

LET YOUR CHURCH
GROW

SUCCESS GUARANTEED



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Let Your Church Grow

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Chapter One

The Problem and Cure

About half of all protestant churches in the United States average less than 75 in attendance in their weekly morning worship service. Our church growth experts tells us that it takes about 75 people to be able to support the basic functions of a church and another 50 people to be able to support a pastor. The purpose of this book is not only to be able to help churches with under 75 reach 75, but to continue to grow until your attendance is 125.

I have asked myself why reaching 75 in attendance is so difficult. So much so that half of our churches average less than 75 in attendance. However, from my personal experience, I have found that reaching 60 in attendance is the most difficult of all goals. This book will give you the keys of not only reaching the first 60 in attendance, but taking it to the next level of 75 and beyond. The principles in this book are both biblically based and based on sound business concepts. A pastor can expect his church to grow to the goal that God has placed in his heart.

This is not a “get rich quick” scheme. This is a “growing a church the Bible way” plan. It is proven and will work I believe 100% of the time. How can I give such a guarantee? Because it is Jesus that said, “I will build my church” (Mt. 16:18). The next phrase is a strong statement, but I am going to stay with it. If a church is got growing it is not functioning 100% as Christ intended it to function.

Most churches do not grow to over 75 in attendance for very simple reasons. First, we overestimate what we can do in the short run and underestimate what we can do in the long run. Second, we ignore some of what I call basic scripturally-based business strategies when it comes to growing the local church that we pastor.

In this book I am going to show you how to take the smallest church in attendance and bring that church to 75 in attendance. These principles work even if you are planting a church and your attendance is now zero. They will work if the church you are pastoring is averaging in the 20s and has been in existence for over 50 years.

I will also give you a biblical foundation for bringing your church to 75 in attendance. Once you understand these principles, it will make it much easier for you to reach your attendance goals. Why? Because you will understand that God is on your side and is rooting for you to make it to the first 75 in attendance. Second, the stories that I will give you are all personal in nature. We all learn best through our own failures and successes. Some reading this book will say what is the big deal about getting a church to 75 in attendance? Anyone should be able to do that. I will agree with that statement “anyone should be able to do that.” However, gathering the first 75 is very hard work. If it was easy why are half of our 344,000 American protestant churches struggling to get to the first 75 in attendance?

However, easy or hard the job can be done. When you begin to think about it, the odds for success are not encouraging. Many of the churches under 75 in attendance have been there for a very long period of time. I have been involved in churches that have twenty to less than fifty for a very long period of time. They had been that way for more than thirty years. They even had long term pastors (more than ten years tenure). What are the chances they can change and grow to 75? Statistically it is very low. If you are pastoring one of those churches this book is designed to give you hope.

If your church is plateaued or declining in attendance, this book is also for you. While I will give you different ideas and methods, I will basically focus on how an individual pastor without a lot of outside help, can see the church he or she pastors reach the goal of 75 in attendance and then go beyond. While it can be done without a lot of outside help, having outside help permits you to see blind spots that may be difficult for you to see yourself. It will also permit you to grow your church faster. For instance sometimes a three year growth goal can be reached in one year with additional help from qualified people.

The longer you have been at a church as pastor, the easier it is to overlook things that may be hindering your church from growth. Thus, having an outside consultant can give you that fresh look and a new perspective to identify areas that may need attention. However, self-study is always the key. Self-study may be in the form of reading books on church growth. However, do not limit yourself to just church growth materials. Study books on business growth and be a lifetime learner. You may want to learn something about calculus that shows how best to plot changes in motion, study books on marketing or look at the newest multimedia methods. Include books on how to get along with people, conflict resolution and learn about finance, income taxes and proper methods of investing. Importantly, set time aside each day or week to study outside of your regular sermon preparation time.

When pastoring a church is your fulltime job, it is easy to become myopic in both your behavior and outlook. I call it becoming a church nerd. The only people you associate with are those inside your congregation. It can become your safety zone. When you and your spouse would like to go out to eat, you invite someone from your church to join you. You have a men's breakfast, but only with men from your church. Staff meetings and Board Meetings once again are comprised of people who are closely associated to you. You even find it difficult to visit other churches to glean ideas from them because you rarely miss a Sunday morning service at your own church.

Do not think you need to invent the wheel again to have a growing church. God has given church growth ideas to people since the early church. God wants us to observe, not copy, what others have done in the area of church growth. I heard about a church that had phenomenal growth. In a couple of years they had more than 2,000 in attendance with five services on Sunday. So my family and I went to visit the church. Even though they were in a large city in a bad location in a rented facility, they had found

church grow principles that worked for them. It helped me formulate better ideas to reach both the church and unchurched.

Observing what God is doing in other locations will permit you to be open to church growth ideas for your own church. God oftentimes plants church growth ideas from many experiences that you may have. You can be at the museum, the sports game, restaurant, a live performance or any of a number of places, and God may place something in your heart to help you implement a church growth idea for your church. God has made a vast world, and the more that you can see what God is doing in His world, the more your heart can be opened to what God wants to do at your church. The Apostle Paul says quoting some from the prophet Isaiah "No one's ever seen or heard anything like this, never so much as imagined anything quite like it - What God has arranged for those who love him. But you've seen and heard it because God by his Spirit has brought it all out into the open before you. Who ever knows what you're thinking and planning except you yourself? The same with God - except that he not only knows what he's thinking, but he lets us in on it" (I Cor. 2:9-12 Message).

Because God is infinite Himself, he has an infinite amount of ideas for each of His churches to grow. Pastors are described in Scripture with a very affectionate term—shepherds (I Peter 5:2). Not only that, they work under the direct direction of the Chief Shepherd who is Jesus Christ, Himself. He is interested in your success even more than you are. He will load you down with ideas so that you can be the best shepherd for your flock. Ultimately, when He appears again, it is the pastors that He plans to reward lavishly (I Peter 5:4 Message).

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