in dormitory cafeterias, American Christians can purposely sit down across from the foreign student. After casual eating and light conversation, then names, addresses, and telephone numbers can be exchanged.

One student from Taiwan said, “At first I was too busy in my studies to want a close American friend. Then later I was asked to meet at Burger King for a meal. We talked for about three hours. That’s when a great friendship between us began.” Another student from Indonesia said, “When I came to the U.S., I knew nothing about American culture. But American friends made me feel truly welcome. I had someone to call. I wasn’t here alone.”

A fourth way of contacting internationals is for the church to host an international friends dinner at the church building on a Friday or Saturday evening. Good food and a program of songs and presentations about American culture, language, history of the state you live in, and Christianity can be interesting. Two or three meetings annually should be planned, and also don’t forget the summer months when many foreign students remain at the campus. Most important, Christian singles or families should “pair off” with one or two students at these dinners. Then personal relationships naturally begin to deepen as the students are invited into homes, to go on outings, and to share their lives with American Christians who care about them.

Inviting the Student Into Your Home

Sharing a relaxed, unhurried meal is a beautiful cross-cultural way for the Christian and the international student to get acquainted. Of course don’t be surprised if your guest from abroad is late to your home by 20 or 30 minutes. We Americans live

by the clock, yet from their culture and background, punctuality may not always be honored.

Usually internationals eat similar foods that we Americans have on our dinner tables, although they are cooked differently. From time to time it may be discovered that some students do not eat pork or beef because of religious reasons. Yet normally what you daily prepare for yourself or for the family will be acceptable. Rich desserts may need to be given in smaller portions or made with 1/3 of the sugar normally used. If you start a meal with a prayer as is the custom of Christians, take a few minutes to explain the custom to your guest.

Arranging activities for your international friend is not as difficult as you might think. The majority of these students truly miss friends and relatives as they start their new life abroad. Especially after heavy testing or deadline projects are finished, the foreign student is ready to relax and be with friends. Remember that timing is important in planning activities. In other words, a student might decline an invitation one or two times because of an upcoming test or term paper.

Therefore, let the international friend know at least a week ahead of an activity. Putting an invitation in writing with the date, time, and description of the event should make things clear. Then a phone call the day before an event is always helpful.

Consider some of the following interesting and enjoyable activities: have a picnic at a nearby park; go to an American garage sale; go walking around a mall; attend a ballgame or concert; listen to music and talk. And don't forget your city's museums, lakes, restaurants, and cultural events like fairs or arts and crafts exhibitions.

Of course, working in a garden or hiking in the wooded areas or fishing can be pleasant for everyone. Or just enjoying a quiet supper and casual conversation in a warm, friendly Christian home is "entertainment enough" for a person far away from his or her country. He or she might also have a good time playing with your children, or listening to your daughter or granddaughter play the piano.

When foreign students first arrive on our college campuses, they have immediate practical needs. Where are the supermarkets with the best prices or the discount stores? How can they find a good family doctor or dentist? Where is a bank that caters to college students? They may need advice on purchasing a car or finding a good mechanic. Serving the needs of others is actually central teaching from our Lord, and the foreign student has realistic needs to be met.

On the average, you spend time with the international student about every two weeks. This time is arranged at your convenience and there is no set schedule to follow. You can just be yourself and utilize the talents and resources that God has given you to woo and attract your friend to the Friend of sinners.

Introducing the Bible

“Most Americans are indifferent to me and pay me no attention. Then there are the religious people. They show an interest in me until it appears to them that I’m not interested in Christianity. Then they drop me and I never see them again,” a foreign student said.

Many times if we “get too religious too fast,” then the international will feel that we are only interested in converting him to Christianity. In other words, in his mind our friendship is not genuine. Always be true to yourself and your student, and offer authentic friendship in Christ. Try in a very natural way to share your life with him or her, and open up your private world to them.

One way to get into a religious discussion (only after a few months) is to first ask the student questions about his country’s religions. Become truly curious about what his religious beliefs are. Always show respect and interest in what your guest from abroad holds as morally right and sacred. You might want to spend a short time in the encyclopedia to deepen your understanding of his culture. Also check your local library or bookstore for books explaining his religious philosophy of life.

Don’t forget that your own story of how you became a Christian might be interesting to the student. An eventual study of the advantages of living the Christian life shows practical application of God’s principles to our present times. Or ask the student if he would be interested in a short two or three month study of the life of Jesus Christ. Meet once a week on the average, and keep the study to an hour and a half, and then have refreshments. A study of the Gospel of John is recommended showing from select passages the beauty of the character and life of Christ. Or a three month study of the attributes of God is always appropriate for the non-Christian.

Remember that through your local bookstore, you can order your friend a copy of the Bible or New Testament in his own language. Tracts in the native language of the international are available from a missionary of the church. It could be that your international friend has never had his own Bible, nor read many religious materials of a positive nature about Christianity.

As your relationship with your student deepens and in God’s grace becomes more pleasant, continue to place the name and needs of your friend before the Heavenly Father. Ask for patience, wisdom, and perseverance in reaching out in service to him or her.

Follow Up . . . After They Leave

Sometimes we find that we befriend an international for only 9 months or possibly as long as 2 years before he leaves to return home or study elsewhere. If the student is moving to another state for an advanced degree, contact the elders and local

evangelist of the church in that city. Give them a background sketch of the foreign student and the progress that you made with the student in Biblical teaching. Make a long distance call to the church building later to discuss “follow up” procedures with the student by the church there.

To the international, the gift of friendship continues for a lifetime. Keep the communication lines open by sending a brief letter, a birthday card, a family snapshot once a year, or call long distance every three or four months. Remember the international student’s redemption and eternal destiny is hanging in the balance. With effectual follow up, after a short while you may be informed by the church of his or her baptism by co-workers in Christ at their location.

A Summary of Guidelines

1. Befriend only one or two international students so that you and your family can spend quality time with him or her.
2. Just be yourself and, by imitating the compassionate Christ, offer sincere friendship.
3. Try to get together on a regular basis so that your friendship will develop and begin to truly deepen.
4. Learn to share yourself with the student, and let him know that you genuinely care about his personal life and future.
5. Learn from the student what he or she enjoys in life (e.g. in areas of music, sports, hobbies, food) and where their immediate needs are.
6. Plan invitations to dinner or activities right after major testing when he or she is more likely to be in the mood to get away from campus life.
7. On major American holidays (prior to your own family get-togethers), be sure to honor the international friend in your home. This shows him that during America’s most important “festivals” he is always thought of and included.
8. Allow the international to do some things for you (cook his favorite foods, work in the yard, etc.) so that the friendship won’t be one-sided.
9. Don’t start right away by getting “too religious too fast” with your friend from abroad.
10. Eventually you will want to give your student a Bible in his own language. It may be the first Bible of his own that he has ever had. Religious tracts in the student’s language are also available through missionaries on the field.

11. Order from the Sunset bookstore, the following “How To” brochures (3723 34th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79410, (806) 797-2249): *Teaching The Bible To African Students*; *Teaching The Bible To Chinese Students*; *Teaching The Bible To Hispanic Students*.
12. Every two months meet with others in the congregation for discussion of progress and problem areas in international students evangelism. Continue in private and collective prayers to ask the Lord of Harvest for vision and compassion in how to truly serve and Biblically teach these “world citizens” among us.

Al Henderson

Name _____

I would like to volunteer for the following:

- () International Friends Dinner
- () Teach conversational English (2 hours a week)
- () Being a Host person or family (invite into home once a month)
- () Exclusive outreach as a Christian woman to a student's wife

VISITORS

Determining Our Openness Quotient

Respond as honestly as possible to the following questions.

Total positive points _____

Total negative points _____

Openness quotient is _____

_____ Excellent

_____ More than adequate

_____ Average

_____ Less than adequate

	Yes	No	Points plus or minus
1. Visitors are given ribbons or name tags.			
2. Every worshiper wears a name tag.			
3. Visitors sign a guest book, or there is attendance registration.			
4. There is more than enough parking.			
5. Our auditorium is full for worship.			
6. Members leave the closest parking spots for the handicapped and visitors.			
7. I take the initiative to talk with those I do not know well.			
8. Our congregation is about the right size .			
9. If someone is sitting alone, I sit by them.			
10. Classrooms are identified.			
11. There is a register of rooms at the entrance.			
12. Rest rooms are easy to find.			
13. Ushers greet people and show them to seats.			
14. Service times and the name of the church are clearly identified outside.			
15. I go to church with a mental list of people I need to see, items I need to check on.			
16. We have a refreshment time after worship.			
17. At fellowship times I usually spend my time talking with friends.			
18. Visitors to church are visited within 48 hours.			
19. We have some specific strategies for growth.			
20. The church is united on wanting the church to grow.			
21. I feel good about my preacher.			
22. Most of our elders have been members of our congregation for at least five years.			
23. I feel good about our brotherhood.			
24. There is continual tension in our congregation.			
25. In the worship services terms are used and references made that someone new would not understand.			

Ways to build a morally powerful ‘youth ministry’ in a small church

I recently met with some adult youth leaders and volunteers. We were discussing adolescents, volunteering, and youth culture. Someone asked, “Can you have a youth ministry in a small church?” The answer is “no” and “yes.” If you wait until you have extra money, an intern, or “enough” young people, the answer is “no.” If you love the youth you already have, use volunteers and do creative things that don’t require huge amounts of money, the answer is “yes.”

I am always encouraged at large youth gatherings. I get to see a lot of my youth ministry friends. So many of these, however, are adults and college students who volunteer to help with young people at their small church.

A small church has parents, college students, or young married couples who can volunteer to work with the youth. These often have extra time, get some small stipend, or want the best for kids. Whatever the reason, these people make youth ministry happen in small churches. They might say they don’t know very much about youth ministry, but they do want students to love the Lord, be like Christ and serve his church.

Here are some ideas for your small church youth ministry.

- **First, start with what you have.** If you have one student in your church, you have youth ministry potential. Get one adult with a passion to see that one student grows spiritually, and you have a youth ministry. I know youth ministers with many students in their ministries. They love it, but they hate it. Often they say, “I wish there were only a few, so I could spend time with them all.”

- **Second, develop a plan.** Spend some time casting a vision for what a youth ministry might be like, considering the needs of your youth, your church and your community. Set achievable goals which reflect concepts that build students spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.

- **Third, start with a good foundation.** Rick Chromey suggests four building blocks for a good foundation in small church youth ministry – L.I.F.E. *Love* is the cornerstone for any ministry, but especially youth ministry. Use members who truly love young people and are willing to sacrifice their time and money. This is especially important in a small church where there is more one-on-one relationship potential.

Involvement is the second part of the foundation. Don’t wait for students to grow up to be adult workers in the church. Get them involved right now. There are jobs in the church that youth can do at all spiritual levels. All of the adult jobs we do in church

can be done by youth. Students can welcome new and visiting students. Students can share the Gospel with others – young and old. Students can visit other students and pray for them. Bottom line: Get them involved in doing what they were truly created to do!

Fellowship is the third element of a good foundation in a small church youth ministry. Students need to learn how to love and accept others. Christian fellowship gives them a platform to accomplish this task.

Education is the fourth part of a good foundation. Don't sacrifice education for entertainment. It used to be that many of our students knew Bible facts. They weren't necessarily very good at applying them, but they knew the facts. Now it seems that not many know the facts, much less the applications of those facts. We must put a priority on teaching in our youth ministries, whether they are large or small. This teaching must be followed with examples of application, as well as opportunities to personally apply biblical concepts in real student life.

Other specific areas to think about:

- **One-on-one relationships** – Connecting significant adults to students.
- **Programming** – Meet the needs of the students at your church.
- **Family activities** – Small churches should capitalize on intergenerational activities among its families.
- **Discipleship** – Push students to grow spiritually.
- **Evangelism** – Challenge your students to share the Gospel with their friends.
- **Missions** – Team up with a larger group and take your students on a joint mission trip,
- **Service Projects** – Do things around your community for others.
- **Fun activities** – Balance all of the above with reasonable fun activities.

– DUDLEY CHANCEY, Oklahoma City

For more information on youth ministry in small churches, contact Dudley Chancey at the Youth Ministry Department, Oklahoma Christian University, Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136. Phone: (405) 425-5373. E-mail: dudley.chancey@oc.edu.

Sensitivity: growing singles population requires attention

The way children grow up in our society is changing. Young people are prolonging their entry into life's responsibilities and most are waiting longer to get married. Consequently, the church has a new adult population that we have not been accustomed to serving.

The importance of that group was driven home to me in January, when George C. Creach, Jr. of Kennendale, Texas, wrote about priorities I had outlined in a *Chronicle* article last November. Creach's letter, which was carried in the January *Chronicle*, made the important point that one of our fastest-growing groups within the church is our singles, and he made an eloquent appeal that we recognize the significance of the singles and do more to prepare those young adults for roles of responsibility within the church.

About the same time that Creach voiced his concern, Todd Gentry, who ministers to the singles at the South MacArthur Church of Christ in Irving, Texas, wrote Christian college presidents about the 400 singles at that congregation. He observes that these young adults are "more prepared for marriage than single life. They expect to marry at college, prepare to marry, and then graduate as a single. You would think that single life would be natural, but it isn't. [They] struggle for a long time with their broken dreams."

All of these concerns are justified. Only a small percentage of American youth marry when they finish high school. A larger number marry when they are in college or at the time of graduation, but that percentage is smaller than it was one or two generations earlier. Young adults are taking longer to make their career preparation: a large number will take four-and-a-half or five years to complete a baccalaureate degree. Many will go on to professional school or graduate education. Young adults often enter their first job in their career after they are 25. Marriage typically occurs when they are closer to 30 than to 20.

The reality of these facts will have a powerful effect on the church. Singles ministries have become standard aspects of dynamic churches in larger cities.

What creates the problem is the general principle that churches seem to function best at serving families. From the Bible school to programs of work and ministry, churches have fashioned their activities to serve couples and families. Unmarried young adults, widows, widowers, and those divorced Christians do not naturally fit into every congregation. Singles must persist if they are determined to make a place for themselves in the average church. And even in churches with elaborate singles ministries, those believers often feel isolated and alone. Singles perceive that a "barrier" exists between them and other church members.

A good friend who recently celebrated his thirtieth birthday and has been part of several churches since his graduation from college has shared his thoughtful insights about his experiences as a single. His personal devotion to God and his commitment to being an active part of the body have prompted him to give much of his energy and time to church activities. He has worked hard to cultivate friendships among the singles and among those who are married.

He observes, "All manner of excuses permit congregations to segregate single people, at least in the minds of its married segment. Unwittingly, [singles] give them a lot of reason to think as they do . . . For Christian singles, a major force is the congregation around them at church. Consider that Paul's apparent praise for bachelorhood is ignored – I am single, so where are the requests for my abilities? Where are the invitations to meetings and resource classes? Where is even a passing mention in any public address that single people have any power to offer service? And how about a little respect via real responsibility versus seeing me in an afterthought as a good person to watch the kids while the couples go do the 'real work of the church'?"

Clearly, singles have a lot of feelings about their place in the church, and it is time churches made special efforts to break down the wall segregating the unmarried. It is time to take stock of the talents of every person in the body so that we can make the fullest use of those talents.

We must also help the singles address their singleness without apology and without a sense of inadequacy, because, as my friend says, "Admittedly, we get no better when we come to each other [singles] for support and fellowship. The tensions that accompany seeking a companion make it difficult for any but the closer ones to be genuine with each other, so we stifle what we most need from people, any people. We also battle within ourselves the lifestyle of default – having no accountability, we exist for the world to grab on and suck out our essence like a leech. We get weaker in heart, and the distance between us and brethren who 'don't know what to do with us' just grows. Some of us will work at life and keep our perspective, and grow and give regardless, because our status and worth is not based on our feelings or on the views of our misguided pew companions, but rather in a strong sense of purpose defined by a higher source. Some singles become a Landon Saunders or an Amy Carmichael, but quietly.

"For most other singles, they must either marry or go someplace where marital status counts nothing for most purposes. If they don't, they will become the tonsils and appendices in the body of Christ, comforting themselves in some illusion of true membership, but never serving any useful purpose. If they become inflamed and cause trouble, look for a cure – it can be treated. If not, be sure that you will lose them, and the Devil is waiting with open arms and laughing over every chance to pierce into Christ again."

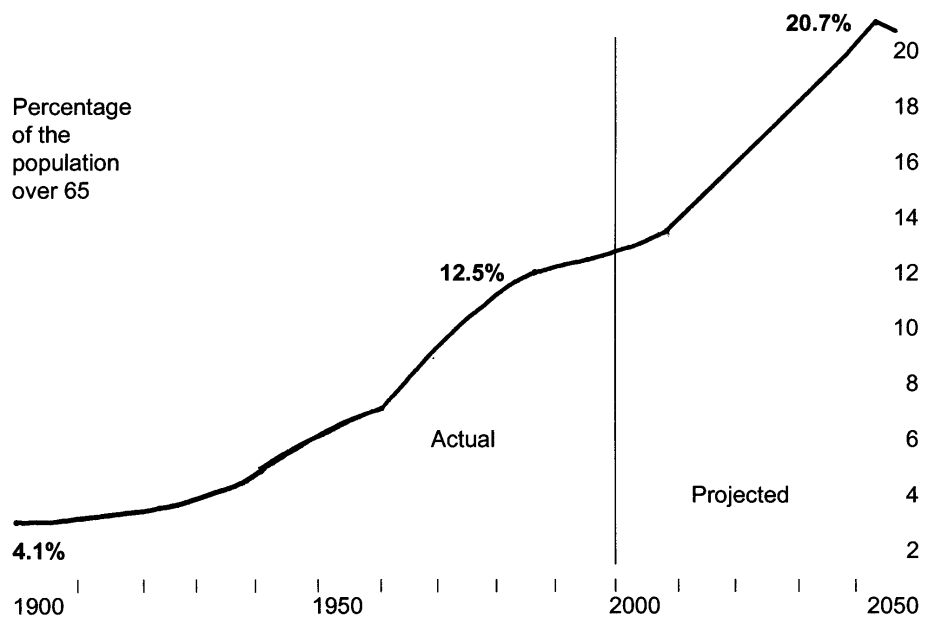
Todd Gentry makes a strong point that our training of young people in our churches and in Christian colleges should help prepare for a longer period when people will live a single life. In our anxiety over the problem of divorce and failing marriages, we concentrate our teaching on those relationships while we fail to equip young adults for a period of living single. We do not equip them as singles for relating to couples, families and other singles.

Gentry is also concerned that our training of those who minister to the church does not include preparation for assisting singles of the Kingdom to meld into congregational life and service.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the church is for every person to develop a healthy respect for every other child of God. We need eyes to see only the souls and potential of our brothers and sisters. Although we have made great strides in dealing with differences of color and background, and although we are growing in our respect for people without regard to sex, we have not really begun to deal with singles. A few efforts have been directed toward healing those destroyed by divorce, and we have long excelled at giving prompt but not sustained attention to those losing a spouse to death. With a rapidly growing singles population in every metropolitan church, it is time to get serious about utilizing the talents and the spiritual gifts of this important group. They have much, indeed, to offer the Body of Christ.

BAILEY B. MCBRIDE

**America is getting grayer: today, one in eight Americans is over 65.
By 2005, it will be one in five.**



Source: U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENCUS

Many More Adults and Fewer Youth

It doesn't take a crystal ball to see the future of the church coming over the horizon. There will be many more adults and fewer youth! In fact, it's already happening.

Is your church ready?

Today in America . . .

- the number of persons over 55 years is growing three times faster than the national population!
- there are more people over 65 years than under 18!
- those U.S. citizens 65 years and older outnumber the entire population of Canada!

Tomorrow in America . . .

- in just 20 years one of every four senior citizens will have children who are also senior citizens.
- by the year 2010, average life expectancy will be 91 years.
- by the year 2040, when the last of the "baby boomers" reach retirement, 25% of the population will be 65 years or older!

Reclaiming 'lost sheep' should be a major area of evangelistic thrust

One of the very best opportunities for winning souls is to reclaim those who have been members of the congregation but have fallen away. Some of these may have quit over some issue or conflict, but most will have just slipped away through neglect. Whatever the reason why they no longer attend, many congregations have found this a rich mine to work and report greater numerical results from bringing people back than from converting new Christians. Every congregation, of course, should have a plan for reaching those in both conditions.

One smaller congregation in Texas recently reported that it identified 40 persons who had attended few or no services within the last 16 months and made a special effort to reclaim as many as they could. They set a Friend's Day on a particular Sunday. For this day they scheduled a pot luck and all members tried to bring friends. Among those who received a special letter of invitation were the 40 they sought to reclaim. Some members also selected these as friends to invite. Of the 40, 10 came on the special Sunday and another five came the following Sunday. How many continue remains to be seen, but getting 15 out of 40 to attend even once within two Sundays is an excellent start on getting these members back into the fold.

Another Texas congregation identified those who had fallen away over the past few years. They then assembled a group of members who knew them. This team reviewed each person's situation, trying to determine what had been the cause for their leaving, whether personal conflict, isolation from other members, insufficient involvement, a doctrinal difference, dissatisfaction with the congregation, growing apathy to religion or some other cause. Then a group of Christians who were willing to make visits met and studied how to make such visits most profitable, approaching each person to win not condemn. Each prospect for renewal was then assigned to a pair of Christians who would make the visit. Through this careful plan, the congregation was able to restore many.

Your congregation could develop a reclaiming plan such as this:

- Identify, with the help of two or three long-term members, those still nearby who formerly attended your congregation and do not attend any neighboring congregation. Past directories or membership lists could help in making this list.
- Assemble a group to review these cases to determine the reason for their leaving and how and by whom each might best be approached about returning.
- Have continuing special prayers for these.
- Set a special day to bring friends to worship.

- Carefully word a letter to those no longer coming to encourage them and provide an “open door” for their return. If you have had any recent changes such as a new preacher, new elders or some new program that might interest them, include that in your letter.

- Assign each prospect to one or two who have been trained to make such visits in a spirit of meekness.

- Those visiting can issue a special invitation to each person or family and deal as necessary with the cause for having drifted away.

- If a “lost sheep” does attend, be prepared to give that person a warm welcome and a good follow-up.

- Plan something regularly to reach dropouts. This effort should not be just a one-time activity.

Every congregation, large and small, should have a Reclaiming Ministry as an ongoing program. A deacon or member with a heart for this work should be given a permanent assignment 1) to keep up with those who need to be sought and 2) to develop and carry out an individual strategy for reclaiming them. A small group can work together in regularly discussing those who need attention and planning how to contact each. This group can assign to various members the type of contact they believe will be best: a direct visit, casual contact, mail, working first with the children, or some other approach.

Jesus speaks of “going after” a sheep who has gone astray. Surely he had in mind our reaching out to church members who have strayed.

Try www.oc.edu/colleges/bible/ministry for articles on a wide variety of topics in ministry.

– STAFFORD NORTH, Oklahoma City

Drop Outs: Solving the Problem Before it Occurs

Research is showing that the process by which people arrive at their Christian decision is a key factor in determining whether they become active members. In fact, one can actually predict with surprising accuracy which decisions will grow into responsible church members and which will drop out.

EVANGELISM THAT CREATES DROP-OUTS

- 1) *An evangelistic process which uses a “manipulative” approach tends to create dropouts.*

Evangelism can be categorized into one of three approaches: The first view, *“Information Transmission,”* sees evangelism as a one-way act of communicating spiritual facts. The perceived relationship between the evangelizer and the prospect is one characteristic of a teacher and student; the goal is to impart certain correct information. The assumption is that a correct understanding by the hearer will bring a logical, positive response.

Another approach to evangelism may be called the *“Manipulative Monologue”* view. This approach sees evangelism as a process of manipulation. It might center around an emotional appeal, or a set of carefully prepared questions. The relationship between the believer and the non-believer approximates a salesperson and a customer; the goal is to “close the sale.”

A third approach, *“Non-manipulative Dialogue,”* views evangelism as a two-way process of honest interaction. The assumption is that not all people see things exactly the same way, and one “canned approach” is not appropriate in every situation. Characterizing the relationship between the Christian and non-Christian, in this case, would be friend to friend; the goal being to share an honest concern for the other.

One study found that when a church member saw evangelism as “Information Transmission,” 75% of those approached with the Gospel said “No.” Among members who viewed evangelism as “Manipulative Monologue,” 81% of those approached said “Yes,” but 85% of that group became inactive within a year. However, when church members viewed evangelism as “Non-manipulative Dialogue,” 99% of those approached said “Yes” and 96% of those stayed.

Which view of evangelism does your training program encourage?

- 2) *An evangelistic process which sees the goal as a “decision” rather than “disciple” tends to create drop-outs.*

The fact is that not all who make decision become disciples; the two are not synonymous. The biblical goal is a life transformed and a participating member of Christ's Body. A “decision-making” view of evangelism - which focuses on a critical point in time - tends to create drop-outs because once that decision is made, it is assumed the goal is accomplished. A “disciple-making” view of evangelism - which focuses on a lifelong process - encourages a more accurate evaluation of “successful” strategy.

Are the fruits of your evangelism program measured by decisions or disciples?

- 3) *An evangelistic process which presents the Gospel one time then asks for a response tends to create drop-outs.*

Research shows that in comparing active and inactive members, those who continue as responsible church members have been exposed to an average of 5.79 different Christian influences *prior* to their commitment. Drop-outs, by comparison, had seen or heard the Christian message only 2.16 times before their decision.

As an evangelistic strategy, the more times a person is exposed to the Gospel message *prior* to his/her Christian commitment, the more likely he/she is to understand the implications of that commitment, and stay. The fewer the Christian exposures prior to a commitment, the greater likelihood of that person dropping out.

Does your evangelism strategy seek a response on the first contact?

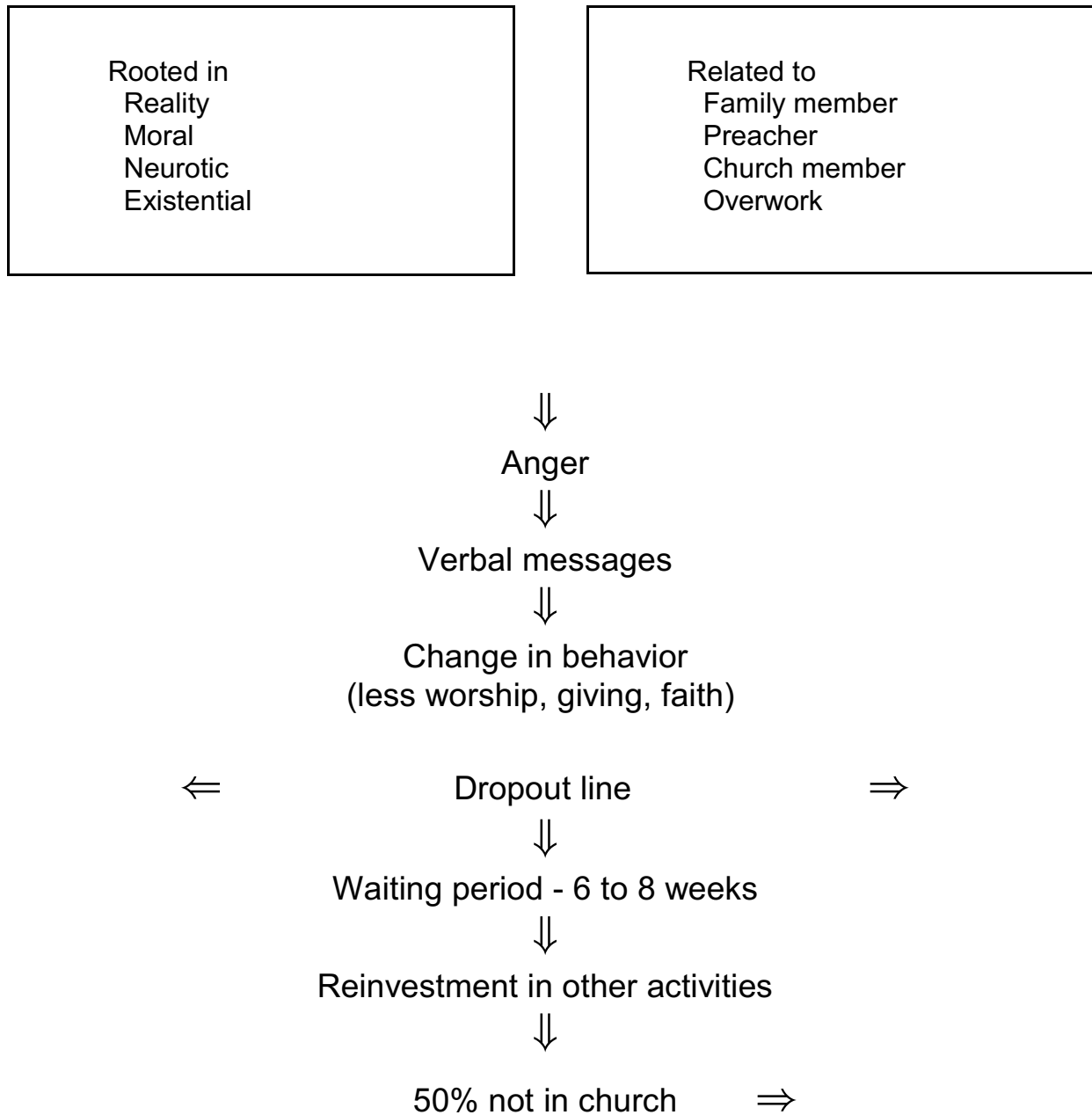
- 4) *An evangelistic process which does not create prior relationships between the potential member and the church programs/people tends to create drop-outs.*

When events leading up to a person's profession of faith were not due to a relationship with the people of a local church, there are no ties established with that person and the church. Thus the perceived value of involvement in the church by the new convert is low. However, when the new believer has established friendships with members in the church . . . has become part of a group where he/she feels a sense of “belonging” . . . when the person has been exposed to the church's people, beliefs, expectations, then that new convert's potential assimilation into the church is increased dramatically.

How many friends do your potential new members have in the church, and how many programs/ministries are they presently involved in?

SAVAGE'S “DROPOUT TRACT”

Anxiety-provoking event



**Hundreds of teachers have used these principles
to double the size of their classes.**

20 Ways to Double Your Sunday School Class

You can double the attendance of your Sunday School class. Sound impossible? Well, it isn't. Hundreds of teachers have used the principles I include here, and have had fantastic results. Read all the points carefully – then discuss them with the other teachers in your Sunday School. Think how much could be accomplished for the Lord if every class in your school doubled in size this year.

1. *Set an Overall Goal.* If your class has been averaging 15, set a goal of 30. Prepare a poster with a goal of 30. Write 30 on the chalkboard. Saturate your pupils with the goal. Goal setting works. A junior class in Florence (SC) hung a large sheet of paper from one wall to another, then had each of the 26 boys write his name on it and sign "52" by his autograph. In that way, each student reinforced the class goal of 52. The total Sunday School set a goal of 1,225. Posters were put on walls, bulletin boards and doors. Every poster announced the goal of 1,225, but each differently – in German, Spanish, Greek; upper and lower case letters; Gothic and Roman numbers.

2. *Set a Goal for Finding New Prospects.* In order for your class to double, attempt to get twice as many prospects as your average attendance. This means that each member should suggest 2 names. If there are 30 in the class, get 60 names on your prospect list.

An adult class in Salem, Va., distributed blank cards to members and asked each to submit names of friends he or she would like to see in the class. After two weeks of listing names, the goal still was not reached. Therefore, three ladies were delegated to phone members of the class and write down the names they suggested. They worked until 100 new names were gathered.

To have a growing Sunday School class, put as much emphasis on finding prospects as on recruiting them.

3. *Assign Prospect Responsibility.* Many growing classes type the names of all prospects on sheets of paper, then distribute photocopies in the class, assigning prospects to be contacted before the next week. One group in Ypsilanti, Mich., printed a motto over its visitation board, "People Expect What You Inspect." Many members work in the automobile assembly plants in Detroit where they are taught by GM that people work according to how closely the foreman supervises them. The same rule applies to Sunday School. Therefore, give each of your class members a prospect to

contact, then check up on them the following Sunday to see if they have made the contact.

4. *Phone Every Prospect.* During the campaign, phone every prospect on your list ... every week. Extend to each a friendly welcome, giving the time, place and lesson topic.

5. *Send Mail to Every Prospect.* During your campaign, mail every prospect a postcard or letter, inviting him to Sunday School. A housewife can write a personal note to 30 prospective students in 2 hours. A first-class letter to 30 prospects costs less than \$12 – eternal benefits will result.

6. *Visit Every Prospect.* Visitation puts the GO in Gospel, carrying the message to every person. After you have phoned every prospect, a visit to his home will convince him of your love. In fact, visit every prospect every week during your attendance campaign.

7. *Start a Class Newspaper.* During your campaign, start a one-page (or larger) class newspaper. The junior class at one church in Guelph, Ontario, distributes an eight-page paper, *The Roadrunner*, to every junior. Since it is a large class, the teachers spend time writing articles about juniors who recently have committed their lives to Jesus Christ. The paper also includes crossword puzzles, homework, stories, and news about the attendance campaign. The attendance motto and logo also are printed there, reminding the kids of their attendance goals.

The average Sunday School teacher with less than 10 pupils cannot publish a newspaper every week, but he can do it at least twice during each attendance campaign. A newspaper is not hard to prepare. If you've never issued one, simply write a one-page letter giving the news of the class. Then type the letter in two columns to make it look like a newspaper, and put a headline across the top. Fill the newspaper with the names of students, their accomplishments, and what you expect to do for God.

8. *Name Your Class.* One teacher called his fourth grade boys class "The Treehouse Gang." A massive cardboard tree, with a door, was used at the entrance of the room. Two more large trees, reaching from ceiling to floor, covered the inside walls. Later, a stockade was put in the hall surrounding the doors. He started his class in September. His goal was to average 54 before the year was out. With enthusiasm, ingenuity, and determination, he pushed the average attendance to 94.

9. *Post Attendance.* A junior boys class at one place in Hammond, Ind., called their campaign "Spring Training." A massive box score chart marked hits, runs and errors so that students could follow their progress each week. The class was divided into two sides, and at the beginning of each class they "batted around," adding up visitors, attendance and Bibles.

Since pupils tend to value those things that are important to teachers, make sure to call the roll carefully. This tells each student it's his duty to be in class every Sunday. The extra pressure of some kind of a wall chart gives added motivation.

10. *Get a Motto.* One high school class in Savannah, Ga., had a "Fat is Beautiful" campaign. Instead of awarding stars or rockets, or putting names on the wall, they weighed in each week. The teams began with an equal total weight. Visitors tipped the scales for the winners, while absentees dragged the losers down.

11. *Get a Logo.* A church that celebrated its 25th anniversary hung a huge silver seal all year in the auditorium with the motto, "The 25th Year of Redemption." Under the motto was their goal. The entire seal was their logo. They had it fashioned into small silver seals which they affixed to envelopes and letterheads. It was also printed on all the literature of the church.

12. *Give Out Buttons.* Each person is to be given a button ahead of time with the wording "I Am One of **" to remind him to be faithful in attendance. (** the number chosen as the goal.)

13. *Stretch Their Faith.* One large group in West Hollywood, Fla., planned to beat the state record and have the largest Sunday School in the history of Florida. To do so, attendance had to double from 2,700 to 6,400. In a three-day workers conference, their faith was stretched.

On the first night of the conference, everyone was pinned with a "5,000+" button and asked to pray for 5,000+ every time he ate a meal during the next week. Since most eat three meals a day, every person would pray 21 times for 5,000+. It was called, "Fast or Pray," reminding the people that if they didn't pray for 5,000, they should not eat.

The second night, each worker signed a card to pledge, "I will work for 5,000+." On the third night every teacher made a numerical commitment of a goal for his class on 5,000+ Sunday.

When the tally was in, they had pledged to reach 5,400. Later they reached 5,427, the largest Sunday School in the history of Florida.

14. *Choose a Good Day.* Don't plan a Sunday School campaign for Labor Day weekend, or during the Fourth of July holiday when there is a natural dip in the attendance. The minister who tried to have his largest attendance on Labor Day weekend and the Sunday after Easter, claiming, "Anybody can get a crowd on Easter, I want to build an attendance to show our people love God," has missed the whole purpose of an attendance campaign. A high attendance should do more than demonstrate the loyalty of the faithful. It should bring visitors, electrify everyone when the attendance is doubled, and bring men, women and children to a saving faith in

Jesus Christ. So plan for Sunday School growth when the best results are possible. Then you will be a good steward of your time, energy and money. Therefore, plan to grow on those days when attendance can be largest.

15. *Remember the Clenched Fist.* A man can keep his fist taut only so long. Then the muscles give out. Likewise, a Sunday School class can pressure itself for expansion for only a short time. Therefore, growing Sunday Schools plan two attendance campaigns for six or seven weeks each spring and fall. They work as hard as they can during a campaign to find prospects, excite students, phone, write and visit. The attendance drive is relaxed during holidays, the snows of January, and again during the summer.

16. *Get a Running Start.* Before jumping a creek, a boy runs faster if he has to jump farther. In Sunday School, the larger the goal, the longer it takes to double your class attendance. Plan a six or seven week fall campaign with the high Sunday as the last day. Don't read this chapter and plan to double your class next week. Pray to double, plan to double, and promote to double. But remember this: A teacher can't lead if his class won't follow, and pupils won't work to double their class unless their teacher takes the time to convince them it can be done.

17. *Plan a High Day.* Plan a high attendance Sunday on the last Sunday of your campaign. Some criticize this, saying that it only gets a crowd and makes small-class teaching impossible. However, the "high day" really is only a return to the old-fashioned rally day, where all pupils assembled in the auditorium to "rally" enthusiasm for Vacation Bible School. Most teachers need to break lethargy and infuse the pupils with expectation. A "double day" convinces the pupils it can be done again and again, until the class is permanently doubled.

18. *Pray.* A junior boys class in Decatur, Ga., set a goal of 26 in Sunday School. They wanted to double their average attendance of 13. The teacher asked each boy to pray. Several boys promised to bring their buddies. Next Sunday morning they began to fill up the little room ... 22 ... 23 ... 24 ... 25 ... 26. All the boys cheered. But, the visitors kept coming. Soon they were sitting two to a chair and standing in each row. When the teacher finally counted all the heads, there were 50.

"I can't teach. There are too many in this room," the teacher said apologetically.

A hand went up. "It's my fault," said a tow-headed boy, "I prayed for 50."

God answers the prayer of those who ask for their ministry to be enlarged, but prayer alone cannot build a Sunday School. God will not do what He has commanded us to do. We are to go and reach people. Classes grow when teachers are busy visiting, phoning, mailing and praying all week.

19. *Feed Them the Word.* People go to restaurants where they get good food, then they tell their friends. Books are sold by word of mouth. The satisfied customer is still the best salesman for any product. The basis for growing Sunday School classes is still good Bible teaching which causes students to bring their friends. The Bible must be made interesting, captivating and relevant.

20. *Try Super Saturation.* The disciples went everywhere preaching the Word, reaching all men by all means. A Sunday School teacher should use every technique to excite pupils about coming to Sunday School. Extra promotion, contests, and rewarding the pupils to show that a teacher cares. Extra preparation, visitation and prayer will get results. The work of God is still spelled *W-O-R-K*. Any class will grow in direct proportion to the energies expended by the teacher.

With our meeting coming up, it's a good time to remember . . .

Rules for Making Every visitor Feel Welcome

The Thirty Second Rule
Most guests will make a judgment about us during the first thirty seconds after they enter the building. Greet others with a handshake and a friendly smile as soon as you see them.

The Front-Door-Rule
Help people find their classes or a seat in the auditorium. If they have trouble, they may not return.

The Ten-Foot Rule
Greet anyone with whom you are not familiar who comes within ten feet of you. Make eye contact. Be friendly.

The Five-Minute Rule
Take the first five minutes after services to seek out guests and greet them. Encourage them to return and thank them for being here. After you have greeted our guests, you will still have opportunity to talk to your friends.

Our attitude will often determine if visitors return. Do your part to make sure they really feel

welcome

&

appreciated

TO GET NEW VISITORS

Invite all police to a free fellowship dinner. Note for them it is not a religious meeting, but the church is doing this in their honor.

Then do the same for judges, city officials.

Then Chamber of Commerce, etc., etc.

The church in one town had a bad name from the past and did this program. These actions totally eliminated the problem.

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What Are First-Time Visitors Looking For?

After the first visit, a decision to return is a result of six factors, in this order:

1. *The Friendliness and Warmth of the Church*

A study found: “When both unchurched and church people are asked what they look for in a church, all agree on one factor – the climate of the congregation. They are looking for a church in which they feel at home, where the people are friendly, and where there is a warm and comfortable atmosphere.” This attitude is primarily conveyed 1) when visitors first enter the building, and 2) when the formal service is over and people begin to leave. Help your members understand the need to approach and welcome anyone they do not recognize, or who appears to be alone.

2. *The Character of the Worship Service*

The issues reflecting on the character of the worship are:

Is it authentic? People want to experience the presence of God. They are looking for clarity and guidance to know what is right, and power to do it.

Does it echo with the notes of grace? People already know they are sinners. They don’t need to be convinced of that. What they need is affirmation of the reality and depth of God’s love for them.

Is the worship edifying? Worship is meant to be an uplifting experience that enables people to leave the service strengthened and equipped for life.

3. *A Place for Children*

Recent studies show that visitors perceive the needs of their children as a major factor in a decision to find a church. Baby-boomers (born between 1946-1964) include one-third of all Americans. Churches that provide opportunities for children will be effective in attracting these people.

4. *The Adult Program*

One way to involve unchurched adults is to offer involvement opportunities in which they can participate. Athletic events, classes, musical or fitness groups, social gatherings can be designed to include unchurched people.

5. *The Church Building*

Your location and structure are fixed and, thus, not a factor you can change in your visitor attraction strategy. True? Only partially. It’s important to know what it is about your facility that attracts or deters visitors. Four key questions are: *Is your church visible? Is your church accessible? What is the condition of your property? Do you have adequate space?*

Why Visitors Return

Churches that do well in seeing newcomers return have certain common qualities:

1. *A Positive Identity and Self Image*

A positive self-image means that members have good feelings about their congregation. A positive identity means that members believe their church is special and they have something unique to offer. These characteristics have much to do with desire and ability to reach out.

2. *Congregational Harmony*

Churches equipped for growth are unified. There are no major conflicts in the church, there is an essential agreement about the style and ministry of the congregation, and the people love and care for one another.

3. *Minister Enthusiasm*

Congregations equipped for growth have enthusiastic ministers who believe in the potential of the church. These men are full of hope and inspire confidence in the members. A key part of this is energetic and enthusiastic worship leadership.

4. *Ministry in the Community*

Congregations attracting visitors nearly always have specific ministry in the community. This community ministry authenticates and affirms the church's message of love. The ministry helps people believe the word proclaimed and makes invitations from the congregation more readily accepted.

5. *Small Group Opportunities*

Congregations keeping visitors have various small group opportunities which serve as entry points. These small groups allow people to become friends, and to deepen relationships. They represent a variety of interests and activities to which people can be invited.

How to Attract First-Time Visitors

(People select a church only after first visiting. Thus, an effective growth strategy must include 1) attracting, and 2) retaining visitors. Much of this issue is taken from the new book – *Attracting New Members* – by Robert Bast. The book is a helpful resource in developing an effective visitor strategy.)

Here are three suggestions for seeing your first-time visitor rate increase, presented in the way they might be experienced by a non-churched person, but in the reverse order of importance and effectiveness.

Step One: Advertising

A congregation serious about growth will spend a minimum of five percent of its budget on advertising. Here are areas that might be included:

1. *The Yellow Pages*

This will be effective in reaching new residents looking for a church. Market research indicates people under age 40 use the Yellow Pages frequently. Take as large an ad as possible, and include both your advertising theme and a brief reference to several specific ministries in your congregation.

2. *Mailings*

Mailing effectiveness grows with a) the frequency of your mailings (plan a minimum of six); b) the focus of your mailings (the more specific your target group, the better the results). Try this:

- January – An introductory letter of greeting with a well-designed brochure introducing the church.
- March – Send an invitation to a special seminar or workshop beneficial to members and non-members.
- April – A letter of invitation to a “Inquirer’s Class” mailed the week before a quarter of study begins.
- July – An invitation to a church social event. Perhaps ice cream sundaes on the church lawn. Information about Bible Study groups is included.
- Early September – An invitation to church following summer vacation, with a brochure on educational opportunities, classes, and other events in the fall.

- October or November – A mailing inviting people to the fall seminar, plus a new brochure on the church.

3. *Newspaper Advertising*

Advertising designed to reach the unchurched should run in the section of the paper most likely to be read by the people to whom the message is addressed, but not in the religious section.

4. *Radio and Television Advertising*

Churches should be particularly conscious of the opportunity to communicate their message, and should develop a planned advertising program to take advantage of the openness of people to a spiritual message in these difficult times.

Step Two: Programming

If the question is, ‘What do we advertise?’ the answer is, “our church’s program.” A church program is most attractive when:

a) it provides for all age groups; b) it is broadly based; c) it is of high quality; d) it is specifically and intentionally designed to reach the unchurched; e) it is specifically directed to your target audience.

Programs are developed as people-needs are identified. In a church I formerly served, we became aware that four members of the congregation were all battling cancer. Out of the experience of those cancer patients and their families came a decision to form a cancer support group as a ministry to the community.

Step Three: Inviting

By far the most important aspect of a congregation’s ability to attract new members is the degree to which members invite others. Between 75-90% of all adults who choose a congregation are first brought by a friend or relative. There is no more effective method of church growth than the personal invitations extended by church members.

Lyle Schaller notes: “The congregations in which members invite others to come to church with them usually display these characteristics: a) the members are enthusiastic about their faith as Christians, b) the members are enthusiastic about this congregation, c) the members are enthusiastic about the current preacher, d) the congregation as a whole conveys the expectation that members will invite others to come to church with them, e) most of the members actively and enthusiastically greet and welcome visitors, and f) that particular program or, if it is on Sunday morning, that worship experience is planned on the assumption that first-time visitors will be present. This means minimizing references to last week, to congregational problems, to administrative concerns or to ‘in house’ jokes that leave the stranger mystified.”

Seeing Your Visitors Return

The welcome you extend to visitors will greatly influence whether they come back. *You don't have a second chance for a first impression.* Here are some suggestions to improve your visitor welcome and follow-up strategy:

1. Change the name. Drop the word “greeters;” begin using the word “hosts.” The implications of the term will help those who welcome newcomers realize that their responsibility does not begin and end with a smile and a handshake. A “host” is responsible for seeing that “guests” are taken care of from the time they arrive until the time they leave. This doesn’t mean hosts must be with the visitor constantly. But like any good host, they are concerned that guests are welcome, meet others and enjoy the experience.

2. Increase the number of people who say “welcome.” Consider positioning “hosts” in the following places:

- *Parking lot.* Responsibilities include helping persons find the main entrance, distributing a well-marked floor plan of the church/educational facilities, assisting parents with children, distributing umbrellas on rainy days, etc.
- *Portico.* If your church has a place for unloading people in inclement weather, or where attenders regularly unload before parking, several “hosts” should be stationed there.
- *Doors.* Every door that people may enter should be “hosted.” The primary responsibility of these hosts is to identify persons who are new or visiting. The host should escort the guests to the welcome center, and introduce them to the “welcome center hosts.” (Therefore, you will need more than one host at each door.)
- *Welcome Center.* Most churches would do well to designate a centrally located area of the church as a “welcome center.” Put up an attractive sign and decorate the center appropriately. Welcome center hosts should mingle nearby. When anyone (host or member) brings a visitor to the center, welcome center hosts should be available to “adopt” the person/s for the rest of their visit. The host/s should offer to sit with the guests in the service, escort them and/or their children to an appropriate class, and introduce them to other members in the church before and after the service.
- *Classes.* Every adult and children’s class should have several hosts. Class hosts should watch for visitors, “adopt” them for the remainder of the class, introduce them to

others, sit with them. If the visitor has not been to the welcome center he/she should be escorted there.

- *After Church.* Newcomers' opinions about the "friendliness" of the church will be most influenced by what occurs after the service. "After Church Hosts" are primarily concerned with looking for persons following the service who seem to be alone and/or new. The guests should be engaged in conversation, introduced to others with similar interests or ages, and "adopted" until they are either introduced to someone else, or leave for the parking lot.

A helpful guide every church host should read is *How to Help Your Greeters Extend a Warm & Caring Welcome*.

3. Follow-up the visit within 48 hours. Several studies have documented that visitor-return rate is influenced by the length of time between the church visit and the follow-up contact from the church. Ideally, the contact is Sunday afternoon; Monday is next best, Tuesday next. After the first 48 hours, return rates drop drastically.

4. The goal of the follow-up contact is to see the visitor return. The average "affiliation rate" of a first-time visitor in American churches is 12-15%. (That is, 12-15% of all first-time visitors typically join that church in the following year.) Even growing churches average only 25% affiliation of first time visitors. But the average affiliation rate for second time visitors jumps to 40-45%. And third-time visitors is 60-75%!

Follow-up contacts should have only one goal: get the person back the following week. Many visitor follow-up programs see the follow-up call as evangelistic. (More often, this "hidden agenda" works against the visitor ever returning!) Ideally the follow-up contact involves the welcome center host who spent the most time with the guest the previous Sunday. The host should offer to meet the person or family at church at a pre-determined time and place.

5. Seek to move the visitor from an "entry point" to an "entry path." Most people eventually decide to join a church because of friends and relationships established. It is important, therefore, to help these persons find a group in which they can begin to build such relationships. A social group, class, home Bible study, sports team, etc. is the best way to see this happen. The original welcome center host should be familiar with the opportunities for involvement in the church, and seek to find an appropriate place for the newcomer to fit in.

Increase Your "Visitor Staying Power"

You don't have a second chance for a first impression. When it comes to visitors, do it right the first time. Here are some suggestions . . .

1. Do away with the greeter at the door impersonally shaking hands with everyone who enters. In most cases it's ineffective and could be the worst first impression your church could make.
2. Enlarge your visitor reception group to 10, 20, 30 greeters in the foyer. When a visiting young couple arrives, a young greeter couple will meet them, welcome them, *accompany them* to the auditorium, sit with them, assist them as needed with the worship service and at the benediction, take them to the coffee table and introduce them to others, especially of the same general age and interest. The greeters should note information on the visitors and send it to the office for later reference. This friendship-building initiative will be a major factor in seeing visitors return in greater numbers. A similar procedure should be applied to youth greeters, older adults, etc.
3. Why don't you and the preacher welcome visitors for 15 minutes *before* the morning service? You will begin the communication process person-to-person, you will be able to introduce visitors by name and tell something of interest about each. Your visitors will be very impressed... as will your members, by your example.
4. Build your visitor flow by recognizing members who *bring visitors*. *Try this*. During the announcements: "If you brought a guest, would you stand and introduce them?" What impact does this have on members? Sunday after Sunday it reinforces and rewards those who bring visitors. The result? More and more guests/visitors.

Seeing Visitors Return

The sooner a personal call is made on visitors, the better the results. Sunday afternoon is better than Wednesday. Monday better than Thursday. A first call made by members produces better results than a first call by a preacher.

Why? Because calls made by members are viewed as being "personal": calls by a minister are often viewed as "institutional," he's paid to do it.") When you do make an "institutional" response, preacher, make it as personal as possible. Send a follow-up letter after your visit. And, *make it personal*. (Use your new word processor!)

Why not send with your personal letter an enclosed, self-addressed card, asking for their response to the service (like the cards you often see in restaurants and hotels that care about their patrons' opinions). This could start the involvement process, as well as providing you with valuable information.

The purpose of your first visit – a return visit by the prospects. The first call (by members or minister) is to build friendships, to listen, to assess needs, interests, Christian commitment (if any), family, and other significant facts. It's an informal entrance interview. With this information, additional support and resources should be focused to see visitors move from the "outside" to the "inside." See that the name gets to 4-5

appropriate people in the church for subsequent invitations to various church/social events.

Who Are Your Best Visitor Prospects?

Many churches go out of their way to make the first-time visitor feel welcome and at home. Often they are given a special information packet, visitor ribbon, and may be asked to stand in the service.

However do you know who your second-time visitors are? Third-time? The fact is that those who return to your church a second time are much more receptive to uniting with your church than first-timers. And third-time visitors more open than second-timers.

What are you doing with your return visitors? They should receive as much or more attention, follow-up, and concern as the first-time attender. Your strategy should include such things as personal visits during the week from one or more person(s) with areas in common; a second, different letter from the church thanking the person for coming back again and perhaps explaining how a person can become more involved in the life of the church.

Third-time visitors are indicating by their presence that they are seriously interested in your church. Again, a unique system of responding to these people is called for.

If your congregation is making a good first impression, be sure to follow up that second visit with an equally good impression.

Predicting Your Church Growth or Decline by Visitors

You can predict your church's future growth pattern through your visitors. *Few visitors - little growth; many visitors - much growth.* Here's why:

You can expect to lose between 5-11% of your members each year; 1-2% through death, 2-3% through transfer-out, 2-6% through reversion. (Variables include age of congregation, location, size of church, effectiveness of incorporation, etc.) Analyze your own records for your average yearly losses in each category. *Growth takes place only after losses are recovered.* Example: a church with a membership of 750 could average a yearly loss of 75 members. They need 75 new members just to remain even. How many *visitors* would such a church need to grow?

The data from our computers – we are monitoring several hundred churches – indicate that the *typical church sees 12%-15% of its visitors saved.* This church must attract approximately 550 visitors in one year just to begin to grow; or approximately 11 visitors per Sunday who live in the church's ministry area. (We are helping churches improve this number dramatically through the application of appropriate growth strategies.)

To project your next year's growth/decline *first*, identify your expected loss from death, transfer-out, and reversion (based on your previous five years), *second*, determine the percentage of first-time visitors that actually are converted within 2-10 months; *third*, calculate the number of visitors you need to a) make up for expected losses, and b) grow beyond that point; *fourth*, determine the number of visitors you are presently attracting and compare this figure to step three. If it is less, expect a loss at the end of the year; if greater – growth.

To realize new growth through visitors a church has two options . . . first, increase the number of visitors per Sunday, second, increase the percentage of visitors who are converted. Both require a specific strategy, the second requires an "incorporation" strategy, the first calls for an "outreach" strategy.

You Don't Have a Second Chance . . . for a First Impression

A "visitor strategy" for your church will address two basic issues: 1) how to *attract* visitors, and 2) how to make them *feel welcome*. The first impressions you give in both areas are very important in seeing visitors eventually become members.

ATTRACTING VISITORS

Most people will have some mental images of your church even before they attend. This will come through a) acquaintances and word of mouth, b) drive-by appearance, and/or c) church advertising. Hopefully "a" will occur, and be positive; "b" is also important; but "c" is the area most churches overlook.

A creative advertising strategy is so easy . . . yet so seldom done. This, in spite of the fact that within a year an effective advertising strategy will substantially increase your “visitor flow.” Gather four to five creative, “unemployed” ones to serve on a *community relations committee* this Fall. Their areas of responsibility should be:

Mailings sent once every three months to areas in your community populated by persons who closely reflect the characteristics of your present members, since these people will feel most “at home” when they visit. In each mailing highlight an upcoming church event of interest to non-members. (Worship services usually aren’t.) Early September, mid-December, mid-spring, and early summer are the best times to mail. Provide a way for persons to take a small, non-threatening step to express interest such as requesting an appropriate free gift (such as a tract on the family), returning an interest reply card, calling for more information, receiving the church newsletter, etc.

Newspaper ads that are creatively written and visualized will place your church a step above the ordinary in the eyes of prospective visitors. An effective ad will a) get the *attention* of the reader, b) turn their attention to *interest* with a transition to a felt need, c) move from interest to stimulating *desire*, by showing how participating in church activities responds to their particular felt need, d) encourage the reader to take *specific action*, e) and communicate in a language familiar to the unchurched.

Unfortunately, advertising won’t grow your church. It *will* increase the number of visitors; it *will* raise the self-esteem of members, but it *won’t* cause people to be converted in record numbers. That’s where the second strategy comes in . . .

MAKING VISITORS FEEL WELCOME

Research indicates that the #1 reason people select a certain church is “they felt a sense of belonging.” They felt important, wanted, loved. What first impressions do the new visitors have of your church – once they arrive?

Realize that visitors, even old time church-goers, feel anxiety about going to a strange church the first few times. You can help them get over this anxiety in two ways:

Formal Welcome. Growing numbers of churches are realizing the value of placing their “first line” greeters in the church parking lot! It’s a good idea. For the visitor even knowing where to go once he/she gets out of the car can be a question. Develop a visitor “visitor package” to be given to visitors while they’re still in the parking lot, including an easy-to-follow map of the facilities. Parking lot greeters should escort the visitors to the entrance of the church where they are personally introduced to the “second line” of greeters. Your greeter system should respond to all first, second, and third-time visitors.

Informal Welcome. While your formal welcome strategy is important, the informal welcome ultimately has the *greatest influence on a person’s eventual decision* to be

saved even come back. It is when members go out of their way to express genuine interest in the newcomer ... when members are inviting them to a get-together of friends from the church . . . when they are remembered the next time they visit. According to our recent “love quotient” research, *growing churches measured significantly higher* on the “love expressed to visitors” than did declining churches. This “informal welcome” is more difficult to plan for, but it can be done, and your informal welcome can be improved!

HOW TO HAVE A CHURCH ATTENDANCE DRIVE

1. Ask each one in the congregation to attend for **8 weeks** before the “attendance day.”
2. Have cards with places to check as follows: I will attend every time; I will ask _____ people to come. Then see who doesn’t sign a card; pray for them and go talk to them and ask if they will be there. “Do you promise? Are you sure? O.K., sign here” (on the card).
3. Timing is important, especially if the church is tired. Find an excellent time for that church.
4. Provoke (motivate) to love and good works. The next verse (in Heb.) is about attendance.
5. Build up the importance of attendance. Get those attending to exhort the ones not attending.
6. Get all of God’s people there; **then** you can conscientiously ask everyone else.
7. Plan every detail of your drive; don’t fail to plan.
8. Have various ones in charge of the various activities, especially if the organizer is trying to do it “all.”
9. Use everything you have in the church to promote it.
10. Go all the way; stick your neck out; put it in the paper; tell everyone; burn your bridges; pulpit promotion, radio, tv, printing, mail, newsletter, bulletin boards, bumper stickers. Make every member a messenger. Use whatever way you can to get the word out.
11. The more advertising you do, the easier it is for people to talk to others about it.
12. Teach lessons on the campaign before you have it: Why have it? What each can do. What it will result in. What we do afterwards. Promote it.
13. Teachers receive a note in every class every time that they meet to promote it for all 8 weeks.
14. Use the organized visitation groups to visit everyone who has ever visited services (you should have kept records), or in any other way has a connection with the congregation (must be organized).
15. (If applicable) use the bus and have bus riders bring their parents and friends.
16. The preacher(s) (elders) must visit “part-timers” to get everyone to come.
17. Set goals for yourself (the coordinator of the drive). Invite 50-100. Don’t set goals for others.
18. Don’t just visit; go soul seeking.
19. Get 40% more promises than you actually want to have there. Many will not keep their word, even when they signed a card.
20. Have every age class and every sermon (a.m. and p.m.) all on a theme that’s in harmony with the idea chosen for the attendance day (don’t be repetitious).
21. Have the theme of the campaign taught in every Bible class for most, if not all of a quarter (example: “Jesus Cares” or “The Church in the World”).
22. When the day arrives, make it really valuable; have something really special for them. Think “non-member.” Many times this would probably involve an “outside” speaker.
23. Many times it is good to have a “pot luck” or some other kind of meal after the worship.
24. If possible, organize a way that every visitor is invited back the next week by someone who will also take them to lunch afterward.
25. The program needs to be organized so that everyone is given a job and is able to do it. Follow up on the first card filled out (#2 above) with another on “what do you want to do?”
26. This program must be coordinated with a planned follow-up program ready to go immediately the following day.

Incorporating and Assimilating Your Newcomers

Dr. Bill Sullivan

In my experiences of church growth, I have found it helpful to distinguish between two events relating to a new person's integration into the fellowship of a local church – *incorporation* and *assimilation*. Traditionally these words have been used interchangeably. Actually, they are *two very different aspects* of the new person's integration process, both of which need careful attention.

"Incorporation:" "the process of helping newcomers feel *socially comfortable* with the church – its people, programs, and facilities. "Incorporation" is very critical to making disciples. Contrary to what many church leaders believe, "incorporation" actually takes place at the *front end* of the evangelism process. When newcomers feel *socially comfortable* with church members they will listen to the message of the church and its people. If social comfort is low or non-existent, participation in church related activities is also low or non-existent. A first-time visitor who attends your worship or small group is unfamiliar with the context and unacquainted with your members. Such a situation naturally creates social discomfort. If that discomfort remains at the conclusion of the first contact, the likelihood of your newcomer returning drops markedly. If, however, the social discomfort is gone by the end of the meeting, the chances of this person returning go up dramatically. Remember, you never have a second chance for a first impression! A church that recognizes this and organizes to overcome the tendency toward social discomfort of newcomers will be much more effective in seeing them eventually involved.

"Assimilation:" the process of helping newcomers feel cognitively assured that they are an *accepted, trusted member* of the fellowship. While social involvement comes early in evangelism, assimilation follows later. The final test of inclusion into the fellowship is *trust*. Many have dropped out, not because they weren't socially incorporated, but because psychologically they felt rebuffed. Church leaders did not trust them to chair a committee, or to give an opinion on intensely internal matters of the church. No amount of social involvement can overcome the rejection felt by one who believes he or she is not trusted. Conversely, the new church member who feels genuinely trusted and sought-after feels a sense of oneness and integration with the church.

Examine your church's effectiveness in welcoming newcomers. And look at *both* your *incorporation* strategy and your *assimilation* strategy.

Improving Your Member Incorporation Strategy

Here are some thought-starters for how to see new members become active members:

- Develop a special new members' course for your church. Have recent new members help, since they know better than anyone the unique needs of the newcomer.
- Monitor the critical involvement indicators of your new members – worship, Sunday School, small groups, giving – for the first six months. 85% of those who become inactive do so in the first six months of their membership.
- Plan special events designed to build relationships between new members. (Roller skating, a baseball game, pizza, a theatrical play, etc.)
- If you have a “sponsor program” that matches new and old members, plan with sponsors to discuss ways to improve the strategy.
- Develop a “job description” for each role in your church. Include a review of these ministry opportunities in every New Members Class.
- Invite one person per week (representing a particular ministry area in the church) to speak to the New Members Class and describe what they do and how a new person could become involved.
- Give each new member 3-5 names of members in the church (unknown by the new member) with the assignment of finding those persons and completing a “personal profile” on each for the next meeting.
- Have a new member video presentation on the church's various ministries. Update the presentation each quarter with the next class of new members.
- Have a “one-year old” birthday recognition each quarter during worship to honor members who have been in the church for one year. Make sure they are aware of it ahead of time.
- If your church uses plastic name tags, print the name tag in different colors representing the longevity of the member (red: less than one year; blue: 1-4 years; white: 5-10 years; green: 10-25 years; silver: 25-40 years; gold: 40 + years). Have a special ceremony to present “graduates” in each category with their new colored pins.
- Personally interview every new member baptized in the last two years. Ask how the church could improve their new member orientation from these people who are best equipped to tell you.

The Characteristics of an “Incorporated Member”

Here are eight characteristics every new member should have *by the conclusion* of your new members class:

- 1) Each new member should be able to list at least seven new friends they have made in the church. (These friendships could be, and often are, with fellow new members.)
- 2) Each new member should be able to identify their spiritual talents.
- 3) Each new member should be involved in at least one (preferably several) roles/tasks/ministries in the church, appropriate to his/her spiritual talents.
- 4) Each new member should be actively involved in a small fellowship (face-to-face) group. Many churches keep their new members groups together.
- 5) Each new member should be demonstrating a regular financial commitment to the church.
- 6) Each new member should personally understand and identify with the goals of the church.
- 7) Each new member should be exhibiting a regular pattern of worship attendance.
- 8) Each new member should have identified his/her unchurched friends and relatives and be taking specific steps to help them toward responsible church membership.

The New Member Class

Look at the orientation process of your new members. Are you addressing the issues that will result in their becoming active, responsible members? Most churches aren't!

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NEW MEMBER'S CLASS . . .

MISCONCEPTION: New member orientation should focus on grounding members in the faith, on Bible study, on spiritual growth, the meaning of baptism and the Lord's supper, and church doctrine.

Comment: The most important goals for your new member program should be 1) building strong relationships with other members, and 2) involvement in a meaningful role or ministry in the church.

Don't confuse the purpose of a new believer's class with a new member's class. One class *cannot* accomplish both aims. A new believer who is also a new member should be in both groups.

MISCONCEPTION: Once a person leaves the new member's class he/she should become part of a Sunday School class or other group.

Comment: If your strategy for integrating new members into groups and classes means integrating them into existing groups and classes, it may fail. If a group or class has been together for over two years, new members will generally not find a home there. Regularly start new groups and classes for new members. If you don't believe it, try a new group for new members sometime and watch what happens.

MISCONCEPTION: One new member's class per year is adequate.

Comment: The first six months of a new member's life in the church *are critical*. If the person is not "incorporated" by the end of six months, they probably never will be. One class a year *overlooks 75% of the new members* at the very point they need help the most. Plan on a new members class at least four times per year. Some "super-churches" are so aware of this necessity, they start a new member's class each week!

(The Barnabas Program Developed By Larry Pasley. Use It To The Glory Of God.)

BARNABAS PROGRAM

Barnabas Means “Son Of Encouragement” And This Program Is Designed To Build-Up Anyone In The Congregation Who Might Need Encouragement.

THOSE INCLUDED MIGHT BE:

I. Those Not Attending At All.

- A. Send a copy of the bulletin each week.
- B. Send them a note or card each month saying we miss them.
- C. Call or visit them occasionally just to see how they are doing and ask if they need any help.

II. Those Not Attending Regularly.

- A. Send a copy of the bulletin each week they are not here.
- B. Let them know they are missed by calling or sending a card when they are not here.
- C. Drop by and visit them occasionally.

III. New People Moving Into The Community Who Visit The Congregation.

- A. Invite them home with you after the assembly.
- B. Offer to help them locate housing.
- C. See that they have access to a local paper and map or anything else which might be useful to them.

IV. Local Visitors To Our Assemblies.

- A. Be sure you speak to them and welcome them.
- B. Send them a note saying you appreciate their visit and invite them back.
- C. Visit them the week of their visit.

V. College Students, Singles.

- A. Adopt-a-student.
- B. Involve them in working with the teens.
- C. Make them feel like they are a part of the body.

VI. Those Who Are Facing Peculiar Problems In Their Life.

- A. The sick.
 - 1. Visit the sick (hospital and home).
 - 2. Take food to the sick (at home).
- B. The bereaved at the death of a loved one. Be sure they receive cards, calls and visits occasionally for at least six months after the death.

- C. Shut-ins or those in nursing homes.
 - 1. Be sure they receive regular cards, visits, phone calls, small gifts, etc.
 - 2. Offer to bring them tapes of the sermons if they would like.
- D. Anyone with an obvious problem with children, mate, job, money, etc.
 - 1. Be observant and seek out those who may have problems.
 - 2. Share books, videos and other help available in our library or elsewhere. Be a friend to them.

VII. New Members.

- A. New Christian class - **First Steps In Faith** by Clayton Pepper.
 - 1. Have different couples teach each lesson. (One couple would teach the same lesson each time.)
 - 2. The new converts go to a different home each week (or month, etc.) and are taught a first principle lesson and get to know a family in the congregation.
- B. Get them involved as soon as possible.
 - 1. Have them fill out a form indicating what programs in which they would like to work.
 - 2. Encourage them to attend social functions
 - 3. Have Bible school teachers encourage each family member to attend.

VIII. Membership Involvement - Getting To Know One Another.

- A. Look over the member list and make a decision to get to know someone who you do not recognize or know very well.
- B. Begin A "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner" Program.
 - 1. Everyone who signs up for the program alternate going to someone's house for dinner or having someone over for dinner.
 - 2. The host is only told how many will be coming to dinner not who it will be.
- C. Begin a monthly men's supper (at the building) or men's night out (at a restaurant).
- D. Begin a monthly ladies' night out.

A BARNABAS PROGRAM

I want to be involved in the Barnabas Program. I will help in the following way(s).

NAME _____

I. THOSE NOT ATTENDING AT ALL.

_____ Mail Bulletins To Those Not In Attendance At All.

_____ Send Monthly Notes Or Cards To Those Not Attending At All.

_____ Call Or Visit Those Not Attending At All.

II. THOSE NOT ATTENDING REGULARLY.

_____ Mail Bulletins To Those Not Attending Regularly.

_____ Send Monthly Notes Or Cards To Those Not Attending Regularly.

_____ Call Or Visit Those Not Attending At All.

III. NEW PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY WHO VISIT THE CONGREGATION.

_____ Invite Visitors Moving To Our Community For A Meal After The Assembly.

_____ Provide Local Paper, Map, And Help Locate Housing For Newcomers.

_____ Take Newcomers Packets To Those Visitors Who Have Moved Here.

_____ Make A Point To Seek Out And Speak To All Visitors At The Assemblies.

IV. LOCAL VISITORS TO OUR ASSEMBLIES.

_____ Send Notes Or Cards To Local Visitors.

_____ Visit Local Visitors The Week Of Their Visit.

V. ADOPT A STUDENT OR SINGLE PERSON.

_____ Adopt A Student Or Single Person.

VI. THOSE FACING PECULIAR PROBLEMS IN LIFE.

A. Sick.

_____ Visit The Sick (Hospital And Home).

_____ Take Food To The Sick (At Home).

B. Bereaved.

_____ Visit Those Who Have Lost A Loved One. Weekly For Six Months.

C. Shut-ins and Nursing Homes.

_____ Visit Shut-ins And Nursing Home Residents Regularly.

_____ Send Cards Or Notes To Shut-Ins And Nursing Home Residents.

_____ Take Tapes Of Sermons To Shut-Ins And Nursing Home Residents.

D. Counseling Needs.

_____ Be Available For Counseling Those With Child Rearing Difficulties.

_____ Be Available For Counseling Those With Marital Difficulties.

_____ Be Available For Counseling Those With Job Related Problems.

_____ Be Available For Counseling Those With Money Related Problems.

VII. NEW MEMBERS.

_____ Teach A First Steps In Faith Lesson, In My Home, To New Christians.

_____ See That All Newcomers And New Christians Fill Out Involvement Form.

VIII. MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT - GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER.

_____ Make A Point To Get To Know Someone New Each Month.

_____ Join The “Guess Who’s Coming To Dinner” Program.

_____ Cook For The Men’s Supper.

_____ Participate In The Men’s Supper.

_____ Participate In The Ladies’ Night Out Program.

A FELLOWSHIP GROUP APPROACH TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE LORD'S WORK

I. Goals:

- A. To PROVIDE PLEASANT FELLOWSHIP FOR ALL MEMBERS. There is a great need to provide meaningful fellowship for each new member, all weak members, and anyone else, who because of temporary circumstances might be discouraged. Even those who are strong spiritually need to have fellowship with brethren in order to love their brother and be ready to assist him.
- B. TO EXPEDITE AN EFFECTIVE VISITATION PROGRAM WHICH WILL BE PLEASANT, PRODUCTIVE, AND EFFICIENT. There is a constant need for visitation for a variety of reasons. Newcomers to town are often "looking for a church." Visitors to our services are favorably impressed by someone showing special interest in them by paying a short visit to them to invite them back. Out of duty members need to be checked on occasionally to see if something might be done to reclaim them. Home Bible Study Prospects need to be checked out. Others, currently studying in a Home Bible Study series, need to be visited to increase the chance of their obeying the gospel.
- C. TO INVOLVE EVERY MEMBER IN SOME IMPORTANT TASK FOR THE LORD'S WORK. Everyone needs to be important to someone or something. Every member has at least one talent that is important. Much talent is hidden because shy members think "someone else in this large group can do a better job, so I will just sit back and let _____ do it." Working through smaller groups this member is more likely to do his part in order to help his group accomplish meaningful goals. It will be up to group leaders to make sure every member of his group KNOWS something that needs to be done that HE CAN DO.
- D. TO ACCOMPLISH NEEDED PROJECTS: There are constantly reoccurring tasks that go unattended to and thus hold back progress simply because there is a shortage of willing workers. Most of these projects could be quickly taken care of if assigned to small groups, or if a group would discuss the need and then pledge itself to the solving of a problem. Some of these needs fall under the following categories:
 - 1. Youth projects - parties, devotionals, etc.
 - 2. Building repairs - construction.
 - 3. Elderly needs - widows' needs, widowers' needs.

4. Sickness needs.
5. Distribution of tracts or other forms of evangelization.

A GROUP OF 8-10 FAMILIES CAN ACCOMPLISH JUST ABOUT ANY PROJECT THEY THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE! The deacon in charge of any given area could turn to the group meeting on a particular week and ask for their help. Or, if a group thinks a certain project needs to be taken care of, they could contact the deacon in charge and get his help or O.K.

- E. TO HELP NEW MEMBERS GET ACQUAINTED AND QUICKLY BECOME A PART OF THE WORKING FORCE. New members are often eager to make new friends in the church and to be a part of the work force. Often though, it is several months before they get to know more than a handful of members and even longer before they are involved in any work. They establish a pattern of being a spectator rather than a doer. We who are older in the faith are not usually aware of their needs or interests or talents. Old friends try to drag them back into their company which is unhealthy for the new convert. Move-in members form poor impressions of the congregation because they do not know what is being done and often complain, "They are not as friendly here as where I was." This is tragic whenever the newcomer is a weak member.
- F. TO CREATE A MEANS FOR QUICKLY RESPONDING TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS IN TIMES OF SICKNESS, DEATH OR OTHER EMERGENCIES.
- G. TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING, TRUST AND GREATER CONCERN FOR OUR BROTHERS. We are our brother's keeper! We cannot trust nor love one whom we do not know. Misunderstandings, suspicion, and unfair surmisings run rampant in a church where members do not know one another well.

II. A PLAN OF ACTION TO ACCOMPLISH THE ABOVE STATED GOALS:

- A. SET UP # FELLOWSHIP GROUPS WITH AN ELDER AND HIS WIFE OR A DEACON AND HIS WIFE AS THE GROUP LEADERS, THEN:
 1. Each Group Leader will choose 3 couples as his helpers. (You will choose couples upon whom you can depend for help! Group leaders will explain to these 3 couples only the details of this program and why it is important that they assist.)
 2. After choosing the 3 couples to help, the Group Leaders will select 3 families that need to be worked on. Leaders should select persons who have something in common with the "worker families".

(The ones being worked on are not to find out that they are the “weak members” of the group.)

3. The rest of the members will then be equally divided among the groups. Care must be given that no group is a segregated group either racially, financially, or according to age.
 4. Have the fellowship group lists typed up and available to all.
- B. EXPLAIN TO THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION SOME OF THE AIMS OR GOALS OF THE PROGRAM AND URGE STRONGLY THAT ALL PARTICIPATE. (Goal #2 will not be stressed from the pulpit.)
- C. ONLY TWO FELLOWSHIP GROUPS WILL MEET EACH WEEK IN GROUP LEADERS’ HOMES OR HELPERS’ HOMES. (This will make each group meet only once every 5-6 weeks.)
1. Pulpit announcements and bulletin announcements will be made that “Group 1 will meet at the _____ house, _____ evening at 7:00;” etc.
 2. Group Leader or Hostess will personally invite or remind any of the “weak” members to come for the fellowship. (One of the helper couples might offer to go by and pick them up.)
 3. Group Leaders should check with the office for names of visitors, new converts not yet assigned to a group, prospects, or others to be specially invited to attend the meeting.

III. WHAT IS TO BE DONE AT THESE FELLOWSHIP GROUP MEETINGS:

- A. THE EMPHASIS IS UPON FELLOWSHIP! Plan games, get-acquainted sessions, Bar-B-Q or chili supper, ice cream freeze, etc. Plan something that everyone will look forward to and will want to attend. (The success of this program will depend upon these meetings being something people will want to attend rather than attending out of duty.)
- B. AFTER THE FUN-TIME, it will be necessary to have a “serious time,” to make the meeting one that accomplishes important functions. During the “serious time”:
1. Have a short devotional (10-15 minutes of singing and prayers).
 2. Decide upon a group project to be accomplished before the next meeting (5 weeks away). The Group Leader can have a prepared

list of tasks needing to be performed. Others in the group will doubtlessly have ideas as to important chores. Decide upon a project and a plan of action which includes a date and who is to be in charge of what. (Group Leaders should try to guide the group to QUICKLY make their plans for action and not get bogged down in details or dissension. Group Leaders should encourage projects that involve every member of the group, especially the weaker members that need to be important.)

3. Mention the names of those of the group that are absent and urge all to encourage those missing to be present for the next meeting. (Stress the fun they missed.)

- C. SOMETIME AT THE FIRST MEETING AND THEN AGAIN AS OFTEN AS NECESSARY, LAY DOWN THE RULE THAT COMPLAINING, CRITICIZING, AND CONDEMNING IS NOT TO BE ENGAGED IN! These meetings must not become "gripe sessions," "gossip sessions," or "business meetings." The only justification for mentioning anything that is wrong or lacking in the church is to point out a problem that this group can solve! If it is a problem that cannot be solved by this group, DON'T BRING IT UP! Also do not let these meetings be used to discuss points of controversy. Controversial problems will destroy the purpose of these meetings. In other words, Group Leaders must prevent these meetings from being seed-beds of any kind of division!!!

IV. FOLLOWING THE MEETING:

- A. A written report is to be filed with the office. A short form will be provided. It will look something like the following:

REPORT FORM

Group # _____
No. in Attendance _____
Absentees: _____

Project Selected: _____

Visitation Assignment Details _____

_____ (signed)

- B. As projects are accomplished, pass this on to the office so that each group can receive its due praise. This will cause each group to take healthy pride in accomplishment.
- C. It is up to the Group Leader to see that projects are accomplished by the group. (It is better to pick up a small project and accomplish it than a large one and never get it done.)
- D. Group Leaders should get “helper couples” to assist with visitation needs or other problems involving weaker members of the group. Helpers can be called upon to get materials projects, work out details surrounding the current project, or perform any needed task.
- E. Group Leaders should discuss with other Group Leaders what they are planning to do, Fellowship ideas, project ideas, things that worked well in their last meeting, that did not work well, etc. In other words, help each other plan more effective fellowship meetings.
- F. After 3 meetings of each group (approx. 4 months) an evaluation meeting will be held of all Group Leaders. They will seek at that time to improve upon the program through changing the members of each group or through planning a different type fellowship for the group system.

V. APPARENT ADVANTAGE OF THIS APPROACH.

- A. No one person meets more than once every 5 weeks unless he chooses to attend additional fellowship meetings (new converts, newcomers, visitors, and guests may wish to use these meetings to get better acquainted).
- B. Work is being accomplished every week (by 2 groups). Thus visitors to our services can be visited immediately. Any special visits can be made every week during that week. Any special need can be taken care of by a group that is meeting that week.
- C. It provides a means to equally share the work load among all members.
- D. With small groups no one is likely to be forgotten, neglected, or left out,
- E. Any one who sees a need for anything can see a way to do something about it. This program should encourage more good works being thought up and carried out.
- F. Each group should become a force for good and each individual should become aware of important work that he can do for his Lord’s cause.

Editor warns to be careful with the worship assembly

Spiritual men and women to the right and left of center in churches of Christ are concerned about our future. They have never before experienced the amount and/or kind of turmoil that afflicts so many of our congregations today, and they are scared as they contemplate what might happen to the Lord's church.

Some people say that we have already experienced a split in the fellowship and just need to acknowledge the fact. One person said that he was not as worried about a split as he was about a shattering of the brotherhood.

While we appreciate the genuine concern so evident in these expressions, we do not believe that the church has already divided, that it will divide, or that it is going to shatter. This optimism presumes, of course, that key people on every side of current controversial issues will demonstrate a high degree of integrity, love and patience as they work through the differences within a framework of sound biblical teaching.

It appears to us that our unity in the years ahead will depend to a great extent on whether we are committed to the idea of being careful about what we do in the public assembly. A consensus concerning what should and should not happen in the public worship assembly has been a strong unifying factor in churches of Christ throughout the twentieth century.

Without doubt, the public assembly has unified us as a brotherhood. In spite of the autonomy of local congregations, the odds have always been strong that on a vacation or business trip, we could stop at a building designated "Church of Christ" and find a group of people worshipping in the same way we did back home. We have also felt secure as we moved from city to city, or nation to nation, that we would find a place to worship that had a public assembly like the one we had attended ever since we became Christians. This predictability concerning the public assembly allowed us to have a sense of brotherhood that transcended social, economic, racial, regional and national barriers.

Although the flavor of the public assembly might differ from place to place, we knew that males would lead the worship and that the content of the assembly would predictably include *a capella* music, prayers, the Lord's Supper, a biblical study and the giving of a financial gift to further the work of the kingdom. Sometimes the singing was not very good, and sometimes it was beautiful; some studies were better than others, not to mention the prayers. Regardless of the aesthetic quality of the assembly, however, the public worship assembly had the effect of unifying the worshipers as they praised God and remembered the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Because of the strong commitment to a public worship assembly that was biblical, brothers and sisters who differed on many other ideas found the public

assembly to be a source of unity in the midst of diversity. Although members disagreed on a host of other issues, they could praise God in unity with brothers and sisters determined to maintain the pattern of first-century worship.

We have usually been longsuffering about differences outside the assembly. We have disagreed about the war question, the marriage-divorce-remarriage issue, politics, the use of tobacco and alcohol, celebration of Christmas, the rightness or wrongness of certain forms of entertainment and numerous other outside-the-assembly issues. In the vast majority of cases, however, these differences involving activities outside the assembly have not divided the church nor provoked a breaking of fellowship. There have been heated arguments, and rightfully so, but people still have been willing to lay differences aside and worship together in the public assembly as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have never, to our knowledge, had unanimity concerning whether it was right or wrong to use instrumental music with religious singing outside the assembly. Some families permitted this in their home, and others did not; but I never knew of any breakdown of fellowship because of what happened in the home. Some brides wanted an organ in their wedding, and others refused even to contemplate such an idea. Some permitted instrumental music at funeral services, and others absolutely refused it. Church members evaluated these choices and reached their own conclusions, but never did these difference cause a breach of fellowship. Why? Because what happened in the home, at a wedding, or at a funeral was outside the public assembly.

Many of us grew up listening to the Chuck Wagon Gang and the Stamps-Baxter Quartet. Our people took pride in the fact that some of our own members sang with the Stamps-Baxter Quartet, even though a piano accompanied that singing. But their singing was outside the church's public assembly, so even those who disagreed with what was happening did not make it a point of fellowship.

In summary, the public worship assembly is critical to our unity as a brotherhood. It always has been. Because of this, we must be exceedingly careful when we tamper with it in any way. We are very resilient in churches of Christ when the issues on which we disagree fall outside the public assembly of the saints. When controversial practices enter the public assembly, however, everyone is affected; and the possibility for division and shattering is scary.

Howard Norton
CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE / JANUARY 1993

Relevant thoughts on making corporate worship the time of our lives

Experiments in corporate worship are widespread today among Protestants, Catholics and Jews. Present unrest about worship comes, in the first instance, from misunderstanding the nature of biblical worship. If we misunderstand or disagree on what worship is, our views will differ on what we ought to be doing in worship and what steps should be taken to “improve” worship.

Worship stands at the center of the church’s existence. Whatever else the church does, it worships. Whatever else it is, the church is a worshipping community. Worship is adoration of God. It remembers and proclaims God’s great acts of deliverance in the history of his people. At the heart of Christian worship is the Lord’s Supper, which unites the church in remembering the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. In partaking of the supper, the church acknowledges and submits to the presence and rule of the resurrected Lord in the church.

Christian worship is thus God-centered. It is not human-centered, much less self-centered. True worship subordinates our hearts and minds, our feelings and concerns, to the reality of God and his claims upon our lives. The fact that worship is God-centered delivers us from being locked into our own limited thoughts, abilities and emotions. Further, it delivers us from society’s illusions about reality.

Worship evokes the realization that our trust and confidence cannot be placed in ourselves or in things we can measure and manage. As Paul says, “Our hope is in God who raises the dead.” This enables us to see that neither our own intellects, nor our own efforts, nor our own experiences is of ultimate importance. God-centered worship delivers us from self-preoccupation.

We must remind ourselves that idolatry is not just the worship of false gods; idolatry is also the false worship of the true God. Historically, biblical worship has mutated into false worship in two ways. First, we distort worship when we attempt to use worship for our own ends. When our worship attempts to manipulate divine power for personal benefits (e.g., financial, political, etc.), we are worshipping God because he is useful, not because he is God.

The second way worship may become distorted into idolatry occurs when we confuse seeking God with seeking the experience of God. Although God is still named, seeking the experience of God inevitably draws our attention back to ourselves - our own hearts, our own emotions, our own feelings. This subtle shift of focus happens not only in our private devotions but also in our corporate worship.

More than 40 years ago, in *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, Donald Miller warned:

“... to evaluate worship by what happens in the experience of the worshiper is to make men, not God, the center of worship. Worship then becomes a device to use God for human ends, a tool for manipulating divine power and making God a slave to man.”

Miller continues:

“In modern worship services, too much attention is directed toward what happens to the worshiper. Devices of sound, lighting and pageantry are frequently utilized to produce emotional feelings in the worshiper. Those who participate tend to evaluate the worship service in terms of how it ... gave them a “good feeling,” or “inspired” them. ... Religious entertainment is often confused with religious worship.

The purpose of worship – the focus of worship – is to give honor and glory to God. This does not mean that worship does not affect our attitudes, dispositions and emotions. Certainly worship may evoke a wide range of emotions, including gratitude, awe, humility, sorrow and joy. But we do not use worship in order to arouse or manipulate these emotions. Biblical worship does not aim at producing such experiences.

Everything that evokes these emotions is not worship, nor does the presence of such emotions validate worship. Again, it is crucial to distinguish between seeking God and seeking the experience of God.

Padoxically (sic), it is only when we take our attention off ourselves and when we are not asking, “What does this do for me? How does this make me feel? Am I enjoying this?” that we receive the benefits of worship. True worship frees us from our self-preoccupation by centering our hearts and minds on God. As our worship is directed toward our Creator, our selfish preoccupations are exposed and our true needs made clear. In this manner, worship frees us from the gods of the age – from the modern idols of comfort, success and fun. It frees us from the tyranny of the popular and fits us for service to the Truth.

Popular attempts to make worship “relevant” should be approached cautiously. To make worship “relevant” is to adapt it to our own culture, variously described as media-dominated, entertainment-saturated, pleasure-oriented, self-indulgent and sensate. To make worship relevant to this culture would require a “worship technology” – expensive sound and lighting equipment, trained “worship technicians” and special performers.

Ultimately, it would make “worship” look like a rock concert or a halftime show. Do we really want worship to provide maximum sensory pleasure, or to be exciting, entertaining, emotionally intense and personally fulfilling according to contemporary cultural tastes?

While it is understandable that, in a self-centered, fun-seeking, media-dominated society, Christians are confusing religious entertainment with Christian worship, this hardly makes it less damaging. Christian leaders, under enormous pressure to appear “open” and “progressive,” need courage to resist the relentless pull of the cultural undertow. Worship fads and trends reflecting our entertainment-saturated culture and driven by a growing worship industry may make “praise time” more fun, but they also trivialize the faith and impoverish the life of discipleship.

MICHAEL R. WEED, Institute for Christian Studies,
CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE / .NOVEMBER 1998

Six Ways to Increase Your Worship Attendance

Because the worship service is the most visible activity in the church, and has the greatest influence on morale and congregational self-esteem, church leaders do well to focus on positively influencing attendance patterns. Growing worship attendance says to members, “our faith has answers for today’s world ... and people are coming to our church to find it!” Growing worship attendance creates a ripple effect that positively affects other areas of church life, as well.

Assuming your services are well planned and conducted, the following six suggestions can increase your attendance in the next year ...

1. Monitor attendance and respond to signs of inactivity. One of the easiest ways to increase worship attendance is to decrease the number who become inactive.

People like to be noticed when they’re absent. A note from the church saying, “we missed you last Sunday...” will greatly improve attendance patterns. Studies indicate that when a person misses three Sundays in a row, he/she may be on a drop out track. When you see a 3-week inactive pattern . . . RESPOND! A phone call or visit from the preacher or elders is most effective.

For such a system to work you need a method of: 1) identifying who is in worship, 2) monitoring attendance levels, and 3) responding to signs of inactivity.

2. Ask members to set goals for worship attendance. This idea works! Ask members to include a “worship pledge” this fall with their “financial pledge.” Each person estimates the number of Sundays they plan to be in church the coming year (considering illness, vacations, etc.). Then, each quarter, send members an update on how they are doing relative to their goal. Lyle Schaller (*44 Ways to Increase Worship Attendance*) contends that worship numbers should increase 5%-10% with this approach!

3. Have regular celebrations to highlight benefits. Everyone loves a party. We know that big events throughout the church year draw larger crowds. In addition to such traditional highlights, plan 6-8 more special days this year. The actual purpose is not as important as the fact that it’s a highlight.

Promote it well, and you’ll find attendance grows. And, as you have these more often, you’ll find attendance on other Sundays will begin to rise.

4. Involve more people in worship roles and ministries. Involve more people in your music, communion, ushering, greeting and you will see an increase in the number of family members attending.

5. Obtain feedback from members on important issues in their lives. Twice a year include a 3x5 card in each bulletin. Ask members to list three issues they struggle with in applying the Christian faith, or questions to which they would like a Biblical answer. Explain that you will use these responses to prepare the services and messages in the coming months. You'll see an increase in people who are looking forward to a relevant worship and learning experience (or, at least, who want to find out what problems other people have).

6. Expand the number and variety of services. If you are typical of 80% of the churches in America, an additional worship service will increase the total number of people you serve. This is true regardless of 1) the number of people in your present service, 2) the capacity of your auditorium or 3) the growth rate of your present service. In fact, for most plateaued or declining churches, this is one of the single most important strategies to see new growth occur. The service should be geared toward a different "people group" than now attend, and reflect good research on the kind of service that will reach the targeted people. The service need not even be in the auditorium.

Why not appoint a special "worship task force" and assign them the task of implementing these six strategies during the coming year? Keep a careful record of attendance patterns, and watch for trends. Unless there are some extenuating circumstances, you will see growth as a result.

Can Advertising Help Your Church?

First, let's look at what advertising *cannot do* . . .

Advertising cannot win people. Research found long ago that mass media campaigns are ineffective for “conversion growth.” People become Christians through the influence of trusted others, and because the Christian lifestyle and community responds to a felt need.

Advertising cannot stop decline. If a church has been plateaued or in decline for some time, the most effective advertising strategy will not turn it around. The decline is most likely due to other factors. (*The Church Growth Ratio Book* by Win Arn is helpful for initial diagnosis.)

Advertising cannot change reality. People ultimately respond to the experience they have in your church – not the experience that is promised. Be sure first-time visitors leave with a positive memory and desire to return for more.

So what can advertising do for your church?

Advertising can help attract first-time visitors. Growing churches average 4-5% of their morning worship attendance as first or second time visitors. Some churches are not growing simply because they don't have enough people coming in the “top end of the funnel.”

Advertising can communicate what you want people to know about your church. A good advertising strategy informs the community of your desire to reach out in love, and of your desire to meet their needs. Advertising can also inform your community of Christ's love for them, and of the opportunity for a personal and rewarding relationship with the living God.

Advertising can raise congregational self-esteem. Advertising that is a cut above the norm over most church promotion will give members a sense of pride about “my church.” And they'll be more conscious of living up to the promises made.

Characteristics of a Good Newspaper Ad

Money spent on newspaper advertising by most churches is bad stewardship. (Although it is a good source for preachers looking for future sermon titles.) But newspaper advertising, when done effectively, can increase your visitor flow. Here are eleven characteristics your newspaper ad should include:

1. It is based on target audience research. Identify a narrowly defined “people group” you want to reach, then find out the three most important areas of concern they typically have. Write the ad to focus on one of those themes.
2. It is written in language the unchurched can understand. If you tell readers that your church speaks a relevant language to average people, your ad should model that

promise. Once you've written the copy, show it to some non-Christian friends and ask for their impressions . . . does it communicate?

3. It highlights relationships and people rather than programs and institutions. You may have excellent programs, but programs are a "means" to an "end." Identify and promote the benefit to people; focus on individuals, not institutions.
4. It catches the attention of the desired audience. Research indicates we take between 1-3 seconds to determine whether we want to spend additional time reading the rest of an ad.
5. It uses the 60-40 rule. At least 60% of the space in your ad should be head line, picture, or white space. At most 40% of the ad should be "body copy."
6. It is specific . . . focusing on one issue or topic. A good ad is a rifle shot, not a shotgun. Highlight one activity/event, focus on one "people group," and make it the only theme of the ad.
7. It has a standardized form. If you run regular ads, they should be different in content but similar in style. At some point your readers should begin to associate an ad with your church, even before they read the copy.
8. It is regularly repeated. Not everyone will have the same need at the same time. One ad can be run 5-6 times and continue to generate a response. (Think how many times you see the same ad on TV.)
9. It encourages the reader to take specific action. Whatever response you are asking the reader to take should be easy; several "baby steps" rather than one "giant step." Be sure you have a preconceived plan for following up the contacts that are generated.
10. It highlight the benefits. A man doesn't go to the hardware store to buy a ½" drill bit. He is buying a ½" hole. A mother doesn't go to the store to buy baby food, she is buying a healthy child. Take the same approach to promoting your church – identify and highlight the desired outcome.
11. It is placed where it will be seen by your target audience. The church page is OK if you're looking to attract other preachers (or disgruntled members of other churches). If you're trying to reach unchurched people, put the ad in the section of the paper they read, which is not the church page.

If you have a group of creative people in your church, give them this list and the task of developing four sample ads. If the experience is good, give them a green light to create an entire series.

(Helpful Resources 12 Church Ads, *Marketing for Congregations*, *Church Marketing*, *Promotion Strategies for the Local Church*.)

Try a "Video Brochure"

In these days when few read but everyone watches, a "video brochure" can help your church take a step into the 21st century, and give your people an effective way to introduce their friends to church and their church to friends.

What exactly is a "video brochure?"

It is a high-quality 5-12 minute introduction for viewers of the positive benefits that involvement in your church brings to people's lives. The primary purpose is to encourage viewers to visit your church and discover for themselves the warmth and love to be found there.

This goal is best accomplished through enthusiastic, personal testimonies from your members. The video should focus primarily on people and benefits. A short, personal word from the preacher is appropriate. Emphasis on facilities, programs, and "institutional" topics will generally not enhance your video.

Some churches have lay persons skilled in video production, and can produce a video brochure own their own. (It requires more than just a home camcorder, however.) Professional and semi-professional production companies are available in most cities, and a well-produced video brochure can usually be done for \$1,500 - \$2,000.

(I have become acquainted with two young Christians whose love is video production. They have developed a fine production and editing facility and have produced commercial video brochures at an economical price. If you would like to talk with them about developing a video brochure for your congregation call them at 512+754-4625.)

Can Advertising Help Your Church?

Here are some basic themes that should be included in your advertising:

- The sincere desire to be helpful in meeting the needs of the people in your community. (Be as specific as possible.)
- The assurance that those who come will experience love and acceptance.
- The promise that people will find the love of God, and the Word of God relevant to their needs, hurts, and concerns.
- The sense of purpose, meaning, and fulfillment that faith brings to life.

The people in your community will be motivated to visit your church when they feel there may be a solution to their personal needs and wants. The need may be good biblical preaching. It may be for love and acceptance. It may be a place where their children can receive religious training. It may be a class on how to adjust to being a single parent, how to communicate with teenagers, how to cope with drug abuse, or how to become a Christian. It

may be simply to meet new friends. But it will almost always be the expectation of filling an existing need that will encourage a visitor to risk entering the strange new environment called “church.” For them to try it, the benefit must be worth the cost.

[Helpful reference books: *Welcoming the Stranger*, *Finding a Church You Can Call Home*.]

What Makes an Effective Mailing?

Direct mail is one of the most cost-effective mass media tools available to your church. A good goal is to mail to every home in your ministry area four times each year. Churches with a smaller budget should send at least twice a year. An annual mailing schedule might look like this:

Early Spring: a mailing sent to arrive a week before Easter, taking advantage of the opportunity to appeal to those who go to church only on Easter or Christmas. Early June: a letter highlighting summer interests and activities available to the community. Early September: A mailing outlining back-to-school activities, new classes, and special programs. Early Fall: Emphasize a special seminar, lectureship or workshop.

Of course, special programs throughout the year, particularly those designed for unchurched people, are another good reason for a mailing.

Below is an example of a good direct mail letter. Notice how the letter illustrates the warmth and non-threatening tone that is an important ingredient.

LETTER:

Dear Friend,

If you are like most of us you probably don't mind making a new friend once in a while. Those of us who are neighbors in this area get pretty shut away from each other. Maybe you like it that way. But sometimes you may feel like sending out a test signal to see if anyone would even notice! I know I get that way a occasionally.

Life is pretty much a sending out and receiving of signals I guess. And when there isn't anybody around to listen – nobody “to tell it to” – a funny thing happens.

Maybe you know the “ghosts” that haunt your mind when it seems like nobody cares. Maybe you wrestle with anxieties – about your health, about your job, about your family, or some special friend. Maybe you wish there was somebody around to laugh with you, or to cry with you.

You'll have to overlook this kind of introduction by mail. What I would really like is to come and sit down in your living room. I'm just an ordinary man who happens to be the preacher over at the church building. Don't let that scare you. I just thought you might like to know that I am here and that I am available.

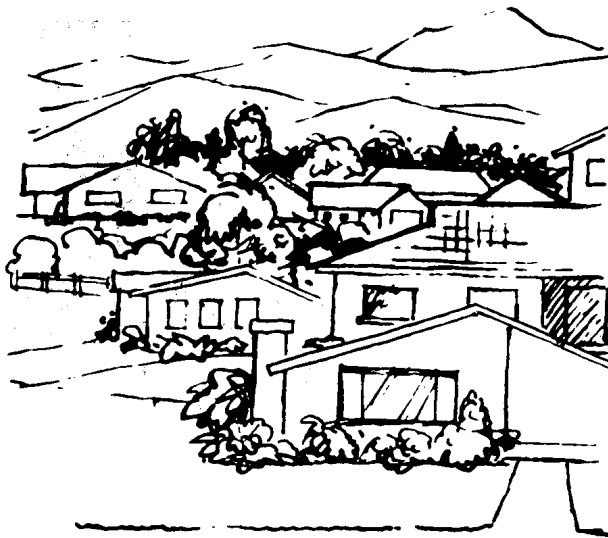
If you would like to make a new friend, here is one neighbor who would like to, too! You can let me know just by sending me back the card I have enclosed. I'll be glad to stop by at your convenience.

Cordially yours,

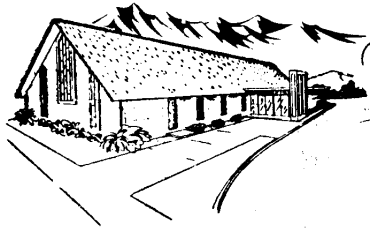
Mailings should always give the reader an opportunity to respond. If you're mailing a letter, enclose a card with the response information on one side and the church address on the other side so all the person needs to do is fill in his/her name, address, phone and drop it in the mail.

Be sure you reply to responses within the week. Keep track of the responses you receive so you can compare the effectiveness of the various approaches.

[Helpful Resources: *Direct Mail Ministry* and *The Church Publicity Book*.]



How We Serve Your Neighborhood



Bear Valley

CHURCH OF CHRIST

PHONE:

2707 SOUTH LAMAR STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80227

986-4521



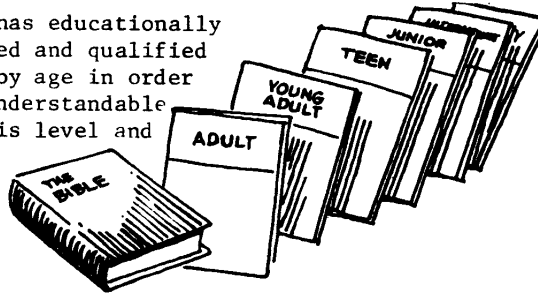
WORSHIP JUST AS NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS DID

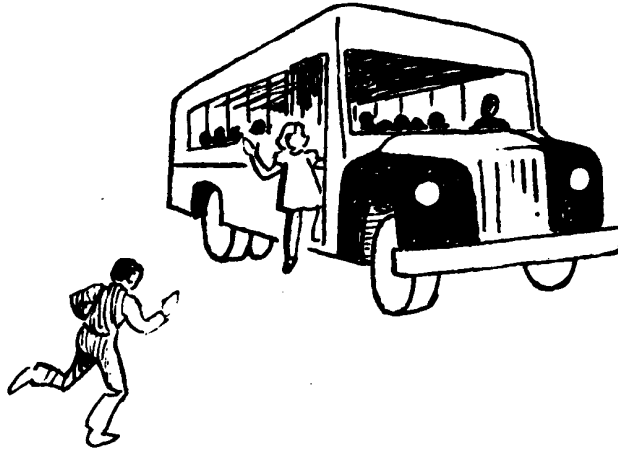
In a world which has over 300 differing denominations, it is refreshing to follow the New Testament's teaching on worship. No man-made doctrines demanding certain forms or liturgies are adopted; rather the simple New Testament worship of singing, praying, giving, observing the Lord's Supper, and Bible preaching make up the Sunday services. Anyone there will be glad to show you from the Bible the scriptural basis for each teaching or practice.

PLANNED BIBLE CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

Every age from 6 months old has educationally sound classes taught by concerned and qualified teachers. Classes are divided by age in order that each student may receive understandable teaching that is presented on his level and to his need.

Also, in the Lord's church, the Bible is taught from the viewpoint that it is the complete, inspired Word of God.





TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM WORSHIP SERVICE

Regularly scheduled buses will provide safe transportation for you and your family to the building in which the church meets. Times for the services are:

SUNDAY:

BIBLE CLASSES (all ages).....9:00 a. m.
 WORSHIP SERVICES.....10:00 a. m.
 TEENAGERS CLASS.....5:00 p. m.
 WORSHIP SERVICES.....6:00 p. m.
 WEDNESDAY EVENING.....7:30 p. m.

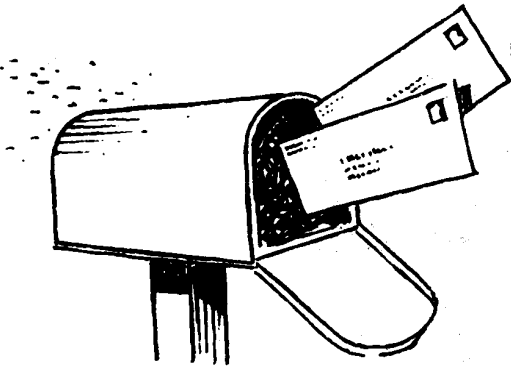
Buses will pick up riders in front of their houses, bringing them back to the same place.

All or any part of a family is welcome to ride. Children from 3 years old and up are welcome to ride by themselves and will be supervised on the bus and at the building.

COUNSELING



Sometimes a visit by a friendly person can be of great help in family relationships. If you desire someone to counsel with you concerning spiritual matters, or simply would like a visit from a Christian who desires to be of service, please feel free to call on us.



BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

(NON-DENOMINATIONAL)

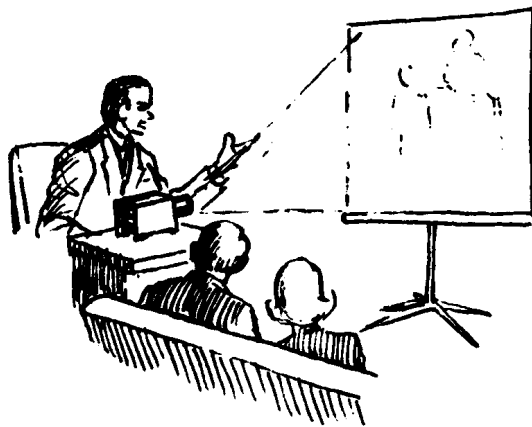
In the privacy of your own home, using your own Bible, and at your own convenience, you can survey the major theme of the Bible. This correspondence course comes to you one lesson at a time. When you complete the lesson, answer the open-Bible test at the end, send it in, and it will be graded and returned to you with the next lesson. This procedure continues until you have completed the entire eight-lesson course. You will then be presented a Certificate of Completion. Free advanced courses are also available at your request.

BIBLE CLASSES TAUGHT IN YOUR HOME

In approximately five one-hour sessions, you can be instructed in the major theme of the Bible. You may choose from two methods:

- (1) Full color projected films with professional narration, or
- (2) Two-color charts taught by trained instructors.

These classes are offered as a free service to families or individuals (regardless of religious background or preference) and are intended to raise the spiritual level and meet the spiritual needs of our area.



HOW MAY WE SERVE YOU ?

Building on Strengths of the Small Church

Growing churches know their strengths and build on them. Here are seven *strengths* of the typical smaller church (under 140 members) which should be used in planning growth strategy .

1. *The heterogeneous mix.* In the smaller church there are seldom enough different “kinds of people” for many groups. Those who enjoy the mosaic of people find the smaller church attractive. Young adults who enjoy the wisdom of older adults . . . older adults who are renewed by children . . . single adults who are comfortable with couples . . . will find a place of fulfillment in the smaller church.
2. *The sense of “family.”* Smaller churches typically include several extended family networks. The belonging, concern, and security these relationships provide in smaller churches will be attractive to many nonmembers in those networks. Helping members reach out to unchurched friends and family is an important growth strategy for small churches. (A resource such as THE MASTER’S PLAN FOR MAKING DISCIPLES is an effective way to train members to reach out to friends and family.)
3. *A common concern.* The smaller church usually focuses on one church-wide event or priority at a time. If the church has a highly visible task in which many members are involved, this mission can attract unchurched persons who share this concern. For example, child-care and development can be a church priority which attracts similarly concerned people. Senior citizen support and sharing could be another. Identify the church’s concerns, seek out those in the community who share a similar concern, and provide ways for them to become involved.
4. *The ease of involvement.* Persons who have been previously active in a church usually join a new church with a willingness to become involved. Whereas, in larger churches it may be years before they “earn” the right to be given responsibility, in smaller churches newcomers willing to be involved are more likely to be welcomed into positions of influence and leadership . . . if for no other reason than there are not enough people to serve the various program needs and opportunities. Smaller churches will be attractive to people who want to be involved.
5. *The sense of being needed and valued.* Because it is easy to become involved quickly in the small church, the by-product is that persons who do become active make friends and develop a sense of self-esteem and worth as a valued church member. In terms of effective outreach by the smaller church, persons who need self-confidence/esteem are good candidates for membership.
6. *A non-formal church environment.* The smaller church is more informal and flexible in activities and worship. People who have not become involved in church (or who dropped out in adolescence or early adulthood) because of perceived hypocrisy in the church may often feel the smaller church is more genuine and honest in who it is and what it stands for.
7. *The love and caring.* According to our research, smaller churches are significantly more loving and caring among members. The larger a church becomes, the less loved people report feeling. The smaller church can build on this natural love-ability. Be sure, however, that the love is intentionally focused outward to newcomers, since the natural tendency in smaller churches is for love to be inward-focused, often to the point of being exclusionary.

Small Church Survey Conclusions

Growing Small Churches

1. Nearly every member involved
2. Membership had focused, clear-cut goals
3. Some form of visitation
4. Hosted a vacation Bible school which typically contributed to a congregation's goals
5. Bible classes use curriculums coordinated with the adult classes and usually written or adapted by the membership
6. Offered a variety of adult classes (even in very small churches)
7. Had a full-time pulpit minister regardless of church size
8. Preachers served more than four years
9. Preachers considered themselves to have multiple roles
10. Preachers were usually over 40 years of age
11. Were willing to vary worship and Bible study times
12. A little more than half (58%) had worship services which they described as "untypical of churches of Christ" only in that they gave a greater emphasis to acts of worship. It is interesting to note that 42% of the growing churches had "typical" services

Non Growing Small Churches

1. Many members complacent
2. No clear-cut goals
3. Visitation limited to preacher or only a small few
4. Most did not have a V.B.S. Those that hosted a V.B.S. has little support from membership
5. Used only pre-printed curriculum
6. Little variety of adult classes
7. Many had part-time pulpit preachers
8. Preachers served 3 years or less
9. Preachers listed their only role as "pulpit minister"
10. Preachers were under 40 years or over 65
11. Would not change times of worship Services or Bible classes
12. Most worship services were described as "typical of churches of Christ." Where radical changes were made (i.e. women preaching, introduction of instrumental music, etc.) . . . this always led to loss of attendance

The biggest surprise that came out of this survey is reflected in point #10 of the survey. Nearly half (45%) of pulpit ministers who served growing small churches were 40-49 years of age. One third (33%) were 50-59 years old. This means 78% of the preachers who served growing churches were 40-59 years old. This does not preclude the possibility that younger preachers can help spark growth in small congregations. But it does give pause to wonder why a number of congregations seek to hire the younger preachers.

The second big surprise was #12. It has been asserted lately that for a congregation to grow, it must introduce radically innovative things into its worship service. Adoption of choirs, solos, instrumental music, drama, "tongue speaking", women preachers, which are common among Catholic and Protestant churches in the US., actually never helped any of the churches of Christ in this survey increase their overall attendance. In fact, these introductions did hurt several churches.

How To Get Your Members On Board

In our “focus group” research sessions, a frequently voiced comment by preachers was that members did not share their own concern for the priority of church growth. Preachers felt that not only were they responsible to initiate *leadership* in growth, but even getting members to be *concerned* about church growth was a challenge.

We are seeing that if church leaders and members do not begin to share the preacher’s dream for enlarged church outreach and ministry, the preacher will generally a) leave, or b) give up on the dream. How can the vision for outreach be shared so that support and involvement in growth throughout your congregation will occur? Here are some important guidelines:

1. Repeat the message again and again. Research indicates that we hear/learn as much the second time we are exposed to a message as the first time. And in the third exposure the learning curve drops only slightly. *Building a “growth consciousness” cannot be over-done*, since there is a constant tendency for churches to revert to a maintenance and self-service agenda.
2. Have others communicate the message. Expose leaders and members to outside experts who support and reinforce the message of the preacher/church leadership. Growth seminars and/or an outside consultant can serve to enhance and strengthen your message.
3. Make “growth” a standing agenda item in board meetings. Every elders’/men’s meeting should include a report on the vital statistics you are monitoring in your church. These should include monthly updates on worship attendance; first, second, and third time visitors; attendance in each Sunday School/adult class; visitors in each class; number and percentage of members involved in small groups during the month; and an update on all scheduled activities related to growth/out-reach/member assimilation.
4. Use different media to communicate the message. One recent study showed that the spoken word was the *least persuasive* form of communication, when used in isolation. Supplement your spoken word with other sensory input such as films, bulletin boards, prayers, newsletters, that reinforce the message of growth and outreach.
5. Integrate the message into every church group. If growth is discussed only in the evangelism committee meetings, don’t expect other members to talk about it outside the meeting. Rather, use every *church-related meeting* (including Sunday School classes, women’s classes, socials, deacons’ meetings, etc.) to build a “growth consciousness” among members.
6. Gather objective data on the church, and share it. One of the easiest ways to begin members talking about their church, its past growth trends, and the future implications is through factual data. While members may disagree with opinions, *it’s difficult to argue with facts*. Whether through an outside consultant, or your own self-analysis, charts and graphs will raise the issue of growth every time the graphs are brought out and/or updated.
7. Review and publicize your church’s purpose. For some churches, the first step is a basic review of “why are we here?” Particularly for churches over 50 years old, or ones that have plateaued/declined during the past 15 years, this is *the place to begin*. But in every church the purpose statement should be integrated into church thinking and planning, including church officers’ retreats . . . every new member orientation . . . each Sunday School class . . . and at *least once a year with every organization* related to your church.

Your Mission Statement

The mission statement of a church is the foundation upon which every ministry program of the church should be built. "More failures in the church come about because of an ambiguity of purpose than for any other reason," observes Howard Hendricks.

The benefits of a good mission statement include:

- it unifies the members of a church.
- it provides motivation.
- it provides a basis for accountability.
- it gives assurance that you are doing God's work not busy work.
- it gives the church an overall direction. It defines what the church does and does not do.
- it alleviates false guilt and provides a basis for measuring accomplishments.

What comprises a good mission statement? There are five components. To illustrate, consider our own organizational mission statement:

Mission Statement CHURCH GROWTH, INC.

Believing the call of God to make disciples is our greatest privilege and responsibility, it is our purpose to enhance the efforts of local churches, regional judicatories, and denominations in the task of disciple making.

To accomplish this, we will disseminate proven principles of growth through seminars, study kits, books, films, videos, and other ways and resources that facilitate worldwide the Great Commission and the Great Commandment so that churches may better achieve their full potential in making disciples.

The mission statement for any Christian organization should include the following five points:

- *Biblical Understanding* of what you believe God desires you to be/do.
- *Target Audience* identifying those people and groups who are the focus of your ministry.
- *Major Activities* of your church through which the Good News is communicated.
- *Geographic Area* in which you minister.
- *Expected results* which, with God's blessing, you anticipate.

Can you find each of these qualities in the above purpose statement of CHURCH GROWTH?

Developing a mission statement with your church leaders is time well spent. Then *use it!* Use it in new member orientation. Use it in leadership and officer training. Use it in the bulletin. Use it in public prayer. Use it in sermons. Use it at social events. Use it to measure accomplishment at annual meetings. Use it and refer to it as often as possible.

The Big Dream

Effective church growth planning requires at least three ingredients: *a clear mission statement, a big dream, and specific goals*:



After the mission statement comes the dream.

“Not much happens without a dream. And for something great to happen there must always be a great dream. Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams. Much more than a dream is required to bring it to reality; but the dream must be there first,” says Robert Greenleaf.

Effective leaders help the church dream big dreams, and enable members to discover and act on *God’s dream for their church*. (An obviously important assumption is that the leaders believes God has a great dream for that church!)

Where does the *energy* come from that moves a church and its leaders forward in growth? *It comes from the shared dream* of that church and its leaders!

Believing that God has given your church a unique opportunity for ministry – right where you are – is the foundation upon which the dream begins to form. Are you tapping into the energy source that a dream can provide?

Behind every great church are dreamers of great dreams!

Building a Growth Conscience

Growing churches have a common characteristic – leaders and salaried staff intuitively make growth-oriented responses to issues facing the church. This “growth conscience” comes over time and exposure to church growth thinking. Some authorities suggest around 200 hours of reading, observing, learning about church growth is necessary before it becomes intuitive.

An excellent way to build this “growth conscience” is through visualizing models of growth (over 75% of Americans are visually, rather than verbally, oriented).

Measuring Your “Great Commission Conscience”

On the subject of “ratios,” consider this one as you measure an important *common denominator* of growth in your church: “*Great Commission Conscience.*”

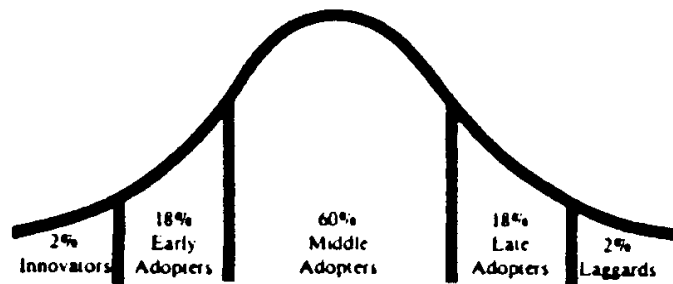
What is a “Great Commission Conscience?” It is an attitude which permeates the thinking and the decision-making process of a church. It is an attitude which sees people outside of Christ as lost. It is an attitude which causes rejoicing when people become new converts. It is an attitude which prioritizes disciple-making. It is an attitude which resonates with the Great Commission found in its various forms throughout Scripture. It is an attitude which sees missions as both “over there” and “right here.” It is an attitude which motivates both corporate and personal action in prayer, giving, and service for Great Commission results.

What is the “Great Commission Conscience” ratio necessary for a church to experience growth? There are two. The first is a *Leaders Ratio* - 3:5, the second is a *Membership Ratio* - 1:5. In other words, a church should have at least three of every five leaders with such a conscience, and at least 20% of its members with a similar Great Commission Conscience. But how do you determine either? Simple . . . you ask them. Here are ten “Yes/No” questions which will give you a clue. Seven of ten affirmative answers are an indication of a reasonably strong “Great Commission Conscience.”

1. I see the primary purpose of our church as responding to the Great Commission.
2. I have participated in an outreach training event in the last year.
3. I have invited an unchurched friend/relative to a church event in the last 6 months.
4. I would support a motion to designate at least 10% of our church budget to outreach events/training/activities.
5. I would prefer the minister call on non-members more often than on members.
6. I would be willing to take a new member/visitor home for dinner once every six months.
7. I have intentionally introduced myself to a new member or visitor in the past month.
8. I have talked to an unchurched person about my faith in the past three months.
9. I have prayed for a specific unchurched person in the past month.
10. I would be willing to be a pioneer in a new group or new church activity to help reach people.

Understanding and Encouraging Change

When a proposal for change is introduced in your church, people will fall into one of five categories in terms of their response:



Innovators The dreamers. Persons who are often responsible for new ideas but seldom receive the credit. Generally not acknowledged as leaders or policy makers.

Early Adopters Those who know a good idea when they see it. Opinions generally respected in the church. Often receive credit for new ideas that may not have been theirs.

Middle Adopters The majority who respond to proposals of others. Generally reasonable in their analysis of a new idea, but inclined to maintain the status quo. More easily influenced by those opposing change than those supporting it.

Late Adopters The last in a church to endorse an idea. Often speak against and vote against proposed changes/ideas/innovations. May never verbally acknowledge acceptance, but generally adopt if the majority has demonstrated support.

Laggards New ideas seldom, if ever, adopted by this group. Their commitment is to the status quo and the past. Often sow discord after change. Often the leaders of division within the church.

Introducing A New Idea

- Realize that the longer a church has gone without change, the more effort will be required to introduce change.
- Put "Early Adopters" in positions of leadership (committee chairpersons, etc.).
- Solicit support of Early Adopters before the change is publicly introduced.
- Seek out suggestions for refinement before the change is publicly introduced.
- Use informal communication channels over formal channels to elicit support.
- Emphasize the change as an addition, not an alteration or subtraction.
- Establish a date when the innovation will be evaluated regarding achievement of its purpose. Keep careful records for evaluation.
- Share the credit for the success of an innovation.

SMALL GROUPS

In the last few years, small group ministries have grown incredibly within churches of Christ. While their popularity has grown recently, the use of small groups goes back to the New Testament. The Biblical roots of small groups are found in the Book of Acts when the early Christians met from “house to house.”

While churches have always contained small groups in one form or another - committees, Bible classes, fellowship groups - there is a new emphasis on groups of 5 to 20 Christians that meet regularly for Bible study and fellowship.

A number of churches have begun offering home groups as an alternative to the traditional Wednesday evening or Sunday evening gatherings at the church building. One congregation experienced a 50% increase in Wednesday attendance when small groups became an alternative for mid-week Bible study.

There are almost as many types of small group ministries as there are congregations. Some emphasize evangelism, while others specialize in Bible study or support groups. Other options for emphasis include prayer, ministry projects and family building. The most prevalent approach seems to be an effort to combine all of these functions into one group. If you don't have a strong small group ministry here are five reasons to consider beginning one.

1. Small groups build relationships among members. While many churches begin a small group ministry in order to attract new people, they often find that the greatest benefit is in nurturing and building members. The warm fellowship that occurs becomes a glue that bonds the group in love. Members start caring about one another on a deeper level. Fringe members are drawn in by a group that fulfills Jesus' mandate to “love one another.”

2. Small groups provide opportunities for leadership development. An effective ministry requires that dedicated members be identified to lead, co-lead and host the groups. This is an excellent means of developing leaders who will become deacons and elders. In addition to encouraging these leadership abilities, small groups also give rise to the development of other spiritual gifts, such as teaching, serving and showing mercy.

3. Small groups provide more entry points for unchurched friends. Members tend to feel more comfortable inviting friends and neighbors to an informal home gathering than to a formal assembly in a church building. Likewise, those friends are more likely to come to the small group before visiting the worship service. Contrary to expectation, evangelism is not a natural by-product of a Bible study group. The natural tendency is for a group to become inward focused and resistant to new people. The group's leaders and the church leaders must be committed to evangelism for the small group to be effective in outreach.

4. Small groups lend themselves to a greater emphasis on prayer. Within the context of a close-knit gathering of Christians, people are more likely to share honest concerns and needs. Perhaps surprisingly, visitors are not “turned off” by prayer; in fact, they may be more attracted to prayer than to Bible study.

5. Small groups can develop meaningful, relevant Bible study. The atmosphere of a small group is conducive to open discussion of the text and practical application. Bible study that is discussed and applied is likely to be more meaningful.

Small Groups Can Provide Instruction And Help Build Relationships

As a youth minister I enjoyed working with kids. It was great to be with them one-on-one. I loved the relational aspect of the work. When I started, there were 40 young people, but over 18 years, that changed. The number grew beyond me.

It was impossible for one minister to provide attention, discipleship and care for so many. I needed a way to work with a large group of young people (or adults) without my family life and spiritual life suffering. I felt guilty not knowing what was going on in everyone's life. I used to, but now I felt totally separated, frustrated and unconnected. No one can shepherd a flock of 80 or 200 young people. What was the answer? Hire an additional youth minister? Was there another way?

Small groups provided the answer for us. It was biblical and functional. A church's ability to provide a personal touch is often lost as it grows. Our youth needed a structure to connect people relationally, give them community, help them grow closer to Christ, establish deep and everlasting friendships, and enable them to multiply rather than stagnate.

It was natural for Jesus to develop a community of followers, and for Paul, Peter and other church planters to start new communities wherever they went proclaiming the Gospel. These new communities began as small groups, just as Jesus had modeled with the twelve disciples (as seen in Mark 3:14, Luke 6:12-19).

Small groups offer an opportunity to stay in touch with a large group of people through the eyes and ears of the small group leaders, so we developed small groups for our Sr. High, youth group. We called it our NITES Ministry – Nurturing Independent Teens/ Equipping & Empowering Spirituality

On Sunday mornings we sit at round tables with 7 to 8 students and a trained, prepared adult leader at each table. (Other adults are on stand-by to serve as substitutes in case a regular NITES leader is absent.) At this Sunday meeting, we make announcements to the whole group and all join together in a short devotional and a brief lesson. Then each table continues independently to discuss the lesson, make applications, and have its prayer time on what the teens suggest for prayer. The strength of this program is that on Wednesday evenings, the same students meet with the same leaders to discuss the lesson, make applications, talk of their needs, and again pray for matters the young people suggest. This time of connection and community with the leaders really builds group cohesion.

Small groups take work. But, the rewards are worth it. Here are some guidelines on developing a small group ministry for any age group or for the congregation as a whole.

- Start early to prepare both the leaders and students for this plan. Laying the foundation is absolutely necessary. Study the values, vision, mission and plans. Get together a group of key people to brainstorm and plan. Let key people know the benefits of small groups.

- Understand the “change dynamics” among your members. It’s hard for a congregation, youth group or campus group to begin small groups if small groups have never been a part of the culture. Seek to understand the “enhancing forces” and “inhibiting forces” that strengthen and weaken the beginning of any new ministry.

- Begin with prototype groups. You may think this is foolish, but this could be one of the biggest steps you will take. This allows you to evaluate your program in a small way.

- Allow small groups to grow rather than try and implement a church-wide system at once. We started with the youth group. It’s grown to the university students and who knows where it may go from there.

- Leaders should invite others who could be leaders to be in their small group. This way more leaders can be ready when needed.

- Make sure evangelism happens. Because of God’s goodness our high school class saw tremendous growth in visitors as well as conversions through this program. A seed sown in the hearts of unchurched individuals continues to grow through the Lord’s help.

- Invest heavily in leadership development. Small groups will rise and fall on the strength of the leaders. Nothing is more important than equipping leaders with the necessary tools to lead a small group.

- Develop community not committees. All of us are looking for a place to belong. If we can offer individuals a place to belong and a place to feel connected they will return. It is important not only that each small group become a community, but the leaders, as well, must sense “connectedness” with each other.

- Allow time to change mindsets; it won’t happen overnight.

JAMES WAUGH, Memorial Road church, Oklahoma City

Attendance Plateaus

Congregations also tend to plateau at various levels of worship attendance. There are different reasons for each plateau and different strategies to break through each. Here are four typical attendance plateaus, the most common reason for the plateau, and the most appropriate response.

Level 1 (approximately 75)

Typical Reason: The church is a “single cell” church – one group of people know each other. A single cell church seldom grows above 80 -100 persons, often because in many such churches members do not want to grow!

Appropriate Strategy: If the church wants to grow, intentionally establish new units within the church (If the church does not want to grow, focus on building a “growth conscience.”) Create smaller “cells” where persons can find a place of belonging within the larger body.

Level 2 (approximately 125)

Typical Reason: The church’s self-image – “we’re a small church.” Such a church often lacks a vision to catch the imagination and move the church forward.

Appropriate Strategy: Leaders should look to God and within themselves for a clear vision of what they believe Christ wants to do in their church, then pursue that dream with every ounce of energy available.

Level 3 (approximately 200)

Typical Reason: Staffing; or more correctly, lack of staffing. For every 150 persons over 18 years old in worship, a church should plan on one full-time program staff person. A church may grow beyond 150, but will usually plateau at 175 - 200.

Appropriate Strategy: As mentioned, a church should add staff on a 1:150 ratio. *The staff person should be responsible for church growth/outreach/assimilation (rather than education, youth, etc.) His salary will be paid for through new giving units within the first 12-18 months; other staff usually will not.

Level 4 (approximately 375)

Typical Problem: Assimilating new members. Often half of all new members in such churches become inactive within a year.

Appropriate Strategy: A priority of equipping and involving members for ministry. Find or create roles based on members’ interests, strengths, gifts, concerns. This allows new members to contribute and build new friendships with those of similar interests. (An excellent guide to structure an effective ministry strategy is *Mobilizing Laity for Ministry*, available from CHURCH GROWTH, INC.)

Is Your Church in a Mid-Life Crisis?

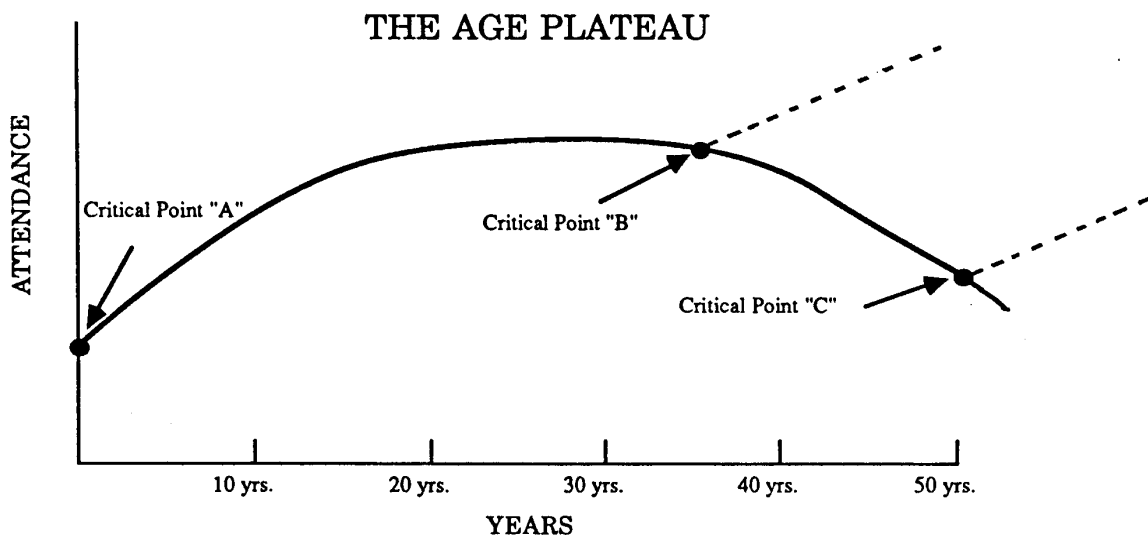
In the years following World War II thousands of new churches were established. Today, of the approximately 350,000 churches in America, four out of five are either plateaued or declining. Many of these plateaued/declining churches, now over 40 years old, are experiencing a predictable mid-life crisis.

New churches often experience an initial 15-20 year period of growth, followed by a plateau.

Critical-Point "A" In a new church, if growth principles are intentionally structured into the philosophy and strategy of ministry and integrated into the daily activities of the new church, a subsequent plateauing effect is less likely.

Critical Point "B" A plateau is a critical point in the life of a church. It may signal the beginning of decline and eventual death, or with the application of appropriate growth strategy, it may be an opportunity for restructuring and new growth. (Note that there is no "critical point" when the plateau first begins. Research indicated that even in growing churches there are times of consolidation between periods of growth. This is normal in growing churches.)

Critical Point "C" When this exact point is reached is often difficult to identify. It is more easily recognized after the fact, as a "window of opportunity" for a period of new growth that has now passed. Occasionally the 50th birthday of a church is an indicator.



Breaking Out of a Mid-Life Crisis

There are no simple solutions to immediately break out of church mid-life crisis. However, there are some steps you can take to begin...

ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS

- “Why are we here?”
- “Where will our present course take us?”
- “Is this where we want to go? If not, what must be changed?”

These answers will stimulate your church to rediscover its reason for being, examine the assets Christ has entrusted to you, and focus direction for the future.

EXAMINE YOUR LEADERSHIP ASSUMPTIONS

In plateaued/declining churches the preacher often sees himself as an “enabler” rather than an “initiator.” Such an attitude is not conducive to visionary leadership. Preachers and leaders in growing churches have a clear vision of what God wants to do and are willing to risk for that dream.

DEFINE YOUR PRIORITIES

In the typical plateaued/declining church, 97-98% of the time, money and people are spent on Class I (maintenance) activities. Work toward the following goals:

- One of four members involved, and one of four hours spent should be in Class II (outreach) ministries. Create new Class II roles if an insufficient number are available.
- 10% of your church’s total budget should be spent on outreach oriented activities.

ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY RATHER THAN CONFORMITY

These characteristics of creative individuals are also qualities of a creative church:

- optimism about the future
- constructive discontent with the status quo
- highly curious and observant
- open to alternative ways of doing things
- dreamer of what could be
- ability to recognize inefficiency
- independent thinker

BUILD A GROWTH CONSCIOUSNESS IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Individuals must change before institutions change. Open eyes to change by studying the previous growth patterns of your church. When did the plateau begin? Is it due to the “front door” closing? or the “back door” opening? Disseminate this information through the church during growth-related sermons, films, and curriculum study on the subject.

To Improve Church's Involvement, Increase The Number Of Ministries

The key to many good things in a congregation is increasing the number of members actively serving. A preacher can work 40 or 50 hours a week, but a church of two hundred, averaging five hours a week per member, produces a thousand hours. Not only is more work done, but members grow spiritually, unity is better and more are led to the Lord. The following list can help members and leaders find new ministries. Standard ministries such as education, youth, foreign missions, and communion preparation are not included since most churches have these. Read this list several times and note new ministries you could start in your congregation:

- Someone can teach English to internationals through Bible study to lead them to Christ. • Volunteers can help at the church office. • A ministry can serve members (and non-members) in the hospital and confined at home by visiting and serving them.
- A prayer ministry can meet weekly to offer thanks and praise to God and to pray for missionaries, local work, the sick, families in need and the spiritually weak.
- Mechanics can hold a car-care clinic every two months to provide minor service free to widows and the elderly.
- Correspondence courses can be given to inmates in a local prison and provide personal studies to those who request them. • Summer back-yard Bible schools can provide Bible studies for neighborhood children one morning a week. • A bulletin-board ministry can post attractive and informative messages around the building, with current information on members, classes, missions and other ministries. • A greeter ministry can station friendly, helpful people at every entrance to welcome everyone and assist visitors.
- A worship ministry can plan every service, making the worship meaningful in song, prayer and communion, and can assign roles for each service, notifying participants, briefing them before the service, and providing substitutes. This ministry can also train men to serve and members to worship more effectively.
- A women's ministry can plan retreats and activities for women, including ladies' Bible classes, occasional Wednesday night classes for women and mother-daughter activities. The ministry can encourage women to bring non-member friends to such events.
- A mens' ministry can offer retreats, prayer groups, fellowships, athletic activities, classes and father-children events.
- A communications ministry can place articles in the local paper when the church or its members do something newsworthy. They can also help with ads for

meetings and special events, organize mailings and provide brochures and other materials when needed.

- If a college or university is located nearby, a college ministry can offer classes, special activities, and fellowships and can arrange for church families to “adopt” students to provide a “home away from home.”

- A family ministry can plan activities to strengthen families and may offer classes on Wednesday nights to benefit husbands/wives and parents/children.

- A letter/card ministry can write to missionaries, the sick, those recently baptized, shut-ins, the bereaved and others needing encouragement. Those not able to get out can do this at home.

- Every congregation needs a ministry to help members be active in evangelism, encouraging every member to share Christ and His church, arranging for evangelistic home Bible studies and helping other ministries such as youth, education, hospital visitation and family life to be evangelistic.

- A nurturing ministry can promote fellowship among members with luncheons, retreats, campouts, monthly care groups, new-member fellowships and food provision for the sick and bereaved.
- A new members’ ministry can incorporate new members – just baptized or placing membership – into the congregation through visits, involvement in a ministry, invitations into homes, classes for new members and packets of useful materials.
- A ministry for the elderly can help older Christians be involved, provide visits and services, and plan outings.

You can think of other possibilities. Take your ideas for new ministries to your elders and offer to help get them going. If you are an elder or deacon, start some ministries you don’t have. Let as many people take leadership responsibilities in these new ministries as you can.

Different activities appeal to different people, so your congregation needs to have a wide variety of ministries available. Encourage those not sufficiently active to get involved. Having a high percentage of members serving in “good works” should be the aim of every congregation.

STAFFORD NORTH, Oklahoma Christian University

For more information about any of the ministries above, contact Stafford North at (405) 425-5380 or stafford.north@oc.edu.

A Secret of Growth

Our research clearly indicates that 75%-90% of the persons active in church today first came through a friend, relative, or associate already in the church.

Research also tells us that the average church member can identify 6-8 unchurched friends, family, and associates in their church's ministry area (reasonable driving distance).

Based on these facts, here is a powerful secret of growth that can significantly expand your church's growth and ministry . . . I call it your "Extended Congregation."

A definition – "EXTENDED CONGREGATION:" the cumulative total of your member's unchurched friends, family, and associates who are in the ministry area of your church.

The members of your "extended congregation" (normally 6 to 8 times the size of your active membership) are the most receptive people in your entire community to your church and its message! The question: "How do we reach them?" The answer: "By enlarging your church's view of ministry."

Consider this . . . your church membership records provide a list of individuals who comprise "the members" of your congregation. The more you know about these people and their needs, the better you can plan for effective ministry. Church activities, programs, and classes are generally intended to respond to the needs of these members.

Now, with this same view of ministry – responding to member's needs expand your ministry to include potential members in your "extended congregation" . . . those unchurched persons in the relational networks of your present members. And while "ministry to members" remains a priority for your church, and the recipients of your church's intentional ministry now includes the members of your extended congregation as well.

By enlarging your church's ministry in this new perspective, you will dramatically enlarge your effectiveness in ministry . . . and outreach!

Six Reasons For Focusing On Your “Extended Congregation” and Five Ways to Minister to Them

When you focus on your “Extended Congregation” your church will . . .

. . . *focus on a specific and identifiable group of winnable people.* These potential disciples are significantly more receptive and reachable than most other people in your community.

. . . *focus its caring ministry.* Care, love, and support in times of need are important functions of the church body. Now the number who experience this attractive love can expand six to eight times.

. . . *focus programming to meet needs.* You can more easily evaluate and prioritize your program ministry. Special events, programs, and classes should be directed toward the unique needs and interests of members in your entire congregation (including your “extended congregation”).

. . . *experience increased morale.* Contagious excitement results when members see once unchurched friends and relatives find new life. Morale also builds as new Christians bring their new-found enthusiasm for the Christian life into the church.

. . . *more effectively invest its resources.* Church time, money, and people are invested in areas that produce a return.

. . . *experience a continually expanding congregation.* As members of your extended congregation become Christians and church members, they bring with them their own “web” of influence. As these new disciples identify their unchurched friends and family your extended congregation increases. And the process begins all over again. This is exactly the way the early church grew first by addition (Acts 2:47), then by multiplication (Acts 6:7).

MINISTERING TO YOUR EXTENDED CONGREGATION

1. Create Awareness in Your Present Congregation About Your Extended Congregation ● Preach a series of sermons on the growth process on the early church – which happened through the network “households” of early Christians ● Survey how many church members came to faith through a friend or relative ● Create several “web diagrams” which show how church members crossed “bridges” of relationships into the church, and place them in a visible point in the church foyer ● Highlight the relational bridges of new members who join the church.

2. Identify Your Extended Congregation • Communicate to members the importance of identifying and ministering to the church's extended congregation • Explain what will and will not be done with the names of unchurched friends/family. (People will not provide names if they are afraid the church will embarrass them or be the cause of an awkward relationship.) • Invite church members to complete a "membership profile" on each unchurched person in their "extended family" who lives in the ministry area of their church.
3. Profile Your Extended Congregation • Categorize persons in your extended congregation by common age, marital status, common needs, and common interests (a computer can be a valuable tool) • Identify major groupings in these categories.
4. Profile Your Church Members • Categorize the members of your church on the same basis as #3 above • Compare the profile of your "worshiping congregation" with your "extended congregation" and look for areas of common overlapping.
5. Plan Special Ministry Events • Identify specific target group/s represented in both your "extended" and "worshiping" congregations and plan appropriate event/s • Focus your promotion among appropriate members • Keep accurate records on participation of each extended congregation member (a computer will help). • The goal in these events is building relationships, not "getting decisions" • Encourage church-wide prayer for these events. • Plan at least one extended congregation event per quarter, more if possible.

Target Group: Friends and Relatives

A most productive “target group” for your church’s outreach are the friends, relatives, and associates of your present members. Our research shows that 75-90% of the people in church today come through friends, family, and associates of established members and adherents.

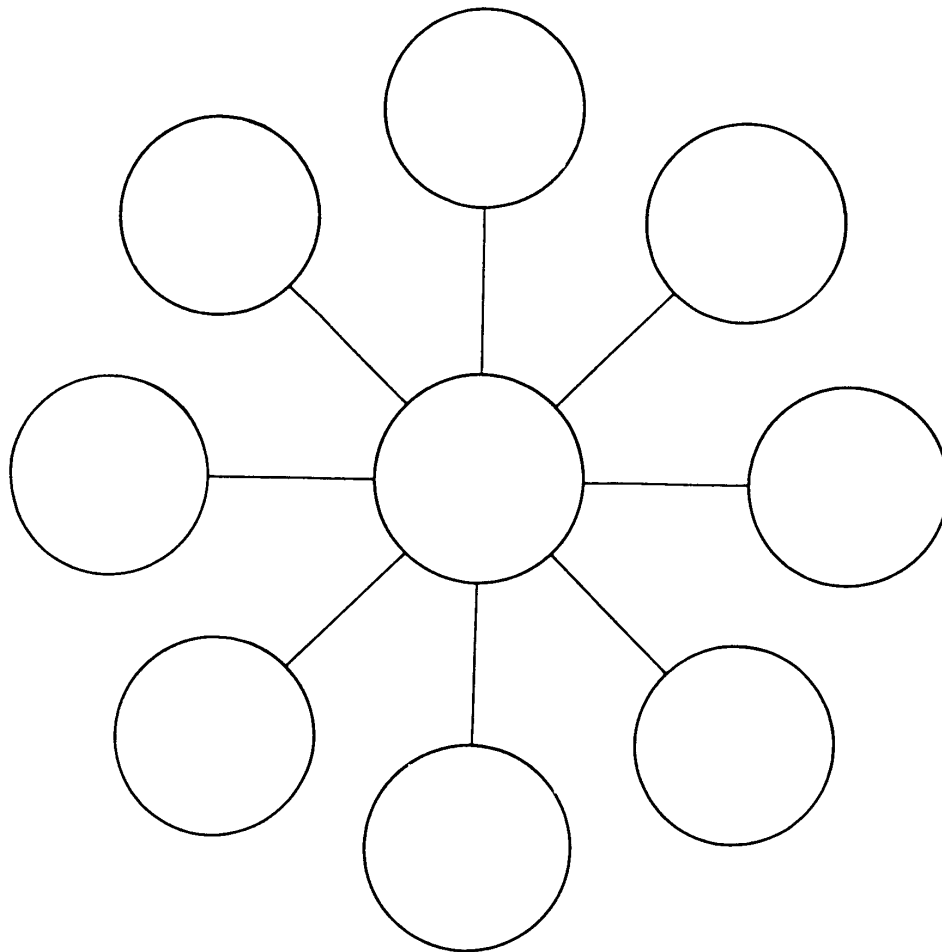
The term “potential congregation” is introduced in the book *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples* (recently in its 12th printing and over 100,000 copies sold). It is defined as the cumulative total of your member’s unchurched friends, family, and associates who live in the ministry area of your church.

Identifying your “potential congregation” will give you a “target group” of persons that is one of the most receptive groups of persons in your entire community. Here are some rules of thumb in focusing “target group evangelism” on your potential congregation:

- 5% of your total church budget should be spent on identifying, ministering to, and winning the members of your “potential congregation.”
- 50% of your “worshiping congregation” should have identified their unchurched friends, relatives, and neighbors in the coming year.
- 25% of your “worshiping congregation” should have invited an unchurched friend, relative, or neighbor to a church event in the past four months.
- 3-4% of your Sunday morning worship attendance should be made up of members of your “potential congregation.”
- 30% of your “worshiping congregation” should have invited an unchurched friend, relative, or neighbor to their home for dinner in the past four months.
- 8-10% of your identified “potential congregation” should move into your “worshiping congregation” each year.

Develop Your Own Web

1. Put your name in the center circle.
2. In the surrounding circles, enter the names of nonchurch people you know best, your own "8.4" prospect list of friends, neighbors, work or school associates, and relatives.
3. Then pick the one best prospect and write that person's name here: _____
4. Begin to list elements of your strategy to bring that person to Christ this year:



CHURCH OF CHRIST
AT BORGER
401 Gardner Street

REGISTRATION

MEMBER REGISTRATION

Date: _____ AM ☐ PM ☐
Family Name: _____ Each family member present: _____

VISITOR REGISTRATION

Mailing Address: _____
Name: _____ Address: _____
City & State _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____
I am attending as a guest of _____

☐ I am new in the Borger area Church Home: _____
☐ I would like to know more about the Church of Christ ☐ I am looking for a Church Home

I'M INTERESTED IN ACTIVITIES FOR: ☐ FAMILIES ☐ CHILDREN ☐ TEENS ☐ SINGLES ☐ SENIOR CITIZENS
AGE: ☐ Pre-teen ☐ Teen ☐ 20's ☐ 30's ☐ 40's ☐ 50's ☐ 60's +

Please check how you came to visit: ☐ Traveling ☐ Friend invited ☐ Advertisements ☐ Phone listing ☐ Saw church bldg.

PLEASE COMPLETE CARD AND HAND TO END OF THE PEW BEFORE SERVICES BEGIN

MONDAY NIGHT FOR THE MASTER

This week I plan to attend Monday Night for the Master

I will arrive at: ☐ 6:00 PM (Dinner, Number attending dinner____) ☐ 6:25 PM (Activities)

I will help in the following area

☐ Making Visits ☐ Baby-sitting ☐ Kitchen Help ☐ Set-up & Clean-up
☐ Card Writing ☐ Phone Calling ☐ Home Bible Studies ☐ Other projects as needed

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Today's Date: _____ Suggested person to visit: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE CARD AND HAND TO END OF THE PEW BEFORE SERVICES BEGIN

“READING ABOUT YOU”

**THE FOLLOWING IS AN INSERT IN WHICH TO PLACE A CLIPPING FROM A
LOCAL NEWSPAPER TO BE SENT TO PEOPLE IN TOWN TO LET THEM
KNOW THE CHURCH CARES ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE DOING (AND
PERHAPS THEY WILL ATTEND SERVICES, ETC.).**

mi
ministry
of **ideas** Item 670-1

Arthur Davenport Associates, Inc. Box 18545, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73118

**I'VE BEEN
READING
ABOUT YOU**

Current Yields

Average annual returns currently
available on investments in various
categories as compiled by
Investment Company Institute

Category	1-yr	3-yr	5-yr	10-yr	YTD
Govt Bonds	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
Corp Bonds	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%
Mutual Funds	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Stocks	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Real Estate	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Commodities	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Art Collection	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Private Equity	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Hedge Funds	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Private Debt	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Structured Products	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Alternative Investments	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Global Investments	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Emerging Markets	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Commodities	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Art Collection	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Private Equity	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Hedge Funds	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Private Debt	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Structured Products	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Alternative Investments	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Global Investments	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Emerging Markets	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%

mer Byron Hol-
said the exact
amount of damage
is still unknown

and determine the exact
damage in an examination
of the fire scene on Mon-
day.

More Norman Residents Considering Mayoral Race

AN — Two more
have joined the
corps of possible
candidates in the
ing election.

ouncilman Herbert
nan, 54, who has
in the council since
he feels the city
ome fragmented
of the utility rate
sy and believes
pull the various
together.

an is a dairy
who has lived in
all his life.

s D. Ledgerwood,

Norman attorney, an-
nounced he is considering
entering the race, but will
not make his candidacy
definite until he receives
more citizen reaction.

Ledgerwood said Sunday
that "Norman is ripped to
thunder.

"The bus has stopped
here. It is time to econo-
mize and get back on the
road again," he said. Al-
though he hasn't been in
the bus yet, Ledgerwood
said, he feels he is quali-
fied for the mayor position
and therefore is consider-
ing being the driver.

Women Top Prize Winners Poetry Society Contest

women garnered nine of 21 possible first place
in the 1974 Poetry Society of Oklahoma competi-
as announced.

etty M. Carlton, Oklahoma City, Clara Laster,
and Emma Crobaugh, Delray Beach, Fla., each
e first place awards, with Mrs. Carlton also
one second place award.

Becquart and Thelma Knight Shumake, both of
a City, and Emma Crobaugh each won two first
ors.

n N. Hill, Wewoka, Christle Jeffries, Okmulgee,
homa Cityans Marj D. Bennett, Shirley Peak
Helen Downing and Vivian McCullough each
rst once.

were 21 separate contests. Judges were poets

and enrollment is still
being taken. Enrollment
fee is \$25 per credit hour
for those wishing to gain
college credit, or \$25 for
others.

In addition, if space is
available, persons may at-
tend individual sessions at
\$4 per session. Paul Lam-
bert of the Oklahoma Heri-
tage Center said.

More information may
be obtained by calling
235-4438.

Tinker Blast Attributed To Fuel Leak

A leak in a fuel line has
been blamed for the large
explosion which injured
four jet engine
and caused
age at a Tink
Base testing
2.

A base sp
investigators
mined that
pipe, housed
tunnel that ra
the building,
explosive aftr
fuel-air mixture
tunnel.

Officials said they have
been unable to establish
what set off the atmos-
phere. The line carried
waste fuel from test cells.

A base spokesman said
repairs are expected to be

Woodward was Bobby
Wayne Collins, who will
formally be presented to

gone previous
Speaker Carl
ball star Jo
and evangelis
rts.

Presentat
Norman
vice president
manager of
WKY-TV in
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Bagwell no
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he is a Re

Morrie Avenue Church Of Christ

Cheyenne, Wyoming



Schedule

Sunday
9:30 - Classes
10:30 - Worship
6:00 - Worship
Wednesday
7:00 P.M.

David Lasater
Minister

3319 Morrie Ave.

Office 632-8428
Home 634-8727

Tuesday has been post-
poned one week.

Hood to Discuss Boren Pro

State Rep. David Hood
will discuss the governor's
tax program in a meeting
The meeti
uled for 7:30
Crown Heig