

Why Churches Do Not Grow

Luke 14:15-24, "When one of those at the table with Him heard this, he said to Jesus, 'Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.' Jesus replied: 'A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

There is a province of Northern Mexico where the peasants lived in poverty. Their main crop was corn, but it had been ravaged by diseases and the years had depleted the soil. The farmers were only getting 10 bushels an acre.

Some American experts went to see if they could help the situation. They analyzed the soil, determined what was lacking and developed a corn that suited that area and was resistant to the disease. And, as a result, the harvest increased to **110 bushels** an acre.

The church often finds itself in a "low production cycle." We need analyze the soil, and see if the situation can be improved.

WHY CHURCHES DO NOT GROW

1. It could be they are victims of defeatism. They may have a fatalistic attitude . . . the "*It can't be done here*" syndrome" . . . "*It's impossible to grow here*" attitude is what is hindering many churches from growing.

Jesus was always *realistic*- but He was never *negative*!

It is true that prophecies do tell us that there will be "*great apostasy*" in the last days; however, God's Words also predicts that there will be an "*outpouring of His Spirit*" in the last days. Let's expect the outpouring of God's Spirit!

2. Some churches fail to grow because they have lost mobility. They have reduced their activities to the four walls of their building. They are "*Prisoners of a building*" They have withdrawn from the areas around it where the people are. The Pentecostal churches of yesterday were built on street meetings, cottage prayer meeting and visitation.

The extent of reaching outside their walls of many churches today is to have some "*quest speaker*."

The early church didn't even have buildings. God help us to never allow a building to seal us off from the world outside!

3. Another situation which hinders church growth is, "*A Family-Clan Mentality*"

Some churches will grow rapidly for awhile and then level off its growth because the people feel at home with one another. How welcome does a visitor feel? Does it disturb the security and fellowship of those who are already a part of the church there? The church needs more **bridges** to the outside world. A fire needs new material or it will begin to burn low. The church needs new material or it will begin to burn low

4. A fourth hindrance to church growth is a "*pastor-do-it-all*" mentality. - This is a common mistake of young pastors.

Ephesians 4:12 teaches that, God placed pastors in the church, "*For the perfecting of the saints, [maturing of the saints] for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*"

There should be no comma after the word "*saints.*" What difference does that make, you ask? It means that the pastors responsibility is the see to it that the saints reach maturity and that the **saints** are to do the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ!

Look at Acts 8:4, "*They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word.*" You might think that this means that the preachers went every where preaching God's Word. Look at the first verse of Acts 8, "*They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*"

We must each one of us fulfill our own divine calling!

5. The church fails to grow when it is **self-centered**. The church's work should be like "*breathing*" is a person. One must breathe in and out. For the church, "*breathing out*" is perfecting the saints in Christian graces and "*breathing in*" is evangelism. The temptation is to withdraw from the rugged task of winning the lost, and retreat into the enjoyment of the presence of gifts the Holy Spirit

We, of course, should be concerned about "*the maturity of the saints,*" but, we should never be so concerned over the deepening our own spiritual lives, that work of evangelism is lost. We must keep both of these ministries in perspective.

6. It is possible that church fail to grow because of a weak spiritual incentive. The spiritual dynamics of prayer, intercession and waiting upon God has been lost. There is a tendency to substitute the natural for the spiritual, that is, attempting to carrying out the work of God on a natural plane.

Some church have such a round of activities that there is no time left for the important things.

7. It is possible that churches do not grow because they are in bondage to **traditions** and **religious habits**. They begin following certain routines and lose the freshness of God's touch. Where's the **burden for souls** - the **weeping** - the **wrestling in prayer**? God can break through. Faith can be revived. God intends for the church to grow. Let's ask Him anew to move in His church here . . .