

# "Growing A Healthy Church"



## **Definition of a Healthy Church:**

A center of "spiritual reproduction." (new believers, new groups & new churches are being born)

A community of "life transformation." (people's lives are being measurably changed).

Church health cannot be achieved or maintained without:

...The work of the Holy Spirit and.... High caliber pastoral \_\_\_\_\_.

"A servant leader is one who has been called, transformed, gifted, and empowered by God, to serve Him and the needs of others, before their own concerns."

## **"Nine Habits of Churches that Reach and Keep the Unchurched" .... Dr. Thom Rainer**

### 1- Habit of Intentionality.

Simply put, for a church to be successful it intentionally must be \_\_\_\_\_ to reach the unchurched. Examples: Outreach program like Sunday School's F.A.I.T.H., friendly greeters, clean restrooms, modern nurseries, etc.

### 2- Habit of Cultural Awareness.

Rainer said. "It does not mean they compromised with culture, but they understood culture. There are some things we can do to be culturally aware."

### 3- Habit of High Expectations.

Rainer said there is a direct correlation between how much is demanded of a new member and how long the new member stays active in the church.

### 4- Habit of Clear Doctrine.

Rainer said the formerly unchurched told the researchers, "We want to hear about the doctrine on the front end. We're not going to make a commitment to a church where you will tell us about what you believe later."

### 5- Habit of Risk Taking.

"The risk-taking attitude of these churches is obvious by their willingness to \_\_\_\_\_ members," Rainer said. "They do not make decision based upon who might leave as a result of this. They make decisions more on: Who will we reach?"

### 6- Habit of Dynamic Small Groups.

68 percent were involved in Sunday school. Rainer said unhealthy Sunday schools are inward focused -- healthy Sunday schools are constantly looking beyond themselves."

### 7- Habit of Effective Leadership.

"Once unchurched persons visited churches, they said the pastor and the preaching were the most important factors in their returning." Among effective churches, the pastor spent five hours a week involved in personal evangelism.

8- Habit of *Effective Preaching*.

"Among effective churches, pastors spent an average of \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week on sermons -- including the task itself. They gained time by delegating and give away ministry [assignments]."

9- Habit of *Prayer*.

Rainer said that churches that prayed together and prayed often kept their new members. Often, he said, church members would call up the new members and say, "We are praying specifically for you."

**Five Guiding Principles of Church Growth:**

1- The Principle of *Visionary Leadership*.

A church grows when decisions are made \_\_\_\_\_ on the intention of bringing new people into the church. Churches that make decisions based only on how it will affect their current members are generally not growing churches.

2- The Principle of *Human Resource Utilization*.

A church grows when decisions provide the staff, leadership, and resources needed to focus on outreach. (One full-time staff for every 150 worshippers; 60% of the people have a ministry in the church.)

3- The Principle of *Open Doors*.

A church grows when decisions create opportunities for \_\_\_\_\_ people to enter into the life of the congregation. Doors can be anything from worship to need-oriented ministries and programs.

4- The Principle of *Incorporation*.

A church grows when decisions spawn ways to incorporate new people into the social circles of the membership. The feeling of being wanted, having a sense of identity, & belonging to a group are strong pulls for a newcomer's involvement.

5- The Principle of *Finance*.

A church grows when decisions adequately finance local outreach activities. Growing churches spend from 5 to 10 percent of their budget for outreach.

In every church, people place their trust in what is \_\_\_\_\_...

Smaller-size: the key family or long-term leaders.

Medium-size: the programs provide the continuity.

Large-size: the senior pastor (sometimes staff)

The longer a pastor's tenure, (continuity) the more likely the church will follow his leadership.

The central idea of leadership is "standing before people & leading them in some \_\_\_\_\_."

Second only to the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, pastoral leadership is the most determinative factor in growing churches.

Strong pastoral competence is a decisive factor for the vitality and outreach of a congregation.



**Church Size is Important to Church Growth:**  
**(Characteristics of Churches with 15 to 200 in worship)**

The size of a congregation is the most critical variable in determining how it behaves, congregations of very different sizes behave in very different ways.

Every church is a bundle of strengths and weaknesses. Most weaknesses are strengths pushed to an extreme.

Every pastor is a bundle of strengths and weaknesses. Most weaknesses are strengths pushed to an extreme.

Characteristics of a New Church Start:

Born from vision or church split.

Everything is new to the church.

High expectation and excitement.

Pastor is the key to success.

Pastor is entrepreneur/ \_

Pastor/Family burnout high-risk.

Minimal trained leadership present.

Financial base is limited.

Usually dependant on sponsor.

Characteristics of a Tier One Church (under 35 in worship)

A Family Chapel Church.

High ownership by membership.

New members adopted into church.

Most growth is biological.

Bi-vocational pastor is the norm.

Pastor tends to be \_\_\_\_\_.

Matriarch/Patriarch usually present.

Leadership style is relational.

Characteristics of a Tier Two Church (36-75 in worship)

Pastor is center of everything.

Pastor recruits most new members.

Pastor's family easily neglected.

Pastor tries to be "all-things" to all.

High expectations on Pastor/family.

Pastor ministers/Church leaders administer.

Church plateaus at the level of the pastor's competency, time, energy.

Pastor must learn to do \_\_\_\_\_ & raise the quality of all church ministries.

Characteristics of a Tier Three Church (76-200 in worship)

The 75 Barrier is broken.

Church becomes more organized.

Lay ministries increase with growth.

Intentional outreach program starts.

Pastor still central but roles shifting.

Near 150, burden great for pastor.

Pastor must learn to \_\_\_\_\_.

Church staff is added as needed.

Constitution/bi-laws becomes issue.

### **Twelve Qualities of Good Leaders in Smaller Churches:**

- 1- INTEGRITY: it is the quality of being able to be trusted. We don't lie, we do what we say, our affection is genuine, & our praise is honest.
- 2- VISION: a leader is in tune with the future, knows where God wants him to go, and is \_\_\_\_\_ on a clear purpose.  
("When the pastor doesn't dream, the church is a nightmare.")
- 3- WISDOM: wisdom is different than intelligence, wisdom has to do with judgment. It is knowing what to do, who to listen to, what to attempt, and what to leave alone.
- 4- COMPASSION: if you put their best interest first, they will follow you. If they sense you are serving your own interests they will turn from you.
- 5- COURAGE: you have to the courage to speak & stand for your convictions, with sensitivity. If you are wishy-washy on hard issues don't expect followship. Always remember, leadership, not lordship is the goal.
- 6- ENTHUSIASM: if you can't get \_\_\_\_\_ about your dreams and goals, don't expect anyone else to either.
- 7- INITIATIVE: good leaders are proactive, not reactive. They get their vision from God, develop a strategy for fulfilling it, & challenge the people to go forward.
- 8- HUMILITY: every pastor needs a servant spirit like that of Jesus. A pastor who exercises control over people through fear & intimidation makes a mockery of Christ's leadership style.
- 9- SENSE OF URGENCY: these are urgent & demanding times. We must be persons of urgency. We must have a sense of urgency about what we are doing.
- 10- PERSISTENCY: a leader must have a tolerance for criticism & rejection. Leadership is the ability to keep going even when we have little or no support.
- 11-SENSE OF HUMOR: don't take yourself so seriously, relax, enjoy yourself & enjoy the people & enjoy the Lord. Lighten up, you'll be a better leader. (Don't be like the preacher who thought he was so holy that he only took St. Joseph's aspirins)
- 12-EXAMPLE: leaders lead by example. Practice what you preach. Show others how to do it. People follow \_\_\_\_\_.

### **General Characteristics of the Smaller Membership Church:**

Each member knows all the other members. Meals are a family affair, a time of fellowship.

Meals are included with almost all occasions. It has the feel of a large or extended family.

There is a high premium on \_\_\_\_\_. Preferences, decisions, choices, judgments, elections, conclusions, resolutions, and votes are influenced by this orientation.

In the relational community a group consciousness provides a framework of values, beliefs, & commitments, against which the members measure their lives.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is always present. Hence, words like “change” and “creative” are enemies since they could not imagine doing anything differently.

Its goal is not so much to change the world as it is to know each other better. On “workday” at the church everyone attends.

The smaller-size church is a single cell church. They have a close, face-to-face fellowship that extends beyond Sundays.

They have the feeling of being a large, loving \_\_\_\_\_. Values, style, history, memories & concerns are commonly held together.

They have one or two families that hold the key positions & make most decisions.

Newcomers find it hard to be accepted.

All programs, ministries, & decisions, are connected to the KEY FAMILY(S).

For any size church to grow the Leaders must lead. The Leaders \_\_\_\_\_ is the Key...  
“If they think the church can grow or think it can’t, they’re probably right.”

In a smaller-size congregation people customarily see their pastor from a \_\_\_\_\_ point of view. They may describe him as “loving, warm, caring, etc”

A church is most likely to attract a pastor who fits its perspective. (ie: a relational person) This viewpoint should provide an objective evaluation when considering a call for a pastor or when a pastor considers a call by a church. (does he have strong relational skills?)

This helps prevent mismatches of pastor and people. To lead effectively pastors need to \_\_\_\_\_ their ministry skills to fit the church where they serve.

The process of change comes from the key family or other lay leaders. The pastor may be the initiator of the change, but it must come from the key lay leaders to be accepted by the congregation.

### **Decision-Making in Smaller Membership Churches:**

Decisions are made by the congregation with heavy influence from a single person, family, or families. Sometimes real decisions are made \_\_\_\_\_ in the parking lot or around the kitchen table.

Driven by \_\_\_\_\_ & custom, the main concerns are keeping people happy, keeping building use down, keep expenditures as low as possible, maintain status-quo of relationships, and minimizing dissent.

For the pastor to lead successfully, he must take initiative & influence the process by developing trust through building relationships one-by-one.

The smaller the church the more likely the decision will be \_\_\_\_\_ & subjective. Choices are determined on the basis of the speaker’s popularity & ties to the main families of the church.

The larger the church becomes, the more the probability increases that judgments will be made rationally and objectively. Whether or not the issue has merit becomes the deciding factor rather than popularity of the speaker.

### **Staffing a Smaller Membership Church:**

The staffing dynamic is fairly simple when there are only two parties... pastor and congregation.

The leadership team is like a "\_\_\_\_\_."

Planning takes place informally. A direct line is available to all church members, which smoothes the communication process.



### **Growing A Smaller Membership Church:**

Church growth is about "\_\_\_\_\_" , not just adding numbers to the church. We must focus on "seeking & saving the lost," and church growth will be a natural by-product.

When a church reaches its maximum potential, it can continue to grow by multiplying new churches. Church growth is as much about planting \_\_\_\_\_ as it is simply enlarging a single church.

Older churches can grow, but it is hard to break out of old patterns to establish a new vision for growth. Most churches could grow at least 5% a year if they retooled & refocused their resources on making disciples.

Small-size churches grow through the "\_\_\_\_\_ model." Growth through "attraction" occurs when a church exudes so much warmth & love that newcomers are attracted. If relationships in the church are healthy, the church stands an excellent chance of growing through "attraction."

Usually there is plenty of love & care in the small-size church, the challenge is to get them to direct it towards new people.

### **Obstacles to Growth in a Smaller Membership Church:**

- 1- *The small church image-* Sometimes there is a low self-esteem as a church. ("We Can't do that.")
- 2- *An ineffective evangelism-* Sometimes they feel they are too small to be effective, when in reality they can be \_\_\_\_\_ effective. (have care & loving atmosphere that is difficult in larger churches)

The unchurched have many relationship concerns about "fitting in, acceptance, etc," & relationship is the small-size church strength. To overcome the obstacles the church must develop "a sense of mission," "a sense of urgency," and an "open fellowship."

- 3- *Inadequate programming-* People go to another church who has a better program in their need area.
- 4- *A downward momentum-* Once a church starts declining, cutting back, turning inward, it is difficult for the church to focus on anything but \_\_\_\_\_.

- 5- *Ingrown fellowship-* People tend to develop their relationship skills during their younger years. The longer a church is in existence the more likely the people are to be older & ingrown.

Indicators of an ingrown church: more than 50% have been members 12+ years. Fewer than 10% have joined in the last year.

## **Strategies For Church Growth in a Smaller Membership Church:**

The best way to prevent “fighting fires” in a church is to have an effective strategy for growth.

We cannot cause growth; we can only \_\_\_\_\_ in which growth can take place. Ultimately only God causes the growth. (1 Cor. 3:6) As workers we are called to plant & water, God ripens the crop, then He uses us to work the harvest.

### 1- Renew a sense of purpose.

The first step is to help the congregation see that Jesus Christ passed on His purpose of “seeking & saving the lost” to His \_\_\_\_\_. Focusing on a renewed sense of purpose restores a healthy, outward-focused viewpoint.

### 2- Begin new ministries.

Most people prefer to be in on the ground floor of a new venture, beginning new ministries attracts & holds newcomers. (1 per year) Perhaps the number one way that a smaller-size church breaks out of a single cell orientation is to add a second worship service.

### 3- Cultivate evangelism.

Find 1 or 2 two key lay people who are interested in reaching new people & train them in a small peer group to \_\_\_\_\_ this ministry. Develop an evangelistic consciousness through sermons, retooling ministries to be more evangelistic, praying for lost by names, training, outreach events.

### 4- Celebrate victories.

One solution to improve self-esteem in the smaller church is to call attention to positives in the church. Talk about your strengths rather than your weaknesses. Give God praise for each victory.

### 5- Start new groups & classes.

New people often leave if after several years they have not been accepted into the inner circle of the church. Rather than trying to fight their way into being accepted by people who have been together for years, new people prefer to join a \_\_\_\_\_ group, class, etc.

### 6- Involve new people.

It takes significant involvement in the life of the church before new members and attenders feel like they belong. Churches need to focus on involving newcomers as quickly as possible, but always within six months.

## **General Characteristics of the Medium-size Church: (201-500 in Worship)**

Characteristics of a Tier Four Church: (201- 350 in Worship)

The 200 Barrier is finally broken. Most difficult barrier to break/sustain.

High priority on Worship and Youth.

Pastor learns \_\_\_\_\_ skills. More time on sermon preparation.

Multiple staff members added. Lay leadership increases.

Leaders cast vision, generate energy.

Church council/deacons assume greater leadership responsibility.



The church orientation is programmatic.

The medium-size church functions as collection of families, classes. To some extent the medium-size church is in a transitional phase, moving from a smaller to a large size church. (It feels like a growing family)

As they grow, if they don't make appropriate adjustments to their ministries, they will either plateau or decline back to a smaller-size.

Men's group organizes and supports workday. Meals usually are built around programs.

The church focus is on the \_\_\_\_\_ organizations, etc.

Members know \_\_\_\_\_ of the people. It is a complex mixture of numerous influential groups.

The organizing principle is the programmatic orientation attached to the various groups.

Influence on decisions is driven by what will perpetuate the program.

The medium-size church will become a "stretched cell" if it does not add new leadership as the church grows. If it does add new leaders, & decision-making is spread among a broad base of groups, committees, etc, it will become a strong medium-sized church, with a good chance of growing to a large-size church.

Growth typically comes from new ministries, classes, etc, that have \_\_\_\_\_ doors for newcomers.

A "stretched cell" church is like a rubber band, it can stretch so far it breaks.

(For a church this would mean going down in size, probably back to smaller-size.)

If a medium-size church becomes a "stretched cell" when it grows, it means the key leaders are the same as when the church was small.

The medium-size congregation perceives their pastor from a \_\_\_\_\_ viewpoint. You may hear him described as a good "organizer, administrator, teacher, etc."

In the medium-size church decisions are made by the congregation after they have been hammered out and agreed upon by a committee, team, or board.

Most of the decisions are driven by \_\_\_\_\_ since the church is usually adding volunteers, hiring staff, motivating stewardship, coordinating facility use, & establishing policies.

For the pastor to lead successfully, he must develop trust by building a relationship with the chairman of his key committees, teams, or boards, and working through them rather than initiating ideas himself.

The leadership team in a medium-size church is like a complex " \_\_\_\_\_ " composed of pastor, small staff, lay leaders, & congregation.

Communication dynamics increase six-fold, making it a high risk stage in staff development.

Since more parties are involved, there is a greater risk that one member of the team will not carry through his or her responsibilities, causing the rest of the team to suffer.

Each size has its challenges, but the crucial question is, is the church staffed for growth, plateau, or decline?

Churches that place their priorities in the order of staff, programs, facilities are usually the growing ones.

Bivocational ministry is an effective way for very small, financially strapped, & geographically isolated churches to carry on their mission, but it's extremely rare to see a bivocational church growing.

The best way for a church to stay in a growth pattern is to add staff "just before" the church reaches each \_\_\_\_\_ attenders mark. (ie: 150, 300, 450, 600, etc)

Change in the medium-size church comes from the "\_\_\_\_\_." It must come from key committees, boards, or teams. If the pastor wants to initiate change he must work through this key group in the church.

The medium-size church grows through the "\_\_\_\_\_ model."

It grows best as it develops new ministries to meet relevant needs of the new people they are trying to reach.

Typically the medium-size church has one or two "star programs" that effectively reach new people for Christ. They should concentrate on their "stars."

Remember the "Pareto Principle:" 20% of your programs or ministries bring 80% of the results.

### **Obstacles to Growth in the Medium-sized Church:**

#### 1- *Inadequate facilities.*

Growth will place pressure on all ministries to fit everything in a small facility. Funds are often not there yet to build or remodel the facility.

#### 2- *Inadequate staff.*

Today's \_\_\_\_\_ for high quality & diverse ministry will often not be met with adequate staff to lead them.

A related issue is motivating & recruiting volunteers for ministry. (women in the work force today)

#### 3- *Inadequate finances.*

The need for facilities, staff, programs, & resources, make Christian stewardship crucial for this size church.

#### 4- *Poor administration.*

As a church grows into the medium-size church, the pastor/staff, and leaders must care effectively for the increasingly complex functions of the church.

#### 5- *Increasing complexity.*

This is one of the factors that may cause a church to \_\_\_\_\_ to smaller-size, as leaders recall the "simple" atmosphere of the past.

After a few years of growth, the medium-size church must make the necessary adjustments to move to the next size church or it will plateau.

## **Strategies For Growth in the Medium-sized Church:**

### 1- Develop A Distinct Identity.

Studies have found that healthy churches of this size usually have at least one ministry for which they are legendary in their \_\_\_\_\_. It should highlight this ministry in an intentional effort to reach even more people.

### 2- Add Additional Staff.

Failure to do so will eventually result in plateau or decline. Call additional staff "before" the church reaches each 150 category. (ie: add 1 at 150, 2 at 300, etc)

### 3- Use Facilities Multiple Times.

This allows the church reach new people without increasing expenses for new buildings. This also allows the church to enjoy the \_\_\_\_\_ of a smaller-size church of knowing members more intimately & doing church-wide activities.

### 4- Offer Multiple Worship Services.

Delay building until the church has 3-4 worship services in the present building. This assists the church in developing a multiple cell orientation of the large-size congregation.

### 5- Write A Long-Range Plan.

Plans give a church \_\_\_\_\_ & motivate members with a sense of purpose. Develop the plan based on the church's strengths. Ask: "What do we do best?"

### 6- Improve the Quality of Ministry.

Most people want to attend a church that is slightly above their socio-economic level. They expect good child-care, sound system, facilities, worship experience, etc.

Sometimes pastor and/or staff who helped the church grow from smaller to medium-size may not be able to take it any farther.

