

Kingdom Expansion through Multiplication

Part 7

EXPANSION GROWTH

KEY VERSE:

And the Word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly... (Acts 6:7)

INTRODUCTION

In the natural body, the various parts are coordinated by the head. All bodily actions result from directions given by the head.

Jesus is the Head which provides direction for His spiritual Body, the Church. Jesus said, **"I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:18).**

In the Bible, His methods for achieving this objective are revealed.

Methods for multiplying the Church should be based on what is taught and demonstrated in God's Word.

As members of the Body of Christ, believers are called to act upon these directions from the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

This part is the first of three that concern growth in numbers in the Church.

This lesson focuses on expansion growth.

EXPANSION GROWTH

Expansion growth occurs when believers win new converts to Christ and bring them into fellowship with their own local church.

This results in numeric growth of the local church.

Expansion growth should be directed at increasing the Kingdom of God.

If the Second Church adds 100 members from the First Church through transfer of membership, Kingdom growth has not occurred.

There has been an increase in membership at Second Church but no expansion of the Kingdom of God.

Kingdom growth only occurs as new converts are won to Jesus and disciplined to become responsible members of the Body of Christ.

THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORD

The book of Acts records the expansion growth of the first church at Jerusalem. Here is a summary of that record:

THE FIRST GROWTH PATTERNS:

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the Disciples and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty). (Acts 1:15)

The Church began in an upper room with a small group of 120 Disciples.

On the Day of Pentecost 3,000 were added to the Jerusalem church:

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day

there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)

After Pentecost, expansion growth occurred on a daily basis:

**And The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.
(Acts 2:47)**

The number of the men in the Jerusalem church grew to 5,000.

This count did not include the women and children who were part of the church:

**Howbeit many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of
the men were about five thousand. (Acts 4:4)**

Eventually, multitudes were added to the church:

**And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men
and women. (Acts 5:14)**

Even people who opposed the church were amazed at its extension:

**Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief
priests heard these things, they doubted them whereunto this would
grow. (Acts 5:24)**

The word added was first used to describe the expansion of the church.

Soon the growth became so rapid that the word multiplied was used:

**And the Word of God increased, and the number of the Disciples
multiplied in Jerusalem greatly... (Acts 6:7)**

From this point on, the book of Acts stresses the multiplication of churches as well as members of the local Jerusalem church.

New churches were planted in every heathen center of the then-known world in less than 40 years.

For example, in Samaria...

...when the believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)

The churches in Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa all experienced expansion growth:

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied. (Acts 9:31)

And all that dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and turned to the Lord.

And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. (Acts 9:35,42)

"Much people" were added to the church through the ministry of just one Jewish convert:

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people were added unto the Lord. (Acts 11:24)

Three verses record the great numbers added to the church at Antioch:

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch.

And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church and taught much people.

**And the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.
(Acts 11:21, 24, 26)**

As the Word of the Lord continued to grow and be multiplied, new believers were added to the church:

But the Word of God grew and multiplied. (Acts 12:24)

THE MULTIPLICATION CONTINUES:

The following passages summarize growth of the church outside of Palestine:

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

**And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.
(Acts 13:49-50)**

So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed. (Acts 19:20)

GROWTH AT ICONIUM:

And it came to pass in Iconium, they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews and so spoke, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. (Acts 14:1)

GROWTH IN DERBE:

In Derbe, disciples were confirmed, exhorted, and organized by Paul (see Acts 14:20-21).

GROWTH IN GALATIA:

And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. (Acts 16:5)

GROWTH IN PHILIPPI:

And a certain woman named Lydia seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. (Acts 16:14 This was the beginning of the Church at Philippi).

GROWTH IN THESSALONICA:

And some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude and of the chief women not a few. (Acts 17:4)

GROWTH AT BEREIA:

Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. (Acts 17:12)

GROWTH AT CORINTH:

The Lord said "I have much people in this city" (see Acts 18:8-11).

The book of Acts

closes with the Apostle Paul still expanding the church, even though he is a prisoner in Rome:

And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

(Acts 28:20-31)

Paul reports many thousands of Jews alone have turned to Christ and become part of local churches:

And when they heard it, they all glorified the Lord and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and are all zealous of the law. (Acts 21:20)

HOW THE CHURCH EXPANDED

These are the methods by which the early church expanded.

SPIRITUAL VISION:

Where there is no vision the people perish. (Proverbs 29:18)

Without spiritual vision, people die spiritually. The early Church had a spiritual vision.

It was a vision Jesus had given His disciples when He told them...

...Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to

harvest. (John 4:35)

Spiritual vision unites people in purpose.

Vision leads to development of a strategy.

That strategy includes understanding of purpose, objectives to accomplish that purpose, and methods of evaluation to make sure the purpose is being fulfilled.

Vision leads to compassion.

When Jesus saw the multitudes He was moved to compassion.

It was a burden based on knowledge of their need.

Vision is basically the development of a Biblical worldview, seeing the world as God sees it and responding on the basis of that view.

The early church caught the vision of expanding from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

It was a vision taught by their leader (Acts 1:8).

When people have a spiritual vision, expectancy replaces boredom and cooperation replaces competition.

RECEPTIVE AREAS AND TIMES:

Jesus taught that some areas would be more receptive than others:

Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

**And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.
(Matthew 10:5-6,14)**

Some areas and groups are more receptive to the Gospel at certain times than others.

The early church worked in spiritual harvest fields that were receptive.

When Paul was rejected in the synagogue, he taught elsewhere (Acts 9:20-31).

When he first wanted to go to Asia, the Holy Spirit stopped him (Acts 16:6).

He went later at a more receptive time.

Expansion occurs most rapidly when you concentrate efforts in ripe harvest fields.

This does not mean you ignore the unresponsive fields.

You continue to plant the Word, wait, and pray for God to make them receptive to the Gospel.

"GO" RATHER THAN "COME" METHODOLOGY:

The early church used the "go" method rather than the "come" method of Old Testament Israel.

In Old Testament times the nations were to come to Israel to receive the revelation of God.

But in the New Testament the command was "Go ye into all the world."

New Testament believers followed this strategy.

They did not sit around waiting for the world to come to them.

EVERY BELIEVER REPRODUCING:

Each member of the early church multiplied to reproduce new disciples:

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. (Acts 8:4)

The chart in the last chapter showed how rapidly believers multiply when each one teaches one who is able to teach others also.

Churches need to send men and women into the arena of everyday life...

People who live their faith rather than just talk about it, people whose lives have been changed by the power of the Gospel.

A soldier does not win a war by remaining in the barracks.

A harvester does not remain in the barn, and a fisherman does not sit idly on the shore.

SOCIAL NETWORKS:

In New Testament times the Gospel spread quickly along existing social networks of family and friends.

For example, Jesus called Andrew to follow Him.

Andrew immediately started sharing the Gospel.

He began by reaching his family.

He brought Peter to Christ.

Study the following passages which illustrate how the Gospel spread within existing social networks:

- Zaccheus and his family: Luke 19
- Family of official of Capernaum: John 4:53
- Relatives and friends of Cornelius: Acts 10:24,44
- Two households in Philippi: Acts 16:15 and 27-34
- The family of a synagogue leaders: Acts 18:8
- Stephanos and his household: I Corinthians 1:16
- Households of Aristobulus and Narcissus: Romans 16:10-11
- Onesiphorous and family: II Timothy 1:16
- Philemon and family: Philemon I

METHODS OF JESUS:

Throughout the book of Acts, the early Church used methods taught and demonstrated by Jesus.

They preached the Gospel, taught the Word, baptized new believers, and trained new disciples (Matthew 28:19-20).

Prayer and study of the Word were important in the expansion of the church (Acts 6:4).

Combining the Word of God with the demonstration of power also expanded the church.

As people were healed, miracles were performed, and demons cast out, multitudes came to the Lord.

(The demonstration of power was so important that Springs of Revival International has an entire course devoted to this subject entitled Kingdom Expansion: "Power Principles").

NEW TESTAMENT GROUPS:

Groups were important in New Testament expansion.

In Acts 6:1-7 when a problem arose, a special group was organized as a solution.

Paul taught a special group of disciples in an extension school (Acts 19:9).

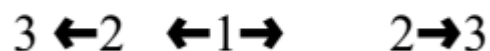
On occasion, Paul taught segregated groups of Jews and Gentiles (Acts 13:42).

Small groups met in homes (Acts 12).

Many churches have organized their entire membership into small groups to accomplish purposes that cannot be achieved as well in larger meetings of the entire church.

Small groups are more intimate, mobile, and flexible to minister to personal needs.

This diagram shows how a church can organize such groups:



1. The Pastor (number 1) trains key leaders to be in charge of the small groups (indicated by the numbers 2).

He instructs them in the spiritual purpose and activities of the group which should include fellowship, study of the Word of God, sharing of personal experiences, prayer, caring for practical material needs, and evangelism.

The number of group leaders varies from Church to Church depending on how many groups are formed.

2. Each group leader (indicated by the numbers 2) forms and leads a small group (indicated by the numbers 3).

EACH HOME A CENTER OF EVANGELISM:

God's plan, from the beginning, was for the home to be a Christian training center:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart...

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house...

**And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and thy gates.
(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)**

Every home as a center of evangelism was part of the method of expansion in the early church as illustrated in the following references:

- Acts 2: The Holy Spirit was given during a prayer meeting in the upper room of a home.
- Acts 5:42: Believers worshiped in the temple and the home, and went house-to-house in visiting, fellowship, and worship.

- Acts 8:3: When Saul tried to defeat the Church, he did not concentrate efforts just on the temples of worship. He entered every house trying to abort the spread of the Gospel.

Each home was a center of evangelism.

- Acts 9:11, 17: Paul was discipled by Ananias in a home.
- Acts 10: The first vision of the cross-cultural expansion of the Gospel was given in a home as Peter prayed.
- Acts 10: The first message to the Gentiles was preached in a home.
- Acts 12: A home prayer meeting resulted in the deliverance of Peter from prison.
- Acts 20:20; 28:30-31: Paul taught both publicly and also from house to house during his ministry.
- Acts 20:7-12: Paul was speaking in a home when Eutychus fell out of the window.
- Acts 21:8-14: Prophetic revelation occurred in homes.
- Churches in the home are recorded in I Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3-5; Colossians 4:15; and Philemon 1:2.

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Holy Spirit is the power which convicts sinful men and women and persuades them to accept the Gospel message.

This results in new converts which leads to expansion of the church.

And when He (the Holy Spirit) is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Of sin, because they believe not on me;

**Of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more;
Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. (John 16:8-11)**

SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

Human growth requires the development of a skeletal structure to support the multiplication of cells.

For the Body of Christ to grow, structure is equally important.

Jesus said the harvest is ripe, but laborers are few.

If laborers are few, then they should be organized effectively to reap the harvest.

For this purpose, the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts and various offices in the Church.

These gifts and offices are for the purpose of the work of the ministry.

Spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit to enable the work of the ministry.

You can read about the different spiritual gifts in the following passages:

- Romans 12:1-8
- I Corinthians 12:1-31
- Ephesians 4:1-16
- I Peter 4:7-11

God has a special place in the Church for each believer:

But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased Him. (I Corinthians 12:18)

Every member has a place which God has chosen for him.

He is empowered to fulfill his special purpose in the Church through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When each believer is filling the place God has chosen for him and using his spiritual gift, the Church operates properly.

God compares it to the operation of the human body in which each member knows and performs its function (I Corinthians 12:1-31).

Each person is important to the work of the ministry, just as each part of the natural body is important:

And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. (I Corinthians 12:21-22)

The Springs of Revival course entitled "**Ministry Of The Holy Spirit**" provides detailed study on each spiritual gift.

For this reason, only a brief summary is provided here:

Special Leadership Gifts:

There are special positions of leadership to which God calls and ordains some in the Church:

And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11)

The special leaders given by God include the following:

Apostles:

An apostle is one who has a special ability to develop new churches in different places and cultures and to oversee a number of churches as a supervisor. Apostle means "a delegate, one sent with full power and authority to act for another."

The apostle has a special authority or ability to extend the Gospel throughout the world by developing organized bodies of believers.

Modern terms used by the church for an apostle are missionary and church-planter.

Prophets:

There are two prophetic gifts. One is the special gift of being a prophet.

The other is the speaking gift of prophecy.

In general, prophecy refers to speaking under the special inspiration of God.

It is the special ability to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people.

A person who is a prophet has the special leadership gift of a prophet as well as the speaking gift of prophecy.

Evangelists:

An evangelist has an ability to share the Gospel with non-believers in a way that men and women respond and become responsible members of the Body of Christ.

The meaning of the word "evangelist" is "one who brings good news."

Pastors:

Pastors are leaders who assume long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

Teachers:

Teachers have the ability to communicate the Word of God effectively in such a way that others learn and apply what is taught.

A teacher is one who has the gift of teaching and also serves in a leadership position in the Church.

The five special gifts of leadership function together to expand the Church.

The apostle extends the Gospel message to various regions and raises up organized bodies of believers.

God gives miraculous signs and wonders to assist in this extension of the Gospel.

The apostle provides special leadership to the churches he raises up.

The prophet also provides leadership in the Church.

One of his functions is to give messages from God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Evangelists communicate the Gospel in such a manner that people respond to it and become believers.

They may minister individually or to large groups, but their ministry always produces new believers.

These believers then come under the care of apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers of the church who guide their spiritual development.

(The example of Philip in Acts 8 illustrates this. He brought the Samaritans to Christ, then turned them to the apostles for further teaching.)

Pastors exercise long-term care for those who have believed through the message of apostles and evangelists.

Their ministry is a picture of the loving care of a shepherd for his sheep.

Teachers provide instruction which goes beyond that of the evangelist.

They teach believers to be spiritually mature.

They train faithful people who are capable of teaching others.

The main responsibility of those with special leadership gifts is to help other believers to discover and use their spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11-16).

The work of the ministry requires the active participation of all the members.

When this structure of Body ministry is not functioning properly, inactive members are easily carried off by false doctrines (Ephesians 4:14)

Here is a brief summary of other spiritual gifts given believers:

Speaking Gifts:

These gifts are called "speaking gifts" because they all involve speaking audibly (out loud).

Prophecy:

A person with the gift of prophecy speaks by inspiration of God to communicate an immediate message to His People.

Teaching:

Teachers have the ability to communicate the Word of God effectively in such a way that others learn and apply what is taught.

Exhortation:

The ability to draw close to individuals in time of need, counseling them correctly with the Word of God.

Word of Wisdom:

The ability to receive insight as to how knowledge may be applied to specific needs.

Word of Knowledge:

The ability to understand things which others do not know and cannot understand and to share this knowledge with them.

Serving Gifts:

These gifts serve the Church by providing structure, organization, and support in both spiritual and practical areas.

Serving:

The ability to perform practical tasks related to the work of the Lord, freeing others from routine but necessary duties.

Helps:

The ability to assist others in the work of the Lord enabling them to increase the effectiveness of their own spiritual gifts.

Leadership:

The ability to set goals in accord with God's purpose and communicate these goals to others.

A person with this gift motivates and leads others to accomplish goals for the glory of God.

Administration:

This gift is called "governments" in the Bible.

A person with the gift has the ability to give direction, organize, and make decisions on behalf of others.

Giving:

The special ability to give material goods and financial resources, time, strength and talents to the work of the Lord.

Showing Mercy:

Special compassion and an ability to help those suffering.

Discerning Of Spirits:

The ability to evaluate people, doctrine, and situations and determine whether they are of God or of Satan.

Faith:

A person with the gift of faith has a special ability to believe with extraordinary confidence and trust God in difficult circumstances.

Hospitality:

Ability to provide food and lodging and minister to other material necessities of those in need.

Sign Gifts:

These are supernatural signs of God's power working through believers to confirm His Word.

Tongues:

The ability to receive and communicate a message of God to His people through a language never learned.

Interpretation:

The ability to make known in a language understood the message of one who speaks in tongues.

Miracles:

Through a person with the gift of miracles God performs powerful acts which are beyond the possibility of occurring naturally.

Healing:

A person with this gift has the ability to let God's power flow through him to restore health apart from the use of natural methods.

BIBLICAL ORGANIZATION:

Believers with special gifts are not the only leaders in the church mentioned in the Bible.

The offices of deacons, elders and bishops are also mentioned in the New Testament.

These are also instrumental in the growth of the church.

These positions of leadership are not the same as the gifts of leadership you just studied.

They are special offices established by the early church to assist in its expansion growth.

You can read in Acts 6:1-7 how the first organization in the early church resulted in growth.

The record of the early church was preserved by God as an example for us to follow in structure.

These offices should also function in the church today.

The purpose of these offices is to assist those who have the special gifts of leadership i.e., the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Use the following section to study these positions of leadership:

Church Offices

Kingdom Expansion through Multiplication

Rev. Michael Angell

Title	References	Duties
Bishop	Timothy 3:1-7 Philippians 1:1 Titus 1:5-9 I Peter 5:2-3	Many consider a bishop to be the same as a pastor. These verses do indicate he is to have indicate long term care over a group of believers.
Deacon	1 Timothy 3:8-13 Philippians 1:1 Acts 6:1-7	These verses indicate deacons have a ministry of serving and helps.
Deaconesses	I Timothy 3:11 Romans 16:1-2	Deaconesses are not specifically mentioned in the Bible. Some churches have adopted this term for the wives of deacons or other women who minister in serving and helps.
Elders	Acts 20:17,28-32 Acts 14:23;15 Acts 16:4; 11:30 I Timothy 5:17 I Peter 5:1-4 Titus 1:5 James 5:14	These verses indicate elders provide leadership in church decisions, minister to the needs of believers, and assist in development and care of local bodies of believers.

Note: The word "elders" is first used in the Bible in Exodus 3:16 in reference to the leaders of Israel.

There are many references to the elders of Israel throughout the Bible.

These elders are different from the position of leadership known as an elder in the early church.

All of the verses we have listed here refer to the elders in the church rather than the elders of Israel.

The elders function in leadership along with the special gifts of leadership God has set in the church.

The elders are not to run the church independent of the special leaders of God, i.e., prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers. God has set the special leaders in the church.

Man chooses the elders.

All leaders in the Church should be born-again believers, of course.

But the Bible also gives specific qualifications which must be met by those filling these church offices:

Qualifications For Bishops And Elders:

Above reproach:

Should have a good reputation and not be in violation of God's Word: I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6,7

Husband of one wife:

If married, should have only one mate: I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6

Temperate:

Moderate in all things: Titus 1:8; I Timothy 3:2

Self-controlled:

Demonstrates control in all areas of life and conduct: Titus 1:8

Sober, vigilant:

Prudent, sensible, wise and practical: I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8

Hospitable:

Home is open to others: I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8

Able to teach:

Has an ability communicate God's Word to others: I Timothy 3:2;
Titus 1:9

Not addicted to wine:

I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7

Patient:

The opposite of being quick tempered: I Timothy 3:3

Not self-willed:

Not self-centered and always wanting their own way: Titus 1:7

Not a new convert:

Must have maturity and experience as a believer: I Timothy 3:6

Loving what is good:

Supporting all that is worthwhile to God and His purposes:

Titus 1:8

Just:

Fair in dealing with people: Titus 1:8

Stable in the Word: Titus 1:9

Holy:

Titus 1:8

Not fond of sordid gain: Not known for greed for financial gain; Free from the love of money: Titus 1:7; I Timothy 3:3

Manages his own household well:

Must show leadership ability in his own family: I Timothy 3:4-5

Having children who believe:

Must have children who have responded to the Lord and are not rebellious:

Titus 1:6

Good reputation with those outside:

Must have a good testimony among non-believers: I Timothy 3:7

Qualifications For Deacons:

Dignity:

- **Must be respected and demonstrate a serious mind and character:** I Timothy 3:8
- **Not double tongued:** Does not give conflicting reports: I Timothy 3:8
- **Not addicted to much wine:** I Timothy 3:8
- **Not fond of sordid gain:** Not greedy for financial gain: I Timothy 3:8
- **Settled in his commitment to the faith:** I Timothy 3:9
- **Tested:** A person who has undergone spiritual trials and temptations and proven faithful: I Timothy 3:10
- **Beyond reproach:** The absence of any charge of violation in conduct: I Timothy 3:10
- **Husband of one wife:** If married should have one mate: I Timothy 3:12
- **Good managers of children and household:** Must demonstrate leadership in family life: I Timothy 3:12
- **Proven:** Not a new convert, but proven as a believer: I Timothy 3:10

Qualifications For Deaconesses:

- **Women:** I Timothy 3:11
- **Dignified:** Respected, person of serious mind and character: I Timothy 3:11
- **Not malicious gossips:** Does not talk about others in a slanderous way: I Timothy 3:11
- **Temperate:** Moderate in all things: I Timothy 3:11
- **Faithful in all things:** Trustworthy and dependable in every area of life: I Timothy 3:11
- **Helper of many:** Must minister to others and help meet their needs: Romans 16:2

The following diagram summarizes the organization of the Church:

THE CHURCH

Special Leadership Gifts:

Apostles
Prophets
Evangelists
Pastors
Teachers
(Ephesians 2:20-22)



(assisted by special offices of bishops, deacons, elders, and each member of the body using their spiritual gift in the church in the place God has set them)



The Foundation laid by Apostles and Prophets

Ephesians 2:20



BUILT UPON THE ROCK-JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 16:18

I Corinthians 3:11

Ephesians 2:20

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. The following study illustrates the results of individual believers witnessing in their own social networks of friends and relatives.

A study of 4,000 new converts to various churches was conducted to determine how they came to visit the church in the first place.

Here were the results:

- 6 to 8% Just walked in
- 2 to 3% Came through a program of the church
- 8 to 12% Came through invitation of the pastor
- 3 to 4% Came due to a special need in their lives
- 1 to 2% Came as a result of a visit by church members
- 3 to 4% Came through a Sunday school class
- **70 to 80% Were invited by friends and relatives**

You might want to study new converts in your own church to determine why people first visited the church.

The information you gain from the study will provide information for prayer and improvement.

Have each person complete the following form:

Name: _____ Address: _____

Please check all the factors on the following list which led you to first visit this church:

- Friends recommended it.
- I came on my own.
- I saw an advertisement (sign, newspaper, radio, television).
- Because of the radio or television ministry of the church.
- A former pastor recommended it.
- I received a letter, tract, or other printed material from the church.
- Because of a personal visit by the pastor.
- Because of a personal visit by a member of the church.
- Because of a revival or crusade.
- Because it is my denominational preference.
- Because I (and/or my family) received spiritual help through the church.
- It is located near my home.
- It is a friendly, caring church.
- Because a relative belongs here.

2. Going from house-to-house was a method used in the early Church.

Here are some suggestions for visiting the homes of those in the community where your Church is located:

- Dress appropriately for the visit, in a manner acceptable for business in your culture. You are there on God's business.
- Pray before going on the visit.
- Center your visit on the needs of the people. Do they need salvation? Do they need counsel for other spiritual needs? Are they in need of physical healing or material help?
- Do not stay too long. Christ's encounters were brief but purposeful.
- Plan to follow up with other visits: What is your point of reentry to the home? In other words, what was said that gives you an opening to make a repeat visit? (For example, to check on the condition of a person who is ill).
- Did anything come up you should refer to the pastor for his personal care and attention?

3. In all expansion of the church there are three important factors:

- The Spirit of God
- The Word of God
- and the man of God

Review the book of Acts again using this outline:

- The Spirit of God is emphasized. Acts 1-11
- Five accounts of the baptism of the Spirit are recorded in chapters 2,8,9,10,19.
- The Word of God is emphasized. Acts 12:20

Its titles are varied.

It is called:

- The Word (16:6);
- Word of God (17:13);
- Word of the Lord (15:35);
- Gospel (15:7);
- Word of this salvation (13:26);
- Word of His grace (14:3; 20:32)
- words of this life (5:20)
- Its result are that the Word increased (6:7);
- grew and multiplied (12:24),
- and grew and prevailed (19:20)

The man of God is emphasized. Acts 21-28

These chapters the Apostle Paul as an example of the man of God.

4. Several studies of growing churches were conducted in the United States.

The following is a summary of common factors present in these expanding churches.

The list is not in order of importance.

How does your church measure up?

- Strong spiritual leadership.
- Well mobilized laity and team ministries.
- Effective evangelism.
- Biblical priorities.
- Demonstration of power (healings, miracles, etc.).
- Gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit manifested.
- Congregations that multiply by planting new churches.
- Small group ministries within the church.
- Anointed corporate worship.
- Visibility (located in a visible place in the community).
- Solid financial resources.
- Organized programs of discipleship training.
- Specific purposes and objectives.
- Effective relationship to the community in which it is located.
- Christ-centered.
- Biblically based (preaching, worship, doctrine).
- Flexible (open to change by the Holy Spirit).
- Friendly, loving membership.
- Spiritually growing, mature, committed.
- Emphasis on prayer.
- Multiple ministries.

5. Special group ministry was one method of expansion in the early church.

Here are some special groups ministries you might pray about starting in your church:

- Discipling for new converts

- New and expectant mothers
- Children
- Teens
- Elderly people
- Young Married couples
- Single people
- Ministry to those bound in substance abuse, i.e., alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, etc.
- Prayer
- Bible study
- Neighborhood groups in different regions of the city
- Unwed mothers
- Special culture or linguistic groups
- Mens' ministry
- Womens' ministry
- The physically or mentally handicapped
- Special groups for those who have experienced difficulties, i.e., death of a spouse, child, divorce, etc.

6. Each group will need a leader.

Be sure the leader fits the Biblical qualifications for church leadership.

Here are some responsibilities of a group leader:

- To be responsible for the group to the pastor and church leadership.
- To conduct teaching within guidelines given by the pastor.
- To encourage participation of group members in study, discussion, prayer, evangelism, and other activities.
- To establish an atmosphere of love and trust in which people free feel free to share their problems.
- To visit and fellowship with group members in their homes.

- To help group members identify their spiritual gifts and encourage their use in the group, church, and community.
- To monitor and encourage the spiritual growth of group members.
- In the case of neighborhood groups, monitor the needs of the area, making contact with new neighbors, visiting and ministering to those with specific needs.
- To train assistant leaders who can substitute for the leader in a temporary capacity and eventually, if need be, assume leadership of the group.

7. The following sample letters can be used in Church expansion:

Letter for out-of-town visitors:

Dear (name of person):

I was delighted to have you visit and worship with us this past Sunday. One of the pleasures of ministering in (city name) is that of meeting so many lovely people from so many places.

I sincerely trust that our service was meaningful and of spiritual benefit to you as well as pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please visit with us again when you are in this area.

Should I be able to assist you at any time in spiritual matters, please feel free to call upon me.

Sincerely yours,
Your name and
Your Title

Letter to a visitor from the community who attends another local church:

Dear (name of person):

It was a pleasure to have you visit with us recently.

We trust you found the service meaningful and that you experienced the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am pleased to know that you are active in another fellowship of believers, but if I can ever be of assistance to you, please feel free to call upon me.

Do come and visit us again!

Sincerely yours,

Your name and

Your Title

Letter from the pastor to new people in the community:

Dear (name of person):

Welcome to (name of city)!

As you know, in moving to a new location, new friendships are important.

I would therefore consider it a real privilege if you would think of me and our church as new friends!

If you do not have a church home yet, we invite you to attend our services of worship listed on the enclosed brochure (or give information on the services right in the letter).

If I can be of spiritual assistance to you and your family please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,
Your name and
Your Title

Letter from a member of the church to new people in the community:

Dear (name of person):

Hello...My name is (insert your name).

Welcome to the city of (name of city).

I hope you will find it as enjoyable as I have to be part of this community.

Perhaps you have not yet found a church home.

I would like to invite you to worship with us this Sunday at the (name of church, service schedule, address).

The (name of church) has become an important part of my life in this community.

Spiritually, I have found warm, sweet fellowship and a minister who is always available as a friend and counselor.

Socially, I have met many of my friends through the church.

The enclosed brochure provides additional information about our church.

Please visit us...We would love to become friends of yours.

If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at (your name or address).

I do hope to meet you soon!

Sincerely yours,

Your name

Letter to a prospect contacted in visitation:

Dear (name of person):

Recently, members of our visitation team had the pleasure of meeting you and introducing you to the ministry of the (name of your church).

We sincerely hope that you will visit and worship with us in the very near future.

As the minister of the (name of church) let me assure you that I have a personal interest in your spiritual life and am committed to making the Bible relevant to the development of a more meaningful relationship with God.

We extend to you the fellowship and ministry of this church to you and your family, and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Your name and

Your Title