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# GROWTH POINTS

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## Church Growth Conscience

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The continued plateauing and decline of churches in North America is sparking renewed interest in biblical church growth research.

While the recent focus on aspects of church health and missional church has provided needed corrections, the reality is too much focus on health often leads to a selfish inwardly directed church. In addition the theological insights derived from missional church studies is helpful but doesn't provide the practical how-tos that work on the ground.

Thus, church leaders are taking a second look at Church Growth research to make use of the numerous practical helps that create an outward focused church bent on making disciples.

## Desire for Growth

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Church Growth studies have identified many principles, some 155 factors, and four laws which impact the growth of a local church.

The first two Laws of Church Growth point to the importance of both the pastor and people having a desire for growth.

Condensed together the two laws state: The pastor and people must WANT the church to grow.

This statement seems rather obvious, but is ignored by multiple churches. It reminds me of an old adage that says, "If you think you can or think you can't, you're right." Adapting that adage, we could say, "If you think your church can grow or think it can't, you're right." Church growth begins with a desire FOR growth.

Of course, there's more to church growth than simple desire. But, without a desire for church growth among the pastor and people, there's little hope that a church will grow. In fact a lack of desire for growth almost always means a church won't grow!

A growth conscience must exist among pastor and people for church growth to take place.

So, how does one go about building a growth conscience? Here's some thoughts.

## Building a Growth Consciousness

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If your church is plateaued or declining, the first thing you must do is build a Church Growth Conscience in the lives and hearts of the people.

A Church Growth Conscience is the belief that people are actually lost and need to be found, converted, and folded in the body of Christ.

If a church does not have this basic understanding of Scripture then, frankly, a church will not grow.

First, preach and teach about the purpose of the church. Key passages that should be studied are Luke 19:1-10, especially “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Matthew 28:18-20, “Go therefore and MAKE DISCIPLES of all the nations.” Luke 5:1-10, “Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.” Acts 1:1-8. “You will be my witnesses.”

Second, as leaders, model your commitment to making disciples. Pray from the pulpit for the lost. Share testimonies on how leaders are seeking to win the lost and disciple family, friends, and associates. Demonstrate a commitment to biblical church growth by studying growth principles and letting them impact goals and plans.

Third, demonstrate a commitment to finding and folding the lost in church practices. This is best seen through a commitment of money for evangelism

(not missions), that is, evangelism in your own Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Growing churches commit a minimum of five percent of their budget for evangelism into the local community. Add to that another five percent for advertising, and growing churches give ten percent overall to outreach.

Fourth, invest in training people for church growth and evangelism. Bring your people up-to-speed with growth training. Pick some form of friendship evangelism and train ten percent of your people in it each year.

Fifth, work toward shared growth goals. The women’s, mens’ and youth group must be reaching out to evangelize. Make it a priority to meet with your leaders monthly or quarterly to promote growth and outreach. Share your passion for evangelism with everyone, at every time, in every manner. It’ll take time, but they will soon catch on.

Pastor and people must pay the price for growth in terms of financial commitment, time, and energy. Are you willing to do so? Are your people? Pay the price for growth!



**Growth Points** is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

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