

August 2017

Church Growth And How To Obtain It

Jim Bill McInteer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/mcinteer-sermons-topic>

Recommended Citation

McInteer, J. (2017). Church Growth And How To Obtain It. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/mcinteer-sermons-topic/37>

This Sermon is brought to you for free and open access by the Jim Bill McInteer Archive at Scholar Works at Harding. It has been accepted for inclusion in Jim Bill McInteer Sermon Outlines by Topic by an authorized administrator of Scholar Works at Harding. For more information, please contact scholarworks@harding.edu.



CHURCH GROWTH-AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT

I. Perhaps no current theme is of more concern to elders & preachers than church growth.

A. It is not optional.

Mk. 16:15-16

B. It is to obtain blessings to the church and to the ones added to it.

C. But how can we grow?

1. Moose story with Canadian bush pilot - where are we? About 100 yds. farther than we made it last year. #1

2. I do not want to send you on a disastrous mission.

D. We all know the need.

1. 250 million people in USA.
100 million no active religious affiliation.
75 million Christians in name only.
More non-Christians in USA than most any nation.

2. 1900 - 27 churches per 10,000 folk.
1988 - 12 churches per 10,000 folk.
85% all N. American churches either static or declining. *Evangelism #1 1/2*

3. 40% of Churches in England report no conversions in last 2 years.

E. Our task: Multiply not maintain.

II. NT church grew (see clip) #2

Acts. 4:4 - no. of men grew to 5,000 *Multitude*
Acts 5:14 - More & more men & women bel.
Acts 6:7 *Word increased. disc. mult. great. priest*
Acts 9:31 *churches multiplied*

Acts 11:21 *Great no. bef.*

Acts 16:5 *increased in no. daily*

III. This prompts some questions & I'll use extensively work of Nelson Annan.

A. 4 reasons for non-growth.

- 1. Unresponsive fields - Jew & Muslin neighborhood. Co. or rural all to town.
- 2. High mobility - here today, transferred tomorrow. 6th & Izard 130 responses per year to stay even.
- 3. Sin & carnality.
- 4. Wrong methods & thinking.

- a) Must become more spiritual.
- b) Or be less spiritual - lower standards. "Getting a crowd is not an accomplishment it's an opportunity. (Clip on Rt.)

*2 classes of people
Rt. & unright.
The classifying
is always
done by the
righteous*

- c) No welcome signs - no ramp, no nursery, for instance - no good P.A.

- (1) Friendly? # 2 1/2
- (2) Average person knows 40 to 60 - if membership above 100 - 40% you do not know!

B. What is necessary?

- 1. Want to expect to, plan to.
- 2. How does the visitor see us?
 - a) Story of epilepsy. # 3
 - b) Parking - at Red Boiling it was directed.
 - c) Legible signs or paint peeling?

d) Greeters - where to take small children - nursery clean?

Gazette clip. #4

e) Sloppy bulletin - 4 1/2

f) Preacher understood

g) Remember studies show people decide within 15 minutes after entering whether they will return or not.

h) Talk up youth & singles program. What about women's group?

3. Do we talk & pray growth - peace, unity, service - what do I absorb as the main thrust from prayers - preacher's ready recollection.

4. Friendly - since new studies say traditional American family is the exception we need others meeting needs - will grow. 70%+ come because of friend or relative. If you have 5+ good friends you stick - below it's dropout time.

a) Great Commission.

b) Great Commandment (Mk.12:29-31)

c) Small groups are important but can be dangerous.

5. What methods? (Growth depends on clip) #5

a. Visitation teams - reach people through people - (Missionary quote)

(1) Couples retreat.

(2) Men's breakfasts

(3) Special speakers at banquets.

- b) Assimilate new comers into group.
- c) Use all talents.
- d) Encourage excellency. - 5 1/4

Col. 3:17

- e) Great preaching.
- f) Goals "He that aimeth at nothing shall surely hit it".
- g) Momentum - Jim Miller

6. Strong Leadership

- a) Role model

1 Cor. 11:1

1 Tim. 4:12

- b) Concern for others - not aloof, removed, uncaring.
- c) M.B.W.A. - compliment folk. 5 1/2
- d) Communicates well. # 5 3/4
- e) Give direction - sand dune or sculpture? (Mrs. Wise at RBS)
- f) Give opportunity to all.
(You called on me 1971 to read text - last time anyone did - 1988!)

7. Need leaders with:

- a) Vision
- b) Can make a decision.
- c) Rebounds - Churchill quote # 6
- d) Motivates others

"A gifted leader is someone who not only motivates people to do what they don't want to do but also gets them to enjoy doing it. "

e) Innovative - inhibitors are:

- (1) Age
- (2) Personality
- (3) True to word
- (4) Fear criticism
- (5) Too busy - "Any change at any time, in any way, for any reason, is bad."
- (6) 2% are innovators
15% listen to innovators and change
70% will go along
10% never support change

f) Training

Prov. 14:4

- (1) "Show me a man who takes no inventory and I'll show you a man who goes bankrupt."
- (2) We are not rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic.

(3) Swendoll #17

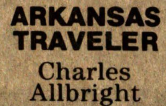
Hillsboro - 8/31/88

Columbia Ave., Glasgow, KY (Mammoth Cave) - 10/7/88

Proverbs revised to better reflect a youthful view

■ **ALL TOGETHER NOW**, children, finish this wise saying: "An apple a day . . ."

"Gets caught in your braces"
— Mandy Snyder.
"Is better than a prune a day"
— Heather Knight.
"Makes you bored with apples"
— Brian Bleidberg.
At Mountain Home,
Sue Calaway



ARKANSAS TRAVELER
Charles Allbright
discussed proverbs with her fifth graders at Guy Berry Intermediate School.
"A proverb tells a truth or some useful wisdom in a short sentence," the teacher explained.
Unburdened by whiskery wisdom from out of the past, the fifth graders struck out on their own to complete the sayings.
Sue Calaway did not reveal the correct endings until the students had written their own.
As for the real thing — Yecch!

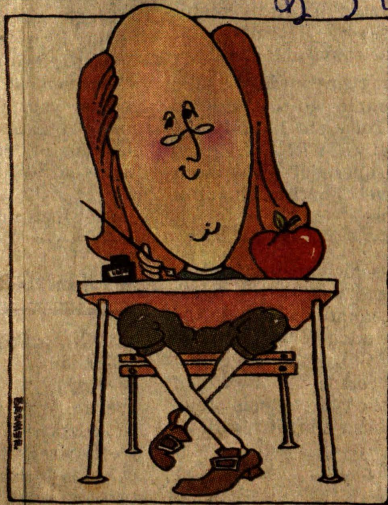
John Bill From J.P.
"In most cases the children felt that their endings far surpassed Benjamin Franklin's in *Poor Richard's Almanac*."

■ **MOVING QUICKLY ON** from apples, class, let us finish another wise saying.

"A bird in the hand . . ."
Michaela Fawcett — "May do a gross thing."
Douglas Alexander — "Gives rabies!"
All right, then, forget the captive bird. Complete this proverb: "All that glitters is . . ."
Heather Knight — "On the Christmas tree."
Franki Heenan — "A reason to buy sunglasses."
Cole Ford — "Fingernail polish."

■ **SUPPOSE, CHILDREN**, that you lived in a house made of glass. People who live in glass houses . . .

Cory Wade — "Should dress when they get out of the shower."
Trisha Holland — "Usually have expensive stuff."
Shawn McIlravy — "Don't need any windows."
Jenny Hughes — "Use a lot of band-aids!"
Russell Webster — "Are always tanned."
Jason Kincade — "Use a lot of paper towels!"
Rickey Crawford — "Better have pretty couches."



But let us move on, to a particular part of the house. Complete this proverb: "If you can't stand the heat . . ."
Louise Kelley — "Sweat!"
Travis Buckley — "Get in a pile of snow!"
Kim Harris — "Get the heck out of Dodge!"
■ **HE WHO LAUGHS last . . .**
Shawn McIlravy — "Gets afternoon detention."
Ferrin Williams — "Doesn't get the joke."
Better late than . . .

Trisha Holland — "Getting a ticket."
Scott Graham — "Later or latest."
Benji Bailey — "Cutting school."
Out of the mouths of babes . . .
Tammera Cox — "Come a lot of bubbles."
Benji Bailey — "Come spit-up, thumbs and passifires."
Enough of the babes. Consider another kind of bird, by finishing this wise saying: "The early bird . . ."
Shawn McIlravy — "Gets to McDonald's first!"
Heather Knight — "Wakes everybody up."
Cory Wade — "Gets the bathroom first."
Tammera Cox — "Is asleep by noon."

■ **BE CAREFUL ABOUT** your chickens. Don't count your chickens . . .
Jeremy Helton — "Before the possum comes."

Tammera Cox — "They may be roosters."
Heather Knight — "Until they're fried."
If the shoe fits . . .
Jill Potchernick — "Say it doesn't so you can keep looking."
Brian Bleidberg — "Check the price tag."
Oakley Rose — "It's your size."
Nicky Rogers — "Get the other one."
Cleanliness is next . . .
Gina Farris — "To the bathroom."
Tammera Cox — "To impossible!"

ON JULY 14, 1988, A GALLUP POLL entitled "Unchurched Americans 1988" was released. It is an update of a similar study done for a consortium of religious groups in 1978.

For the purpose of the study, "unchurched" persons were defined as those who either are not church members or are church members but have not attended a church service in the previous six months. Using this definition, 44 percent of Americans are without meaningful church affiliation.

As I read a synopsis of that study and thought about the task we have of spreading the gospel to the world, most of the things it reported were encouraging. For example ...

* Seventy-two percent believe that Jesus is the Son of God, up from 64 percent ten years ago.

* Sixty-three percent believe the Bible is the literal or inspired Word of God.

* Seventy-seven percent say they occasionally pray to God.

* Seventy-three percent say that they want religious training for their children.

* Sixty-nine percent say that religion is either "very important" or "fairly important" in their lives.

These people are not reluctant pagans! They are sympathetic to Christian faith. They possess an embryonic form of faith. Many of them appear to be -- using Jesus' description of a man he met -- "not far from the kingdom."

The same Gallup poll found this group critical of churches on two primary issues. First, 44 percent said religious groups were not doing enough to help the poor, homeless, etc. Second, 60 percent said churches are too concerned with their distinctive denominational issues.

Let's learn from the Gallup research. In our life as a church, let's do more -- not less -- in addressing the needs of hurting people. That becomes a credibility base with sensitive people. Then, in our teaching and preaching, let's preach a non-sectarian message of salvation in Jesus.

If there was ever a time when undenominational Christianity had a waiting audience, it is now.

---- Rubel Shelly

Two American sportsmen on a moose hunting expedition were flown into the northern wilderness by sea plane. Their Canadian bush pilot skillfully landed on a small lake and deposited the hunters on shore with their gear.

Just before leaving, the pilot warned them: "This lake is small, and the trees on the shore are very tall. It's difficult to take off with a full load. Remember that no matter how many moose you see this week, we can take only one moose with us on the plane."

A week later the pilot returned for the hunters, who, much to the pilot's dismay, had killed two moose.

The pilot exploded, "I told you only one moose!"

But one of the hunters replied, "Last year our pilot let us take out two moose."

The bush pilot bristled. He prided himself on being the best in the business. "Same kind of plane?" he asked.

"Yep."

"Same lake?"

"Yep."

"He was a fool," the pilot said at last. "But if he could do it, so can I."

The hunters packed all their gear and the two moose into the soon overloaded seaplane. Cranking the engine to its limit, the pilot took off. But the bulging plane hit the top of several fir trees on the far shore. Plane, moose meat, and hunters were scattered across the forest.

One of the hunters shook himself, slowly stood up, and in a shaky voice, asked his buddy, "Hey, Hank! Where are we?"

"I don't know," he replied. "But I think we're about 100 feet farther than we made it last year."

Like those foolish hunters, we're often determined to do it our way, no matter how many times we fail. We have a tendency to follow the seven last words of the church: "But we've always done it this way!"

Church Growth

The second amazing factor in the multiplication of early Christians was their absolute certainty #2 that God had, in very truth, opened the way of salvation. These early Christians had no education, no seminary training, no ordained ministers, no church buildings, no philosophy, no history of missionary expansion. But they were certain that God had opened the one way of salvation. Jesus of Nazareth had died on the Cross, as foretold by

"Over four million people indicated they would consider attending a church if they were to receive a personal invitation and liked the people, or if, during a time of crisis in their own lives, members of a church demonstrated genuine personal interest in them."

Bill Martin

"Never on Sunday" *Texas Monthly*

#2/2

Look through a Visitor's Eyes

As two church members visited homes to invite people to their church, they met an epileptic man who said he would like to attend but feared his epilepsy might cause problems. The members assured him that he would be given a special chair, and that if he had a seizure, the ushers would carry him out in the chair, avoiding embarrassment.

The following Sunday the ushers led the visitor to his special seat. When the congregation stood to sing, the man's chair was accidentally pushed back, and when everyone sat down he fell sprawling to the floor. Believing the man was having a seizure, the ushers ran to him, stuffed a large handkerchief into his mouth, and with great efficiency carried him into the foyer. When they let go of him, the man jumped up and raced out the door, leaving his coat behind.

The incident was unfortunate, but this church didn't quit

easily. The aggressive visitation pair visited him that afternoon to return his coat. To their amazement their epileptic friend hadn't visited their church at all that morning. And the other man? He never returned to get his coat!

Funny story, you say? How many churches have unwittingly made visitors feel almost as uncomfortable as the poor "epileptic" above? Do visitors feel welcome and relaxed in your church? Is parking a hassle? Is the sign out front legible and freshly painted? Or does the sign's peeling paint tell visitors "We don't expect anyone to be attracted to us, so we don't try to attract anyone."

Does someone stand at the door to welcome visitors with a smile? Does an usher help visitors find a seat? Are sensitive Christians directing parents with small children to the nursery or the right Sunday school class? Is the nursery clean and comfortable? No matter how small the congregation, visitors need friendly guidance.

Does the sloppy bulletin announce, "We are not excited about what happens here. We just slap this bulletin together because we've always done it this way"?

Does the preacher make people feel relaxed? Is he friendly? Do people feel that he is prepared and that the service is well planned? Do they sense a clear purpose in the service?

What are a visitor's first impressions? His mind may be made up before he hears the sermon. Studies indicate that most visitors decide within fifteen minutes after entering the building whether or not they will return. How does your church encourage visitors to return?

Like the familiar chips and cracks at home, we often tend to overlook the deficiencies of our building and services. But visitors don't. If you've attended your fellowship for several years, it may be difficult for you to evaluate your congregation

We the willing, led by the unknowing,

Are doing the impossible for the ungrateful.

We have done so much, for so long, for so little,

We are qualified to do anything, for nothing, forever.

AA/2

tion and on any theory of eternal truth. ⁴⁵ Rather, church growth depends on conviction that the biblical revelation has been given by God and that, in the absolute matters concerning man and God, God has revealed himself and his perfect will authoritatively. Christians in this century or any other, this land or any other, may confidently go forward, knowing that they are basing their actions on unchanging truth.

In the book *McDonalds: Behind the Arches*, author John F. Love examines the phenomenal success of this fast-food chain.

He quotes the company's chairman: "We were continually looking for a better way to do things, and then a revised better way to do things, and then a revised, revised better way."

45/4



#5 1/2) The best-sellers *In Search of Excellence* and *The Pursuit of Excellence* emphasize a people-management principle called M.B.W.A.—Management By Walking Around. This principle challenges corporate executives to spend time with their employees, asking questions and listening carefully to their needs and feelings. Should local church leaders do less for God's people?

As a member of your local congregation, how do you make others feel appreciated? How often do you thank or compliment those serving in Sunday school, youth ministries, or music? Do fellow Christians hear, see, and feel your appreciation? I'm grieved when someone says of me, "That man never smiles at me. He doesn't care what I think. None of our elders have ever encouraged me." The leaders and each member in your church should actively care for people.

Good leaders are good communicators. The Pursuit of Excellence quotes Admiral Zumwalt on how to ~~com~~⁴⁵³⁴mand a ship: "What I tried hardest to do was ensure that every officer and man on the ship not only knew what we were about . . . but also managed to understand enough about how it all fitted together that he could begin to experience some of the fun and challenge that those of us in the top slots were having . . . More important . . . was the basic effort to communicate a sense of excitement, fun, and zest in all that we were doing."

Good shepherds use every means possible to keep the congregation informed so that each person feels a part of the church. This flow of information includes congregational meetings, financial reports, newsletters, telephone calls, and home visits. Leaders need to ask questions, heed the advice of others, and share information.

3. A leader rebounds quickly. Because leaders are human, they make mistakes, fail, and receive criticism. Cultivate the perspective of Winston Churchill, Britain's Prime Minister, during World War II. After presenting a gloomy war report to his Cabinet, he lit a cigar, smiled, and said, "Gentlemen, I find it rather inspiring." What a leadership attitude! Churchill also said, "Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at—without result."

Charles Swindoll compares church growth to remodeling your home: it always takes longer than you planned. It costs more than you figured. It is messier than you anticipated. And it requires greater determination than you ever expected. #17

J. Robertson McQuilken, president of Columbia Bible College, visited several growing churches in Japan with Donald McGavren, a pioneer of the church growth movement. McQuilken was puzzled that each of the growing churches cited a different reason for its growth. One cited commitment to prayer; another claimed it was excellent organization; and a third credited a movement of the Holy Spirit. So McQuilken asked McGavren what he believed was the secret to Japanese church growth.

"There's no mystery there," McGavren replied. "What do they all have in common? They all *expect to grow*, and they *go out and do it!*"