

STRATEGIES FOR GROWTH

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1

LEADING DISTRICTS AND MINISTRIES

We find the principles of church government and church growth in the New Testament. Although our specific form of church government isn't required by Scripture, our organization is our attempt to fulfill New Testament teachings about church government and church growth. Although leaders are elected or appointed by humans, our fellowship has established positions to fulfill biblical principles and purposes. Consequently, a leader's job is not merely secular or administrative. It is truly a position of spiritual leadership. At the same time, leaders should be submitted to the body, to those who have elected or appointed them. In this chapter we discuss some important aspects of spiritual leadership. We will directly address district leaders, but the same principles apply to pastors, ministers, and lay leaders. (For full discussion, see David K. Bernard, *Spiritual Leadership in the Twenty-first Century*, Word Aflame, 2015.)

Seek the Leading of the Holy Spirit. Since we are spiritual leaders, we must have the leading of the Holy Spirit. We're not engaged in a commercial enterprise but in advancing the kingdom of God. Thus, we need the leading of the Holy Spirit to accomplish our mission. To grow the kingdom of God, we can't rely on our own ability. We must hear from God, and we must operate in the power of the Spirit.

Cast Vision. The most important function of a leader is to cast vision. The administrative aspects of a position can be learned, and to a great extent they can be delegated to other people. But only the leader can set the right tone, create the right atmosphere, and cast the vision.

Face the Future with Faith. To cast vision it is important, regardless of the situation, to face the future with faith. Of course, if there are problems we must address them. If things need to be changed, we should develop a plan of action. But we shouldn't dwell on problems, failures, or weaknesses. We shouldn't draw attention to inadequacies of past leadership or past efforts. Our ministers can perceive the problems, and they will respond to a positive call to action.

Be Proactive, Not Reactive. We shouldn't wait for problems to come and then try to fix them, but we should think ahead. Based on our positive vision, we inspire, teach, and train. We teach ministerial ethics before there is a major problem. It is important to develop a culture of development, discipleship, training, and education. In this way, we can address the most important matters in a positive way, and in doing so, we will deal with many issues and problems before they arise.

Communicate. The power to communicate is the power to lead. In a business environment, leaders can motivate employees with bonuses, raises, or threats of being fired. We are spiritual leaders in a mostly volunteer environment, so we must appeal to the spiritual interests of our followers, and the way to do so is to communicate. We should take advantage of the many means of communication we have today, including district publications, news bulletins, social media, video clips, email, texting, preaching, and teaching. We must continue to cast the vision to our ministers and constituents. We should present opportunities, address concerns in a timely way, and answer questions. When issues arise, instead of reacting in a negative way to attack or condemn, it is more effective to respond in a positive way with information and explanation. If we present as much information as possible and provide the basis for a decision, then most of the time our constituents will understand. If we approach issues in a harsh, partisan, authoritarian way, we set the tone for an antagonistic debate. Instead, it's better to display the following attitude: "We're trying to work together and to make the best decision under the circumstances. We welcome discussion and input. We hope everyone will support the mission and the vision. Even if some don't agree with a particular policy or a decision, we hope they can appreciate the intention and understand the rationale." As ministers, we tend to approach all issues as matters of right and wrong, but for many policy decisions there are legitimate differences of opinion. While we should unite around our goals, there can be more than one way to accomplish those goals. We shouldn't equate our opinions with the will of God but respect the decision-making process of the body. When scriptural principles are involved, we can explain them and explain the direction we feel from the Lord. In this way, we can create a healthy climate for discussion and decision-making.

Build Relationships. A leader leads by influence, and influence is built by relationships. A position or title confers authority on paper, and God honors the principle of authority, but a position of authority doesn't confer ability to motivate people in real life. The most effective means of leadership is not an appeal to authority but the exercise of influence. We are familiar with the spiritual authority of a senior pastor who leads saints in a local church, but organizational leaders don't have the same type of authority when leading ministers. Pastors and other ministers are spiritual leaders in their own right and expect to participate in decision-making. It's important for them to share in molding the vision and providing input. We allow them to do so by good communication; by involving as many as possible at various levels including boards, committees, activities, and events; and by building relationships in which we provide personal care, assistance, and support for individual ministers, churches, and ministries. We should show concern and respond to needs, not to be manipulative but because we care about everyone. As a result, people will trust us and won't be prone to assume that we have an ulterior motive

or a political agenda. And of course, we shouldn't. As leaders build and maintain personal relationships, followers will understand what kind of persons they are and will realize that they are advancing ideas for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Train Leaders. We need a culture that is conducive to recruiting, developing, and training leaders. A portion of board meetings should be devoted to training. We should provide resources to district leaders and ministers such as books, video, websites, and seminars. Our leaders need to stay up to date with cultural changes, their area of ministry, their geographical area and its demographics, and social issues.

Focus on the Mission. The reason we are leaders is because of the mission. We cannot afford to be sidetracked by problems or personal ambitions, but we must focus on the mission, the vision, ideas, and goals. The UPCI's mission is to "carry the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church," and our job as leaders is to apply that mission to our geographical area or sphere of ministry. We can't focus on personalities or controversies. We can't operate in a defensive mode or exercise favoritism. We shouldn't seek personal position or power.

Our ministry is from God, not people. People can appoint, elect, or replace us, but they don't change our ministry. If God has called us to be a leader, we can be a leader by example, whether we have a position or not. We shouldn't seek a position but let a position seek us. If we receive a position, it may well be God's way of enabling us to exercise the ministry He has given us, at least for a time. But we shouldn't confuse our ministry or self-worth with our position. If a position is no longer ours, we may be disappointed, and we may feel that some people have worked against us unfairly, but we have to be bigger than these feelings. Of course, we should be responsive to our constituents. If they express concerns we should address them, not for the sake of personal power but for the kingdom of God.

Let's exercise the ministry God has given us, do our best, and leave the results up to God. We don't need to become involved in personal battles. If we are dragged into conflict, we can step back and apologize if need be, revise our tone, and seek reconciliation. We should treat everyone, even perceived opponents, with kindness, generosity, and respect, providing opportunities for dialogue and cooperation. While a few people will reject the offer, dialogue can often resolve an issue when the root cause is a misunderstanding. Through personal discussion, it is often possible to clarify motives, explain situations, and make corrections if necessary. Through this effort, sometimes opponents can become supporters.

Respect People and Respect Church Government. Even if we don't agree with some policies or procedures, we should respect our organizational structure at every level as well as our judicial

procedure. When we work with pastors and church boards, we should respect local church government. When we accept a leadership position, we accept the structure and policies that go with it. If we want to change something, there are appropriate avenues to make changes, but we must cooperate with the big picture. If a certain decision or plan is God's will, then God will help us with the approved means for implementing it. If for some reason our plans are thwarted, we may seek to implement them another way, but it's not ethical to manipulate or evade the decision-making process. If we believe strongly that a certain action should be taken, we still need to work within the approved avenues, for if we do otherwise the ends don't justify the means. We must leave some things in the hands of God. We shouldn't avoid a problem because we don't want to deal with it, but we must handle it in an appropriate way. In some situations, such as cases of ministerial discipline, we may be limited in what we can do because of policies or judicial procedure. In those cases, we can pray for God to reveal truth and provide the means for dealing with the matter appropriately. Sometimes God may have a larger purpose of redemption, so we must wait on His time and His method. We can't force the process, but we must follow the process established by the church and act ethically.

Delegate and Empower. A successful leader is not one who knows everything or who can do everything, but one who surrounds himself or herself with a team who has the collective expertise and ability to do what is needed. The leader casts vision, provides direction, and organizes the team to accomplish a goal, but the leader doesn't do everything necessary to obtain the goal. Instead, the good leader delegates authority and responsibility while maintaining lines of accountability. The leader develops and empowers others in key positions to fulfill the mission. It's amazing what can happen when we don't worry about who gets the credit but simply focus on getting the job done and using the most effective people and means. Of course, it is important to recognize accomplishments by commending workers, rewarding them suitably, and giving them appropriate honor. Team members need to know they are appreciated, and the constituency needs to know it as well. Research has shown that non-monetary rewards such as recognition and appreciation motivate people more than cash, even in a secular context. People often choose non-monetary recognition over cash because they value what others think about them. In our volunteer context, this principle is even more applicable. Leaders should be generous in giving credit without trying to take credit for themselves. In summary, we should learn to use other people to get the job done. Satisfaction doesn't require that we do everything personally or that people regard us as indispensable. Instead, we find our true sense of accomplishment in doing the will of God, leading our team to achieve their goals, and advancing the kingdom of God.

Be Committed to Core Values but Open to Change. The first sentence of the Fundamental Doctrine of the UPCI affirms the plan of salvation according to Acts 2:38. The second sentence, which is based on Ephesians 4, is a commitment to maintain the unity of the Spirit and not to contend for different views to the disunity of the body. Both doctrine (teaching) and unity are essential to being Apostolic. According to Acts 2:42, the early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers. Right along with doctrine, which includes New Testament salvation and the life of holiness, we find practical expressions of unity, such as meeting together for communion, fellowship meals, and prayer. We don't need to choose one over the other; as our Fundamental Doctrine states, we should have both. These are our core values.

As leaders, we should both proclaim and exemplify our apostolic identity. Part of our job is to reaffirm the fundamentals, to reinforce the basics such as the inspiration and authority of Scripture, the oneness of God, the absolute deity of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the gospel, the new birth, the gifts of the Spirit, prayer, worship, and the pursuit of holiness.

When it comes to strategies and methods, we should be open to change. Our culture is changing, and our nation is becoming more diverse in every way. Consequently, we face new challenges. We need to create a culture of learning and a climate of openness to new ideas, creative solutions, and thinking outside the box. Just because we've always done things a certain way, doesn't mean we have to continue to do so, especially when society has changed. Even if we personally don't like some changes, we must set aside personal differences and focus on what is best for the kingdom of God. We should think afresh about what we are trying to accomplish and the best way to do so in our context.

In general, people don't like change; they prefer what is familiar to them. As Christians, we tend to prefer the church culture that prevailed when we grew up or first came into the church, including preaching style, music, church attire, order of service, church décor, and outreach methods. We live in a different society, however; thus we need to consider ourselves as missionaries to our culture. Global missionaries adapt to the language, food, music, culture, and dress where they minister, while maintaining biblical teachings regardless of culture. Likewise, we should adapt to the needs, culture, and diversity of our state, province, city, or town, without compromising the truth of our message. While we want to be a good example in our fellowship, we shouldn't feel obligated to conform to methods or styles that aren't necessary or productive in our context. While we shouldn't feel compelled to change just for the sake of change, neither should we view all change as bad. We've all seen some ministers and even some leaders who drifted away from the full apostolic identity, and usually they started with relatively small changes. Thus, when we see someone making changes, we can jump to conclusions, but

instead we should adopt a balanced view. By periodically reassuring people of the fundamentals, we can create an opportunity for acceptable change, so they won't fear or suspect appropriate changes.

Be Knowledgeable. As leaders, we are responsible to know our own and others' job descriptions, requirements, responsibilities, policies, and procedures. Those who hold organizational positions should become well acquainted with the UPCI Manual, including the Articles of Faith, General Constitution, District Constitution, Local Church Government, Judicial Procedure, General Board Policies, and Position Papers. District superintendents and secretaries should read and refer to their respective UPCI handbooks, which include special policies. All district leaders should know and follow district policies. These resources address most of the problems and questions that they will encounter. Of course, everyone is encouraged to consult general officials for information and advice as needed. Knowledge is power. A knowledgeable leader can help everyone to do a good job, fulfill their respective roles, stay in their lanes, and handle situations properly to fulfill the overall objectives. Lack of knowledge tends to be exposed over time and causes much loss of trust and influence.

Be Accountable. We are accountable to our constituents to do what we have promised and what they have asked us to do. When a governing conference or board makes decisions, we are accountable to implement those decisions. Our authority is not arbitrary or unrestricted; it's limited by our structure and policy. We are leaders with authority but also under authority. As leaders we cast vision, set direction, and promote policies, plans, and changes that we think are needed. In the end, however, we are bound by the decisions of our leaders, boards, and conferences. If a policy or a plan results in unexpected difficulties, we can ask for reconsideration or revision. In general, however, we should follow up on each action item until it has been accomplished or until it becomes evident that the plan needs to change. We should report the results, including results that don't meet expectations, and if necessary offer explanations or proposed modifications. If at some point we can't or don't want to fulfill our job description or implement a decision of the body, then it may be time to leave our position. If we stay in a position, we must be diligent to do our job with excellence and complete the goals that are set before us. Ultimately, our ministry is in the hands of the Lord. Our goal is not merely to please our constituents but to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23).

2

PLANNING

This chapter discusses two important types of planning. It specifically describes planning on the district level, but the same principles apply to other ministries and local churches. Planning doesn't replace the leading of the Spirit but enables us to become more effective and allows the Lord to lead us in new ways.

Strategic Planning

Periodically, the leaders of a district or ministry should engage in strategic planning for the future.

1. **Brainstorming: SWOT Analysis.** We can start by having a brainstorming session with key leaders, a free discussion designed to stimulate creative thinking and generate new ideas. SWOT analysis is a helpful way to begin.
 - *S: Strengths.* What are we doing well as a district? Where are we successful? What should we emphasize?
 - *W: Weaknesses.* What are we not doing well? What is not effective? What is not working? What is being omitted, neglected, or overlooked? Once we have identified a weakness, the next question is what to do about it. If the weakness is a vital component of growth and success, the response should be to improve and strengthen it. Otherwise, maybe we shouldn't invest more resources in something that isn't successful but instead focus our resources in more productive activities.
 - *O: Opportunities.* What opportunities do we have to grow, minister, and plant new works? What are we doing about them? How can we seize those opportunities?
 - *T: Threats.* Where is our society headed? What developments could hurt us? What could hinder our growth if we ignore it? What could be a major problem in a year? In five years? In ten years? For example, what is the median age of our ministerial constituency? If the majority are over fifty, who is going to pastor our churches in the next ten years? Even though we may be successful right now, if we don't address the issue of recruiting and training young ministers, in a few years we'll have a leadership crisis that threatens our growth or even our survival. Similarly,

does our constituency reflect the diversity of our society, and does our leadership reflect the diversity of our constituency? If not, we could face a crisis caused by misunderstanding, and as diversity increases we could decrease.

2. **Goals.** After examining and discussing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the second step is to set goals for the future. Where do we want to be in ten years? In five years? What goals should we establish, and how can we measure our progress? This discussion can also lead to strategies: How can we use our strengths to address our weaknesses? How can we leverage our opportunities to minimize our threats? How would such actions take shape in one year, three years, and five years?

3. **Plan of Action.** Next, we must develop a specific plan of action to achieve those goals. What steps should we take this year to advance toward our five- and ten-year goals? We then develop a strategy for each year based on our goals, which are in turn based on the SWOT analysis.

4. **Assessment and Adjustment.** The process isn't complete until we "close the loop"; that is, we must assess the results and adjust as needed. Each year we must measure and evaluate our progress. To what extent have we met our goals, and to what extent do we need to revise our efforts so that we will meet our goals? If some goals have proven to be unrealistic, how should we revise them? We must continue to evaluate what we are doing, whether it is working, what adjustments we need to make, and what plans we may need to revise. Every year we should take a fresh look at our strategic plan and discuss where we are, what we have achieved, and what we haven't achieved. We should certainly celebrate our achievements but at the same time acknowledge what we haven't accomplished.

Planning for a Board or Committee Meeting

Much of the work of a district or ministry involves periodic board or committee meetings, and the members are busy people who have other responsibilities. Typically, their primary ministry is as a pastor or assistant in a local church, and some may be bivocational. In other words, the leaders have two or more major responsibilities. They can't give constant attention to their district responsibilities, which means the board or committee meeting is a crucial time for action.

It's important to prepare in advance for a meeting by establishing an agenda and an estimated time schedule. To do so, the chair should consider everything that needs to be reported, discussed, decided, or enacted. Written reports can expedite the meeting by communicating significant information precisely. If a departmental leader doesn't have any new action items, he or she may not need to attend the meeting but could simply submit a written report. On the other hand, it may be

desirable for the departmental leader to attend to make a personal connection with the board and for the board to ask questions and give direction. When adopting or amending a major policy, it is often good to send the proposal to the board or committee members in advance.

Each presenter should have a scheduled time and a time allotment. While a short time may be allowed for information or promotion, the presentations should focus on action items, that is, the decisions or actions that the presenters are requesting.

It's important to plan and guide meetings so that they focus on the mission and not on problems. The emphasis should be on growth, not maintenance. It's easy for a board meeting to be consumed with one or two big problems, to get bogged down in trying to fix problems and maintain operations. Thus, the chair should structure each meeting to give significant attention to the mission, the main goals, growth, and planning. We cannot be satisfied to operate systems and programs. Each meeting should include time to look at the future, set or evaluate goals, and discuss strategies for attaining those goals. It's also good to have a training component in each major meeting, to add value to the board, present specialized information, and discuss job responsibilities. The atmosphere of meetings is important to the long-term success of a district or ministry. Sometimes we must deal with major problems, but as much as possible we don't want problems to be the focus of a meeting.

Before a meeting, the chair should review the minutes of the previous meeting to make sure every item has been addressed properly. The secretary should read the prior minutes at the beginning of the meeting to make sure everyone remembers what was decided and to adopt the minutes officially. Next, the chair should give a report that covers all actions taken pursuant to the minutes, all developments since the last meeting, and the main items for the current meeting.

What is the best way for a board or committee to make good decisions? First, it's generally not good to make important decisions late at night. It's better to make them when minds are fresh. Second, creative solutions can often emerge from group discussion. As godly leaders pray, talk, and seek direction, God can lead them to a solution that no one thought of in advance of the meeting. In this sense, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

As leaders, sometimes we think we know the answer even before a meeting, and thus we come with a predetermined plan of action. We want the group to approve our plan or endorse our solution to a problem. It is true that we may have a good plan and good ideas, and we may need to guide the discussion to keep it on track. At the same time, we are wise not to force a decision but to let the decision-making process unfold. We need to trust God and trust the process. Sometimes we will be pleasantly surprised when the group refines our idea or comes up with a better idea. Many times, a

good idea is improved by the group's discussion and decision. Even when our idea is adopted, the process of discussion will likely generate stronger support and ownership for it. In short, a healthy decision-making process can result in good decisions and strong support.

To prepare for a discussion, the leader gathers the necessary information and makes sure the board or committee receives the relevant data to make a good decision. It's the responsibility of the chair to set the direction and frame the discussion. Of course, how the chair frames the discussion can significantly affect the outcome. It's important for the chair not to be manipulative or controlling, but at the same time he or she must help the group to see what's important, what's at stake, and what needs to be decided, while preventing them from getting sidetracked by irrelevant or secondary issues.

Once the leader has framed the discussion, he or she should allow time for discussion and even disagreement. Research shows that disagreement is usually healthy, because without it the meeting can be subject to the phenomenon known as groupthink. When everyone is thinking along the same lines, it's easy to overlook a significant problem or risk. When people ask questions, raise concerns, or even make objections, they force the group to view matters from another perspective, consider potential problems, and think outside the box. They alert the group to potential questions or potential opposition from the constituency, for if a board member has a concern it is likely that other constituents will also. Sometimes the group realizes the direction they have been contemplating is problematic. At other times, the objection won't prevail, but the discussion forces the group to consider certain points, address problems, and fix weaknesses so that the final plan is much better and will have stronger support. After considering all views, the group will often think of better ways to explain and implement the decision. In short, robust discussion can help the group to make a better decision, build consensus, address problems successfully, and communicate the decision more effectively.

To have a productive discussion, it's important for the group to remain focused on the issue at hand. If necessary, the leader should ask questions to move the discussion forward in the right direction. It's also important for the leader to discern where the group is. When does it need more time for discussion? When does it need more information? When is it ready for a decision? Some matters may need to be referred to a committee or postponed to a later date to gather more information, address concerns, negotiate, or build consensus. Perhaps the group needs to come back the next day. Perhaps the group needs to take a break to clear everyone's mind and allow for informal side discussions. When all views have been fully considered and no more information is needed, it's time to decide.

If possible, the leader should seek win-win solutions. The goal is to find a decision that addresses the main interests and concerns of the opposing sides. While neither side may be completely happy,

both sides can walk away feeling they accomplished what was essential to their position, or at least that their voice was heard and their concerns were addressed. Most of the time, it's possible to reach a decision that is beneficial for everyone or almost everyone. The leader should seek consensus if possible, working to bring about unanimous or near-unanimous consent. For a major proposal or initiative, it's desirable to have at least two-thirds support. If a matter is sensitive, controversial, or subject to strong peer pressure, a secret ballot is needed.

In summary, the leader's role is to guide the group to a decision without imposing one. When leaders use their authority to impose a decision without taking time to build consensus, typically the group will go along but the decision won't have the support that it needs for full success. It may turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory, in which the long-term cost is too great and the program ultimately fails. Thus, it's wise for leaders to guide the decision-making process and at times even let their opinion be known in an objective way, but in the end not try to manipulate or force a decision but lead the group to the best possible decision. Often, it's best for the leader not to express his or her full views until after significant discussion. If there is a consensus that accords with the leader's views, then the leader can affirm the decision. If there is no consensus, then after some discussion the group is often ready to hear what the leader proposes as the answer or at least the way forward.

Successful spiritual leaders love people and serve them. They don't coerce or manipulate, but they lead to the best possible decision for the whole body in submission to the will of God. If we sincerely seek to be that kind of leader, God will help us, people will acknowledge our leadership, and we will be effective in the kingdom of God.

3

GROWING A DISTRICT 1: MAKING THE CASE FOR GROWTH

For the spiritual success and health of a district, it's important to create and maintain a climate of growth. This is first the responsibility of the district superintendent, but also the district board, department heads, and committee chairs. The mission of the UPCI is "to carry the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church." That's the main reason why we exist an organization. As a district grows, it's easy for its members to shift their thinking from growth mode to maintenance mode, because the district has achieved a measure of success and has many ongoing needs. An established district has many traditional functions, many older churches that need attention, a variety of events to produce, and perhaps a campground or a district office to maintain. Thus, it's easy for the district leadership team to focus almost exclusively on the current structure and operations of the district and the needs of existing churches.

At a high level, the general organization can promote growth. The general superintendent and division heads should cast vision and provide resources, but the general organization can't drive growth from the top. Instead, it must come from the grass roots. First, we depend upon individual ministers to start and grow churches. In that sense, we're congregational and entrepreneurial. Second, just as a city, state, or province can create a climate that either promotes or hinders economic growth, so UPCI districts and sections can create (or hinder) a climate of growth. Therefore, it's primarily the district leaders, especially the district superintendent and presbyters, who can facilitate growth throughout the UPCI.

Presenting the Case for Growth

All of us understand the need for evangelism, but it's important to understand that, over time, the best method to reach more souls is to plant more churches. When a district grows to a certain size it's easy to lose the urgency of church planting, especially in districts that have a church in every major city or town. It's easy to become complacent, especially when current income is sufficient to support current operations. But let's look at the need from the perspective of souls. If we want to reach just one percent of the population, how many churches do we need?

Let's assume that we have one hundred people per church (including daughter works and preaching points), which is probably more than average attendance but less than peak attendance or total constituency. The result is that we need one church for every ten thousand people, simply to house one percent of the population. No district has reached this level, and most districts are very far from reaching this level. We are doing well in some rural areas but not in urban areas. From this perspective, a town of ten thousand needs at least one church, while a town of twenty thousand needs at least two churches, and a town of fifty thousand needs five churches. For a metropolitan area of one million, we need as many churches as we can start. Another consideration is that we need as many Apostolic churches as there are trinitarian churches.

Creating a Climate for Growth

Change the Conversation. To create a climate of growth, we must first change our collective thinking and conversation from maintenance to growth, from pioneer mode to growth mode, and from having one church in an area to having many. Historically we have focused on starting churches in new places, which is correct and which we still need to do. As pioneers, we've tried to start a church in every country around the world and in every major city and town in North America. We have emphasized starting churches in cities, counties, and parishes where we don't have a church. While this strategy is good, it isn't sufficient to reach our population. For instance, one church in a large city cannot reach everyone in the city. While anyone in the metropolitan area can attend that church, practically speaking one church cannot reach into every neighborhood and demographic. It cannot physically house, evangelize, disciple, and retain as many people as five, ten, or one hundred churches. Denominational growth studies have consistently shown that multiple churches in a city will reach more than one large church in a city, even if it's a megachurch. Invariably, the total constituents of that denomination are much greater when there are multiple churches in an area.

As a founding pastor in Austin, Texas, I wanted to build our church as big as possible; I did not ever want to cap its growth artificially. Under my pastorate of eighteen years, we grew to more than one thousand constituents (all who claimed our church as their home). Nevertheless, our church couldn't meet all the needs of the city, so I had a twofold strategy. First, I sought to grow our church as big as we could. Second, I sought to plant as many other churches in the area as possible while also partnering with other church planters who wanted to come to the same area. Instead of viewing other pastors and churches as competition, I believed we were all trying to accomplish the same goal and reach the same city. Therefore, we needed to work together, strengthen one another, have fellowship, and create a

partnership to grow the metro area and the entire section. Thus, under my pastorate, we started sixteen daughter works that were in existence when I resigned as pastor. While some eventually closed, others were started. As of early 2019, the net result was the establishment of eighteen United Pentecostal churches (works), of which thirteen were self-governing and eleven owned buildings, with peak attendance and total constituents over two thousand.

To recapitulate, we must move from pioneer mode, in which the goal is to establish one outpost in each location, to growth mode, in which we follow population growth and seek to establish as many churches as necessary to serve the population, including the various demographics, ethnicities, and language groups. In Global Missions, we can't say we've reached a nation just because we have one church there. In North America we can't say we've reached a city just because we have one church there or that we've saturated a district just because we have one church in each major town. Likewise, we can't focus our mission efforts exclusively on unreached nations, cities, or towns. In the pioneer phase of our movement, these goals were important, but we've grown past that stage. While we must still target unreached areas, we also must consider *under-reached* nations, cities, towns, counties, parishes, ethnicities, and language groups. We must shift into growth mode, which means we will plant multiple churches in relatively close proximity. When there is only one church in a city, it can be challenging to discuss the idea of starting a second church, because we tend to think of dividing the existing pie of believers, including Pentecostal move-ins. But when there are five churches in a city, we aren't worried about the idea of starting a sixth church, because everyone understands that each church has its own distinctive appeal and needs to focus on growth by evangelism. Moreover, when there are several options, every church tends to be more accountable to its constituents, and there is greater security for the UPCI in cases where a church declines for any reason or departs from the faith.

Some say that one church in a city or town is sufficient because anyone in the area can attend. While that may be true of established saints and Pentecostal move-ins, many unchurched people will never be contacted; or if they are contacted, will never visit; or if they visit, won't commute very far on a regular basis. We typically don't have hundreds of people looking for a United Pentecostal Church; most people don't know we exist. Therefore, in marketing terms we must create demand, and the way to do so is to plant many churches. The more churches we have, the more people will be exposed to the Apostolic message. All churches will benefit from the increased exposure, as more people begin to seek Apostolic churches and refer their family and friends. Fifty years ago, no one searched for Starbucks, but now they do, because Starbucks has created a market by expanding to many locations and thereby increasing exposure and demand. It is their strategy to plant multiple locations in the same town or city.

Of course, they need to follow ethical guidelines. Presumably one Starbucks won't try to hire employees away from another one, although they may help each other in time of need.

Move from Turf Protection to Ministerial Ethics. Someone with a pioneer mentality may say, "This is my city, my territory. I came here and dug out a work. I'm the bishop of this city. If somebody wants to start a church, they should choose a city where there is no church, or else they should work under me." As a church planter, I can sympathize with this sentiment, but for the sake of souls we must move beyond it. I know what it's like to invest blood, sweat, tears, and family finances to establish a church. I know what it's like to lose people to other churches who started later and even to have some of them solicit our members unethically. I know what it's like to be a small church in the shadow of big churches and lose people because we couldn't offer everything they wanted or needed. I know what it's like to be a large church and lose people who wanted the camaraderie, influence, attention, position, or role they felt would be available in a small church. I know what it's like to transfer people intentionally to start daughter works, and when those daughter works became successful to lose some people unintentionally because they now had a good option closer to home. Nevertheless, I still support the concept of daughter works, because it's the best way to plant churches and to evangelize an area. Moreover, it's best for the mother church, because it provides outlets for ministry, opportunities to develop leaders, an atmosphere of revival and growth, and a natural path for release of leaders and multiplication of churches, which will otherwise likely happen anyway but in a harmful way. Even considering the intentional and unintentional transfers to sixteen daughter works, our church grew more than it would have otherwise, because of its revival spirit and God's blessing on its investment in the Kingdom. The mother church continued to grow and, by planting daughter works, doubled the total Kingdom constituency. While it would have grown anyway, it's growth rate wouldn't have been as great, and it wouldn't have doubled its constituency in the same time. In short, some transfers will occur, but if handled correctly they can be beneficial or at least not detrimental.

I discovered four benefits of planting daughters and promoting multiple works in a metropolitan area. (1) Foremost, each church develops its own physical and social location, personality, ministry, outreach, and network, and thereby it reaches people that other churches won't. (2) Daughter churches reap a second harvest from the previous efforts of the mother church. Over time they will reach visitors that the mother church didn't win, converts that it didn't retain, and backsliders that were reluctant to return. (3) Daughter churches become a safe place to refer people who need to make a new start due to failures, divorce, conflict, or other special circumstances including ministerial development. They can even be a positive alternative to a defection or split. (4) Daughter churches will make similar referrals

back to the mother church so that over time the mother church will benefit from their evangelistic efforts. The number of referrals and transfers will reach a balance.

How should we deal with the legitimate concern that new works might attract some people from existing churches? The key is to teach and enforce ministerial ethics. We can't block new works or give area pastors veto power over new works simply because of the fear of transfers. As an analogy, spiritual gifts can be misused, but as we see in I Corinthians 14 the remedy is not to discourage them, forbid them, or impose so many controls that they are rarely manifested. Instead, we teach proper use and deal appropriately with any misuse. Proper use will create a positive culture for their exercise. The same is true with ministerial ethics. It's good for the district to provide proactive teaching on ethics for ministers. District and sectional leaders must communicate, practice, and uphold ministerial ethics. When there are problems between ministers, leaders should help them work through those problems. If necessary, the district board should enforce ethical guidelines and follow up when there are clear violations. As the same time, all of us should be reminded of the importance of feeding the sheep, caring for the flock, and establishing people by sound doctrine. The best way to retain people is by respect, love, ministry, and teaching rather than by coercion, blocking of options, or an artificial "monopoly."

Of course, people can be misled by unethical tactics, which is why we must firmly oppose unethical conduct such as soliciting members, undermining other pastors, disparaging other churches, tale bearing, sowing discord, or causing strife. This includes the use of social media. We must affirm three basic guidelines regarding the possible transfer of members: (1) Most importantly, it's wrong to solicit members from another church of our faith, whether directly or indirectly. (2) If church members visit another church and indicate a desire to transfer, the pastor of the prospective church should simply urge them to discuss their intentions with their pastor with the goal of resolving any concerns, and then promptly inform their pastor of the contact. (3) If they persist in attending a new church without the blessing of their pastor, generally the new church should neither encourage nor forbid them but allow time for evaluation and possible reconciliation with the previous church. (See chapter 5 and see "My Code of Ethics," Position Papers, UPCI Manual.)

In addition, the district can adopt the following policy (used by the Texas and South Texas Districts): A new church cannot accept transfer members from another UPCI church for a period of one year, unless they are sent by their pastor. The district board can ask home mission applicants if they will uphold this policy.

Foster a Kingdom Approach. We need to take a Kingdom approach, in which we don't try to build our individual kingdoms but work together to build the kingdom of God. It's not about building my

church; it's about reaching our city, our section, and our district. A Kingdom approach leads to a team approach. To be successful, we must partner with others who have the same vision and goals. Through preaching, teaching, district and sectional communications, websites, emails, and letters, and we can promote this approach and thereby create a climate for growth. We can change the conversation from whether or not we should approve applications for new churches to developing a strategic plan to plant many new churches ethically and successfully.

Establish a Predisposition to Approve New Works. The district board should firmly determine and communicate that the district wants and needs new works. If a qualified minister applies for an area that needs a new work, there should be a strong disposition to approve the application. Instead of asking why to approve the application, we can ask why not. Of course, we should ascertain that applicants have a calling and burden, believe our doctrine, exemplify the life of holiness and will teach it to their converts, are soulwinners, want to build a church by reaching new people, and will practice ministerial ethics. We will want to know if they have a genuine burden and affinity for the proposed area. We should examine their track record, and we should obtain input from neighboring pastors. At the same time, we recognize that no one is perfect and that at some point everyone needs an opportunity to prove their ministry. If they haven't been ethical or if we find good reason to believe they won't be ethical, then we probably won't approve the application, but we shouldn't deny applications based merely on suspicions or fears. We can ask applicants for a commitment to practice ministerial ethics, and if we think there could be a problem, we can ask them specifically about prior contacts or what they would do in certain situations. They should be willing to follow district policy, work in harmony with existing churches, and support future applicants for the city. If necessary, we should follow up to make sure they keep their commitments.

4

GROWING A DISTRICT 2: DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF GROWTH

In addition to making the case for growth, district leaders must shape a culture that is conducive to growth.

Developing a Culture of Outreach

Promote a Fivefold Approach. For the district to grow, there needs to be a culture of outreach, and it must start in local churches. We can advocate a simple, fivefold approach. (1) Every church should be involved in soulwinning efforts, such as *home Bible studies and other outreach events*, for that is the mission of the church. (2) Sometimes when a home Bible study comes to an end, the participants want to continue their journey. The next step might be a *home friendship group*, in which a small nucleus of people gathers for a weekly meeting with simple worship, sharing of the Word, prayer, and fellowship. Research shows that most new people won't commute more than fifteen minutes to church, so if the group is farther from the mother church, perhaps in a suburb or a neighboring town, then there is good potential for it to become a new work. Similarly, there is good potential if the group is built on a distinct ethnicity or language, in which people invite family and friends based on a common cultural identity. (3) This group could develop into a *preaching point*, which is a regularly scheduled service, typically once a week or at least once a month, that features preaching. At this juncture, under UPCI policy there should be an application with district approval. A preaching point isn't a firm commitment to start a church, but it's a stated effort to explore the possibility, and therefore it's important to consider the proposed target area and the input of any neighboring pastors. (4) If people attend faithfully and want to have a permanent service, and particularly if some are converted, then it's time to consider a *daughter work*. At this point, UPCI policy calls for another application. The stated intention of a daughter work is to plant a new church that will eventually become self-governing. The mother church oversees this new work and may assign a daughter work pastor. (5) When the work can become self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, then the mother church releases it so that it can become a United Pentecostal Church in its own right, upon application and approval by the district. (We sometimes say "autonomous," but this term can erroneously imply independence. The UPCI General Constitution uses the term "self-

governing.”) For full protection and benefits, it is recommended that the new work become affiliated and receive North American Missions status, which the mother church can require as a condition for release.

While one minister can be the pastor of two churches or two campuses, when a daughter church has its own minister assigned for pastoral care and when it fully meets the three “self” criteria, our goal is for it to be recognized on its own as a UPCI church. The reason is twofold. (1) Theologically, we have adopted a congregational rather than a hierarchical form of church government, as we believe this model most accurately reflects New Testament practice. At some point, local churches and pastors should have authority over their own internal matters and not be controlled by an external authority such as a district superintendent, presbyter, or bishop. That is how our existing churches and pastors have attained their current status. (2) Practically, when a minister has the primary responsibility for preaching, teaching, and pastoral care of a congregation, he should have the corresponding authority to lead the people as their pastor. Certainly, the mother church and pastor have a vested interest in the ongoing integrity and success of the daughter church, but our fellowship has decided that the best way to protect this interest over the long term is through doctrinal identity, fellowship, ministerial credentials, church affiliation, sections, and districts. (For further discussion of church government, see David K. Bernard, *The Apostolic Church in the Twenty-first Century*.)

Most outreach efforts or church plants won’t follow all five steps, but this approach represents a natural progression. New works can advance based on need and demand. Some Bible studies will accomplish their purpose and simply end. Some home friendship groups or preaching points may remain as they are indefinitely, because they meet a need but there isn’t a strong reason or ability to go the next level. When a home missionary attempts to start a work, typically the minister and his or her family move to a new location, get new jobs, and have no other church for a home base. If they make only a few converts over several years, the work may close, causing the ministerial family to feel like a failure and to relocate yet again. But when we follow the natural progression of outreach and church planting, there is no failure. Every outreach effort is productive because it fulfills the local church’s mission to evangelize, whether it continues over the long term or not. If it ends, the church can simply shift its resources and efforts to another outreach.

We should emphasize preaching points and daughter works because this method has proven to be the most effective means of planting new churches around the world. Global Missions has used this strategy successfully for many years. In North America, we estimate that 70 percent of daughter works survive long term, while 70 percent of individual church plants do not. This method provides much

greater support in every way to the pastor and family and enables a smooth transition to self-governance or, if need be, closure. Even if a church isn't started officially as a daughter work, it will benefit greatly from partnering with an established church and pastor who can offer prayer, guidance, strategies, encouragement, volunteer support, and financial assistance. We will always need home missionaries in new areas, but once a strong church has been established in an area we should view it as a beachhead for expansion. In World War II, once the Allies conquered the Normandy beaches, they didn't try to attack one hundred other beaches at the same cost in personnel and equipment, but from this beachhead they advanced rapidly throughout Western Europe. Instead of each church planter having to start from scratch and in isolation, it is more efficient and productive to leverage the experience, leadership, resources, and contacts of an existing church. It takes many years of work and sacrifice to establish a mature congregation in a new area. Instead of duplicating the same time, effort, and costs for each subsequent church plant, we can use the initial effort as an investment to multiply subsequent churches more rapidly. Businesses typically expand this way; sometimes we can learn successful strategies from the children of the world (Luke 16:8).

The vision of the local pastor is the primary force behind this approach, but the district can cast the overall vision as well as provide guidance and practical tools to help pastors implement the vision. The South Texas District adopted this approach when it started in Fall 2002. At that time, it had 150 churches and 10 daughter works for a total of 160. By emphasizing daughter works, in the seven years of my district superintendency the district grew to 194 churches and 48 daughter works for a total of 242. In fifteen years, the district more than doubled, and in Fall 2018 it gave birth to the South Central Texas District, which started with 90 churches, 21 daughter works, and 42 preaching points, for a total of 153.

Seek Opportunities. As a district, we should look for opportunities to plant new preaching points, daughter works, and churches. As already mentioned, the best way to grow constituents is to increase the number of churches. While it's important to help our existing churches to grow, it's also necessary to plant new works. As a pastor, I wanted to grow our church as big as possible and not artificially limit its growth. If new people continued to come and were receiving effective ministry, then we tried to accommodate and facilitate them. We didn't have a strategy of sending a group away from the mother church, except when we started daughter works with other language groups. At the same time, since I had a burden for the whole city and knew our church couldn't reach everyone in the city, I wanted to partner with other ministers who had the same burden and who wanted to start churches in the area, whether as daughter works or home mission works. Thus, after our church was solidly

established, I began to leverage its resources to facilitate the starting of daughter works. The church provided support, including special offerings, to every new church in the metropolitan area.

As a district strategy, we should emphasize the importance of outreach. Every local church should look for opportunities to have Bible studies, home friendship groups, institutional ministries, and other outreaches. At the same time, each church should look for opportunities to use some of these outreaches to plant new works. A Bible study may simply be a tool to win a new person or family, which is to be expected and celebrated. At the same time, it could become a tool for reaching a group of people, in which case it could become the nucleus for a preaching point or daughter work. This is especially true if the Bible study is in an unreached or under-reached area, such as a neighborhood, suburb, or nearby town that has no church, or if it is attracting people of a different language or ethnicity who have their own culture, needs, and circle of family and friends.

To change the district or sectional culture, it's not necessary for everyone to catch the vision at first. Initially, it only takes two or three pastors. District leaders can set the example. When no one is planting daughter works, it's easy to find many reasons not to do so. If only one pastor is doing it, he or she may be viewed as an exception or aberration. But when two or more do it, the conversation changes from "It can't be done" or "It shouldn't be done" to "How are they doing it?" and "How can we address concerns and problems so that we can do it too?" When I became a presbyter in 1996, our section had thirty churches and no daughter works. Two of us pastors began to plant daughter works. Our example encouraged other pastors to do so, and it also encouraged home missionaries to apply. In seven years, the section grew to fifty-three churches and daughter works. As of December 2018, that area had about 110 works and formed the core of the new South Central Texas District. When the South Texas District was formed in 2002, it had ten daughter works, of which nine were from our section and seven were from our church. Of course, other pastors in Texas had started daughter works before our time that had already become self-governing churches. This history demonstrates that just a few pastors can influence the growth of an entire section or district.

When district leaders set the example, they can address objections effectively by saying, "Yes, there are legitimate concerns about ministerial ethics, transfer of members, and difference of personal convictions. We've encountered these issues, but we can testify by experience that it's possible to deal with them successfully. Despite the problems and risks, planting daughter works is still the right thing to do. It will lead to greater success for the kingdom of God and greater revival for the mother church." As a presbyter and later as a district superintendent, I helped persuade the district board to approve new

works despite some philosophical and practical concerns, because I had both planted works and supported applications of home missionaries for our area.

Developing a Culture of Diversity

Our world is diverse, our nation is increasingly diverse, and our own movement is diverse. Diversity can be a weakness if we allow it to cause disunity, but it can be a strength for several reasons. (1) It helps fulfill the scriptural teaching to evangelize and disciple everyone. (2) It offers a positive, credible witness to the world. (3) We all benefit from a diversity of gifts, talents, perspectives, and ideas. (4) It enables us to establish networks that can reach more people more effectively. Ethnic minorities, linguistic minorities, and immigrants often have a close network of family, friends, and others of the same background. Winning one person of such a background can open the door to an entire group. Reaching people of different backgrounds is a worthy goal because each person is important to God, and it can also be an effective strategy for local church growth and for planting new churches. To be successful in this endeavor, we must be intentional, and we must be willing and able to address the challenges that come with diversity.

The church consists of all races and ethnicities. Our goal is not to establish churches of one race or color, but to establish churches that minister to everyone. At the same time, it's not enough merely to say that we welcome everyone. To evangelize and disciple people of diverse backgrounds, we must be intentional about diversity. That is, we must create a culture in which people of various races and ethnicities feel welcome, have significant involvement, and attain positions of leadership. We should adopt a threefold strategy: (1) Encourage all churches to become intentional about diversity. (2) Support ministers of various ethnicities in starting new works. (3) Increase the participation of minorities in district events and operations. The key is to recruit, train, and mentor leaders from various groups who demonstrate the church's commitment to diversity and who can help the church become more effective in reaching everyone. Our church needs to reflect the increasing diversity of our society, and our leadership needs to reflect the increasing diversity of our fellowship.

Being intentional doesn't mean establishing quotas or promoting unqualified people simply because they are of a different race or color. It means to become more effective in identifying and using qualified people among us. When selecting people to nominate for office, serve on boards and committees, participate in district events, or perform other tasks, we may think of those who are closest to us, who are most like us, and whom we know best. We tend to rely on people who have been used before and who have done a good job. But in addition, we need to think of others who may also be

qualified, or who could become qualified with the proper encouragement and development. We need to look outside our immediate circle of knowledge and influence. If the pool of qualified candidates is small, then we should work harder to identify people with potential in order to mentor and coach them.

Diversity encompasses not only race and ethnicity but also age, gender (male and female), geography, urban and rural churches, large and small churches, multi-generation and first-generation Pentecostals. As leaders get older, they tend to think of young ministers as too inexperienced to have a significant role and forget their own involvement when they were young. Ministers in their twenties and thirties can serve effectively in many roles, bringing new ideas and methods and helping us relate to changing culture. The more people we can involve and the more we can draw from various backgrounds, the more participation we will have overall. This strategy is more ethical as well as more effective for growth.

Leaders should cast a vision for diversity. It should be a topic for discussion in leadership meetings and ministerial meetings. The district board and district department heads should discuss how to involve more people, attract a broad range of participation, interest more people in district activities, and recruit and train more participants.

We're not successful if we simply build strong churches within one narrow range of ethnicity or culture. We must consider the total population in our area. Are we truly effective in reaching them? For example, in a big city we may build a strong church among people of a Pentecostal background who have moved from small towns, or on the East and West Coasts we may build a strong church among move-ins from the South or Midwest. Of course, move-ins need a church, and they can be a great help in establishing and growing churches. At the same time, such a church may develop styles of worship, music, preaching, government, operations, and activities that are more attuned to transplants than to natives. In this case, we need to consider strategies to become more effective in reaching the main population of the area, whether by modifying local church culture, planting more churches, or both. The key is to raise up ministers and lay leaders who are native to the area and who represent the major ethnicities of the area.

The apostle Paul learned to become all things to all people (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). Without compromising biblical truth, he accommodated to local culture and ethnic identity as much as possible for the sake of winning souls. Like missionaries to a foreign country, we must consider ourselves to be missionaries in our secular culture. We must learn the language of the unchurched and develop methods that relate to them, including minorities and youth. Different churches will have different ways of reaching people, and by working together we can reach our society effectively.

For metropolitan areas and areas of significant diversity, we need many churches to reach the population. First, it is difficult for one church to minister effectively to thousands of people. Second, while many Pentecostal people will commute long distances to a good church, it's difficult for them to win their neighbors and coworkers without a church nearby. Third, it takes many churches to attract the diversity of a large population. Each church has its own personality, style of ministry, geographical location, social location, and network of influence. We can be successful with a twofold strategy: (1) Establish churches that welcome and minister to everyone. (2) Plant churches with minority leaders and in minority neighborhoods that can be particularly effective in evangelizing under-reached and under-represented groups. Some ethnic minorities will respond well to a diverse church, while other ethnic minorities respond better to a church that is more firmly rooted in their own ethnic heritage. While we hope minorities will respond to the ministry of someone who isn't like them, we must remember that we are trying to reach sinners not saints, and we want to remove as many historical, social, and personal obstacles as possible. Moreover, for some groups, language is a significant factor, which necessitates bilingual ministry or ministry in their native language. In short, we need a diversity of approaches, ministries, and churches to fulfill our mission.

Developing a Strategy for Growth

Set District Goals. The district needs to develop a strategic plan for growth, and the district board and district department heads should participate in the planning. (1) The process typically begins with a leadership meeting or retreat, perhaps with a guest speaker. The district superintendent should cast vision, and perhaps a leader from another district could share their experience. (2) Planning involves conceptual goals: recruiting and training more ministers, planting more works, helping existing churches to grow, preserving declining or at-risk churches, increasing diversity, evangelizing unreached or under-reached cities, towns, counties, parishes, ethnicities, and language groups. (3) The plan must ultimately set at least some numerical goals for the key objectives. (4) Finally and crucially, the plan needs to include action items for attaining the conceptual and numerical goals. There should be a discussion of how to create a climate of growth, change the conversation, address problems and concerns, and cast vision, followed by practical steps for implementation.

When we started the South Texas District, our general superintendent, Kenneth Haney, had challenged the UPCI to double the number of churches. We calculated that our new district had one church per 60,000 people, so we established a goal of doubling the number of works to have one church (including daughter works) per 30,000 people. (In fifteen years, the district did attain the goal of

doubling the number of works, but due to rapid population growth during that time, it attained a ratio of one church per 45,000 people.) As previously mentioned, another option is to set a goal of reaching one percent of the population, which (assuming 100 people per church) translates to one church per 10,000 people. Thus, depending on its relative size, the district might set a goal to double the number of works in ten years (or another reasonable number such as fifteen years), or it might set a goal to reach one church per 10,000 people (or another reasonable number such as 30,000). The district could set a similar goal for the number of ministers, which in North America is typically twice the number of churches. The ratio of ministers to churches might be somewhat less in a growing district, as some ministers will pastor two works and many assistants will oversee daughter works and preaching points. As another example, a few years ago the Florida District set a goal of starting fifty works in two years and achieved it.

Once the district has set some numerical goals for a period of years, it should set annual goals. For example, if the district plans to double in ten years, it will need to grow approximately seven percent per year. The goals could be set somewhat lower in the first few years, because it is starting from a smaller base. As the base grows and the momentum builds, the district can expect greater numerical growth in the later years.

Identify Target Areas. Once the district has set a numerical goal for new works, then it should identify target areas. In South Texas, we mapped the entire district and ascertained the population of each city, town, and county. For major cities, we identified the population of each neighborhood, suburb, or school district. Since our goal was to establish one church per 30,000 people, we said that a town of 50,000 needed two churches, a town of 100,000 needed three or four, and a city of one million needed as many as we could realistically plant. Of course, if a town or county had less than 30,000, it still needed a church, and if the population was very small at least it could be a candidate for a daughter work or preaching point started from a church in a nearby town. In other words, our goal was to start new churches in both unreached and under-reached areas. Based on the population list, the district office gave each sectional presbyter a list of target areas. If there were already one or more churches in a designated area, the presbyter consulted with area pastors to obtain their input regarding location, special circumstances, ethical concerns, or other potential problems. While pastors didn't have veto power, we respected their input, wanted to hear about any concerns or objections, didn't want them to be surprised, and wanted their cooperation and support. After taking each presbyter's report into account, the district established target cities, towns, and areas. We publicized them and announced that we were seeking churches in each area. This method helped to remove politics by stating in advance

that we would welcome qualified applicants. The goal was to change the conversation from fear to faith, from maintenance to growth, from why approve a new church to why not.

As a result, we opened many doors. After hearing of the district's interest in an area, some pastors decided they would like to start a daughter work or preaching point in their own area, perhaps using members or contacts they already had. As they realized that eventually someone would start a church in the area, they decided to train and release ministers from their own church, concluding that this was the best way to ensure unity, cooperation, and ethics. Some independent Apostolic pastors joined us after hearing of our interest in their area and receiving encouragement from nearby pastors. Some potential home missionaries assumed an area was off limits because we already had a church, but after hearing that it was a target area and that neighboring pastors were not opposed, they applied.

Develop Sectional Plans and Goals. In coordination with the district plan, each section should develop a strategic plan for growth. Each presbyter should be responsible for driving growth in his section. When I first became a presbyter in the Texas District, my section comprised thirty-five counties, had two major metropolitan areas (San Antonio and Austin), stretched to the border of Mexico at Del Rio, was larger than the state of Ohio, and had more people than the state of Arkansas. Yet it had only thirty churches. I identified the unreached towns and counties and began to pray, think, discuss, and strategize. I considered that my job was not only to serve the existing churches but also to promote church planting in the unreached areas. If the presbyter doesn't carry this burden, who will? Each pastor is understandably focused on his or her own ministry and is responsible for the growth of his or her church. We encourage pastors to look for opportunities to start preaching points and daughter works, but who will look strategically at the entire area? The presbyter should pray for the entire section, identify the needs and opportunities, bring them to the attention of the section and district, and help recruit workers. Then the district superintendent should do the same for the entire district. Of course, we expect the North American Missions team to do so as well, but they serve under the district board. It is the presbyter who typically communicates to neighboring pastors about applications, and it is the district board that approves new works. For meaningful growth to occur, the district board must take ownership of the strategic growth plan.

Recruit and Train Ministers. To fulfill our vision and achieve our goals, we need to increase the number of qualified ministers. We can't call people to preach, but we can provide events and opportunities, particularly for youth and young adults, to communicate vision, need, and burden and to develop sensitivity to God's call. We can urge pastors to identify and train future leaders through local classes, mentorship, and the Christian Ministry License. (For this purpose, see *Spiritual Leadership in the*

Twenty-first Century, the companion *Ministry Development* DVDs, and video training on Ministry Central.) We should also provide training and resources on the district and sectional levels. Many books are available from the Pentecostal Publishing House including David K. Bernard, *Growing a Church: Seven Apostolic Principles* (Word Aflame, 2001) and David K. Bernard, *Apostolic Church in the Twenty-first Century* (Word Aflame, 2014), which has a chapter on daughter works and a sample policy for them. North American Missions provides resources for church planting, including Launch (seminar), Church Planters University (Ministry Central), and “Keys to Church Planting” (downloadable file at www.northamericanmissions.faith/training).

Adopt Policies to Facilitate Growth. Our policies should facilitate our stated goals. If we want to start new works, we need to make it easy to approve preaching points and daughter works. For example, the District North American Missions Committee can be empowered to make certain decisions. This committee consists of the district superintendent, district NAM director, sectional presbyter, and sectional NAM director. According to a General Board policy in the UPCI Manual, this committee can approve preaching points in any city or town that doesn’t have a United Pentecostal Church. In the South Texas District, daughter work applications also came to this committee for approval. The presbyter would contact any local pastor in the proposed area. If there was no objection and no problem, the committee could make a recommendation, and the district board could approve the application by email or conference call. If a significant issue or objection was raised by a committee member or an area pastor and couldn’t be resolved, then the application was deferred to the next district board meeting. In this way, daughter works could be approved throughout the year without delay. If we discovered that a pastor had started a preaching point or daughter work without approval but there was no major ethical problem, then we kindly explained the application process, asked the pastor to follow it, and if necessary, helped fill out the application. We also made applications available online. In summary, our policies shouldn’t be unnecessarily complicated but tailored to meet our needs. They shouldn’t be used to obstruct or deny but to facilitate our objectives.

Record and Celebrate Results. We need to record and celebrate success. The early church did so in the Book of Acts. We need information by which to measure our progress, ascertain where we need to adjust, motivate our constituents, and report to headquarters. The UPCI Directory should accurately reflect what we claim on the district level. If we don’t meet our goals, we shouldn’t hide the fact, but we can still celebrate progress and consider how to revise our goals. It’s important to keep our vision, plan, and goals before our constituents to foster a culture of progress, revival, and growth.

MINISTERIAL ETHICS AND TRANSFER OF MEMBERS

Excerpted from David K. Bernard, *Spiritual Leadership in the Twenty-first Century*

It's unethical to solicit members from another UPCI or Apostolic Pentecostal church. Those who attend a church that doesn't teach the New Testament plan of salvation (Acts 2:38), need instruction in greater truth. For those who attend an Apostolic church, however, we should adhere to certain ethical protocols if they express a desire to change churches. As a home mission pastor, I adopted the following guidelines for prospective transferees after consultation with my presbyter, district superintendent, and assistant general superintendent. I implemented them whether or not other pastors reciprocated.

1. *Advise potential transferees to talk to their pastor about their plans and about any concerns*, while explaining that you don't solicit members from other Apostolic churches. Our goal was to grow by evangelism not transfers, and I communicated this goal to our members by word and deed. We did not solicit anyone, whether from in town or out of town, whether directly or indirectly. We did not make appeals or build close friendships with the intent to exert influence. We did not call, visit, or counsel other members except in coordination with their pastor. I instructed our members to be friendly to other Apostolics but not to solicit them or speak of our church in terms that would entice them.

2. *Inform their pastor of the contact*, by telephone, email, or text, in case they don't. Sometimes the pastor is able to resolve their concerns, especially if they know you support their pastor. Often the pastor will give them a transfer, explaining the circumstances so that you will be able to help them. Even if a member is transferring from out of town, communicate with the pastor to obtain a recommendation or other helpful information. It's important to know about any serious problems that could affect your church, such as ethics, morals, doctrine, or child abuse. The standard policy as expressed in the Local Church Government in the UPCI Manual is twofold: transferring members should seek a transfer from their pastor, and the pastor shouldn't withhold a transfer unless a member has been found guilty of wrongdoing by confession or conviction. Occasionally a pastor will discourage or oppose a transfer, in which case you should again urge them to work with their pastor.

3. *If their pastor expresses concern or disapproval but they persist in coming, as a general rule neither encourage nor forbid them*. In the final analysis you can't force people to stay at a church. Sometimes there are justifiable reasons for a transfer such as family circumstances, job transfer, distance, unresolved conflict, or church departing from the faith. Other times the transferees may be

wrong, but for whatever reason their existing church isn't able to minister to them effectively. Perhaps in a new setting they will repent and be renewed. Typically, the receiving pastor isn't in a position to know fully. Therefore, you shouldn't reward them for attending, such as by accepting them as members, offering them immediate involvement, or promising to do so in the future. If you do, your actions will indicate that you seek transfer members, no matter what you say. Moreover, you may inadvertently support a rebellious attitude or introduce a damaging element into your congregation. On the other hand, you should treat them with kindness and love so they will receive what they need, whether correction, restoration, healing, or a new beginning. After they have established a track record of faithfulness, you will be able to discern the best way to deal with them. Sometimes they will realize a need to return to their previous church. Sometimes they will move on after they realize you will hold them accountable.

Some transfers are a blessing if they come ethically, ready to accept you as pastor, and willing to embrace your church culture. Most churches have benefited by receiving members who moved from another town due to job or family. If you try to build a church on transfers, however, you will likely suffer great disappointment later. First, God does not honor unethical transfers; you reap what you sow. Second, if people transfer to you easily, they will feel the liberty to transfer away from you easily. Third, some transfers bring serious problems with them that can negatively influence your converts. Finally, even good transfer members may not readily conform to your vision and philosophy but may try to impose their own. Usually it takes some time, and often circumstances in which they need pastoral care, before transfers truly accept you as their spiritual leader. Thus when people move to your area, don't entice them with promises. Instead, encourage them to visit area churches and make an informed, prayerful decision. If they come and problems arise later, you can remind them of God's leading.

GROWING A CHURCH

Adapted from David K. Bernard, *Spiritual Leadership in the Twenty-first Century*

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.... And the Lord added to the church daily those were being saved” (Acts 2:42, 47, NKJV).

It’s God’s plan for local churches to grow numerically and spiritually. Therefore, it’s important for pastors to have a vision for growth and for other leaders in the local church to share and support this vision. We will briefly discuss seven growth principles that we find in the New Testament and in Apostolic churches today. (See my book *Growing a Church: Seven Apostolic Principles.*)

My parents were home and foreign missionaries, so I was privileged to be raised in an atmosphere of church growth. They pioneered the United Pentecostal Church of Korea and were instrumental in establishing the Spanish Evangelism Ministries of the Louisiana District UPCI. They personally founded six churches. They worked in partnership, but for several years my father was the lead pastor of one church while my mother was the lead pastor of another.

When my wife and I moved to Austin, Texas, in 1992 to start New Life Church, we did not have a detailed plan, but we had gleaned principles from involvement in several local churches, small and large, plus eleven years of full-time ministry in which we traveled extensively in the US and around the world. For eighteen years I was the senior pastor until I became general superintendent of the UPCI. The church started in our home for one month; then moved to a shared, rented church building for four years; then to its own building that seated 300 for four years; and then to a new building that seated 650. Before I was elected general superintendent, we purchased twelve acres of land on a major freeway and began constructing a building of 100,000 square feet. The plan was to complete the internal construction of about half the space with an auditorium to seat 1,000 and later expand it to 2,500 by the removal of walls and installation of risers. The church moved into this building under my successor, Rodney Shaw. During my pastorate, the church attained an annual average Sunday attendance of 681 in the main church; on a good Sunday we had about 750. The regular attendance roll comprised 956, record attendance was 960, and total constituents were over 1,000. In addition, we started eighteen daughter works. Sixteen were active at the end of my pastorate, eight of which were self-governing and seven of which had their own building. The record attendance including current and

former daughter works was 1,641. The mother church was 50 percent Caucasian or White, 26 percent Hispanic, 18 percent African American or Black, and 6 percent Asian American, Native American, or Pacific Islander. Six of the daughter work pastors were Hispanic, one was African American, and one was Korean; and two of the works were started by women ministers. Later some works closed, while others were started. As of early 2019, there were a total of eighteen UPCI church plants (the mother church, twelve self-governing churches, two daughter works, two daughter works transferred to other churches, and one preaching point, not counting two works that became independent). Of these, eleven owned buildings and one owned land on which to build. Total constituents were about two thousand. During my pastorate, the church trained sixty people who received UPCI ministerial credentials. Forty-three were newly credentialed (some after my tenure), while seventeen were already credentialed but advanced to general license, ordination, or position of daughter work pastor during my tenure. This total includes eight women and nineteen ethnic minorities, and these categories comprise a net 40 percent of the total. Obviously, the growth resulted from the efforts of many ministers and leaders as well as the work of the Holy Spirit, and the network has grown further under new leaders. I mention this information to explain the basis of my experience, which ranges from homes and storefronts to tent revivals and citywide rallies. After the Bible itself, the best source of information for church growth comes through observation and experience in Apostolic churches.

We can learn management and growth principles from secular sources and from other Christian sources. At the same time, we are limited in how much we can rely upon them because our goals are significantly different. We want to see people converted according Acts 2:38, pursuing holiness, and becoming mature disciples. For example, according to the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, in self-identified Spirit-filled, Charismatic, and Pentecostal churches approximately 5 to 35 percent of members have received the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. In a typical UPCI church, the number of regular attendees in this category from preteens to adult is probably 90 percent. (That was our experience in Austin even including many Sunday morning attendees who had not yet made a full commitment.) In short, our principles and methods must be significantly different.

1. Prayer

Prayer is important in our personal life, but it's also important to establish in the life of a church. Since we are building a church, not merely a business, civic, or social organization, we must have the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, which requires prayer. To teach and facilitate prayer, we should incorporate prayer into the church in various ways, such as before service, after the message, early

morning or night meetings, come-and-go events, special-called times, chains, and departmental events (such as ladies, men, and youth).

When our church was small, we had services on Sunday afternoon and Tuesday night because that's when the building was available. We needed something more, so we started a prayer meeting in our home on Thursday nights. We didn't expect everyone to come, but most of our regular attendees came at least once a month. After we built our own building, we began having three services per week and encouraged prayer before each service. We also had women's prayer on Tuesday mornings. People still longed for special prayer times, so we began having prayer once a month in our home and invited different groups each time, so that everyone received an invitation at least once a year. Sometimes in a midweek Bible study I would teach a few minutes on prayer and then turn it into a prayer meeting. Now the church has simultaneous home prayer meetings at selected times during the year, and the pastor attends different ones. It also has come-and-go prayer on Friday nights.

2. Persistence

Working for God is hard work, and we must keep working to see results. Ninety percent of God's will is doing what we already know to do. Entrepreneurs and professionals work far more than forty hours per week when starting a business or practice, and typically they continue to work long hours even after they are successful. Many pastors are bivocational, especially when starting a church, and they work long hours. Even after pastors are full time, however, they should expect to work hard and often long hours. At the same time there must be balance. As pastor I took off one day a week, which was Monday. On Tuesday through Friday I had office hours most of the day, while Saturday was more flexible. I spent most evenings making calls or visits, counseling, participating in church functions, and studying. Sunday was full. We need times of rest, but we also need to work hard when we work.

Results don't always come easily or immediately, so we must not be easily discouraged. (See Galatians 6:9.) If we don't see the results we expect, it's appropriate to ask God if we are doing something we shouldn't or not doing something we should. But often the answer is that we must keep doing what we are already doing. For example, it was six months before we had our first new person to be baptized in water and Spirit. It was a frustrating time. After that breakthrough I thought we would have rapid growth, but although we were working with a number of people from various backgrounds, we didn't make another convert the rest of that calendar year. In the second year, twelve received the Holy Ghost. The third year we had twenty-three; the fifth year, thirty-six; the seventh year, fifty-seven. In the ninth year it was 126, and since then the annual total has been around one hundred. In eighteen

years 1,289 received the Holy Ghost in the mother church and daughter works. Counting external outreaches such as jail ministry and visitors from other Apostolic churches, the total was 1,859. A slow but steady process yielded good results.

3. Planning

In order to grow we must plan to grow. We should project where we want to be in five or ten years, and then plan incremental steps each year to attain the goal. For instance, if we project growth for five years, do we have enough building space, seats, parking space, Sunday school teachers, and mentors for new people? We need to begin planning for additional space, and we need to begin training potential workers. We need to think and act a little bigger than we are, striving to increase our faith, vision, expertise, quality, and professionalism beyond what is strictly necessary. In doing so we cast vision, build faith, and prepare people for the future.

At the same time, we must be flexible in our plans, because the future usually doesn't turn out the way we expect. We must plan, but plans don't always work, and in those cases we trust God to make up the difference. We must be willing and able to change, and ultimately we depend on God's plan and God's timing.

Planning includes financial, legal, and construction plans. We need to consult experts in these areas, for a failure in one of them can result in a serious setback. When we bought our first property of four acres, we developed a master plan for maximum use. We ultimately built 27,000 square feet in four phases: first building, second-story classroom build-out, second sanctuary, remodeling of first sanctuary with additional second-story rooms. When we bought the present property of twelve acres on a major freeway in the city, we again developed a master plan with several phases. We planned a structure of over 100,000 square feet of floor space, about half of which we finished out initially.

4. Preaching and Teaching of God's Word

We get what we preach. The reason why almost all regular attendees in the typical UPCI church have received the Holy Ghost is because we preach the necessity of this experience and issue an appeal every week. Our preaching should be positive, encouraging, faith-building, and visitor-oriented. We must think of the typical unchurched person who visits for the first time, and preach in a way that he or she will understand. If we refer to a Bible story, we should tell it. If we use special Bible or Pentecostal terms, we should explain what they mean. We must stand for truth and against sin in a way that offers hope rather than condemnation. We must avoid harsh, hateful, rude, or crude comments, presenting

the gospel in an attractive way. Over the course of the year, our preaching and teaching should cover the major biblical themes, Apostolic doctrines, and holiness of life.

5. Power of the Spirit

We cannot build a genuinely Apostolic church by human ability alone; we must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Every service must be saturated with prayer and characterized by heartfelt, genuine, spontaneous worship. Through preaching, teaching, prayer, and example we can create an atmosphere of faith, worship, and responsiveness to the Spirit. Our advertising shouldn't merely present programs similar to other churches, but it should emphasize the transforming, healing, delivering power of God. Our church growth strategy isn't primarily *attractional*—building something to match people's preexisting expectations—but *transformational*—relying on the Word and Spirit to change people's thinking and lead them into a new experience and life with God. In our counseling, witnessing, preaching, and teaching we cannot rely primarily on our ability, education, and talent. These things are simply tools, but most of all we need the presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit. As Pentecostals, we know that church life and growth come from God's work in our midst.

6. Personal Care

All these principles are vital to all ministry and church life, but the last two focus primarily on pastoral ministry and lead most directly to sustainable church growth.

Personal care means creating an atmosphere and culture in which everyone is important, valued, and wanted. When a church is small, this culture can be formed by the way the pastor and pastor's spouse work with people. As a church grows it must become more intentional in order to communicate the same spirit and to ensure that people don't fall between the cracks. For example, in a small church everyone can greet a visitor, but a larger church must implement a strategy to greet all visitors, get their contact information, and follow up with them.

The church needs a strategy to welcome, communicate with, and follow up with people in every category of relationship to the church—prospects, visitors, regulars, absentees, and former attendees. For example, when I met people in the community I would obtain their contact information and follow up with a call, letter, or email. I would offer to minister to them through prayer, Bible study, hospital visit, or whatever was needed. First-time visitors received a telephone call, a letter, and in a few cases, a personal visit. We also put them on our mailing list for special events, for about six mail-outs per year. Typically we would call them again within six months, usually before Easter or fall revival services, to

express our continued availability to help them and to update our records. Second-time visitors received another letter. Sometimes a visitor was not responsive initially but would decide to return a year later; our continued interest and care made a difference. We also developed a discipleship and mentoring program for converts. We sought to connect all regular attendees to the church in several ways and communicated through our weekly bulletin, website, emails, and pastoral letters. The pastoral team contacted absentees, and the office staff mailed them a bulletin. In short, we sought to communicate regularly with everyone in our sphere of influence and to minister to their needs.

7. Personal Involvement

Personal involvement means creating a culture in which everyone is needed and has a chance to participate. The goal is to involve every regular attendee in some regular activity of the church and ultimately to involve everyone in ministry (service) as chapter 1 discusses. There should be written guidelines for those who are involved in leadership and public ministry, such as Sunday school teachers, children and youth ministry workers, praise singers, choir members, ushers, hosts, and hostesses. Since they represent the church and guide its activities, they should reflect the teachings of the church including the new birth, faithfulness, and holiness of life and dress. (For a sample policy, see the appendix in my book *Growing a Church*.) The more significant of a representative role that people have, the more they should be an example of the church's teachings. The church's public identity becomes what these people represent, rather than what all attendees portray. At the same time, all regular attendees should feel welcome, wanted, and needed; thus we should find ways to involve them. We can assign many tasks and roles to them even if they are in the process of obeying and experiencing Acts 2:38 or have not yet made full commitments in matters such as tithing and dress. Many opportunities are available to everyone, such as building and grounds maintenance, mail-outs, potluck dinners, socials, assistance to the needy, community involvement, and various forms of outreach.

At New Life we sought to connect people to the church in three different ways. (1) *Age-based groups*. We accomplished this through Sunday school classes for all ages. As the church grew, we added adult classes such as Hyphen (ages 18-24), Singles 1 and 2, and Young Families. We also formed fellowship circles to minister informally to various age groups including singles, young families, newlyweds, and seniors. (2) *Geographically based care groups*. In our case they did not function as full cell groups, but we used them to extend pastoral ministry, such as contacting members weekly, checking with absentees, praying with people in the altar, visiting the sick, and preparing food for families when members were sick. At times we used these groups to arrange social events, prayer

meetings, home Bible studies, rides to church, showers, and housewarmings. As the church grew bigger we still wanted the connections of a small church and wanted people to know at least those who lived in their area. (3) *Ministry groups*. As people became committed to the church, we involved them in activities based on their interests and placed them in roles suitable to their development. Occasionally we conducted surveys to ascertain people's interests, abilities, and availability, and we emphasized the importance of involvement by everyone. We tried to reduce the "unemployment rate" of each age group, from youth to seniors. In principle, then, everyone was connected to three sets of friends: people of similar age and circumstance in life, people who lived nearby, and people of similar interests. These ties became a powerful way to connect people to church. Of course, other churches accomplish the same purpose in different ways, such as through small group ministry.

ATTRACTING, WINNING, AND RETAINING PEOPLE

Adapted from David K. Bernard, *Spiritual Leadership in the Twenty-first Century*

Let's discuss three practical steps that are essential to church growth at every level. (1) We must attract a significant number of people. (2) We must convert a significant number of visitors. (3) We must retain a significant number of converts. For the first ten years, I recorded information for everyone who received the Holy Ghost at New Life Church in Austin, including backsliders who were renewed but excluding people who were not candidates for church membership such as out-of-town visitors, visitors from other Apostolic churches, and converts in jail. The net number was about three hundred, about 80 percent of the total. The following study is simply the experience of one church, not a true statistical analysis, but the purpose is to help other churches examine what is effective for them. (For further discussion and statistics, see my book *Growing a Church*.)

Attracting Visitors

I first looked at how people were attracted to the church. I analyzed the visitors who ultimately received the Holy Ghost, for they were the ones we reached most effectively. I identified three main sources of visitors.

1. *Advertising*: sign, newspaper, radio, door hangers, direct mail, Yellow Pages, Internet. In the early years, our best form of advertising was the Yellow Pages; later it was our website. This was true not only for those who sought a Pentecostal church but also for those who sought any church that seemed appealing. All forms of advertising accounted for 10 percent of our converts. This number is significant and worthwhile. In addition, advertising has another benefit beyond directly bringing people to church. It creates positive public relations, goodwill, and name recognition to assist when someone receives a personal invitation.

2. *Cold Contacts*: personal invitations to strangers, such as canvassing, door knocking, street services, ministry in halfway houses, and nursing home services. Overall, we didn't find door knocking to be productive. These methods resulted in 5 percent of our converts.

3. *Personal Relationships*. Invitations based on personal relationships accounted for 85 percent of converts: family (44 percent); friends (34 percent, including coworkers, neighbors, and acquaintances); referrals from other UPCI churches (7 percent).

My conclusion is that we should employ a variety of methods to contact people. Different methods are effective in different situations. The combination of methods brings success. Advertising is beneficial, especially when it highlights the distinctive Pentecostal belief in miracles, healing, deliverance, and baptism of the Holy Spirit. Belonging to an organization and using Pentecostal identification provides tangible benefits. At the same time, by far the most effective methods of evangelism are those that rely on existing personal relationships. The best way to attract visitors is to mobilize church members to become soulwinners. We can impart a burden, inspire, and provide practical training. We can teach how to live as a witness, build and maintain relationships, approach acquaintances, share a testimony, explain the scriptural plan of salvation, and conduct simple Bible studies. We should use the strong ties that exist in certain neighborhoods, ethnicities, and immigrant groups. Once we make good contacts or converts who are connected to larger groups, they can be a key to reaching others. After people are in the church for several years, their relationships tend to focus on the church. We should encourage them to reach outside their comfort zone, make new friends, meet new people in their neighborhood, participate in community events, and connect with service providers and customers. Finally, we can provide special opportunities to invite family, friends, and acquaintances such as holiday events, children's programs, vacation Bible school, dramas, concerts, days to honor special categories of workers, revival services, Appreciation Sunday, Friends Day, Education Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, Holy Spirit Sunday, All Nations Sunday, Winter Renewal (what we call a "revival"), and Fall Renewal.

Winning Converts

It isn't enough to have many visitors or to break attendance records. We must find ways to lead people to repentance, water baptism in Jesus' name, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Our converts received the Holy Ghost in the following ways.

1. *Sectional and District Meetings*, including rallies, camps, and conferences: 13 percent. This method is significant. It was especially important when our church was small. By taking people to various meetings we were able to expose them to nationally known ministries, large crowds, exciting worship, and an atmosphere of faith and revival. Even after we became a big church, it was still an effective strategy to bring people to children's camps, youth camps and conferences, ladies' conferences, men's conferences, Spanish rallies, and revival camps and conferences. The mother church now fills this role in part for present and former daughter works.

2. *Non-Church Settings*, such as home, work, and car: 5 percent. When the local church conducts evangelism outside the church building, including Bible studies, some people will receive the Holy Ghost in these settings.

3. *Special Services* (special speakers): 35 percent. Here we see the importance of the evangelist. We brought in speakers for Holy Spirit Sundays, children's revivals, youth revivals, and general revivals; and we focused on repentance, water baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost. It's worthwhile to set aside money in the budget or to raise money for such meetings. They are effective in inspiring faith, mobilizing people to invite guests, and leading visitors and regular attendees to the gift of the Holy Ghost.

4. *Regular Church Services*: 47 percent. As the church grew, this method became the most significant of all. In the long run, the best tool for bringing people to the new birth is regular church services that feature heartfelt worship, anointed preaching, evangelistic appeal, prayer, and the move of the Holy Spirit. Instead of relying primarily on special meetings several times per year, the church should cultivate an expectation that people can receive the Holy Ghost in any service and that people will be added to the church weekly. One service of the week should be primarily evangelistic. In our church, Sunday morning was the best evangelistic time because that is when we had the most visitors. My message always included an evangelistic appeal. Sunday night became more of a ministry to regular attendees and returning visitors. We had more time for worship, special recognitions, the choir, and prayer at the end. If a church has only one service on Sunday, then this service needs to minister effectively to both visitors and members.

Home Bible studies can be an important component of an evangelistic strategy. Typically, we teach a Bible study to someone who has been introduced to the church through a personal relationship. Bible studies are effective in building a relationship with the teacher and preparing people to be baptized and to receive the Holy Ghost. Not only do they assist in making converts, but they can be the first step in discipleship, which involves retaining converts.

Retaining Converts

It isn't enough to have wonderful revival services and to see many people receive the Holy Ghost. For a church to grow, it must retain a significant number of contacts, and retention must exceed overall attrition. This is probably our greatest challenge. Most churches keep track of attendance, numbers baptized, and numbers receiving the Holy Ghost, but most probably don't have a good idea of their retention rate after one year. It may be as low as 10 or 20 percent. To illustrate the significance of

the retention rate, consider a church that wins fifty souls in one year, a good revival. If its retention rate is 10 percent, then a year later it would have only five new people, probably not enough to offset normal attrition overall. If the retention rate is 50 percent, however, it will grow significantly. Moreover, this retention rate will produce good results if the church wins only half as many converts. For example, if a church of one hundred wins twenty souls per year and retains half of them in net growth, it can double in ten years. One church can have a large revival but show little or no growth, while another church can have only a moderate revival but show significant growth, all because of the retention rate.

The first action to retain converts is what I call *instant convert counseling*. As soon as they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, someone needs to explain its significance to them and urge them to return for the next service: “You’ve had a wonderful experience, but in the next day or two the devil will try to take it away. He may try to convince you that you did not receive anything. You may face trials of life, and you may face opposition from family or friends, but remember what happened to you. Keep believing, keep praying, keep coming to church, and enroll in the discipleship class. God will confirm His Word to you, and He will give you victory.” At this point, the person should introduce them to the pastor, outreach director, or other leader who can connect with them and give them further guidance. Someone should give them contact information in case they have an immediate need in the next few days, and someone should get their contact information to follow up. Now is the time to begin the work of retention.

At New Life Church we found that the best way to retain converts was to urge them to make three commitments.

1. *Discipleship Class*. We used different methods over the years, but eventually we developed four modules of four to six weeks each. We offered the first during Sunday school and the others during our midweek service (so converts could soon join their age group in Sunday school). This method allowed them to make smaller commitments and celebrate measurable progress. Moreover, we designed the classes for everyone who had not taken them, not just converts. The first module focused on basic Christian living, including faith, overcoming temptation, prayer, Bible study, church attendance, giving, and witnessing. Subsequent modules focused on practical Christian living such as relationships, marriage, communication, commitment, accountability, following authority, finances, self-discipline, anger management, and fruit of the Spirit. We dealt with doctrine toward the end, because we found the most immediate challenges for our converts were not doctrinal controversies but issues of daily life. Often, they had come to church because of a personal crisis. If we did not give them practical tools for dealing with their problems, they often succumbed to them again. To cover basic doctrines, including

holiness, we used my four *Essentials* booklets. Other good resources are my book with Robin Johnston, *On Being Pentecostal*, and my three DVD series *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, *The One True God*, and *The Life of Holiness*. People respond well to such resources, because they are presentations by external “experts,” they can be considered over time, and they don’t strain personal relationships with local leaders. Currently, the Division of Publications is developing a new, comprehensive discipleship curriculum such as we have just described.

2. *Sunday School and Worship*. We had Sunday school for all ages including adults. As we grew we added adult classes based on age and marital status that in effect functioned as small groups.

3. *Midweek Bible Study*. Here we emphasized the study of the Word, and sometimes we offered breakout classes, including the discipleship modules.

These three commitments helped people form relationships in the church and gave them practical tools to be successful in their new spiritual life. We retained only 30 percent of those who did not make them initially, but we retained 90 percent of those who did, for an overall rate of 55 percent. Eventually, I would tell the church, somewhat tongue-in-cheek: “If you really love what God has done in your life, make the three commitments, and statistically I promise you can live for God and go to Heaven. If you don’t make these commitments, then flip a coin to see if you are likely to make it or not.”

I also examined our retention rate based on how people had first come to church. Our retention rate for converts who had come through advertising was 20 percent, for cold contacts it was 46 percent, and for personal relationships it was 60 percent. Although 85 percent of our converts came through personal relationships, the percentage of retained converts who came through personal relationships was 92 percent. Thus, personal relationships were not only by far the best way to attract people to church, but they also resulted in a higher retention rate than other methods.

In addition to these three commitments, we tried to connect converts to *mentors*, whether officially or unofficially. Sometimes the mentors were the people who had brought them, but sometimes we used others who were more suitable because of similar situation in life or spiritual maturity.

In sum, we should motivate and train members to evangelize through existing personal relationships. We should connect, disciple, and involve new converts in multiple ways as soon as possible. Through personal care and personal involvement, we can increase our rate of retention and facilitate church growth.