
GROWTH POINTS

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Start Growing!

Once you've spent time developing a Church Growth Conscience (see July 2023 issue), it's time to START GROWING.

Mix It Right

My grandmother (like many) was a great cook. One thing I learned from her was the importance of mixing the right ingredients together. She never used a written recipe, as the proper ingredients and mix were in her own mind. Once I asked her to write down a recipe, which she did. But, she left out one necessary ingredient. Of course, when I mixed it and baked it, it didn't come out correct. Having the right ingredients is crucial.

To date, about 155 different factors have been identified that impact the growth of a local church. The following are five steps that may help you get started in mixing the right ingredients together to start your church growing and going.

First, hold fast to the Word of God.

After Henry Moorhouse heard D. L. Moody in 1868, he advised, "Stop preaching your own words and preach God's Word."

That's good advice today, too. Trust in God's Word, especially taking at face value the command to "Make Disciples," is crucial to build a growing church.

Second, refocus your church on evangelism.

The third law of Church growth states: Evangelism must be the priority. [See last month's issues for the first two laws.]

The basic principle is "You don't revitalize to evangelize; you evangelize to revitalize." To turn your church around and begin to grow, start refocusing on evangelism today. Preach and teach about evangelism. Challenge your people to list the names of those in their social networks of friends, family, associates, and begin praying for their salvation. Train ten percent of your adults each year, and every year, in some form of friendship evangelism. Offer a minimum of four events each year targeted specially to non-believers. In short, think evangelism, plan for evangelism, preach evangelism, do evangelism, organize for evangelism, and pray for evangelism.

Third, face reality.

Take a look at the last ten years of your church ministry. Obtain the stats and graph each of the following five key aspects of ministry: church attendance, baptisms or

adult conversions, number of people in small groups, number of people serving in a ministry, and financial giving.

When you've completed the graphs, look at the trends. What do the graphs indicate about the current direction of your church? What questions do they raise? If you're growing each year, what must you do to keep up with the growth? If you're in decline, what must you do to stop the decline?

Fourth, clarify your church's vision.

Based on the reality you've now faced, ask "If we could be all that God wants us to be, what would we do?"

Answer these questions:

1. Why are we here?
2. Where are we going?
3. How are we going to get there?
4. How will we know when we've arrived?

If you're not already doing so, pull your leaders together for a retreat to face reality and clarify your direction. Set two-year goals, then meet every other year to evaluate, clarify, and reset your goals. Remember: Vision is nothing more than God's dream for the future direction of your church. Write it down in twenty-five words or less?

Fifth, plan for growth.

Develop plans for each of the following areas.

1. Prayer: Strengthen the foundation of your church's spiritual dynamics. Begin by organizing prayer among your people. Ask God to give you direction for the future. Plea with him to see salvations take place. Ask him for souls. Deal with any sin in the church. Clean up the church spiritually.

2. Structure for growth. In general, refresh, relocate, remodel, restructure, revitalize! Update facilities, worship, childcare, advertising, website, etc. Do what you can now; do the rest later. But do what you can NOW!

3. Organize for growth. Budget and use five percent for local evangelism and another five percent for local church advertising. Get the word out on your church to the local community. Prepare for guests by training your welcome team.

Growth happens when we pray for growth and work for growth. Where will you start today?



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