
GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Key Insights for Growth

Jesus Christ is the leader and builder of his church. He declared that he would build his church (Matthew 16:18), and has been doing so for nearly 2,000 years. However, to accomplish this, he has worked through human leaders, particularly skilled pastors, to facilitate his work.

Research on the topics of church renewal, church growth, church health, and missional church over the past fifty years has demonstrated that skilled pastors who lead growing churches often focus on the following aspects of ministry.

Common Foundations

Churches that experience biblical growth have four foundations in place. Without these basic foundations, it is difficult for any church to grow.

First, a clear purpose: Skilled pastors seek to do what is right rather than what is expected.

Second, a growth conscience: They focus ministry externally on the lost, as well as internally on the members.

Third, training in growth principles: They

maintain a learning attitude by reading, attending conferences, and seeking advice from others.

Fourth, a vision of the future: They establish a clear dream that the members and attendees accept and buy into.

Discern the Body

Churches that experience biblical growth effectively use the resources that God has given to them.

First, skilled pastors seek to understand the strengths of their local church, and they are good stewards of its strengths rather than worrying about its weaknesses.

Second, they model what they want the church members to do, and build a proper pride or self-image among the congregation.

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Third, while they are aware of their church’s lack of resources (weaknesses), they use what they have and ask God to supply the needs.

Fourth, they acknowledge that the church cannot reach everyone by defining a clear target audience.

Understand the Community

Churches that experience biblical growth take the time to investigate and understand the people in their ministry areas.

First, skilled pastors exegete their immediate community to discover where the unreached groups of people reside.

Second, the level of receptivity of unreached groups is determined and new ministry programs are developed to reach the most receptive.

Third, they determine and find the resources of people, budget, and time that are needed to reach their target group.

Fourth, they elicit support from people in the congregation to reach their target group.

Structure for Growth

Churches that experience biblical growth organize the systems of their church to

support ministry growth and development.

First, skilled pastors mobilize as many people in the congregation as possible to discover and use their spiritual gifts.

Second, they organize their members and attendees to reach their households and associates for Christ.

Third, the church develops a workable system for welcoming, and assimilating newcomers into the life and ministry of the church.

Fourth, numerous entry doors of ministry are created to attract guests.

Fifth, they build infrastructure for involving people in fellowship, e.g., small groups or classes.

Sixth, they raise financial support by regularly training and encouraging all attendees to give sacrificially to the work of ministry.

Seventh, they evaluate and improve the overall ministry program.

As you read over these activities of skilled pastors . . .

Which ones are you doing well?

Which ones do you need to work on?

Which ones do you need to emphasize this coming year?

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