

A BASIC PROBLEM THAT CONTRIBUTES TO LACK OF CHURCH GROWTH: SIMPLE AND EASILY FIXED

By Bob Young

Every week I receive news about churches that have a problem. The growth of the church is stagnated, plateaued, or even in decline for a single reason: **lack of a "work plan."**

Often, such churches flit from one possible solution to the next. They try something, then they add another activity, and soon the focus is on yet another possible fix. They come up with a certain activity, the next day they leave it to put into practice a new idea they have heard about. They constantly dilute the work by adding (multiplying!) ideas and activities. Usually, it is the latest idea that has come to them or something they have heard that another church was using, whether the idea was successful or not. New ideas are accepted and begun with asking questions and evaluating. Activities are cloned without considering the local church context.

If you are interested in growing your church, **the first step is to evaluate and focus**. Failure to evaluate and focus is at best a mark of taking the work of the church too lightly, and at worst a mark of spiritual immaturity.

This is not the message most church leaders and churches want to hear, but if you want to see your church grow you need a plan that will work. Success is most likely with the help of an experienced person who has demonstrated success. God gave Moses a Jethro, Joshua a Moses, Paul a Barnabas, Timothy a Paul. God recognizes the need for mentors and guides to speed up the growth and maturity process.

Without a workable plan, growth will be slow or nonexistent. Even worse, discouragement easily sets in. Without an effective plan, the church loses more members than it gains. Consider your own church. Is it as large as it has ever been? Is it at its all-time maximum and still growing? Or is it smaller than in the past? Is it shrinking little by little?

Would you like to see the number of members in your church grow, with members constantly being added, perhaps even multiplying the number of members in your church?

Whatever the current number of members, with the right work plan, in a few years you could double or triple. A decadal growth rate of 50% (add 50% every 10 years) is minimal! In almost every situation, churches can double in ten years. New churches and smaller churches can grow even more quickly.

I say this because I have seen such results. I have worked full-time with churches (and served as a consultant and mentor in other churches) with exactly these results.

The key is to develop a work plan specifically tailored to the local church, to initiate a process that will lead to constant growth in the local community with effective ministry. Church growth will come with an effective plan of work. The situation must inform the system—the place informs the plan.

Contact me if you want to know more or if you would like to talk further, perhaps to receive personalized, contextually informed recommendations, consultation, or mentoring. God's desire and plan for your local church is that it will grow. We must simply align our desire and plan with God's eternal purpose.

A final word! Believe me! Your church can grow beyond what you have imagined or dreamed. Begin the conversation. When can we talk about beginning the transformation of your faith community to a growing, active, vibrant body of believers?