

**The supreme motive must be for love of souls.** God is love (1 John 4:8) and if we are His true offspring we will be children of love. Love for God, His Word, His church, and for the lost. If we love as we should we will seek the lost following God's Word all the way. We would desire people to be saved everywhere, and not just those who will increase the numbers at our congregation.

**I am speaking of true church growth and not just a "swelling."** By swelling I mean getting people "baptized," –actually just wet and not truly converted. And when one is converted, we need to keep on teaching him/her on their level and ground them thoroughly in the basics of the doctrine of Christ, bringing them to maturity (Heb. 6:1). By swelling I also mean those "stolen" from other churches of Christ. Often this is people who have a practice of church jumping, and they are likely to jump again. By swelling I do not mean those who come from other congregations because the church they left are doing things that are unscriptural. And brethren if that is the case, then that congregation needs to be marked (Rom. 16:17; see last two month's bulletin)! We need to "Awake to righteousness" (1 Cor. 15:34 cp. Psa. 119:172).

Many other points need to be made concerning church growth and the ones mentioned here need to be expanded upon. Our focus must be on souls prepared for eternity, having the same mindset as almighty God.

**Sad, but some are satisfied in just "keeping house."** Some are not compromising truth, nor bringing in denominational gimmicks, nor accepting people on their denominational baptism, etc. But they have lost their zeal to evangelize; and I believe their "first love" (Rev. 2:4).

**Let us examine ourselves and be certain** that we are on the strait way while we have the opportunity (2 Cor. 13:5). Let us hold fast (Heb. 10:23); preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 20:26,27); warn the erring (Eze. 3:17-21); and contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). Let us do what we can to bring about a revival in the church, co-operating with one another, but most of all following God in all things. (See inside for acrostic) ♥



**"Hold fast the form of sound words"**

SW

(2 Tim. 1:13 cp. Tit. 1:9; Jude 3)

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Volume VII

October 2013

Number 3

## CHURCH GROWTH

(Acrostic Outline)

by Perry Sexton

**God forbid that our goal should be numbers because of pride;** our interest should be in souls saved. For those whose goals are mere numbers they should study and understand about David when he numbered his army (2 Sam. 18:1; 24:10); pride and vainglory surely were involved. It seems many are caught up in the numbers game and bring much harm to the Lord's church. Compromises are made; a strong stand with God is forfeited; the teaching and preaching is watered down so as not to offend anyone (too bad Jesus did not know this: John 6, etc.), but no concern for offending God is shown!; people are accepted on their denominational baptisms which baptisms are not from God, so errors are brought in and the leaven goes to work on the members who were once sound (cp. 1 Cor. 5:6). Numbers may be gained to that congregation, but more souls are gone astray bound for hell! If God's way were followed souls could be added.

**Pride and vainglory are seen concerning church buildings.** Church buildings are good if used correctly and should be kept nice, but in many places the building seems to mean more to some than the souls of men. I believe this is seen in many ways, but again in order to keep and maintain the building the numbers game takes place. Oftentimes buildings are held on to whereas they should be sold and the money used for evangelization. Which is more important to you: evangelization or a building???

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## CHURCH GROWTH – ACROSTIC

**Christ Centered:** “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

**Head is Christ:** We must follow Christ in all things and not man and man’s innovations. Many are taking on denominational ways which shows nothing but a lack of trust in God’s way. Jesus has all power or authority (Matt. 28:18); we must have authority from Him (via the New Testament) for all things that we do in religion (Col. 3:17).

**Urgency of Evangelism:** Even in this country many have never heard the truth of salvation. Two souls leave this world every second. Let us have the goal, and the love of Christ in us to go to them, and tell them about the love of Christ – how He died for them (Luke 19:10). Let us preach Jesus crucified and the God given plan of salvation.

**Revival of The Church:** In many places the church is not what it should be (cp. Rev. chapters 2 and 3; 2 Tim. 3:13). Many are dead and just “keeping house.” Others have taken on unscriptural practices getting down on the denominational level having left the ways of God. At best, many members need to be revived to the greatest work on earth: evangelization (cp. Neh. 4:6; Titus 3:8).

**Continuance in Evangelism:** Most often when we are new Christians we start out strong, but soon weaken and eventually come to a complete stop. So often the zeal of the new converts wane. Many times workers get excited about some program, but soon sputter and dies. We need to learn to stick to it: “stick-tu-ative-ness” (1 Cor. 15:58).

**Heaven the Goal:** First and foremost we need to be right with God ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5). And follow God even if others do not. Put God first no matter what (Matt. 6:33). Only then can we evangelize effectively: help prepare other souls for eternity (cp. Matt. 5:16).

**Gospel, the Power:** Some, if not many, in the church seem to be ashamed of God’s way. Many of our preachers seldom, if ever, give God’s plan of salvation at the end of their watered down sermons. I would be afraid to face God if I were them! We must preach the whole truth (Acts 20:26-28).

**Rescue Mission:** We must realize the greatness of this mission. Read, study, and believe what God says about hell and who will go to that terrible place of torments. Understand the great cost of our own redemption and know that all souls are just as important as our own. Jesus died for all (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2).

**Offence:** We have gone from the offence position to the defense and many have even laid down arms here! Brethren, it is time for a revival! We need to arm ourselves and every member, and excite them to do battle for righteousness. Challenge the damnable errors of the denominations, not join them in their trek for hell. Forward into battle!

**Workers with God:** “For we are labourers together with God: ...” (1 Cor. 3:9 cp. 2 Cor. 6:1), remember this always. Read of Jesus and His disciples evangelizing and know that we can still work with Jesus. We can still evangelize. Why should blood bought people not pass on the good news to others? We all can invite others and this is very important. And then be at services to welcome them.

**Team Work:** Never wait on others to do the work you know you should do. Team work is good only if the team will work. You can inspire others to good works. Co-operation is good to be certain visitors receive letters and visits, if they request visits. Without co-operation often times people think somebody else did that, but no one knows who the “somebody” else is! See Nehemiah 4:6; Titus 3:1.

**Home:** Realize this world is not our home (Heb. 11). We are very temporary here (Jam. 4:14). We join with our/your Savior to invite you to come unto Him (Matt. 11:28-30); obey His gospel (Rom. 1:16) and join us on the journey to Heaven. ♥