

## Syllabus for Church Growth

The study of Church Growth encompasses both a study of Scripture and the methods of our time that lead to spiritual and numerical growth of the Kingdom of God. We will accent what builds Scriptural churches, not what inflates by human ingenuity. We will examine good methods and expose those that may cause harm in the body of Christ.

Class attendance is required. Students cannot pass and have more than three unexcused absences. Two open-note, take home exams will be given. Students will be graded according to the following scale: 93-100 A; 85-92 B; 78-84 C; 70-77 D; below 70 F.

Students will be required to participate in two evangelistic projects to pass this course:

- (1) Chart and evaluate the growth of a local congregation for the past five years.
- (2) Conduct at least one Bible study (two lessons) with a prospective member.

### August

26 Introduction to Church Growth (1-4)

### September

2 Measuring Church Growth (5-7)  
9 Biblical Basis for Church Growth  
16 Principles of Church Growth  
23 Church Growth among Churches of Christ  
30 Barriers to Church Growth (*Mid-Term Exam*)

### October

7 Creating an Evangelistic Environment  
14 The Role of Leadership in Church Growth  
21 Using "Upon the Rock" Bible Study Series  
28 Upon the Rock Bible Studies

### November

4 The Conversion Process  
11 Motivating People to Respond to the Gospel  
(*Final exam*)  
18 Reaching Those Who Have Fallen Away

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<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/MainArchives.asp>

## **Introduction to Church Growth**

### **A Study of the Growth of the Church in Early Church History**

**Acts 2:41** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

**Acts 2:47** And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

**Acts 4:4** But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

**Acts 5:14** And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number;

**Acts 6:7** And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

### **Church of the First Century:**

- 7 Had a “every creature” concept of evangelism and teaching (Mark 16:15).
- 8 Taught daily and additions daily (Acts 2:47; 5:42; 20:31).
- 9 Taught publicly and from house to house (Acts 5:42; 20:20).
- 10 They had an “every member” evangelism concept (Acts 5:42; 8:4; 2 Tim. 2:2,24; Heb. 5:12).
- 11 Their program of edification resulted in multiplication (Acts 9:31).
- 12 The Apostles put the “ministry of the word” first (Acts 6:1-4).
- 13 They had a passion for souls (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1; Acts 21:13).
- 14 They preached the gospel to every creature (Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:23).
- 15 Sent faithful brethren into other works (Acts 13:1-4).

### **Problems of Church Growth in the Twenty-First Century:**

- 16 It sometimes follows the “we will teach those who come” concept of evangelism.
- 17 Many congregations offer only four hours per week of teaching.
- 18 Teaches publicly for the most part; little personal evangelism.
- 19 Sometimes practices the clergy-laity concept unconsciously.

- 20 Too many preachers are made pastors rather than evangelists.
- 21 Some churches set their priorities on other things than reaching the lost.
- 22 Thousands of cities, towns and villages in the U.S. have no New Testament church.
- 23 Churches with hundreds in attendance average only a few converts per year.
- 24 Many countries have little or no missionaries.

Adapted from Clayton Pepper, *Church Growth Today*, p. 39.

### Measuring Church Growth

Church Growth is that discipline which seeks to understand, through Biblical, sociological, historical, and behavioral study, why churches grow or decline. True growth takes place when “Great Commission” disciples are added to the Lord’s church by their obedience to the gospel. The work of discipling demands continuing training so that new converts can become responsible church members and can reproduce themselves.

- *Church Growth is a discipline.* A discipline is a field of study or a system with distinct characteristics.
- *Church Growth is interested in disciple-making.* It is not merely a number counting emphasis. While evangelism, in the sense of making new converts, is vital to our study, the goal is to develop fruit-bearing disciples of Christ.
- *Church Growth is founded on God’s Word.* Christians should take the work of soul-winning seriously, because of the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Early soul winners were interested in establishing new churches, strengthening young churches, and training workers to reach out farther.
- *Church Growth acknowledges the contributions of social and behavioral sciences to help determine how churches grow.* These tools help leaders and workers understand why some methods work and others do not. They also help determine what are the best (Scriptural) methods to use in the work of a particular congregation.

### Kinds of Growth

- 25 **Biological Growth** takes place when children born to church members grow old enough to obey the gospel. The salvation of our children can never be underestimated. Some experts include the conversion of unsaved mates in this category. Family connection is the key ingredient.
- 26 **Transfer Growth** occurs when one church grows at the expense of another church. In some cases where a person had little opportunity for spiritual growth, transfer growth

would be positive in results. Christians who church hop, and churches who sheep-steal, may not be exhibiting the best kind of growth.

27 **Conversion Growth** takes place when an unsaved person (outside immediate family) hears the gospel and obeys it.

**Four Types of Growth in a Congregation:**

28 **Internal growth** is spiritual maturity of the members. As individual members mature, the body matures. Real growth always includes spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:12-14).

29 **Expansion growth** is the numerical growth of a local congregation.

30 **Extension growth** is the church growth term synonymous with “church planting.”

31 **Bridging growth** is church planting when the converts are in a different culture than those doing the evangelizing.

**Growth or Decline in Your Congregation**

Note how many people have either become members or have left your congregation in the past five years in the chart below:

**Additions**

	5 yrs ago	4 yrs ago	3 yrs ago	2 yrs. ago	1 yr. ago	Total Growth
<b>Biological</b> (baptism of family members)						
<b>Transfer</b> (from other congregations)						
<b>Conversions</b> (baptism from world)						
<b>Rescues</b>						
<b>Total Gains</b>						

### Losses

	5 yrs. ago	4 yrs. ago	3 yrs ago	2 yrs. ago	1 yr. ago	Total Losses
<b>Transfer Out</b> (moved out of area)						
<b>Transfer To Another Congregation</b> (but still living in the area)						
<b>Fallen Away</b> (lost to the world)						
<b>Deaths</b>						
<b>Total Losses</b>						

### Assessing Growth or Decline

	5 yrs. ago	4 yrs. ago	3 yrs. ago	2 yrs. ago	1 yr. ago	Totals
<b>Total Gains</b>						
<b>Total Losses</b>						
<b>Net Gain or Loss (+/-)</b>						

### Church Growth Ratios

Church Growth researchers found that *growing churches* normally possessed these ratios or better in their congregations.

5:100	At least 5 of every 100 persons in a Sunday morning worship service should be visitors from the church's ministry area.
1:4	1 of 4 first time visitors within a reasonable driving distance should be assimilated into the life of the church within a year.
3:4	3 of 4 second, third, and fourth time visitors should be active within a year.
1:2	One of every two active members should have identified their "extended family" of unchurched friends, relatives, associates.
1:2	One person should be baptized for every two persons identifying.
1:5	One of every five Bible classes should have been started in the last two years.
7:10	At least 7 in 10 persons enrolled in Bible classes should be in class on Sunday morning.
9:10	Of those who attend Bible class, nine of ten should be in worship.

7:10	Seven of every ten persons present in worship should be active in an adult Bible class.
1:3	One of every three adults in the Bible class should receive training in outreach/evangelism every year.
1:12	Each class/department should share a social event at least once every twelve weeks.
60:100	There should be a minimum of 60 specific roles and/or tasks for every 100 members.
1:150	A church should have one full-time minister for every 150 persons in worship.
20:1	For every \$20 received by the church \$1 should be invested in evangelism/ outreach/church growth. (not missions but local evangelism)
87:100	When 87 of every 100 seats are filled on an average Sunday morning, worship attendance will begin to plateau.
1:7	Each new member should have a minimum of seven new friends in the church within the first six months.
7:100	A church should have at least seven groups for every 100 members. (Classes, fellowship groups, work groups, etc.)
1:30	Each member should have the confidence that someone in the church is praying specifically for his/her special needs, at least once every thirty days...and they are praying for someone else.

Based on research by John W. Ellas, *The Church Growth Ratio Book*.

### Church Attendance

The statistics and analysis in this study come from national surveys conducted by Barna Research.

#### How Many

- 43% of American adults attend church in a typical weekend. (2002)
- From the mid-eighties to the mid-nineties, church attendance was on a roller coaster ride. In 1986, 42% of adults attended a church service during a typical week in January. Attendance rose steadily, reaching a peak of 49% in 1991, before beginning a very slow but steady descent back to 43% in January, 2002.

#### Reasons to Attend

##### Top Ten Reasons to Attend a Church Service

- #1 the theological beliefs and doctrine of the church
- #2 how much the people seem to care about each other
- #3 the quality of the sermons that are preached
- The traditional pattern of Catholics being less likely than Protestants to attend church during the weekend has returned. While in 2002 49% of Catholics attend church in a

- typical week, compared to 47% of Protestants, (2000), 2002 saw 53% of Protestants attend church versus 46% of Catholics. (2002)
- Baby Busters are least likely to attend church in a typical weekend (only 36%) versus Baby Boomers (44%), and Elders (Builders and Elders) 52%. (2002)
  - Attendance levels are still higher in the “Bible belt” areas – the South and Midwest – than in the Northeast and West. 50% of those in the South and 44% of those in the Midwest attend church in a typical week, compared to 38% of those in the West and 36% of those in the Northeast. (2002)

#### **Average Church Service Size**

- The median adult attendance per church service in 1999 was 90 people, which is slightly below the 1998 average of 95 adult attenders.
- The 1999 median of 90 adult attenders is down 10% from the 1997 average of 100 attenders, and down 12% from 1992 (102 adult attenders).

#### **Lasting Impact of Attending Church as a Child**

- Adults who attended church regularly as a child are nearly three times as likely to be attending a church today as are their peers who avoided the church during childhood (61% to 22%, respectively). (2001)
- Roughly seven out of ten Americans adults (71%) had a period of time during their childhood when they regularly attended a Christian church. (2001)
- 63% of those who were church-ed as children take their own children to a church, which is double the proportion among adults who were not church-ed and who now take their own kids to church (33%). (2001)
- adults who attended church as a child are nearly 50% more likely to pray to God during a typical week than are those who did not attend church as children. (2001)

## **The Biblical Basis of Church Growth**

### **Ephesians 4:11-16**

- 32 **Teaching, Training, and Equipping.** God appointed some in positions of leadership whose primary work was in teaching and in equipping others in the work of service. This would result in the building up of the body.
- 33 **Teaching provides safety against the schemes of the devil.** Retention of those converted was important.
- 34 **Growing to be like Christ.** The body of Christ is to grow up in all aspects into Him.
- 35 **Each individual part working properly.** The priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:5-10) is fundamental to the growth of the church.

### **1 Corinthians 3:5-11**

- 36 **God causes the growth of the church.** He causes all growth (Mark 4:26-29)-- how, we do not know. We do know that the means of our salvation is the gospel, the Word of God (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:23-25).
- 37 **Evangelists are servants of God.** They provide seed and watering to bring about reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19-6:2).
- 38 **There is no foundation but Christ.** Christ is the one who builds His church (Matt. 16:18); Christ purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28); Christ is the only head of His one body (Eph. 1:22,23); Christ is the only Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23); and there can be salvation in no one else (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
- 39 **Servants should be careful how they build upon it.** They are to retain what Christ taught and what Christ desired to remain the church He built. (1 Cor. 11:1,2; 1 Cor. 15:1,2; 2 Tim. 1:13).
- 40 **Servants should maintain unity.** They are one and should work to remain one (John 17:20-23).

### **Luke 8:11-15**

- 41 **The seed or Word produces Christians.** Churches grow only where the Word of God has gone.
- 42 **There are different kinds of hearts.** Not everyone allows the Word of God to enter into his heart.
- 43 **Even when Christians do the right thing, this does not insure success.** Servants do not have control of the hearts of people. People decide for themselves whether they will believe and remain faithful. Some will always be faithful to the teaching (Acts 17:32).
- 44 **Our task is to be faithful stewards** (1 Cor. 4:2).

### **Matthew 7:6; 10:5-16**

- 45 **People do not always want to hear truth or even good news.**
- 46 **Sometimes people will use what you teach against you.**
- 47 **Be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves.**

### **1 Cor. 9:19-23**

- 48 **Paul accommodates his life to serve others.** Good evangelists identify as much as possible with those whom they hope to win to Jesus Christ. Paul was free but chose to change himself in order to win others.
- 49 **Paul remained under the Law of Christ.** Paul accommodated to Jew and Gentile to the extent that it did not conflict with his obedience to the teachings of Jesus (Rom. 12:1,2). Accommodating to other cultures is not necessarily compromise. Church growth seeks to understand the culture well enough to accommodate (not compromise) to win souls.
- 50 **We must act for the gospel to become a partaker of the gospel.**
- 51 **Paul acted to win souls "by all means."** There are often many alternatives to the way we have done things. Change that improves our ability to identify, associate, or

communicate to our culture is good, when it does not violate Scripture or make us “worldly.”

- 52 **We cannot expect to evangelize every culture exactly alike.** Different cultures demand different approaches and methods. The variety of method never means that we can be free to change the message of Jesus Christ. God grants us the freedom of expediency but not freedom to change “the faith.”

**2 Tim. 2:2**

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

- 53 **Training is essential to keep the church growing.**

- 54 **Church growth happens only when the truth is perpetuated.**

**SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES FOR CHURCH GROWTH**  
**Eph. 4:11-16**

**55 Prayer Is A Power Behind Evangelism**

56 **Acts 1:12-14** in the upper room 120 people devoted to praying before Pentecost

57 **Acts 2:42** And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

58 **Acts 4:18-31** when they could do nothing else and had no power against the Sanhedrin, they prayed for boldness

59 **Acts 12:1-5** when James was beheaded they prayed “ferently”

60 Here are two communities, the world and the church, arrayed against one another, each wielding an appropriate weapon. On the one side was the authority of Herod, the power of the sword and prisons. On the other side, the church turned to prayer. Herod later died and Peter was released.

61 Prayer ignites our passion for God, opens doors for evangelism, makes us bold to speak

62 Christians ought to pray! **1 Thess. 5:17** “pray without ceasing”

63 God has only one Son who lived without sin, but He never had a Son who lived without prayer.

**For What Shall We Pray:**

64 **Matt. 9:36-38** pray for more workers

65 **Acts 13:1-3** pray for those who are sent to evangelize

66 **Col. 4:2-3** pray for open doors

67 **Thess. 3:1** pray for the word to be spread and be glorified

68 **Eph. 6:18-20** pray for all the saints and for boldness

69 **Rom. 10:1** pray for the lost

70 **Tim. 2:1,2** pray for tranquility

**71 Love Wins Souls: The Method Of Jesus**

72 To bless the lost (vs. 5)

73 To fellowship extensively and unhurriedly with them (vs. 7)

74 To meet their needs (vs. 9)

75 To proclaim the gospel (vs. 9)

- Many times people think that all we need to do is proclaim, not realizing there is more to our work of evangelizing than merely giving facts and asking them to make a commitment.
- People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- Our goal is to love the person in the name of Jesus Christ
- The gospel is a message of love and grace—the person who does not love the one to whom he is speaking that message cannot effectively give it.
- the best public relations we can have for the church is to be loving people.
- God's love is learned by the loving actions of His children.

2 Tim. 2:24-26 And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

### **Ten Steps To Reach Lost Friends Every One Can Do!**

76 Prayerfully identify 1-3 people you know who are not Christians.

77 Pray fervently for their salvation every day.

78 Be a blessing to your friends.

79 Invite each to a meal (no agenda), just to get better acquainted.

80 At an opportune time, ask each one for prayer requests. Check back.

81 Invite each one to outreach events, Bible class, or church.

82 Be there for them when they need help.

83 Continue praying and seek opportunities to expose them to the gospel.

84 Tell them why you became a Christian.

85 When they come to Christ, help them grow and become more involved in the church.

### **86 Truth Wins Souls**

87 The gospel is God's *power* unto salvation:

88 Rom. 1:16

89 1 Cor. 1:21

90 James 1:21

91 1 Pet. 1:23-25

92 There is but one gospel, one faith, one baptism

93 Gal. 1:6-9

94 Eph. 4:4-6

95 Jude 3

96 Obedience to the truth is necessary

97 Rom. 2:4-11

98 Gal. 5:1-7

99 Eph. 1:13,14

100 2 Thess. 2:1-15

101 1 Tim. 2:3,4

102 2 Tim. 2:15-18

103 2 Tim. 4:1-5

104 James 5:19,20

### **Church Growth Principles**

These principles are generally gathered from experience by church growth researchers and by ministers who have seen these practical truths.

105 Growing churches must want to grow. (Nehemiah 4:6)

106 Growing churches must plan to grow. (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

107 A church must have leadership to grow. (Eph. 4:11-16)

108 A church must prioritize evangelism/outreach to grow. (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim.

2:2)

- 109 A church must make disciples of its converts. (Heb. 5:10-12)
- 110A church must make ministers of its members. (Eph. 4:11-16)
- 111A church must offer multiple ministry opportunities. (Rom. 12:4-8)
- 112A church must be involved in mission-minded activities. (John 4:35)
- 113A church must be involved in inviting and recruiting to grow.
- 114A church must be involved in aggressive visitation every week to grow. (Acts 5:42; 20:20)
- 115A church must keep an up-to-date prospect file for visitation.
- 116A church must follow-up visitors in order to grow.
- 117A church must train its members in evangelism in order to grow. (2 Tim. 2:2; Eph. 4:11ff.)
- 118A church must build strong relationships among its Bible classes to grow.
- 119A church must be open to newcomers for that church to grow.
- 120 Crowded classes and worship services engender more desire for growth than smaller and empty ones.
- 121 The quality of the singing and the ability of the preacher do affect church growth.
- 122 A church that is willing to make some changes (in areas of opinion not Scripture) will often grow faster than churches that will not make any changes. (1 Cor. 9:19-23)
- 123 Churches which set goals often grow more than churches which do not.
- 124 Churches that evaluate their progress will often grow faster than those that do not.

***Some false notions which keep the church from growing:***

- 125 Everything associated with “church growth” is denominational.

- 126 If a congregation has fast growth, then it must be watering down the gospel.
- 127 Smaller congregations are more Biblical than larger ones.
- 128 Church growth will cost too much money.
- 129 The “we have arrived” attitude.
- 130 The feeling that growth by transfer membership (only) is success or sufficient.
- 131 We can keep on doing what we’ve always done and expect things to improve.

**You Can't Believe Everything You Hear about Church Growth**  
***Busting common myths about expansion and change.***  
**-by Lyle E. Schaller**

The typical congregational planning process is overloaded with wishes, dreams, and myths, which undermine effective decision-making. Nine common examples illustrate this syndrome:

**Myth 1: If we build it, they will come**

"We now average about 400 at worship, and we have designed a comprehensive strategy to double our membership over the next six years. The recent and projected population growth in this community suggests that is a realistic goal. Therefore we have launched a capital funds campaign to double the size of our physical facilities. We're convinced if we build it, they will come."

**Reality:** That slogan was a great story line for a wonderful baseball movie, but for churches, it overlooks two crucial variables: The initial focus on responding to rapid population growth should be on expanding the ministry and raising the quality of what is offered. That usually means that adding program staff should come before constructing additional facilities.

A second issue is the assimilation of newcomers. Unless the process for the assimilation of new people is improved and expanded, a 50 percent increase in membership may produce only a 10 percent increase in worship attendance.

**Myth 2: Don't make changes in the first year**

"When I came to this congregation, three veteran pastors advised me to spend the first year identifying the lay of the land and getting acquainted with the people. They warned me to minimize the number of changes I should introduce in the first year."

**Reality:** That may be wise advice in congregations in which the predecessor left under a cloud and the number-one priority is to reestablish trust in the office of pastor. In at least four of five situations, however, the new pastor would be wise to take advantage of the honeymoon period to (a) earn trust, (b) build alliances with future-oriented leaders, and (c) initiate overdue changes.

**Myth 3: Friendliness makes visitors return**

"We're a friendly church. We make it a point to welcome every first-time visitor. Less than a fourth of our first-time visitors, however, return a second time, and fewer than half of those join our church. How can we be more effective in persuading visitors we want them to return?"

**Reality:** While some church shoppers, especially those who live alone and those who were born before 1935, place friendliness at the top of their list in evaluating churches, the vast majority place another criterion at the top: Does this congregation appear to be one that will be relevant and responsive to my religious needs?

**Myth 4: Money precedes ministry**

"If we could solve our financial problems, we could concentrate on evangelism, missions, and improving our ministry with our members. Our people, however, are not generous contributors. Every year we have a deficit in our operating budget. What can we do to improve our financial base?"

**Reality:** In perhaps one out of five congregations, this is a genuine problem. In most, however, a financial squeeze is primarily a symptom of a larger issue. The three most common, basic causes of a low level of financial support by the people are (a) a low level of commitment resulting from the projection of low expectations, (b) the absence of a compelling and unifying vision of what God is calling this congregation to be and to be about, and (c) inadequate internal communication of the financial needs. When all three conditions prevail, a low level of financial support is almost inevitable.

**Myth 5: Effective leaders are facilitators**

"I was taught in seminary that a pastor should be an enabler or facilitator."

**Reality:** The enabler style of pastoral leadership is appropriate in perhaps 75,000 Protestant churches in the United States. These congregations average forty or fewer at worship. Most of them want a loving shepherd, not an initiating leader. That may explain, in part, why they are small.

Another 75,000 Protestant congregations average 125 or more at worship. In these, the guiding generalization is that the larger the size of the congregation, the more important it is for the pastor to accept and fill the role of initiating leader.

**Myth 6: Community growth means church growth**

"The planners tell us the population of this community will double during the next decade. We need to plan to accommodate that influx of newcomers. If the population doubles, our church should at least double in size."

**Reality:** The number-one consequence of rapid population growth for long-established congregations is not usually an increase in attendance.

A more common result is a sharp rise in the level of "competition" among the churches. New congregations are founded. Several of the existing congregations often upgrade their physical plant or relocate to a larger site and construct new facilities. Staffs are expanded, ministries are enriched, and new programs are designed to reach the newcomers.

A second result is a rise in quality. The long-established congregation that earned a grade of B on the quality, relevance, and scope of its ministry ten years earlier waits patiently for the newcomers to come knocking on the door. The church shoppers, after comparing

this congregation with the competition, will likely give it a grade of C or D. Rapid population growth means the bar for a grade of above average has been raised a couple of notches.

**Myth 7: Economy of scale applies to church**

"Our basic overhead will remain the same whether we average 300 or 500 at worship. The cost of our insurance, utilities, staff, and the amount we allocate to missions will rise only slightly if we grow, but a 50 percent increase in size should reduce our per unit costs by at least a fourth."

In the business world, we call that economy of scale.

**Reality:** Unlike the assembly of automobiles or the manufacture of legal drugs, the economy of scale rarely applies to churches. As a general rule the congregation averaging 150 at worship will need \$16 to \$18 per worshiper per weekend to pay all operational expenses, including missions. For the congregation averaging 500 at worship, that figure is more likely to be \$20 to \$30, and for the congregation averaging 800 at worship, it often is closer to \$45 than to \$20.

The explanation lies in the size.

To be able to attract 500 or 800 worshipers usually requires a higher quality ministry than is needed to attract 150. The very large congregations usually offer higher quality and more choices. In addition, they tend to be more sensitive and responsive to the needs of younger generations. That requires more money!

**Myth 8: Accommodate everyone in one service**

"We're so crowded for space we've had to go to four worship services every weekend: one on Saturday evening and three on Sunday morning. Our dream is to build a new worship center in which we can accommodate everyone at one service on Sunday morning. That should reinforce our sense of community."

**Reality:** That may be the dumbest myth on this list. Apparently, this is now a congregation of congregations. To cut the schedule back to one worship service on Sunday would mean that most, if not all, of the people would have to change their schedule. It also would probably reduce the worship attendance by at least 15 percent. A wiser alternative would raise two questions: First, how can we sharpen the differences among the four services we now offer so each is designed to reach and serve a clearly defined constituency? Second, when should we add a fifth service to the schedule and who are the people that new service should be designed to reach and serve?

**Myth 9: Sermons should be shorter**

"I've been told that sermons are getting shorter. In the 1950s the typical sermon was thirty minutes. In the 1970s it was twenty-two minutes, and now I'm told I should plan on sermons lasting no more than fifteen to eighteen minutes. Television and the faster pace of life have shortened people's attention span. I noticed at the Republican Convention in San Diego last August that most of the platform speeches were ten minutes or less."

**Reality:** Those are two irrelevant reference points. The number-one context for the length of sermons is the size of the crowd. Three basic generalizations apply:

First, *the larger the number of people in the room, and the greater the degree of anonymity among the people*, and the larger the proportion who have been worshipping

there for less than two years, the more time is required for music and intercessory prayer to transform that collection of individuals into a worshipping community. In small congregations, that is five to fifteen minutes. In very large congregations, that usually is twenty-five to thirty-five minutes.

Second, *the larger the crowd and the greater the emphasis on teaching, the longer the sermon.* The larger the crowd, the greater the need for humor, change of pace, revealing personal anecdotes, and redundancy.

Third, unless it is a highly liturgical format built around the Lord's Supper, the larger the crowd, the longer the service. Forty to fifty minutes may be appropriate when attendance is under a hundred, but if it exceeds five hundred, that worship experience probably should be in the sixty-five to ninety minute range.

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### **Statistics for Churches of Christ 1980-2003**

#### **Statistics for Churches of Christ 1980-2000 by decade**

	1980	1990	2000
Congregations	12,762	13,174	13,032
Members	1,240,820	1,284,056	1,264,152
Adherents	1,601,661	1,684,872	1,645,645

**Gains from 1980-2000**

270 more congregations  
23,332 more members  
43,984 more adherents

**Gains from 1980-2003**

436 more congregations  
35,713 more members  
54,914 more adherents

**Statistics for Churches of Christ 1990-2003**

	1990	1994	1997	2000	2003
Congregations	13,174	13,013	13,080	13,032	13,198
Members	1,284,056	1,260,838	1,255,834	1,264,152	1,276,533
Adherents	1,684,872	1,651,103	1,647,078	1,645,645	1,656,575

**Losses 1990-2000**

142 fewer congregations  
19,904 fewer members  
39,227 fewer adherents

**Gains 2000-2003**

166 more congregations  
12,381 more members  
10,930 more adherents

Statistics appear to indicate that a slight decline has begun in the number of members and adherents within Churches of Christ in the United States. The exclusion of the Discipling Ministry churches (Boston Movement or International Churches of Christ) from the directory in 1994 accounts for some of the loss. However, numerical decline continued through 1997 in the member count to the end of the century in the number of adherents. (Mac Lynn, *Churches of Christ in the United States*, 2000, p. 21; 2003, p. 17.)

The Boston Movement claimed 46 churches and 18,816 members in 1994.

**Growth in Churches of Christ**

**in Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama and Mississippi**

Churches of Christ in Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama and Kentucky have grown by 14 churches and 6,228 members since 1997.

State	1997 Churches, Members	2000 Churches, Members	2003 Churches, Members
Tennessee	1,475 167,968	1,472 168,356	1,479 169,992
Kentucky	623 44,892	622 45,546	623 46,446
Alabama	893 91,590	893 92,096	896 93,065
Mississippi	373 31,980	378 32,898	380 33,155

From 1997 to 2000, Tennessee lost 3 churches and gained 388 members; Kentucky lost 1 church and gained 654 members; Alabama gained 0 churches and 506 members; and Mississippi gained 5 churches and 918 members.

Since 2000, Tennessee has gained 7 churches and 1636 members; Kentucky has gained 1 church and 900 members; Alabama has gained 3 churches and 969 members; and Mississippi has gained 2 churches and 257 members.

Over the last 3 years, the average Tennessee church grew by 1.11 members; the average Kentucky church grew by 1.44 members; the average Alabama church grew by 1.08 members; and the average Mississippi church grew by 0.67 members.

Since 1997, Tennessee has gained 4 churches and 2,024 members; Kentucky has gained 0 churches and 1,554 members; Alabama has gained 3 churches and 1,475 members; and Mississippi has gained 7 churches and 1,175 members.

### **Church Growth among Churches of Christ in America since 1848**

Year	Churches	Members	U.S. Pop. in millions
1848	1,891	119,698	

1892	7,850	700,630	
1906	2,649	159,658	85
1916	5,570	317,937	101
1926	6,226	433,714	117
1936	6,700	500,000	128
1945	8,000	600,000	139
1950	8,750	650,000	149
1955	9,000	700,000	165
1960	9,250	800,000	178
1965	9,500	915,000	194
1970	10,500	1,000,000	205
1980	12,762	1,240,820	226
1990	13,174	1,284,056	248
2000	13,032	1,264,152	274
2003	13,198	1,276,533	291

- Population in the United States is now 3.4 times as large as it was at the beginning of this century, but membership among churches of Christ is 7.99 times as large as it was in 1906.
- Churches of Christ nearly doubled between 1950 and 1980.
- Churches of Christ are the twelfth largest religious group in America according to the number of adherents. Gallup and US census puts us at #9.
- From 1980 to 1990 churches of Christ were the sixth fastest growing religious group in the United States.
- Churches of Christ can be found in 2,417 counties (2,965 total) in the United States, and for our size we are the best-dispersed religious group.
- Churches of Christ rank seventh in the number of career missionaries.
- Every second somewhere in the world five people are born (400,000 per day) and two people die (140,000 per day). There is a net gain of 3 people per second in our world population. In the US, there is a birth every 8 seconds and a death every 13 seconds.

### Why Haven't We Grown?

The *Christian Chronicle* reported that churches of Christ declined 2.1 percent nationwide during the final decade of the twentieth century. This marks the only decade during the last century churches of Christ failed to grow. We ask why. I don't believe we can attribute the problem to just one thing. Several things have hindered the cause of Christ.

(1) **We are losing preachers.** Each year we lose nearly 300 preachers more than we gain from our universities and schools of preaching. In the last decade we have lost 3,000 preachers, who could have served the 13,000 congregations among us. Let us beseech the Lord of Harvest to send forth workers (Matt. 9:36-38).

(2) **We began fussing more.** The radical right and radical left constantly criticize and condemn the mainstream middle. If we continue to bite and devour one another, we should not be surprised that we are consumed by one another (Gal. 5:15).

(3) When **the Boston movement** was no longer counted among us in 1994, we lost 46 churches and 18,816 members.

(4) **Our churches began "graying."** When the average age of the members of a

congregation exceeds 70, it is very hard to keep them growing. Older congregations of 50 or less often decline, because they are not able to care for the needs of young families.

(5) **We stopped training soul winners.** We don't hear much about evangelism today, though we hear much about "church growth." They are not always the same thing.

(6) With the onslaught of postmodern thinking, we have **lost our "theology of lostness."** When large and prominent churches support teachers of false doctrine, give a false sense of security, and fellowship those outside the body of Christ, our people no longer see the need for evangelism. When we don't see others as lost, we don't see a need to take the gospel to them.

We should not be pessimistic, however, for the Lord will restore and bless those who are His. I find many, many congregations thriving and growing. Those who are working hard may not be able to overcome the numerical losses of those who are dying, but they will survive and prosper as they hold to the Word of God.

## Why Do Most Churches Remain under 200 Members?

### I. Barriers to the growth of small churches:

*Contextual barriers due to circumstances beyond the control of the church:*

132        **Ethnikitis** is caused by a changing community. It is almost always an urban disease found in neighborhood churches. When the neighborhood begins to change, and those who populated that neighborhood leave for other areas, the church becomes a commuter congregation soon to die.

133        **Ghost Town Disease** is caused by the deterioration of the economy and opportunity of the community.

*Institutional barriers are due to choices of the congregation:*

134        **The Desire to Preserve Social Intimacy.** Not wanting the church to grow too large.

135        **The Desire to Maintain Control.** A power center fears loss of control to new people.

136        **The Desire to Conserve Memories.** Unwillingness to make changes or leave the church building.

137        **The Desire to Protect Turf.** New people are a threat to what we have worked so hard to obtain.

138        **The Desire to Remain Comfortable.** For many people *any* change is a threat. Many people worry that any change would turn this small congregation into a large one, and they do not wish for that to happen. "What if we try it, and it works?"

139        **Breaking Barriers:**

140        *Starting Point: Motivation*

Motivation is 51% leadership and 49% the people.

**Desire + Commitment = Motivation**

141        *The Cost of Commitment for the Preacher*

Healthy churches have preachers who are possibility thinkers and who show dynamic leadership which can catalyze the entire church into action for growth. If you want your church to grow, you must first be willing to let the buck stop here.

142 You must provide the *vision and leadership* for the congregation with your elders or leaders. You must help them see the possibilities and to make the commitment.

143 You must work hard.

144 You must work smart: Major on majors and minor on minors.

145 Delegate whenever possible. Mobilize those who are in the congregation.

146 Add ministers whenever possible.

#### 147 *The Cost of Commitment for the People*

148 They must be willing to follow the leadership.

149 They must be willing to pay the monetary costs for ministry and advertising and teaching.

150 They must be willing to do the work of ministry. (Eph. 4:11-12)

151 They must be willing to accept newcomers and converts.

152 They must be willing to develop new fellowship circles.

#### **Set Goals for Growth**

Five characteristics of good goals:

153 *Relevant.* Is your growth just from transfers or are there new converts?

154 *Measurable.* Avoid setting vague goals that you cannot measure.

155 *Significant.* Each goal should make a substantial difference.

156 *Manageable.* Don't set extravagant goals so that you have no hope of reaching them.

157 *Personal.* The only good goals are the goals people personally accept and commit themselves to.

#### **Breaking Growth Barriers will be a special challenge if:**

158 If the church is plateaued or declining.

159 If the church is ten years old or older.

160 If the current preacher has been there six years or longer.

161 If the church building lacks visibility and accessibility.

162 If kinship ties form a significant part of the social network of the congregation.

163 If the congregation has considerably more members older than 50 rather than in their 30s.

#### **Other Barriers:**

164 **Comfortitis:** "We like the church just the way it is." "If we grow larger, we won't know everyone." "We can't grow anymore in our present building." "We've got just the right number now."

165 **Participatory Democracy.** The belief that nothing should be done without a consensus approval.

166 **The Not-Like-Us Malady.** This is fear of any change itself. The desire is for the old-guard to continue running the church like in the old days.

- 167 **Ministry Misplacement.** Two few people trying to do too much of the ministry.
- 168 **Ministry Limits.** Churches have a hard time growing beyond the level of care preachers and elders can give to the active members.
- 169 **Biblical Blindness.** Many liberal churches find a lack of growth due to their lack of faithfulness to Scripture.
- 170 **Stepping-Stone Preachers.** Effective churches have preachers with tenures four times greater than among other churches.
- 171 **Ministry Shortage.** Many churches fail to grow because they cannot afford the cost of additional ministers.
- 172 **Mission/Purpose Predicament.** Many members of the church do not know why the church exists or what the primary purpose of the church is.
- 173 **Finite Facilities Syndrome.** Some are so wed to a building, they will never allow the church to grow larger than the facilities.
- 174 **Fundingitis.** Many members are unwilling to give the money necessary for advertising, evangelizing and follow-up.
- 175 **The Dissenting Minority.** Sometimes leadership takes its focus off of growth in order to spend inordinate amounts of time responding to a dissenting minority.

#### **Some Solutions to Breaking Growth Barriers:**

- 176 **Biblical and Prepared Preaching.** The preachers in high-conversion growth churches averaged ten hours per sermon each week.
- 177 **Passionate Prayer.** Praying people become a changed people.
- 178 **Focusing Outward.** Planning activities and ministry to seek to evangelize those in the community.
- 179 **Mission/Purpose Mindset.** Mission defines the primary purpose in which all Christians in the church should be involved (worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, and fellowship). Vision is seeing how a specific congregation can fulfill its mission.
- 180 **The Eyes of the Outsider.** Churches must find ways of seeing themselves as outsiders do and making the necessary improvements in their facilities and behaviors. (This is not a suggestion to change Biblical practices or teaching.)
- 181 **The Acts 6:4 Solution.** "But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." The greatest thing a preacher can do is devote his mornings to prayer and study.
- 182 **The High-Expectation Church.** People will only do what their leadership expects them to do.
- 183 **A Strong, Vibrant Bible School.** This is a critical need for all ages. It provides ministry opportunities for many and gives a place for everyone. Quality is the key.
- 184 **Eating the Elephant.** One does not eat an elephant in a day; he eats in over time. Church growth change demands tenacity and a long-term outlook.
- 185 **The Principle of Priority.** Evangelism must have the priority in our work in the church. Only ten percent of members know that evangelism is one of the purposes of the church. Only two percent of members practice personal evangelism.

## Creating an Evangelistic Environment

### Acts 2:41-47

- 186 They gladly received the gospel  
187 Continually devoting (never let up) themselves: a steadfast, single-minded fidelity to a course of action: To the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to breaking of bread, and to prayers  
188 A sense of awe  
189 A unity of faith and purpose  
190 Sharing of possessions  
191 Daily met together  
192 Continuing with one mind (focus)  
193 Ate together (table fellowship and intimacy)  
194 Gladness  
195 Sincerity of heart  
196 Praising God  
197 Enjoyed the favor of all the people

*Result: And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

### **Three Things non-members look for when they first attend church: Faith, Hope and Love**

- 198 *Friendship* (not just friendliness). They are asking, "will this church really care for me?"  
199 *Spiritual Help*; hope that their inner lives can improve.  
200 *Faith; they expect to find people who believe something*. We can hardly expect people to come to us, if we have an identity crisis. We must know who we are, Whose we are, and what we believe.

*The capability of a congregation to receive, welcome, and assimilate new members is the most important factor in church growth.*

### **Three things necessary for church growth:**

- **You must bring them in**
  - **You must give them something spiritually uplifting and meaningful**
  - **You must follow up with visits and Bible studies**
1. People must be attracted to Christ and His church.
- 201 What is prompting people to become interested in your congregation and to attend your services?
- 202 The only people who become members of a church are the people who attend the services of that congregation.
- 203 What do people know about you?
- 204 63% of those who do not attend church report that none of their friends or acquaintances has ever invited them to church.
- 205 The typical member of a church knows nine unchurched people whom he can influence to attend church.

- 206 We ask every newly identified person what attracted him/her to Concord Rd.
- 207 Do you advertise?
- 208 Do people know how to locate your building?
- 209 Do newcomers to town know you exist?
- 210 About half of those who move to a new town also change their denomination. The average family moves every five years.
- 211 The people of a congregation and the service is about as influential in their decision for a new church home as their loyalty to a denomination.
- 212 There are more people looking for the truth than there are people willing to go teach them.

2. When they come to church, they must have their spiritual needs filled in a meaningful experience. We do not have a second chance to make a first impression.

- 213 Are your guests made to feel *welcome and wanted* by gracious hosts?
- A public welcome during services with a smile
  - Hosts and members should greet and invite guests to come back
  - Members do well to sit with guests and invite them to lunch.
  - Hosts and members should introduce their guests to several others who may share common interests.
- 214 Do your guests know the location of your classrooms for their children? Is your building guest-friendly?
- 215 *Bible classes are highly important*, because that is where guests find friends their own age.
- Do guests feel welcome and wanted in class? Guests should feel valued and cared for.
  - Children and teens make a significant contribution to the decision to return.
  - Every teacher should want his/her class to grow. Teachers who follow up on class visitors make a difference.
  - Many classes are too large and need to break up in smaller groups where fellowship may be heightened.
  - The development and promotion of new classes is one of the keys to growth.
- 216 Preachers, do outsiders understand what you are saying? Some churches fail to communicate effectively. (“Christianese”)
- 217 Do your guests know most of the songs you sing? Are the songs spirited and joyful?
- 218 Clean bathrooms will not bring in guests, but dirty ones might encourage them not to return.

3. The church must follow up with visits and Bible studies.

- 219 Keep good records of those who visit your worship services. Greeters may carry visitor’s cards and have visitors fill them out in the foyer.
- 220 Do you have a plan to follow up on your guests? Newcomers’ opinions about the friendliness of the church will be most influenced by what occurs after the service.
- 221 Do you write notes to every guest?
- 222 Do you have a visitation program designed to follow up guests?
- Only one third of churches have a systematic visitation program.
  - Less than 10% of churches have a prospect file.
- 223 Elders, deacons and teachers in 184 congregations averaged only one visit to an outsider per week, per congregation.

224 Second and third-time guests should not be overlooked. The more a person returns to visit the church, the more likely he is to become a member. The average person is not ready to make a commitment until he has attended three or four times. Repeat guests should actually be shown greater attention, since they show the most interest in becoming members of the congregation.

First time visitors	12-15% become members
Second time visitors	40-45% become members
Third time visitors	60-75% become members

225 Guests will more frequently repeat their attendance when follow-up visits are made quickly. When guests are called upon with a 15-minute visit within 36 hours of their attendance, they will return for a second time about 80% of the time. When the follow-up visit is made within 72 hours, they will return 60% of the time. When the follow-up visit is made after seven days, the return rate is 15%.

226 The follow-up of guests should include personal calls by a visitation team member or minister, letters from the minister and Bible class teachers, and phone calls. Some experts estimate that it takes seven touches to reach potential members.

### Effective Evangelism

Those who convert and remain

Those who convert and drop out

80% led to the Lord by a friend

70% led to the Lord by a stranger

Have had more than five (5.9) exposures to the gospel

Averaged 2.16 exposures to the gospel

Were dissatisfied with their non-religious lifestyles

75% showed little dissatisfaction with their non-religious lifestyles before conversion

Most felt their evangelization was from a friend who cared for them.

90% perceived their evangelization as a manipulation

Developed at least 7 significant contacts with church members before conversion.

"Did not feel a part of the group."

Conclusion:

227 Every person you meet needs faith, hope and love. The best thing we can do is to provide an environment where they may grow.

228 We must develop friendships and must then confront people with the gospel.

229 Sometimes that means pulling a few weeds and removing some stones, so that the soil will be good soil!

### Leadership and Church Growth

Leadership is influence. As churches grow, so must leaders in their ability to influence and their skills to communicate. Ministers must give attention to the following:

how to influence, what to influence, where to influence, and whom to influence. Leadership is plural. The minister must relate to people and take members with him on the journey. Usually people will not follow someone they do not like and/or respect. Leading involves trust, respect, confidence and commitment. Leadership implies movement and direction. A leader moves people toward a goal and gives them direction.

### **Seven Laws of Leadership:**

- 230 *The Law of Vision:* when followers buy into your vision, they buy into your leadership.
- 231 *The Law of Rewards:* the leader gives rewards to his/her followers, because that which gets rewarded gets done.
- 232 *The Law of Credibility:* followers must have confidence in their leaders, and leaders must be confident their followers can follow, can achieve the effort to which they are committed.
- 233 *The Law of Communication:* leaders must effectively communicate their plans so that the followers understand the plan, buy into the plan, desire to implement the plan, and will pay the price to make it happen.
- 234 *The Law of Accountability:* followers don't do what the leader expects (by vision or dream); they do what the leader inspects. Expecting must lead to inspecting.
- 235 *The Law of Motivation:* leaders must give compelling reasons to reach the goal, to work and to sacrifice.
- 236 *The Law of Problem-Solving and Decision-Making:* the ability to succeed is dependent upon solving problems and making good decisions. There are five steps in decision making:
  - 237 Face the problem.
  - 238 Define the problem.
  - 239 Get as much information as possible.
  - 240 Choose a solution.
  - 241 Make the decision work.

### **The Strategy of Motivation:**

- 242 You must know precisely what you are trying to accomplish.
- 243 You must know what response is needed from the congregation to reach the goal.
- 244 You can motivate by putting yourself in other people's shoes.
  - 245 *What do they know?* Start where they are.
  - 246 *What do they feel?* Most people respond from their hearts.
  - 247 *What do they want?* "You can get everything you want in life if you help other people get what they want."
- 248 You must expose and address major problems before followers raise them as barriers and obstacles. Never appear as if you are hiding something.
- 249 You must call for a commitment.
- 250 You must appeal to the higher vision of your followers.

### **Great Leaders:**

- A great leader has followers who believe in him, because a great leader first believes in them.
- If a leader takes the church growth journey alone, that leader will never arrive at the destination.
- The prayer of a church determines its passion, and passion determines if it will succeed.
- Leaders can't build a church on organization, but they cannot build a church without organization.
- It is amazing what you can do for God, if you do not care who gets the credit.
- Usually 20% of the people are the influences in the church, while 80% of the people are followers. Twenty percent do the giving, the work, and the praying.
- Another 20% of the people cause 80% of the problems.
- To build a church, give attention to training more people to be influences or spiritual movers and shakers.
- Find people who have the vision for particular ministries. This visionary influence will sacrifice and pay the price, doing every possible to get the ministry operational.

### **Characteristics of a Good Leader:**

- 251 *Humility.* The best leader is a servant-leader (Matt. 20:25-28). Leaders must understand that it is God who is working in and through them (Phil. 2:13). The question is not what WE are able to do, but what God is able to do (2 Cor. 9:8-10; Eph. 3:20,21).
- 252 *Courage.* Leaders need courage to accept the present without letting discouragement rob their future.
- 253 *Compassion.* Successful leaders must love people, must want to be with them, and must desire to serve them (John 13:34,35; 21:15-17).
- 254 *Knowledge of God.* Leaders must know and have deep faith in God. There is no substitute for intimacy with God (Phil. 3:7-11). A person close to God will grow in the Christian virtues (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
- 255 *Tenacity.* Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). Stewards of other men's souls must prove faithful or trustworthy (1 Cor. 4:2).
- 256 *Example.* He must be God's man, doing what Christ would do (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Tim. 4:12).
- 257 *Prayer.* Jesus customarily prayed (Luke 5:16; 6:12). "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).
- 258 *Optimism.* We need to believe in what God can do through us (Phil. 4:13). Sometimes leaders spend too much time on the opponent and become pessimistic instead of believing. They become defensive rather than aggressive. They react rather than act. They forget these verses: "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith" (1 John 5:4).

## **Training Brethren to Evangelize**

*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.  
And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,  
these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also(2Tim. 2:1,2).*

### **Jesus Selected Twelve Men to Train Extensively**

#### **259 Selecting the Individuals**

- love for God and man (Mt 22:37ff.)
- reliable (1 Cor. 4:2)
- worker (1 Thess. 3:2)
- learner
- hungry (Matt. 5:6)
- Submissive (Heb. 13:17)
- Disciplined (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- Available (Luke 9:59-62)

#### **260 The Importance of Association With the Workers in Training**

261 Jesus is the example (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 2:21)

262 Jesus spent much time alone with his apostles teaching, training, and being with them.

263 The future of His work depended upon His reproducing Himself as nearly as possible in the lives of others.

#### **264 A Greater Degree of Commitment and Consecration is Needed for Members to Become Evangelistic.**

#### **265 The Leader Must Impart to Those in Training the Necessary Instruction and Assistance.**

Trainers must teach faith and confidence in their trainees. They need a greater knowledge of the Scriptures. Jesus worked with his apostles for three years and led them into all truth (John 14:26). Be what you wish your trainees to become.

#### **266 Training Must Include Demonstration Teaching**

267 Jesus taught by demonstration (John 13:15). Trainees need “on the job” experiences.

#### **268 Jesus Delegated Responsibility**

269 Matthew 10 tells of Jesus’ delegating responsibility to His apostles.

270 Jesus sent out the seventy two by two (Luke 10).

271 Jesus delegated evangelistic responsibilities in the great commission.

#### **272 Jesus Supervised the Apostle’s Work**

273 Jesus reviewed the apostles’ work in the limited commission (Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10).

274 Patience is needed in supervising others

- 275 **Christ Reproduced His Work in the Lives of Those Whom He Trained**  
276 Matt. 13:32 the kingdom would grow from a small start.  
277 Train more and you will win more! A few well-trained men who are committed will often outperform a large congregation.

### **Using 'Upon the Rock' Bible Study**

Matt. 7:24-27

Evangelism is a process of bringing a soul to Christ.  
You must convert the whole person to the Lord.  
You must convert his thinking, his heart, and his will.  
You will never win a soul until you confront him with the gospel.

We are working in a difficult field;

- 278 People are skeptical of religion.  
279 People do not want to be manipulated.  
280 People want to discover truth for themselves.  
281 People are living in darkness.

We cannot assume as evangelists:

- 282 People know God.  
283 People believe Jesus is sinless.  
284 People believe the Bible is true.  
285 People understand sin.  
286 People believe in absolutes.

Some convictions:

- 287 There is a true and living God.  
288 The God of the Bible is the only one.  
289 Jesus Christ is Lord.  
290 The Bible is utterly trustworthy.  
291 God means what He says.  
292 I am accountable to God.  
293 The grace of God is greater than my sin.

### **How Do We Reach People Today:**

- 294 build friendships and pray  
295 build interest and pray  
296 offer the gospel and pray

### **Upon the Rock Bible Studies:**

- 297 Six hour-long studies covering these topics:  
298 Pre-lesson (to build faith in God and the Bible)



Mk. 16:16                      believed + baptized  saved

This method will work!

<p>Upon the Rock Bible Study Series Prelesson "GETTING TO KNOW THE GOD OF THE BIBLE"</p>
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**Upon the Rock Bible Study Series  
Getting to Know the God of the Bible**

**What do you think?**

The greatest questions of life:

- Where did we come from?
- Why are we here?
- What happens when we die?
- What is the purpose of life?

*If there is a God,*

- Then there is a Supreme Being to whom we must give an account.
- Then we need to learn whatever we can about the nature of God.
- Then we need to know what He requires of us and how to please Him.
- Then we have a reason for existence and a purpose in life.

*If there is no God,*

- Then there is no Supreme Being to whom we must give an account, i.e., no Judgment Day, no heaven, and no hell.
- Then this life is all there is.
- Then right and wrong, good and evil hardly matter.
- Then no one has any reason for existence or purpose in life.

Is there any evidence for the existence of God?

**Hebrews 3:4**

Can a house build itself?

T        F

Does a house show intelligent design?

Y        N

**Psalm 19:1**

Do the heavens declare the glory and intelligent handiwork of a Supreme Being?

Y        N

**Genesis 8:22**

Do the seasons indicate order and intelligent design?

Y      N

**Isaiah 40:26**

Does the universe display order and design?

Y      N

Does the order in the universe point to an intelligent Being for that order and design?

Y      N

**Romans 1:20**

Could ordinary matter without intelligence bring about the order and design seen in the universe?

Y      N

**Psalms 139:14**

Does the human body show order and intelligent design?

Y      N

If there is intelligent order and design in the universe and in a human body, does it make sense to believe that there is a designer.

Y      N

Would this designer have to possess great intelligence?

Y      N

Would this designer have to possess great power?

Y      N

Is man intelligent enough to create the universe and the human body?

Y      N

Is man powerful enough to create the universe and the human body?

Y      N

*How could inanimate matter so design and arrange itself to bring about the intricate workings of the human body?*

**Romans 2:14-15**

*How do you feel when someone does something to hurt you?*

*How do you feel when you do something to hurt or sin against someone else?*

It is reasonable to believe that inanimate matter gave rise to the moral nature of rational man.

T      F

The fact of God's existence gives the best reason why man has a moral nature.

T      F

Man has a spiritual side, which cannot be explained by matter.

T F

### Can We Trust the Bible?

#### 2 Peter 1:16

Is it reasonable to believe that an intelligent God would communicate to all?

Y N

The Scriptures claim that men spoke from God being moved by the Holy Spirit.

T F

#### Isaiah 46:9,10

Can God reveal the end from the beginning and tell what will happen in the future?

Y N

#### Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34

Did what Joshua predict in 1400 BC come to pass in 870 BC?

Y N

*How could Joshua have known the future?*

### Some Messianic Prophecies

#### Micah 5:2

Was Jesus born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1-10)?

Y N

*How can a person decide where he is going to be born?*

#### Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25 (cf. Gen. 3:15)

Was Jesus to be born of a virgin?

T F

How could Isaiah know this 750 years before the birth of Jesus?

How could they know these things about Jesus?

tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10)

seed of David (Psalm 132:11)

would teach in parables (Psalm 78:2)

Jewish rulers would reject him (Psalm 118:22)

Flesh would not decay (Psalm 16:8-10)

would enlist Gentiles (Isaiah 42:10)

would be scourged (Psalm 35:15)

casting lots for his garments (Psalm 22:18)

bones not broken (Ex. 12:46; Psalm 34:20)

given gall and vinegar (Psalm 69:21)

buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9)

Many prophecies Jesus fulfilled were totally beyond the power of human control, such as: (1) place of birth, (2) time of birth, (3) manner of birth of a virgin woman, (4) betrayal, (5) manner of death in crucifixion, (6) people's reactions at his death, (7) piercing, and (8) his burial.

Concerning these eight prophecies, Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* estimated the probability of anyone fulfilling all of them is 1 in  $10^{17}$ . That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing we take  $10^{17}$  silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

*If Jesus were not from God and the Scriptures were not true, how could these prophecies have been fulfilled?* Upon The Rock Bible Study Series  
Lesson 1

## "THE SON OF GOD"

1. Matthew 7:24-27

The \_\_\_\_\_ man built his house upon the rock. He showed wisdom by \_\_\_\_\_ "these words of Mine" and \_\_\_\_\_. The foolish man hears but does not \_\_\_\_\_. Which foundation will you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

### WHO IS JESUS?

2. Matthew 1:18-25

Jesus was to \_\_\_\_\_ his people from their sins. Immanuel means \_\_\_\_\_.

3. John 1:29-34

Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God who takes away the sins of the world.

4. Hebrews 1:1-4

God in these last days has spoken to us by \_\_\_\_\_ whom He has appointed \_\_\_\_\_ of all things, and through whom He made the \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus, the Son, is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's glory and the \_\_\_\_\_ of His nature or person.

When Jesus made purification of our sins, He sat down at the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

### WHY DID HE COME?

5. John 3:16,17

6. John 10:10

7. John 18:37

## WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE HIM?

8. John 20:30,31

John's gospel was written so that \_\_\_\_\_

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9. John 3:1-3

How did Nicodemus describe Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

---

Why did He believe this? \_\_\_\_\_

10. John 11:43-53

Did the people believe Jesus could raise the dead? \_\_\_\_\_ Did the enemies of Jesus recognize that Jesus could work signs? \_\_\_\_\_. "If we let him go on like this, \_\_\_\_\_ will believe in him."

11. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

List those to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

12. John 20:19,20

Where were the disciples hiding? \_\_\_\_\_

Why were disciples hiding? \_\_\_\_\_

What did they do when they saw the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Acts 1:1-3

How long did Jesus show himself alive after his resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_ Were the disciples convinced of his resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Acts 5:26-32

Did the apostles state that they were witnesses of the resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_ What caused this group, who was at first afraid, to openly disobey the Council (Sanhedrin) and preach the gospel of Jesus?

---

Would you break the law, knowing you would be punished, to preach a belief that you knew was a lie? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Matthew 28:18

Jesus has been given \_\_\_\_\_ authority in heaven and on earth.

16. John 3:35-36

The Father has given all things into the hands of the \_\_\_\_\_. Can one disobey Christ and still please God? \_\_\_\_\_

17. John 12:48

By what will we be judged on the last day? \_\_\_\_\_

18. John 16:12,13

Did Jesus tell his disciples everything during his earthly ministry? \_\_\_\_\_ The Spirit of truth was to guide them into \_\_\_\_\_ truth.

19. 2 Timothy 3:16,17

All Scripture is \_\_\_\_\_ by God. The Scriptures thorough equip (or furnish) the man of God for \_\_\_\_\_ good work. If the Scriptures furnish man for every good work, is there any need for additional revelation?

20. 2 John 9-11

Can one add to, take away from, or change the teaching of Christ and still please God? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Galatians 1:6-10

How many gospels have come from Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ What will happen to anyone preaching a different gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

We should always seek to please \_\_\_\_\_.

22. John 12:48

By what will we be judged?

creeds of men?

preachers?

the old and new covenants?

the words of Jesus in the new covenant?

**What do you think of the following statement of C. S. Lewis?**

*"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come away with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."*

**Matthew 16:13-19**

"But who do you say that I am?"

**"UPON THE ROCK" BIBLE STUDY SERIES**  
**Lesson 2**  
**"THE GREAT SALVATION"**

**THE DOWNFALL OF MAN**

1. Romans 3:23

Every person has \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the glory of God.

2. 1 John 1:8-10

If we say we have not sinned we deceive \_\_\_\_\_ and make Him a \_\_\_\_\_.

3. What is sin?

James 4:17 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 3:4 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are the consequences of sin?

Romans 6:23 \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 5:19-21 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Matthew 26:41

The spirit is \_\_\_\_\_, but the flesh is \_\_\_\_\_.

**SALVATION IS IN CHRIST**

6. Romans 5:6-10

While we were still \_\_\_\_\_, Christ died for the \_\_\_\_\_.

7. 1 Peter 2:21-25

Jesus bore our \_\_\_\_\_ in his body on the tree (cross) that we might \_\_\_\_\_ to sin. By his \_\_\_\_\_ we are healed.

8. John 3:16

God so loved the \_\_\_\_\_ that He gave His only begotten Son that \_\_\_\_\_ believes in Him should not perish.

9. Matthew 7:13,14

\_\_\_\_\_ will go the broad way to destruction. \_\_\_\_\_ will find the way to life.

**SURVEY OF YOUR LIFE:**

Are you saved? \_\_\_\_\_

When were you saved? \_\_\_\_\_

When were you baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

Why were you baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you saved before or after baptism? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Matthew 7:24-27

What distinguishes the wise from the foolish man? \_\_\_\_\_

11. John 14:15

If you love Me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ My \_\_\_\_\_.

12. Romans 6:17,18

Is obedience to God inward only, outward only, or both inward and outward?

\_\_\_\_\_ The Romans obeyed from the heart a \_\_\_\_\_ of doctrine. What is a form? \_\_\_\_\_

Were they freed from sin before or after they obeyed the form of teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Hebrews 11:6

We cannot \_\_\_\_\_ God without faith in Him and His promises.

14. James 2:24

One is justified by faith (Romans 5:1) but not by faith \_\_\_\_\_

15. Luke 13:1-5

Along with faith and love, one must repent or he will \_\_\_\_\_

16. Matthew 21:28,29

Which son repented? \_\_\_\_\_

Is repentance good intentions only? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Luke 15:11-24

When the lost son came to himself or came to his senses, he decided to go to his \_\_\_\_\_ and said, " \_\_\_\_\_ against heaven and in your sight." *What sins in your life cause you sorrow?*

18. Matthew 10:32,33

Christ wants us to confess \_\_\_\_\_ before other men. Could I do all these (love, believe, repent, and confess) except one and still please God? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Matthew 28:20 (Matthew 23:23)

Will God be pleased if we do only part of what He commands? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Mark 16:15,16

He that \_\_\_\_\_ and has been \_\_\_\_\_ shall be saved. In this sentence which comes first "baptized" or "saved?" \_\_\_\_\_

21. Acts 2:36-41

Why were the Jews pierced to the heart? \_\_\_\_\_

Peter told them to \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_ for the forgiveness of their sins. Is this promise for them alone? \_\_\_\_\_

What did these who gladly received his word do? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the 3,000 understand Peter's message alike? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Acts 8:35-39

Was baptism included in Philip's preaching of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ The Eunuch saw \_\_\_\_\_ and wanted to be baptized. In baptism the Eunuch went \_\_\_\_\_ the water and came up \_\_\_\_\_ the water.

23. Acts 22:16

Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your \_\_\_\_\_, calling on the name of the Lord.

24. Romans 6:3-7

We are baptized into the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. We are \_\_\_\_\_ with Him by baptism into death. Christ walked in newness of life when he was \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead. We walk in newness of life before or after we are buried and raised with Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ Our old self is

crucified with him that our body of \_\_\_\_\_ might be done away. If baptism is a burial, could one please God without being buried in water? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Titus 3:3-7

He saved \_\_\_\_\_, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of His \_\_\_\_\_. He saved us through (by) the \_\_\_\_\_ of regeneration (rebirth) and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.

26. Ephesians 4:5

There is \_\_\_\_\_ baptism. If we obeyed the form of teaching that Paul, the Eunuch, and the Romans obeyed, could we too be set free from sin? \_\_\_\_\_

The one baptism is burial in \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of sins.

Would you like to have your sins forgiven today? \_\_\_\_\_

## "UPON THE ROCK" BIBLE STUDY SERIES

### Lesson 3

## "THE BODY OF CHRIST"

1. Matthew 7:24-27

To have a solid foundation we must \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

### CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

2. Christ is:

\_\_\_\_\_ of the church. (Matthew 16:18) \_\_\_\_\_ of the church. (Acts 20:28)  
\_\_\_\_\_ of the church. (Ephesians 1:22,23)

3. Colossians 1:18

The body (of Christ) is the \_\_\_\_\_.

4. How many bodies does Christ have?

Romans 12:4,5 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 12:12,13 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 4:4 \_\_\_\_\_

5. 1 Corinthians 12:13

We are all \_\_\_\_\_ into one body.

6. 1 Corinthians 12:27

If the body is the church, then the body of Christ is also the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

### RELIGIOUS UNITY

7. John 17:20-23

Jesus prayed that all his people might be \_\_\_\_\_. Is religious division a stumbling block to the faith of many people? \_\_\_\_\_ Does God approve of religious division? \_\_\_\_\_

8. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

Christians should be perfectly united or made complete in the same \_\_\_\_\_ and the same \_\_\_\_\_.

9. 1 Corinthians 14:33

God is not a God of \_\_\_\_\_ but of peace.

### THE CAUSE OF RELIGIOUS DIVISION

10. Matthew 7:15-23

Beware of \_\_\_\_\_ who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Will all who say, "Lord, Lord," be saved? \_\_\_\_\_ He who \_\_\_\_\_ the will of my Father will enter heaven. Some were rejected because they practiced \_\_\_\_\_.

11. Matthew 15:1-14

The disciple transgressed the tradition of the elders but the Pharisees transgressed the \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of tradition. Isaiah said that these people honor Me with their \_\_\_\_\_ but their \_\_\_\_\_ are far from me. Their worship is \_\_\_\_\_ because they teach the \_\_\_\_\_ of men. Every plant not planted by the Father shall be \_\_\_\_\_. Can a person be blind to the truth? \_\_\_\_\_.

12. Galatians 1:6-9

How many gospels are there? \_\_\_\_\_ If one teaches a different gospel, he will be \_\_\_\_\_.

13. 2 John 9-11

To have both the Father and the Son, one must \_\_\_\_\_ in the teaching of Christ. Does it please God to assist, bless, or support some who does not teach the doctrine of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

14. John 8:31,32

If you \_\_\_\_\_ in My word, then you are \_\_\_\_\_ my disciples, and you will know the \_\_\_\_\_, and the truth will make you \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE PROPHECY OF THE FALLING AWAY

15. Acts 20:28-30

Savage wolves will destroy the flock by \_\_\_\_\_ to draw away the disciples after them.

16. 1 Timothy 4:1-3

Some will fall away by paying attention to (or following) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

17. 2 Tim. 4:1-5

The time will come when men will not put up with sound \_\_\_\_\_. People will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to \_\_\_\_\_.

18. 2 Peter 2:1-3

False teachers will secretly introduce \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE FALLING AWAY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH A BRIEF HISTORICAL STUDY

#### I. THE CHURCH AS IT WAS ESTABLISHED

Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:1-6.

#### II. THE FALLING AWAY

Unscriptural doctrines and practices began to be introduced after the death of the apostles: Holy water (113 A.D.); Lent (140 A.D.); Penance (157 A.D.); Infant baptism (185 A.D.); Intercession of the saints (240 A.D.); Sprinkling for baptism (250 A.D.); sacrifice of Mass (370 A.D.); celibacy of priests (425 A.D.); purgatory (450 A.D.); confession to priests (500 A.D.); Pope (Boniface III, 606 A.D.); instrumental music used in worship (670 A.D.).

The church continued to depart from the faith until it did not even resemble the church that Christ built. It was different in doctrine, worship, organization and in mission.

The Reformation was a step in the right direction. The reformers rebelled against many of the corruptions of Rome. They rejected many of the unscriptural practices of the apostate

church; but they were inconsistent in holding on to other things which were just as unscriptural, e.g. infant baptism, sprinkling, and instrumental music.

Some reformers: Martin Luther (1530 A.D.) Lutheran Church; Luther's catechism; John Calvin (1536 A.D.) Presbyterian Church; Westminster Confession; Henry VIII (1552 A.D.) Episcopal Church; Book of Common Prayer; John Smyth (1607 A.D.) Baptist Church; Standard Manual; John Wesley (1629 A.D.) Methodist Church; Methodist Discipline.

Today there are more than 1000 denominations that create division and confusion in the minds of men. More denominations are not needed. We have enough!

### **III. THE RESTORATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

If the church of Christ today is simply another denomination, it has no reason or right to exist. These men wanted to restore the church of Christ in its simplicity and purity as it was in the first century. This is still our plea today: James O'Kelly (1793 A.D.) a Methodist preacher; Elias Smith (1800 A.D.) a Baptist preacher; Barton W. Stone (1804 A.D.), a Presbyterian preacher; Thomas and Alexander Campbell (1830 A.D.), Presbyterian preachers.

These men said, "Let us cast aside all denominational names, creeds, doctrines and practices which divide the Christian world and just wear the name 'Christian' and be only members of the New Testament church." Their plea was, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where they are silent we are silent." They began to sow the seed of the Kingdom (Luke 8:11) which produced only Christians, members of the church of Christ, as it had done more than 1900 years earlier.

## Upon the Rock Bible Study Series

### Lesson 4

## **"BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD"**

### **"Upon the Rock" Bible Study Series**

#### **Building a Relationship with God**

#### **Covenants**

Through the ages God has established relationships with men through covenants. Covenants are permanent, formal agreements between two parties, wherein God pledges to keep promises and men pledge to obey His commandments. God has made many covenant promises to man but made only two major covenants with men. The first covenant was with Israel as a nation; and the second through the blood of Jesus with all men.

#### **The First Covenant**

#### **Exodus 19:1-8**

The first covenant was made at \_\_\_\_\_.

God promised to make Israel a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.      T      F

God would bless Israel whether they obeyed His voice and kept His commandments.

Y      N

The sons of Israel said, "All that the LORD has spoken we \_\_\_\_\_!"

**Deuteronomy 5:1-22**

God made a covenant with Israel at Sinai.

T F

The Sinai covenant also included their fathers.

T F

Israel remembered the Sabbath because God delivered them from Egyptian slavery.

T F

**Exodus 34:27-28 (Deut. 4:13)**

Moses wrote on the tablets the words of the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ commandments.

**The Promise of a New Covenant**

**Jeremiah 31:31-34**

God promised to make a \_\_\_\_\_ covenant.

Israel broke the first covenant.

T F

In the new covenant, everyone will know the Lord.

T F

God said, "I will forgive their \_\_\_\_\_, and their sin I will remember no more."

**Hebrews 8:6-13**

He [Jesus] is the mediator of a \_\_\_\_\_ covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

T F

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 7:4-7**

We were made to \_\_\_\_\_ to the Law by the body of Christ, that we might be joined to another. We have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound.

T F

We serve in \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

*Which law said, "You shall not covet"?*

**Galatians 3:19-25**

The law was added because of \_\_\_\_\_.

The law was our \_\_\_\_\_ to lead us to Christ. Now that \_\_\_\_\_ has come, we are no longer under the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Matthew 5:17,18**

Jesus came to \_\_\_\_\_ the Law and the Prophets.

**Romans 15:4**

Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our \_\_\_\_\_, that through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have \_\_\_\_\_.

**The New Covenant in Jesus****Ephesians 2:11-19**

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were \_\_\_\_\_ have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Jesus broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the \_\_\_\_\_ of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man.

**Matthew 28:18-20**

\_\_\_\_\_ authority has been given to Jesus.  
Christians are to observe \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus commanded.

**Matthew 7:24-27**

The wise man hears the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_ upon them. The foolish man hears but does not act upon \_\_\_\_\_.

**John 12:48**

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My \_\_\_\_\_, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

**John 8:31-32**

If you \_\_\_\_\_ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the \_\_\_\_\_, and the truth shall make you free.

How would you describe someone who added to, subtracted from, or changed the teachings of Jesus?

**John 13:34-35**

A new commandment I give to you, that you \_\_\_\_\_ one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

*How has Jesus loved us?*

**John 14:15, 23**

If you love me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ my commandments.

**John 15:8**

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so \_\_\_\_\_ to be My disciples.

*How do Christians bear fruit?*

**2 John 9-11**

If anyone goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, he does not have God.

T F

*One who supports a false teacher participates in his \_\_\_\_\_ deeds.*

Why would a follower of Jesus want to change any teaching that comes from Christ?

**Colossians 3:1-17**

*Christians should seek the things \_\_\_\_\_ where Christ is.*

*Christians should consider the members of their body as \_\_\_\_\_ to immoral things.*

Christians have laid aside the old self and has put on the new self, who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.

T F

What characteristics should a Christian display in his life?

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>"UPON THE ROCK" BIBLE STUDY SERIES</b> <b>Lesson 5</b> <b>"UPON THE ROCK"</b></p>
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**ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH**

1. Matthew 7:24-27 (1 Corinthians 3:11)

The safe foundation is the \_\_\_\_\_. Can one be sure of any other foundation? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Acts 14:21-23

Paul and Barnabas appointed \_\_\_\_\_ for them in every church. Is the word "elders" singular or plural? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Acts 20:17-28

Paul called the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church at Ephesus. Paul said the Holy Spirit made them \_\_\_\_\_ to shepherd the church of God. Elders are \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Philippians 1:1

T F There was only one bishop (overseer) and one deacon of the church at Philippi.

5. Titus 1:5-9

Elders and \_\_\_\_\_ are terms used to refer to the same office. Titus was to appoint \_\_\_\_\_ in every city.

6. 1 Timothy 3:1-13

T F Overseers and deacons must meet certain qualifications to hold these offices.

7. 1 Timothy 2:10-15

Women are not allowed to teach or to \_\_\_\_\_  
over a man.

### NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

8. John 4:23,24

God seeks those who will worship Him in \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_.

9. John 8:31,32

The true disciples of Christ abide in His \_\_\_\_\_.

10. 1 Timothy 2:8

God wills that men should \_\_\_\_\_.

11. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray \_\_\_\_\_

12. Acts 17:10,11

The Bereans were noble because they \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ to see whether these things were so.

13. 2 Peter 3:18

Grow in the grace and the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord.

14. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Christians eat the bread and drink the cup in \_\_\_\_\_ of the death of Christ.

15. Acts 20:6,7

Why did the church at Troas gather together? \_\_\_\_\_

When did the gathering take place? \_\_\_\_\_

Would it be a safe guide for us to break the bread each first day of the week? \_\_\_\_\_

16. 1 Corinthians 16:1,2

The church was to put aside and save on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the week. Does this passage mention the word "tithe?" \_\_\_\_\_

17. 2 Corinthians 9:6,7

Each should give as he has \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart. God loves the \_\_\_\_\_ giver.

Does this passage mention tithes? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Ephesians 5:19

God desires that we \_\_\_\_\_ to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We should make melody \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts. Is an instrument mentioned here other than the heart?

19. Colossians 3:16

We should \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ one another with songs, hymns and spiritual songs.

Would God be pleased if we sang without using any instruments (such as a piano)? \_\_\_\_\_ Are musical instruments able to speak, teach or admonish? \_\_\_\_\_

20. John 8:31

If we speak, teach and admonish by singing a cappello, are we abiding in God's word? \_\_\_\_\_ Can

one be sure he is abiding in God's Word if he adds musical instruments to his worship? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Hebrews 10:23-26

A Christian should stimulate others to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. Forsaking our own \_\_\_\_\_ does not please God. There no longer remains a sacrifice for sin for the one who \_\_\_\_\_ goes on sinning.

22. Romans 12:1,2

Our bodies should be a living \_\_\_\_\_. We should \_\_\_\_\_

what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

### SUMMARY

- T F The wise man builds his house upon the rock by hearing and acting upon the word of God.
- T F Jesus is the Son of the living God.
- T F Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and arose the third day.
- T F You and I will be judged by the words of Christ.
- T F God will hold us responsible for sin.
- T F I have always done the will of God.
- T F The wages of sin is death.
- T F We should obey from the heart the teachings of Christ.
- T F One must do all the will of God to please Him.
- T F To be saved one must love, believe, repent, and be baptized.
- T F True baptism is burial in water for the forgiveness of sins.
- T F God wants all who believe to be one.
- T F God wants each church to have elders and deacons.
- T F God wants churches to pray, study, give, sing, and partake of the Lord's supper.
- T F I want to build my house on the rock.
- T F I know I have a loving and right relationship with God.
- T F I want to be right with God today.

Acts 2:41

They that gladly received his word were \_\_\_\_\_. Did they wait for another day?

James 4:13-17

Do you have assurance of tomorrow? \_\_\_\_\_ It is \_\_\_\_\_ to fail to do what you know is right.

## THE CONVERSION PROCESS

Coming out the world and becoming a fruitful Christian is a process in which there are many steps. Occasionally, a method of evangelism is developed that centers on the steps of salvation and does not give proper consideration to the changes that must take place in the heart and mind of a person before he is ready to believe, repent and obey. Nor do some methods of salvation consider the things that must happen in order for a person to become a functioning part of the body of Christ so that he may produce fruit. This section will discuss the pre-conversion changes and the post-conversion changes of a new disciple of Christ.

Discipleship is an unending process whereby a believer submits to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and lives in such a way that this profession permeates every aspect of his life. One begins the process of discipleship at the time he decides to follow the Lord's way. Salvation comes at the point of obedience to the gospel by submitting to baptism in water for the remission of sins. But God expects the disciple to be taught 'to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:19). The work of the evangelist is not done at the waters of baptism. The one completely safe and dependable manual on personal evangelism is the New Testament; yet the more one studies the New Testament, the less one can deduce from it a system of personal evangelistic methods. Jesus employed a different approach with different persons. He assessed their needs and spoke to them

on the basis of their understanding. One might take for example Jesus' approach to Nicodemus as being very different from his approach to the woman at the well. Paul made a much different appeal at Mars Hill than he did at Agrippa's court or at Ephesus. Circumstances differ, and the evangelist must be prepared to approach his listeners in such a way as to speak to their understanding of God. It is hoped that this section will serve as a measuring stick for the evangelist to evaluate his students and to know where to begin to speak to their spiritual needs. The task of the evangelist is not merely to inform his students of the gospel story; it is also to persuade them to accept and obey the gospel. "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men," Paul says (2 Cor. 5:11). The evangelist must not only know the story, he must also know how to make the story pierce the hearts of those who are listening in the hope that they will respond. Knowing why one must respond is surely as important as knowing what one must do to be saved. With this in mind, let's consider these steps or tasks that are part of the conversion process. Each step has a crucial place in the process. Soil must be prepared before one may plant the seed and expect a fruitful harvest. The planted seed must be watered and protected if it is to grow. The harvested fruit must be cared for and stored before it is ready to eat.

## **PRE-CONVERSION TASKS**

Conversion is the change of the whole person: the intellect, the emotions and the will. These three inter-related aspects of the heart are important in knowing how one changes. It takes true change in all three areas for conversion to take place. Conversion is a change in what one believes; it is repentance; and it is a change in one's love.

### **I. In Relation to God**

<p><i>1. The student must realize the existence of God. (Intellect)</i></p>
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God made His "eternal nature and divine power" known through the world that He has created (Rom. 1:18-21). Yet there are many hearts that have been darkened by not acknowledging or giving thanks to God. Evangelists need to know enough about Christian evidences to demonstrate that God exists beyond a reasonable doubt. The Christian evidences section of this book will be helpful. Further, the student must realize that the one true and living God is the God of the Bible. The apostle Paul at Mars Hill spoke to men who believed there were gods and worshiped idols but did not know the true God. It is not enough to believe there is a God if that God is some other than the God of the Bible. Evangelists may need to address the fact that God is a Person, that He is Spirit, that He is Infinite in power, or that He is unique. The evangelist must respond to the modern tendency in our world toward a pluralistic theology (believing in any god, for one god is as good as another). He must be able to give a reason why Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven, and Mohammed or Confucius is not.

#### **2. The student must have a favorable attitude toward God. (Emotions or Heart)**

The problem of human suffering is a difficult hurdle for many people. One may believe that the God of the Bible is the one, true God; yet one might be angry at God or hold a low view of God because of the suffering one has experienced or observed. It is necessary for the evangelist to be able to help the student overcome this hurdle in order for the student to embrace God in submission and love. Furthermore, the student must come to understand how much God has loved and blessed him throughout his life. We love, because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). There is no greater love than that of God nor more powerful motivation than the message of the cross. The love of God must motivate the student to want to change. God's kindness should lead one to repent (Rom. 2:4).

**3. The Student must Submit to the Authority of God and the Lordship of Christ. (Will)** The call of Jesus for obedience abounds in the New Testament. Among them are Matt. 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven.” John 3:36 “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” John 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” Heb. 5:8,9 “although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal life.”

Jesus taught that a personal commitment must be made to Him as Lord. On the last day all men will bow the knee and confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father (Phil. 2:5-11). The Lordship of Christ means that we belong to Him and that He has a right to make decisions affecting our lives. We are to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses daily, and to follow Him (Luke 9:23).

#### **In Relation to Sin and Self:**

*1. The student must have an understanding of what sin is and the consequences of his own personal sin. (Intellect)*

The message of the cross must not only show the love of God for mankind but also the Lord's utter abomination for sin. The wages of sin has always been death (Rom. 6:23), an eternal damnation. Sin is the enemy of every man. Each student must understand that sin is the violation of God's law (1 John 3:4), and that God takes that violation seriously. It is a momentous occasion in the life of any person when he comes to acknowledge that he has sinned against God and that God will hold him responsible. People will not change until they want to change, until that change is seen as beneficial in terms of their basic needs and desires. They need to understand that their sins have consequences in this life, and that no one escapes the consequences of his sin (Gal. 6:7,8). The life of the transgressor is indeed hard (Prov. 13:15). He must clearly see that by his own sin he has hurt God, hurt others and hurt himself. He must become sorry for his sins, that the sorrow might lead him to repentance (2 Con 7:8-10).

In a relativistic society, many people have no concept of an objective standard of sin. They too often consider themselves as ‘good people because they have not committed some horrible crime (murder, rape, adultery, treason, etc.). They tend to justify their small sins (white lies, petty thefts, etc.) as human mistakes but not worthy of eternal damnation. It should not surprise the evangelist to hear someone say, “I haven't ever sinned,” since many people have such a limited view of what sin is. Some have dismissed the concept of sin altogether. There are those who cannot see any moral wrong in the Nazis' killing of six million Jews. In some societies people do not see the wrong of sin. They believe that if they have not hurt anyone with their behavior, then they have not sinned. The concept of sin has been removed from some vocabularies. We hear of “victimless crime” and one's right to do whatever one wishes as long as one doesn't harm anyone else. This permissiveness is in reality lawlessness. There can be no sin where there is no breaking of the law (Rom. 4:15). If one does not like the law or agree that it should be a law, then one must take away its force as a law. This, some imagine, will justify one's behavior. The deceitfulness of sin is in its effort to justify itself. The evangelist must be aware of this scheme of the devil to deceive men and so rob them of the truth. The gospel will make little sense if a person has no understanding of morality. The evangelist cannot assume that his student feels guilt for his sins.

*2. The student must have a change of heart toward sin and have hope in God to overcome the sin problem. (Heart or Emotions)*

Embracing Jesus Christ means that I must deal with my desire or love for sin. One cannot love God and Mammon. One cannot hold to sin and still love God. James asked, “do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (4:5). John said, “Do not love the world, nor the things of the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). The person who loves the Lord learns to love the things of God and to despise sin. Sin is an enemy to all mankind. Rom. 12:9 admonishes us to “Abhor what is evil; cleave to what is good.” Changing our attitudes toward sin may lead to a change in friends. A person who repents to follow Christ may find that impenitent and rebellious friends are no longer willing to associate with him. Peter observed, “For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carded out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you” (1 Pet. 4:3,4). Changing my moral life by admitting and repenting of my sins is not an easy thing to do. Many people would rather do anything than admit their guilt. The dynamic of guilt is a serious one for a person considering becoming a Christian. An individual’s realization that he is guilty of sin and lost disturbs, alarms and frightens. He knows that he has sinned and that he is weak to sin. He may wonder if he can overcome sin. There are some sins a person can forsake in a day and others that take years. The student has been told he must forsake his old way of life. He may have tried before on his own and failed. He may not think he can overcome the temptations to continue in sin. With some students the evangelist will have a hard time convincing them that sin exists, and with others he will struggle to convince them that God can help them overcome their sin traps. The evangelist must help the student realize that he does not act alone in repentance, but that God will be his helper. Passages such as I Cor. 6:9-11; 10:13 and 1 Tim. 1:12-16 are beneficial in giving hope. God is faithful and will help us overcome whatever temptations we face. One can do all things through Christ who strengthens him (Phil. 4:13).

### *3. The student must determine to leave sin and to embrace righteous living. (Will)*

The call to repentance is twofold: (1) it is a determination to leave sin behind; and (2) it is a determination to embrace righteous, Christian living. His heart and will turns away from sin and toward Christ. He now loves the Lord and everything associated with the Lord, and sinful things have become disgusting and repugnant. He applies these feelings and determinations to the world and to himself. He seeks to become a new man “who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the One who created him” (Col. 3:10).

Repentance begins with a sorrow for sin against God (2 Cor. 7:10), for his sins against others (Matt. 18:6-9), for his sin which hurts himself (Psalm 32:1-5; 51:3-7), and for the false teachings he believed or taught (2 Tim. 2:17; 2 John 9-11). Repentance is not only a turning away from sin; it is also a turning toward God. The changed sinner wants a clean heart (Psalm 51:10). He leaves the far country and comes home to the Father (Lk. 15:11-24). A change of life and behavior complete repentance. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery to “go and sin no more” (John 8:11). Paul told Agrippa that he taught the Gentiles that “they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance” (Acts 26:20). The penitent son of the vineyard owner changed his mind and went to work in the vineyard (Mt. 21:28-30). Christians do not merely talk the talk, they walk the walk. James urged Christians, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22). No one is blessed who sees that there is a need to change but fails to make that change (James 1:25; 4:17).

### **III. In Relation to Christian Living and the Church**

*1. The student must form and change his beliefs and attitudes concerning Christ and the church. (Intellect)*

Beliefs are the ideas that an individual holds to be true. Every person has basic beliefs, which influence the way in which he looks at life and how he behaves and relates to others. Secular values are different from sacred ones. One who embraces God will find that when God is added to the picture, every aspect of his life will change (2 Cor. 5:16,17). All things have indeed become new. Some examples of the attitudes within a secular belief system include these ideas:

God, if He exists at all, is just an impersonal, moral force.

There are no absolute moral values.

Man basically has the capacity within himself to improve morally and make the right choices.

Happiness consists of unlimited material acquisition.

There really is no objective basis for right and wrong.

The supernatural is just a figment of someone's imagination.

If a person lives a "good life," then eternal destiny is assured.

The Bible is nothing other than a book written by man.

The church is filled with weak people who need a crutch.

Modern, secular man is self-centered. He considers fulfilling his own needs and desires as his prime motive in life. He has little room for that which he considers as a limit to his personal freedoms or desires. He may or may not recognize this mindset. The devil has told these lies for so long that many people now regard them as the truth. The message of the gospel may make little sense to a student until such beliefs are challenged, changed and brought into accord with reality. The task of the evangelist is to help his student to come to a Christian mindset, to have the mind of Christ. He must awaken from the darkness (Eph. 4:17-24). We must insist that the student "no longer live as the Gentiles do."

God is a personal, holy, loving Father who created and sustains the world.

Sin is transgression of God's eternal law and brings about death.

Man, though a free moral agent can do nothing without Christ.

True joy consists in a faithful, loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The supernatural is real and actively working in the world today.

Each one will be judged according to his deeds by the word of God. The blood of Jesus is necessary for salvation.

The Bible is inspired of God and is an authority for our lives.

The church is filled with struggling people who love the Lord and want to do right. Beliefs influence attitudes, and both matter because ideas have consequences. One becomes what he believes. A change in beliefs will see a change in attitude, which will cause a change in behavior. A student who sees the difference between his own actual life and the ideal life described in Scripture will desire change.

*2. The student must have a positive attitude toward becoming a Christian and the church. (Emotions or Heart)*

The evangelist must be a sensitive listener to his students. The devil, our enemy, has sowed an incredible number of deceitful seeds about Christianity and the church. One such lie is that a person can be a "good Christian and never be a member of the church (most people in America now believe this). Another is that the church is filled with hypocrites. It may be that some students have been mistreated by Christians or had a bad experience at church. One new convert saw a fistfight between two officers of a church the first time she ever attended. Some congregations are spiritually cold and others are apathetic. Some congregations are cold toward outsiders and newcomers. Such attitudes throw ice water on the person whose heart is beaming with the love of Christ. A Christian who sets an ungodly example through the week can hardly make a positive impact on the new convert who knows him for what he is.

The evangelist today must realize that he must not only convert a sinner from the error of his ways but also prepare him for life in the church. While the church is divine in origin, it is filled with humans who do not live up to the ideal. Nearly all churches have a variety of people who live at different spiritual levels. Encourage the student to follow Jesus and to be patient with human weaknesses found in the church. Everyone deserves time to grow. Love for others means having to put up with their faults (1 Cor. 13:4-8; Eph. 4:1-6; 4:25-32; Phil. 2:1-8; Col. 3: 12-17; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; 4:8,9). The evangelist needs to be a friend to those whom he seeks to bring to Jesus. He must comfort, support and love them. Like a shepherd he needs to bind the wounds of, care for, protect, and feed struggling new lambs.

**3. *The student must recognize and submit to the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. (Will)***

The evangelist must show God's Word to be true and entirely trustworthy (Psa. 19:7-11). He must have absolute confidence that God's Word is wiser than men and that He means what He says. The gospel is a personal message and is indeed good news. It is good news because of the terrible condition man is in because of his sin. When men do not want to deal with their sins, they often challenge the credibility of the Scriptures. It is here that the inspiration and authority of the Word of God comes into focus. Some presume to sit in judgment of the laws of God rather than to allow God to judge them through His word (John 12:48). Jesus wishes his disciples to obey "everything" he has commanded (Matt. 28:19), which means that disciples cannot pick and choose which commandments they will follow and ignore the rest. The student must recognize his amenability to God's Word. Unless he is willing to recognize God's authority and submit to Him, he can never be truly converted to the will of God. Like Jesus one must be willing to say, "Thy will be done." Jesus ended the Sermon on the Mount with the parable of the wise man and the foolish man. The distinction between foolishness and wisdom is not one of hearing but in how one responds to what he hears (Matt. 7:24-27). This passage is an excellent one to help the student realize that his response matters.

At the appropriate time the student needs to be called to commit himself to Jesus Christ. When the student is ready, the evangelist should ask him to obey the gospel. When the people at Pentecost realized their sin and need for atonement, they asked, "what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you!" (Acts 2:37,38). Peter with many other words warned them and pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (2:40). There is urgency to the gospel message; those who accepted the message responded that day in baptism (2:41). The Eunuch sought an opportunity to be baptized when he passed some water (Acts 8:36-39). The Philippian jailer and his household were baptized in the middle of night after Paul preached to them (16:30-33). There is a time to confront a student with his need to obey the Lord.

Becoming a Christian is an all-out commitment, and an evangelist who fails to stress this point has made a mistake. Christianity is for a lifetime; Christ demands one's all (Matt. 22:37; Luke 9:23; 14:25-34; Rom. 12:1,2; etc.). Any evangelist who thinks his work is done at the waters of baptism needs to taught himself. New converts are babes in Christ who need further training as long as they live.

## **POST-CONVERSION TASKS**

### **1. Post-conversion Evaluation**

It is a common experience for new converts to wonder just what has happened to them since they became Christians. They may experience doubts and confusion. They may be disillusioned,

finding the church and their own Christian experience different from what they expected. They want desperately to be loved and accepted by their new brothers and sisters in Christ. This is why follow-up with the new Christian is so important. Evangelists cannot assume that their work is done at baptism. Repeating, reminding, and reassuring are essential for the new convert to grow. A red flag needs to go up the first time a new convert misses church or appears to be dropping out. An evangelist needs to find out why and encourage the new convert to remain faithful. Babies in Christ like babies at home need the attention of those who are mature. Usually a kind word of encouragement, the answering of a question or an act of love can help a new convert work through his doubts and confusion. Nearly half of all new converts fall away within the first year of their Christian life. Church leaders and workers need to be aware that this group needs special attention for their first year.

The new convert may test those who have taught him to see if the church really does care. If he has sensed that the church has forgotten him, he may drop out of attendance and wait to see if anyone has noticed. If no one cares enough to check on him, his suspicions will be confirmed in his mind. Most people give the church a window of opportunity to check on them. The longer the time goes by that the new convert remains unattended, the more difficult it will be to restore him.

## **2. Facing Moral Failure as a Christian**

Every Christian will sin at some time, but a crucial time for a new convert is the first time he sins after he is baptized. At baptism he has had all his sins forgiven and was freed from slavery to sin. Now he finds himself doing the same old sins he did before he became a Christian. Consequently, he is asking himself if his conversion was real. He may wonder why he isn't immediately able to handle every temptation. The evangelist has the challenge to teach the young Christian about growing in Christ, dealing with his sins as a Christian, and God's second law of pardon. The new convert must come to understand that all Christians sin and must struggle continually to keep their lives pure. He needs reassurance that he really has been saved. The feeling of embarrassment that comes from moral failure may cause the new convert to shy away from his Christian brethren and the church, because he feels as if he cannot measure up. This is the time that spiritual brethren need to humbly go and restore such a person (Gal. 6:1).

## **3. Incorporation in the Congregation**

New converts want to feel that they belong in the church. They want to be accepted and feel that they have a function in the church. Wise leaders find ways to fellowship and to use new converts in the work of the church. It is important to assign some task to a new convert; this task will help him feel that he is needed and wanted.

## **4. Spiritual Growth**

New converts need to know how they can develop their spiritual lives. They need to be taught not only the doctrines of the Bible but also how to study the Bible for themselves (1 Pet. 2:1,2; 2 Tim. 2:15). They need to be taught how to pray, to meditate, and to worship in private. They need to know the importance of giving their time and money in the service of the Lord. They need to understand their stewardship of what God has given to them. They need training in teaching others, in ministering to the sick, in developing their personal abilities for the Lord's work. They need to know how to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Pet. 1:5-11). As they develop, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23) should be evident in their lives. New Christians must learn the importance of worshiping with the saints. They must be taught to "consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another (Heb. 10:24). They need to know that they have an obligation to their fellow brothers and sisters in the congregation to help each one remain strong. They also have an obligation to respect and follow those men who have been charged with the leadership of the congregation (Heb. 13:17).

Every Christian has the responsibility to ‘speak’ to his fellow Christians in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in his heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). This means of worship not only praises God; it also edifies the brethren. Every Christian has the obligation to commune with his brethren in remembering the death of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, also called communion (1 Cor. 10:16,17). These matters of worship and fellowship help keep a new convert strong.

### 5. Christian Service

The Lord expects those who follow him to be more than mere hearers; they are to be doers of the word (James 1:22-25). Christians have been saved by the grace of God and created in Christ Jesus for good deeds (Eph. 2:8-10; cf. Tit. 2:11-14). Christians are to “always give themselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58). This service is to demonstrate the love of God for both those who are within the church and those who are without as well (Gal. 6:10). Every Christian has the responsibility of caring for his brother in Christ when there is a need (James 2:14-26). One who withholds kindness from a needy brother does not have the love of God (1 John 3:16). Older Christians have the responsibility of leading the way and of training new Christians in the work of love. Christians also have an obligation to those who are without. They are to do good when they have the opportunity (Gal. 6:10). But Christians also have an obligation to evangelize those who are lost. New converts may be short on experience and knowledge, but they often have many friends who are still in the world. New converts can be trained to teach others. The church grows when individuals teach others who teach others who teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). Those who evangelize have the responsibility to teach the new Christian everything that Jesus commanded, including the commission to take the gospel to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20).

*The work of evangelism is not done until every new convert is able to stand on his own and reproduce in the lives of others the things which he has been taught. May the Lord help us to see clearly the great work that needs to be done over the lifetime of a new convert and never cease our growth in His cause.*

### The Conversion Process

Heart Changes in the Intellect, Emotions and Will in regard to God, Sin and Christianity.

	God	Sin	
<b>Christianity</b>			
Intellect	Realize the Existence of the God found in the Bible	Understand Sin and its Consequences	Form and Change Beliefs and Attitudes toward Christianity
Emotions	Have a Favorable Attitude toward God	Change of Heart toward Sin and Have Hope in God to Overcome Problems of Sin	Have a Positive Attitude toward Christianity and the Church
Will	Submit to the Authority of God and	Determination to Leave Sin and to	Submit to the Inspiration and

	the Lordship of Christ	Embrace Righteous Living	Authority of the Scriptures
	<b>Believe</b>	<b>Repent</b>	<b>Love</b>
	<b>Call to Confess Christ and Be Baptized</b>		

**MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO OBEY THE GOSPEL**

Our purpose is to bring the lost to an obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:25,26). The apostles did more than merely teach the basics of the gospel; they also attempted to convince those they taught to obey. There is never any good reason for manipulation or coercion in teaching the gospel, but there is a need for persuasion which is Biblical:

1. 2 Cor. 5:11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men
2. Acts 2:40 with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."
3. Acts 18:4 he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks (cf. 19:8)
4. Acts 28:23 he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus

Bobby Bates: "If we know that people are lost in sin, doomed to eternal condemnation in a Devil's Hell forever and forever, and then we do not try to persuade them to obey the gospel, are we really fulfilling our obligation to God and to the lost? No! A thousand times, no!"

In order to reach people we must help them through their spiritual decision process to make a life-long commitment to deny themselves and take up their crosses daily and follow Jesus. We must help them count the cost of discipleship and count the cost of rejecting Jesus.

**SOME WAYS TO APPEAL FOR OBEDIENCE:**

**I. Ten Reasons Why You Should Be a Christian**

- 309 The Bible teaches it
- 310 Happiness (Acts 8:40)
- 311 God's help (Heb. 4:16)
- 312 Influence on loved ones
- 313 Time is short.
- 314 Death is certain
- 315 Heaven is too good to miss
- 316 Hell is real
- 317 Jesus wants you to obey
- 318 You'll never regret it.

Psalm 116:12 "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

Question: "Can you think of any good reason why you shouldn't become a Christian? Why don't you write down your reason for not being a Christian? Would you be willing to give this to Jesus on Judgment Day?"

**II. Some choice questions:**

1. Will you choose going to bed tonight having done right or wishing you had obeyed?
2. Would you rather be a member of a church that follows the New Testament or a church that has good people but practices things not taught in the Bible?
3. Would you rather follow the Bible plan of salvation or following some plan not like any New Testament teaching?

4. Did you ever find a time in life when you regretted doing the right thing?
5. If Jesus could come here to you now, extend His hand to you, and ask you to be a Christian, what would you do?
6. Suppose you had a friend who was asking you what to do to become a Christian, what would you advise him to do? (Let him answer.) Can you take your own advice? If it is right for him to do that, it is also the right thing for you to do. Can you see this is what YOU ought to do?

### III. Giving the Best You Have to Offer

"John, I believe that if it were in your power, you would give Mary and your little ones the very best life could offer."

(Wait for an answer.)

"But, John, you cannot give them the best life has to offer until you give them a Christian husband and father, and that IS within your power tonight."

"I don't doubt you are a good husband and father, but we are talking about giving them the BEST. Your family thinks you are great and wonderful, the best that ever lived. But your little ones will very likely turn out like your example. To be the best example you need to give them a devoted Christian father."

### PSYCHOLOGICAL APPEALS BETWEEN SALVATION AND CONDEMNATION:

1. *Appeal to Self Preservation:*
  - a. Acts 2:40 "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."
  - b. It is nonsense not to teach people the dangers of spiritual procrastination or indifference.
2. *Appeal to the Highest Quality of Life*
  - a. John 10:10; Matt. 11:28-30
  - b. Jesus is the answer to the problems of anxiety, guilt, fear, meaninglessness, and death. He gives grace, peace, purpose and life.
3. *Appeal for Recognition and Acceptance*
  - a. God loves us (Rom. 5:6-11; John 3:16; Rom. 8:32)
  - b. God accepts us (Luke 15:11-24)
4. *Appeal to the Yearning for Freedom:* freedom from sin (John 8:31-36); and freedom from the consequences of sin (in God's eyes)
5. *Appeal to Fulfillment*
  - a. John 10:10; Eccl. 12:13
  - b. Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 2:11-14
6. *Appeal to Influence*
  - a. Matt. 18:6-10 stumbling block to a little one
  - b. opportunity to make our world a better place
7. *Appeal to Gratitude*
  - a. Have you thanked Jesus for dying on the cross for you?
  - b. In turning down Jesus, one is turning down God's greatest gift.

### SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS IN MOTIVATING OTHERS:

1. Use words and questions that produce a positive reaction from your friend's mind.
  - a. "Why?" is often a good question to ask
  - b. "Let's. . ." is unselfish and cooperative
  - c. "When?" is a good word to use in response to a person who is "someday" oriented.
  - d. "Which?" is a good word to use in comparisons:

- Which one is according to the Bible?
- Which one pleases God?
- Which foundation do you want to build your life on?

2. Use vivid and clear illustrations that help a sinner see the need for obedience. He must see himself as God sees him. You may want to use his name in the illustration. It is not enough merely to know the truth. He must apply it to his life and to his soul.

3. Reassure the person you are teaching by quoting from God's word. "If God said it, it has to be true." "Can you go wrong if you do what God says to do?"

4. Do not be afraid to be gently persistent. Salesmen often have several ways they ask people to buy their products. If an approach is unsuccessful, try a different approach. Customers often say "no" early, when they are not yet fully convinced. What they need is a little more gentle persuasion.

5. Sometimes silence can be very effective in persuasion. Ask the sinner to respond and then remain silent until he breaks the silence. Don't be afraid to wait. Let him think and act.

6. Persuasion will be much easier if you have done these things to lay a foundation:

- a. believe with all your heart that people are interested.
- b. be convinced of the things you are asking him to accept
- c. pay attention to the person you are teaching
  - \*listen to them when they are speaking and focus on what they are saying
  - \*encourage them to talk
  - \*ask questions and pay attention to their answers
  - \*look them in the eye
  - \*don't try to out-do their jokes or stories
- d. be generous with honest praise
- e. be courteous and polite
- f. let them know that they are important to you
- g. dress neatly and be well-groomed (watch out for mouth odor)

7. Be enthusiastic and positive about your message.

319 Be thorough in your teaching.

320 Be clear about what you want them to do.

<b>Crucial Questions Converts Ask</b>
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*1. Will my commitment to Christ do for me what you say?*

It is not always easy to make up your heart and mind whether or not you are willing to commit yourself wholly to Christ Jesus. There is one thing you can be sure about: God keeps His promises. From the time of Abraham, those who are devoted to God could be certain that whatever God had promised, He was also able to perform (Rom. 4:20,21). Paul knew the God whom He believed and was convinced that God was able to guard His soul until the day of judgment (2 Tim. 1:12). God does not stutter, does not tease, and does not forget His promises. Whatever God has promised you, He is able to perform. Jesus Christ challenges us in John 7:17, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." God is asking you to commit yourself to Him. He will honor His promises to you.

*2. Is this the best solution for my life?*

The Christian life is truly the best life to live. Many Christians wonder how anyone could live without Jesus Christ as an active, everyday part of their lives. Life with prayer to a Lord who loves you is certainly superior to life with no help from above. Life with the truth is certainly better than living with a lie. Life with hope in Christ is certainly more happy and fulfilling than

life without God (Eph. 2:12). Life with a moral foundation is certainly more peaceful and stable than life without rules. Someone has well said that there is no problem that is bigger than God and you together can handle. When one puts his trust in God, he need not worry about being put to shame or disappointed (Rom. 5:1-5).

### *3. Will this decision help me for the rest of my life?*

Christianity is a life-long faith built upon a life-long love. God loves you and has provided for your spiritual needs in this life and in the life to come. Paul said that in Christ we have all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). Christ Jesus is One who understands the temptations and struggles you face, and can help you face whatever trial that lies ahead (Heb. 4:14-16). The firm promise of God in the Scriptures is, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). As long as you hold to God, you can be sure of His blessing and presence in your life.

### *4. Will I be able to hold out?*

Jesus Christ has asked us to remain faithful until death (Rev. 2:10); there is no turning back for the person who commits himself to Jesus (Luke 9:57-62). Should we decide to forsake the Lord, we can lose what we have gained in Christ (2 Pet 2:20-22). We should not think, however, that the Christian life is one that we live alone and without the help of God and others. God has provided the church as a family for us to grow spiritually strong. He has provided prayer and His grace to sustain us through difficult times (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Worship services, Bible classes, fellowship with our church families, daily prayers, and faithful Christian service will be sources of spiritual nourishment and refreshment for as long as you live. When you need God, He will be there for you. The Word of God can strengthen you (Rom. 16:25,26).

### *5. If I should fail, what would happen to me then?*

Although you may become a Christian, you will still have to deal with sin in your life from time to time. The Scriptures teach that when a Christian sins, he is to confess his sins (1 John 1:9; James 5:16) and to repeat of his sins, asking God for forgiveness (Acts 8:18-24). You can feel certain that when you are penitently asking God's forgiveness, that you are continuing to walk in His light and can enjoy His fellowship (1 John 1:6-10). But should you forsake the Lord and walk in darkness, you will lose the blessing of His cleansing blood (Heb. 10:26,35-39). Each Christian needs to keep guard on his heart and life to see that he is continuing to follow the Lord.

### *6. Do I have to change my whole life? Will I have to give up my friends?*

A person who begins loving the Lord will find his desires change. He wants to draw close to God and learns to love the things of God. At the same time, sinful things that separate one from God tend to lose their appeal. As a Christian one doesn't see sin as an attractive thing anymore. The young Christian who wants to please God may find that his old friends may not want to have much to do with him (1 Pet. 4:1-4). The young Christian should seek for people who will help him build his faith rather than destroy it. The great challenge for the new Christian is to share the gospel with his old friends, so that they may experience a change of heart and life. You may want to share this program or another Bible study with a friend.

### *7. Why does it seem there are so many hypocrites in the church?*

Someone has defined a hypocrite as a person who "does not intend to be what he pretends to be." A hypocrite is an actor or a pretender; he is not genuine in his faith or his desire to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus described the hypocrites of his time as whitewashed tombs, pretty on the outside but full of uncleanness on the inside (Matt. 23:25-28). There are some hypocrites in the church, but one should be careful not to confuse hypocrisy with weakness. Ad! Christians have their weaknesses, in which they are especially vulnerable to temptation and sin (Heb. 4:15; Gal. 6:1).

As Christians, each of us must be patient with each other and help each other to overcome the temptations we all face (Heb. 12:12,13). Further we must guard that we do not exalt ourselves as judges (James 4:11,12).

*8. I've never done anything really bad; I'm not sure if I died that God would send me to hell?*

Men often downplay their sins. They often do not look at sin the way God does. God does not think the way we do (Isa. 55:6-9). While we may not see the harm or the offense in sin, God is offended by all sin. Every sin is a breaking of His law (1 John 3:4). God has declared that the soul who sins must die (Ezekiel 18:4; Rom. 6:23). We usually forget how much we have sinned. If a person only sinned once a day, he would have accumulated more than 20,000 sins by age seventy. God hates sin. He sent His only begotten Son Jesus to die on a cruel cross to pay the penalty for our sins. The Bible teaches that God is both just in condemning those who reject the blood of Jesus and the justifier of those who will be obedient to Him (Rom. 3:24-26). Our God is a loving God, but He is also just and will condemn those who remain in sin.

## **REACHING THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY**

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). To restore the fallen is to reconcile them to the Lord and to the church. Some general statistics about drop-outs:

1. Almost one of every two Americans, 46%, will drop out of active church participation sometime during their lifetime.
2. One third of all dropouts occur during the teenage years; 60% by age 24.
3. Eight in ten of those who drop out do so in the first year after they are converted.
4. Most people who drop out of church fail to receive a caring visit within the first two months.
5. Up to 80% of those who drop out will return to active participation in the church sometime during their lives.
6. Half of all dropouts can be reached again by a caring, compassionate visit from a Christian brother.

### **I. WHY PEOPLE DROP OUT**

1. The failure to establish close, warm relationships with members of the church is the primary reason. If people have 5 or 6 close friends in the church, they will probably never drop out.
2. Another reason is the failure to have his needs met. In some cases it is the failure to have expectations met. He may be bored with church, uninvolved, or unedified. He may be tired of being put down or shamed at church. He may be disillusioned, finding that the church was not what he expected it to be.
3. He may have personal problems. In some cases an individual is caught up in sin and does not want to face it (Heb. 3:12-14). In other cases a devastating illness can create a faith problem. We should never take for granted that personal difficulties can be easily borne.
4. He may face major changes in life that make him vulnerable. A change in job and moving from one town to another often leaves people vulnerable to falling away. About half of those who move and find a new church home change from the religious group they were attending to a different fellowship. Many who move are very slow to find a church home within churches of Christ. Newcomers to town are among the most fruitful converts; but moving offers an opportunity for weak Christian to fall away.

5. False teaching can lead souls away from the truth (2 Tim. 4:2,3; Gal. 5:1-4).
6. Harsh treatment by crude brethren can drive weak Christians away from the church (3 John 9-10).
7. A loss of faith in God or in Christ can lead one to deny the Lord (Heb. 6:4-6). This is in a context of severe persecution.
8. Marital problems at home, divorce, or parental problems can destroy an entire family's commitment to the church and the Lord. Many times the embarrassment is overwhelming to a family, to the extent that they will not return. The loving acceptance of brethren is never more needed than in family failure.
9. Personality clashes with other members, preachers or elders can lead people to stop attending altogether. In some cases, people never quite "fit in" with the whole congregation. Sensitivity to this problem and efforts to incorporate the brother or sister need to be made.
10. Occasionally a brother or sister works very hard in the church and receives very little appreciation. A lack of appreciation, sometimes criticism, and exhaustion can lead to burnout. Those who lead need to be sensitive to hard-working volunteers, who need feeding and appreciation. No one can live forever with manipulation and guilt-trips. Those who feel they can not live up to expectations or can not please others will eventually cease trying.
11. Occasionally a person will drop out because he does not agree with "church doctrine."

## II. HOW A PERSON WHO DROPS OUT FEELS AND ACTS

1. He often is deeply hurt and usually wishes he were not dropping out. What he wants is that someone care! When someone is offended or hurt, he generally tests his brethren by dropping out to see if anyone notices. The most crucial time in this period is the first few weeks. If after six weeks to two months no one has noticed that he has ceased active participation, he regards the lack of attention as a confirmation that he is not needed or wanted. This is a devastating, hard-to-overcome, blow to an offended brother. Prov. 18:19 "An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city, and disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel."

2. There are generally *two reactions* to the deeply felt hurt in one who has fallen away:

a. **Anger.** In his mind, the church is the offender, filled with hypocrites, who hurt him and do not care about him. Our approach to such a one is usually critical of his behavior (dropping out is wrong). We are often surprised, then, to find hostility.

b. **Guilt.** This is the person who blames himself for failing and is eaten up with guilt. Filled with despair, doubts and hopelessness he quits. He does not see any possible way he can come back.

3. After a period of time a dropout will usually reinvest themselves, their time and effort, into some other project. It may be family, a civic organization, or a volunteer program. He will find himself useful in his newly found project and believe that his faith is better than ever before. He may portray a life of great spirituality without the need for church. His spiritual life is all vertical, not horizontal. Many people who drop out never know they have not been faithful to God. They still consider themselves "faithful" members of the church. (80% of the people of the U.S. believe you can be a good Christian and not be a member of any church.)

## III. WHAT WE CAN DO TO BRING THEM BACK

Lost is a terrible condition for the fallen child of God (2 Pet. 2:20-22). The Bible gives us some instruction about the need to restore the fallen:

- \*Gal. 6:1 restore, considering yourself (Matt. 7:12)
- \*James 5:19-20 save a soul from death
- \*2 Tim. 2:24-26 gentleness
- \*Jude 22,23 have mercy on them

1. *We must go to them, gentle and compassionate.* It may take some weeks of building trust with them before we can get them to open up and talk about their hurt and problems with the church. Usually it takes one visit for every year they have stayed away from the Lord. One must use friendly visits to build rapport and trust and earn the right to talk to them about their souls. Many people can be restored if a loving, caring, compassionate visit is made.

2. *We must listen to them.* We must, after gaining their confidence, tactfully ask what prompted them to leave. We must then listen, neither condoning nor judging their answer for the time being. It is important to allow them to fully speak their hearts.

3. *Once they have finished speaking, kindly ask them what they think could or should be done to change matters.* Don't tell them; let them tell you. They usually know:

- confession of sins: James 5:16; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:1-5
- repentance: Acts 8:22-23
- prayer for forgiveness
- "What can I do to help you?"
- Pray with them

4. *Suggest positive alternatives as solutions.* What most people need in life is a little hope for change. Let them know there is something they can do to make things better.

5. *Show the love of Christ to them.* Encourage them and help them to resume their lives in Christ.

6. *Ask them to commit themselves again to the Lord.*

We must be careful never to allow little problems to become big ones before we seek a solution to them. Prevention is always better than recovery.

**Appendix A**  
**Church Growth and the Traditional**

**Church Business Magazine, September 2002**

“Churches in America having the largest Sunday night attendance are those that follow traditional music and preaching ministries, especially emphasizing systematic expository preaching of Bible content.”

**Thom S. Rainer in *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*. Copyright 2002**

- Over 80% of the formerly unchurched told us that the church name had little or no influence upon their joining a particular church. Nearly two-thirds of those respondents indicated that the denominational name had a positive influence on their decision.
- 91% of the formerly unchurched indicated that doctrine was an important factor that attracted them to the church. In many cases “the unchurched were more concerned about doctrine than Christians who had transferred from another church.”
- Unchurched people often desire to be challenged. Churches that expect much receive much, even from many of the unchurched.
- “Even before I became a Christian,” Cheryl S. told us, “I was really interested in what churches believed. I had enough common sense to know that they weren’t all exactly alike. I wanted to find a church that would stick to their guns on their beliefs.” The formerly unchurched were not just interested in the facts of the doctrine; they were insistent that the churches should be uncompromising in their stand. These facts fly in the face of an increasingly pluralistic and theologically tolerant culture. The seeker desires to discover truth and the conviction among Christians about the reality of God, Jesus and the entire supernatural realm. Jorge C. spoke rather bluntly about the issue: “I visited a few churches before I became a Christian. Man, some of them made me want to vomit! They didn’t show any more conviction about their beliefs than I did. And I was lost and going to hell!” Churches that are lukewarm in their doctrinal conviction do not attract the unchurched. “I can find plenty of compromise in the world,” Rob. M said, “but I expect the church to stand for something.”
- “Why is doctrine so important to you?” The most frequent response was their desire to know truth or absolutes. Most of the interviewed unchurched did not understand explicitly that they were searching for absolutes as they visited churches.
- Doctrine is the content of belief; certitude is the conviction of belief. In nearly one-half of our interviews, the formerly unchurched gave us some indication that certitude was an important reason they chose a church.
  - “The church is uncompromising on the Word.”
  - “The preacher spoke the Word of God as truth. Didn’t fluff-up the sermon. Called ‘sin’ sin in a loving way.

- “You could tell that the people really believed what was taught and preached.”
- “All the material they give visitors in the worship service tells you clearly that the church has convictions about what it believes.”
- “I have never been to a Sunday School class where the teacher was so well prepared and taught with so much authority and conviction.”
- “I get excited thinking about where I am now. But I also know that there are a lot of churches out there where no conviction exists. I’ve been to some of them. You’re never going to convince a lost person to become a Christian unless the church is totally sold out on its beliefs. Man! There sure are a lot of wishy-washy churches out there.”
- “I didn’t have a church background, but I sure could tell a lot about churches after a visit or two. There was this one church where the preacher went through all sort of gyrations to say nothing. It was like he was afraid he would offend somebody. Personally, I was offended that he was such a dud. I could’ve turned on the TV and watched *The Simpsons* and learned as much about the Bible. Why do these guys even get into the ministry if they don’t believe anything? It seems like it would be a matter of integrity for them to believe in what they do. What a shame?”
- How does doctrine affect the closing of the back door?
  - No one desires to be a part of an organization or cause based on uncertainty or ambiguity. “Why should I waste my time being a part of something that doesn’t really make a difference?”
  - People are attracted to an unambiguous declaration of absolutes. Many seekers desire to know that black and white reality does exist.
  - Churches with doctrinal certitude tend to be activists in their beliefs, passionately evangelistic in their approach to the lost. They spoke the truth in love.

Without exception, when the formerly unchurched told us of their attraction to churches with doctrinal conviction, they never described the spirit of the churches with such negative words *as harsh, judgmental, or legalistic*. When they described the spirit or ethics of the people of the church, they typically used words that could best be summarized as “speaking the truth in love.”

- Churches that grew always had a “theology of lostness.”
- Almost one out of three of the formerly unchurched informed us that they came or returned to the church for their children. The unchurched do not always seek a place of worship for their own needs.
- The preacher and his preaching was the most significant factor leading the unchurched to choose a particular church (90%). The doctrines of the church were second in significance (88%). The friendliness of the members was the third most significant (49%). Children’s/Youth ministry (25%). Worship style (11%).
- Preaching that wins the formerly unchurched is:
  - 321 preaching that teaches the Bible.
  - 322 preaching that applies to my life.
  - 323 the authenticity of the preacher.
  - 324 the preacher’s conviction.
  - 325 contact by the preacher

- 326 the preacher is a good communicator
- 327 the preacher is a leader
- 328 the preacher's class

**Appendix B**  
**Unchurched People**  
 from the Barna Archives

Definition

an adult (18 or older) who has not attended a Christian church service within the past six months, not including a holiday service (such as Easter or Christmas) or a special event at a church (such as a wedding or funeral).

How Many?

- One out of three adults (33%) is unchurched. A proportion that represents 65-70 million adults in America. (2000)
- It is surprising to find that roughly 10 million born again Christian adults are unchurched. (2000)

Who?

- The highest proportion of unchurched is in the Northeast (44%), compared to 33% in the West, 32% in the Midwest and 26% in the South. (2000)
- The unchurched adults has been on the rise in the past 3 years for the following population segments: Busters (rising from 31% to 40%) and men (up from 33% to 38%). (2000)
- Men are one-third more likely than women to be unchurched (38% of men and 28% of women are unchurched). (2000)
- Adults who are politically liberal are more than twice as likely than political conservatives to be unchurched (47% of liberals versus 23% of the conservatives). (2000)
- Nearly three out of ten married adults are unchurched (28%) compared to two out of five who have never been married (39%). (2000)

Spiritual Commitment

- Two out of three (67%) unchurched adults call themselves Christian. (2000)
- One-third (35%) claim they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today. (2000)
- About 4 out of 10 unchurched assert that their religious faith is very important in their life. (2000)

Beliefs

- 64% of the unchurched say that Satan is not a living being but is a symbol of evil. (2000)
- 64% of unchurched adults state that a good person can earn his or her way into Heaven. (2000)

- 44% of the unchurched define God as an entity other than the perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of the universe who continues to rule His creation today. (2000)
- 48% of the unchurched assert that when Jesus Christ lived on earth, He committed sins. (2000)
- 22% of the unchurched firmly believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all that it teaches. (2000)

**Top 15 Reporting Religious Bodies  
Nashville, TN**

Church, Christian, or Religious Body	Adherents (and rank)		Congregations	
	in 2000	in 1990	in 2000	in 1990
Southern Baptist Convention	223,561 (1)	198,724 (1)	321	262
United Methodist Church, The	76,746 (2)	75,510 (3)	210	220
<b>Churches of Christ</b>	<b>75,843 (3)</b>	<b>75,666 (2)</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>326</b>
Catholic Church, The	60,283 (4)	37,698 (5)	29	29
Presbyterian Church (USA)	16,511 (5)	16,167 (6)	49	49
Independent, Non-Charismatic Churches	14,200 (6)	4,900 (15)	9	7
Church of the Nazarene	11,157 (7)	9,518 (7)	49	47
Assemblies of God	10,575 (8)	5,779 (13)	30	24
Episcopal Church	10,554 (9)	9,213 (8)	26	22
Muslims Estimate	9,046 (10)	NA	7	NA
Presbyterian Church in America	8,925 (11)	2,942 (20)	9	6
Cumberland Presbyterian Church	7,661 (12)	8,284 (9)	44	43
Seventh-day Adventist Church	7,418 (13)	7,491 (10)	28	23
Jewish Estimate	6,000 (14)	5,560 (14)	4	5
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The	5,801 (15)	3,660 (19)	15	11

Metropolitan Population, 2000 Census: 1,231,311  
Percent of Population Claimed by Reporting Groups: 48.1%

<TR=100% National Average: 50.2% claimed

Reporting Groups (149 possible): 62(51 of 133 in 1990)  
Total Reported Adherents: 592,104(562,157 in 1990)  
Total Reported Congregations: 1,474(1,291 in 1990)

The metro area included 8 counties (or equivalent) at the time of the 2000 census:  
Cheatham County, TN; Davidson County, TN; Dickson County, TN; Robertson County, TN; Rutherford County, TN; Sumner County, TN; Williamson County, TN; Wilson County, TN

The newly published book *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000* includes a CD that allows users to determine such lists for any selected group of counties.

Source: Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000  
Churches and Church Membership in the United States 1990  
Both studies, copyrighted by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, are published by the Glenmary Research Center, Nashville, Tenn. More information is available at [www.glenmary.org/grc](http://www.glenmary.org/grc).

## **Appendix C**

### **The Keys to Church Growth**

#### **329    *Friendships***

- **Jn. 13:34,35**

Growing churches have six adult groups for every 100 members; more groups mean more opportunities for new people to find a place to belong. If we want to make a difference, start making visits to the homes of prospective members and building relationships. Friendship brings us to church, too. Sometimes, literally, we are invited by friends and come with them. But often it's the *desire* for friends -- good friends, caring friends, friends who share our values -- that brings us to church in hope. God knows, loneliness can eat at our sense of well-being. Being new in a community often accentuates that longing to love and be loved. And this is as it should be. God *means* for the church to be a place to build long-term caring relationships, to be a *community* in every sense of that word.

- Every new member needs seven or more friends to feel he or she belongs
- Churches with strong infrastructure can endure trials in church life such as staff turnover or open conflicts
- The most important single attitude related to church growth is a genuine interest and concern in others combined with a sincere desire to share the love of Christ and the church.
- Do everything you can do to grow in real relationship with others

#### **330    *Dream Excitement***

- Power comes from focus on an exciting goal or mission
- Churches must be moved from a mission, a purpose a heart filled with love.
- Of those persons who do not go to church (160 millions Americans), between 54 and 75 percent have never been invited to attend church. Most will come to church if asked.
- Learn to talk favorably about your local church.
- Most churches need an intentional effort at overcoming indifference and cultivating attitudes which help church growth.
- At Thessalonica **Acts 17:6** And when they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also;

331 *Personal Involvement*

- In any promotion, it still comes down to one person inviting another to become involved in some level of the local church.
- A church only grows when someone who is not currently a member of that church decides to come to the Lord or to become a member of that congregation. They do this by baptism or by transfer.
- One individual can make a significant difference in the growth of a local church. You can make a difference in your church.
- **Acts 5:42** And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.
- **Acts 8:3,4** But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.
- The most important single step you can take as an individual is to invite someone you know, who is not actively involved in a local church, to worship with your congregation.
- Believe it or not, there *are* people who are asking, "What do I have to *give* here?" rather than just "What can I *get*?"
- If we want to help keep new members, then keep in touch with them and encourage them to get involved here.
- If we want to grow we must train ourselves in how to grow, how to evangelize. **2 Tim. 2:2** And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

332 *Prayer*

- Always remember that we are the agents through whom God may choose to speak to the hearts and minds of others, but God is the one who changes the hearts and lives of people.
- God can and does open doors (Col. 4:2,3).
- "Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as *it did* also with you" (2 Thess. 3:1).
- "And *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:19).
- God works in the lives of others through people and circumstances and situations which seem most unlikely. God works through us, not only through our strengths, but also through our weaknesses.

## **Appendix D**

### **Reaching the Unchurched (Stafford North article)**

In his recent book Surprising Insights from the Unchurched, Thom S. Rainer reports the results of extensive studies that do indeed offer surprising insights. He surveyed 2,000 evangelistic churches from a variety of denominations and from them identified 353 formerly unchurched individuals who had been “converted.” Rainer believes we can learn more from the unchurched who became church members than by studying unchurched who remain that way.

Rainer’s definition for an evangelistic church is one that meets two criteria: (1) has at least 26 conversions a year and (2) converts annually at least one person for each 20 members. Thus, a church of 500 would be “evangelistic” if it converted more than 25 a year. He says the average U.S. church only converts annually one for each 85 members. From these 2,000 evangelistic churches, Rainer interviewed 353 people who had been converted.

Rainer’s book discloses what he learned from open-ended questions he asked these converts. Their answers allowed him to determine how important a number of factors were in causing these unchurched to affiliate with the church they did. For each individual, he tabulated all the factors that person said were important.

Following are the factors which had a strong influence, and the percentage who said that factor was of important to them in their change from unchurched to church member.

- Pastor/Preaching – 90%
- Doctrines of the church – 88%
- Friendliness of members – 49%
- A member “witnessed” to them – 41%
- A family member attends – 38%
- Relationship with non-family member – 25%
- Sunday School Class – 25%
- Children’s/Youth Ministry – 25%
- Worship Style/Music – 11%
- Location – 7%

From this information and other observations in the book, I would make the following practical observations about how we can reach the unchurched for Christ.

1. Use appropriate ways to get the unchurched to attend a worship occasion, a special seminar, use a service the church provides, and/or get their children to

attend a Bible class or a VBS. They will respond favorably to a warm greeting at the door, friendliness from all those they meet, and excellence in everything you do. Such positive contacts with good follow-up are effective in reaching the unchurched.

2. Offer biblical preaching that kindly but firmly proclaims your commitment to fundamental beliefs. The unchurched who made the change were not impressed by churches that did not proclaim clearly what they believed. “Doctrinal certitude” is attractive to many of the unchurched (62). “We should never dilute our biblical teaching for the sake of the unchurched” (45). And “churches that reach the unchurched are theologically conservative” (275). Both Rainer and George Barna say “doctrine is . . . the single most critical issue in reaching people” (129). The unchurched also are attracted to preaching that is relevant and well illustrated (218-19). Any personal contact the preacher can make will be especially appreciated.
3. Train members to talk positively about their Christian experience and their beliefs whenever and wherever they can: at work, at recreation, in the neighborhood, when shopping. We should use our daily relationships and conversations as occasions to share our faith.
4. Teach Christians who have unchurched family members how to get them interested in attending and making a decision to become a Christian. Relatives who are outside the church are a ripe field if they are approached carefully. The “witness” from a wife or husband was found to be a very important factor for many.
5. Make your youth program effective and evangelistic. “People are most receptive to the gospel before they are twenty” (51). Have events to which your young people can invite their friends. Make being evangelistic an important part of the youth program. Not only will it offer an opportunity to bring others to Christ, it will also strengthen the faith of your youth. This should be one of the major evangelistic thrusts in all churches.
6. Utilize your Bible class program and other small group opportunities as a way to contact, provide biblical teaching, and serve the unchurched. Getting them to meetings of small groups can be effective both for attracting and assimilating them. Teach your classes how to bring visitors and how to make them feel welcome. Have special occasions to which to invite them.
7. Make your facilities as inviting as possible: well-landscaped, clean, attractive, and with good signage. One church paid an outsider to come once a month to tell them how a visitor would respond to their facilities. How you keep your building is a signal about the quality of your church. Visitors are especially interested in the appearance of your nursery and pre-school facilities.
8. Offer an “entry-point class” designed especially for seekers (112). Many churches have found this especially effective. Some visitors are not advanced enough in their Bible knowledge to be comfortable in regular Sunday morning classes. This class is also a good time for them to have contact with the preacher.
9. Plan worship services to be scriptural, interesting, and appealing, but do not make changes that alienate members in the hope of gaining others. The style

of worship was not high on the list of factors that influenced the unchurched to make their change. Visitors will use the worship occasion as a measuring stick to determine whether the church is a place of excellence. A well-planned service carried out by those who do their parts well will be an attraction.

Rainer's book is well worth reading and any congregation would do well to check itself against his criteria and then make improvements that will attract, teach, and convert the unchurched.

## Appendix E

### Where Can I Find People Who Want to Study?

**333 The Scriptures teach “whosoever will...”**

John 3:16; Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Heb. 2:9  
1 John 2:1,2; 1 Tim. 2:3,4

**334 People who make good prospects**

- 335 those who have had a serious change in life
- 336 those who are dissatisfied with their present faith
- 337 those who originally believed the Bible teaching
- 338 those who have Christians among their family or friends

*Change in Life:*

- 339 death of spouse
  - 340 divorce
  - 341 marital separation
  - 342 death of a close family member
  - 343 marriage
  - 344 marital reconciliation
  - 345 retirement
  - 346 gain of a new family member
  - 347 change in financial status
  - 348 change in work responsibilities
  - 349 child leaving home
  - 350 wife beginning or ending work
  - 351 beginning or end of school
  - 352 change in residence
- 353 People who make poor prospects (Matt. 7:6)**
- 354 those who reject Christ and the truth (Matt. 10:11-15)

- 355 those who are proud and will not listen (Acts 13:42-46; 28:23-28)  
 356 those who have little association with members of the church  
 357 those in whose lives there has been little change

### Effective Evangelism

#### Those Who Convert and Remain:

- 80% are led to the Lord by a friend
- Have had more than five (5.9) exposures to the gospel
- 70% viewed evangelism as non-manipulative dialogue.
- Developed significant contacts with church members before their conversion
- Were dissatisfied with their non-religious lifestyles.

#### Those Who Drop Out

- 70 % are led to the Lord by a stranger
- Averaged 2.16 exposures to the gospel before their conversion
- 90% perceived their evangelization as a manipulative dialogue
- 75% showed little dissatisfaction with non-religious lifestyle before conversion

### Appendix F

#### Why I Believe We Have Reached a Plateau; These are Spiritual Problems

- 358 *We have become apathetic*  
 359 our church members have all our friends, and we do not need or see those  
 outside who are lost  
 360 we became inward focused rather than outward focused
- this was a perspective problem
  - we forgot what it meant to be lost or hurting
  - Elders and preachers were asked: what will you do for me?
  - Many had the idea of a “service” church not a “serving” church
- 361 2 Pet. 1:7 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having  
 forgotten his purification from his former sins.
- 362 *We are not teaching the distinctive nature of the church.*  
 363 the progressive movement  
 364 preaching changed from doctrinal and evangelistic to “meeting felt needs,”  
 counseling and “church growth”  
 365 we want everything to be non-threatening
- 366 *We disrespect the sacred work of “preaching”*  
 367 colleges are training youth ministers or missionaries but not preachers  
 368 the word “preacher” is often spoken negatively

- 369 we do not like confrontation or speaking of sin  
 370 evangelism is a low priority
- 371 *We stopped talking about “soul-winning” and training “soul-winners.”*  
 372 Few soul-winning workshops because of the controversies surrounding  
 past ones  
 373 Many who were trained in times past no longer win souls  
 374 Satisfied with inviting friends  
 375 Congregations often withdrew into themselves, not needing others,  
 perhaps because of jealousy and “sheep-stealing”  
 376 When we are busy criticizing others, we don’t have time for our own  
 work.

## Appendix G

### What Can an Aging Congregation Do?

Recently a dear friend told me of the challenging work he was facing. He was preaching in a congregation, where the average age of its members was sixty or above. The church building was located downtown, but the stately congregation like the building seemed to lack enthusiasm. A guest entering the assembly could feel the attitude of just trying to hang on as long as possible before they have to close the doors. It could be fifteen years, or it could be five. One could sense the death of a church. This church is not alone; there are literally hundreds of congregations down and distressed, thinking there is no hope for survival.

Does it really have to die? Only if it chooses to.

What can an aging congregation do? It can do several things:

*First, it must assess its strengths and capabilities.*

The powers churches possess are actually twofold. They first have some strength from a Divine source. They possess the power of love, the power of the Word, the power of truth, the power of prayer, and the power of relationship with God. These are dynamic forces not blank shells. When God’s people use God’s means to do God’s work, God blesses that effort. Love, the gospel, and prayer will still make an impact on lost souls.

Sometimes leaders in aging congregations forget what an overwhelming resource mature Christians possess. The hardest working members of most churches are retired from employment but active as volunteers. They are free from a job but sold to the Master. Such volunteers are priceless.

What can your retired people do for the community? People of experience have much to offer to those who are hungry to learn. Aging congregations can serve a community by sharing its godly wisdom and experience. Congregations can offer tax advice, can provide Christian counseling, can offer financial planning and management, can teach homemaking skills, can provide sitting services, and can volunteer services at hospitals and nursing homes. In short, they

can get involved in their communities and meet needs. Are there not wise and discerning members in most congregations that can share their wisdom and experience with younger people who are hurting. A friend who will listen and understand is a priceless treasure.

A dear sister in Columbia, Tennessee raises thousands of roses each year to share with friends. With the tremendous influx of Hispanics to our country, several congregations are offering English lessons with a Bible base. When congregations show love to each other and to their neighbors, they become known in their communities as churches that love. Early churches were found doing things no others in communities were willing to do. They buried the dead, took in orphans, cared for the sick, fed the poor, and watched out for the widows. Their love won souls.

Love is the best side door approach to evangelism. Sometimes we forget that we must earn the right to speak to our neighbors about the most important issues of life. We earn this right by loving others. Giving a tract with every act kindness can open doors.

Second, *it must focus on what it can do rather than what it cannot do.*

Some aging congregations believe that since they have few or no young people, they have no one to reach. This simply isn't true. Every evangelist has found some opportunities with adults. Indeed, nearly every preacher can tell the story of a person past retirement coming to the Lord. While it is true that most people convert at a young age, it doesn't mean that those fifty and above never come to the Lord. It is amazing how many people are hungry for spiritual food but have not yet been exposed to the true gospel.

An aging congregation can offer activities that seniors enjoy and open the door to relationships that can bear fruit. How often a lonely widow or widower would love some activity with others. No one likes to eat every meal alone.

Congregations must use their imaginations to find ways to meet the needs of the people they hope to target. It just makes sense that if a congregation is aging, it may have a powerful impact on lost people who are also aging. When a community begins to think of the Lord's church as a place where people care, they will open their hearts.

Paul reminds us, "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal. 6:9-10).

Third, *it must never forget the goal of evangelism.*

It takes three things for churches to grow: (1) guests must come through the door, (2) guests must find spiritual help and love from the brethren, and (3) brethren must follow up. We must invite, invite, and invite some more. We must make our guests feel *welcome* and *wanted* when they come through the doors. We must do our best to provide them with spiritual food and help in every sermon and Bible class. We must contact them within 72 hours after their visit to encourage their return. Follow up sometimes requires sharing the gospel and at other times restoration. The best source of prospects we have is in the guests to our services.

George Barna, a researcher of religious trends, reveals that the #2 reason why people return to a congregation arises from the love they show each other. If a guest senses that members of the congregation love each other, he realizes that he too can be loved.

Effective evangelists use Monday nights to follow up every local guest to the worship services. If this number is lower, he can visit face to face. If this number is higher, he can use the telephone to great advantage. A 10-15 minute visit can work wonders.

There is no substitute for hard work, for loving people, for Bible studies. Churches grow when members work the harvest fields of human hearts. The method of evangelism is not nearly

so important as the perceived love of the evangelists. When godly brethren lovingly share the truth of the gospel with unbelievers, they will see conversions.

The world belongs to the prepared. Many older Christians have spent a lifetime studying God's word. With a little training, they can become effective soul-winners. Ten trained brethren, on fire for God, can bring about growth in any church. There are plenty of opportunities; we need merely to open our eyes to the harvest.

Revival begins with prayer and with repentance. Sometimes congregations need to awaken from complacency and begin fervent prayer to God. It is easy to settle for "housekeeping" religion rather than New Testament Christianity.