

New Testament Evangelism

An Introduction to Natural Church Development

The purpose of this seminar:

- Understand how growth occurs in the church
- Examine the biblical teaching concerning evangelism
- Clarify several misconceptions related to evangelism
- Introduce the concept of Natural Church Development
- List the eight key spiritual characteristics that are necessary for a congregation to grow

God Gives the Growth

- John 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.
- The success of any evangelistic effort depends on God's will
- Human beings are unable to come to Christ on their own

God Gives the Growth

- John 12:32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.
- Every person who has ever lived will have an opportunity for salvation
- Does not say when this will happen
- Does not say every person will be saved

God Gives the Growth

- 1Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.
- 1Cor 3:7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

God Gives the Growth

- Mark 4:26 And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil;
- Mark 4:27 and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know.
- Mark 4:28 "The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head.
- Mark 4:29 "But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Church Growth Is Like an Organism

- Growth takes place all by itself
- Growth is normal in healthy organisms
- Growth produces more organisms

All we have to do is plant and water
The rest takes care of itself!

How Does God Give Growth?

- Acts 11:19 So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.
- Acts 11:20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and *began* speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.
- Acts 11:21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.
- Acts 11:22 The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch.
- Acts 11:23 Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and *began* to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain *true* to the Lord;
- Acts 11:24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

How Does God Give Growth?

- Christians encounter non-believers
- Spiritual information is given to them
- God opens their minds to understand it
- They make a commitment to follow God
- They are nurtured by other Christians

What Is Evangelism?

- Evangelism is preaching the Gospel in such a way that the message can be used by God to draw new disciples.
- They are then baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and are taught to obey what Jesus commanded.

What Is Evangelism?

- Matt 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
- Matt 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Misunderstanding Evangelism

- "Our job is to warn the world not save souls"
- Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
- Acts 2:40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

Misunderstanding Evangelism

- "We are a non-proselytizing organization"
- To proselytize means to recruit or convert someone to join a new faith or cause
- Matt 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations

Misunderstanding Evangelism

- “The church is only a little flock”
- Luke 12:32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.
- This passage does not say that the church will always be just a little flock
- Matt 13:33 He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."
- Acts 17:30 "God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent."

Misunderstanding Evangelism

- “Ministers do evangelism, not members”
- Acts 11:19-24 God used average Christians spread the gospel to Jews and Greeks
- 1Pe 3:15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence
- Eph 4:11 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,
- Eph 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ

Misunderstanding Evangelism

- Ministers are ordained to preach, to teach, and to lead the congregation
- Ministries are works of service performed by God’s people
- Ministers prepare God’s people to do ministries (works of service) – including evangelism

Misunderstanding Evangelism

- “If God is calling new people, they will find their way to us eventually”
- Rom 10:14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

What the Research Reveals

- Almost every evangelistic effort works in high quality churches
- Almost every evangelistic effort fails in low quality churches
- There is no substitute for quality in churches
- People like being in a spiritually healthy, functional environment

What the Research Reveals

- Pure doctrine doesn’t overcome poor quality
- The challenge is to provide truth and quality
- There is no monopoly on truth or quality
- If you don’t provide both, someone else will

What Works

- Healthy, balanced congregations grow
- Focusing on improving the quality of your congregation across the board
- A shared passion for evangelism

- Enthusiastic members who are fully engaged in making new disciples
- Attending to local needs in a compassionate manner
- Being real people focused on real work

What Doesn't Work

- Toxic congregations - dying for a reason
- Better marketing of a toxic congregation just turns off more people in less time at a greater cost
- Congregations in conflict, focused on politics and the form of religion
- Congregations that do evangelism because they are required
- Evangelism for the wrong motive
- Getting people to come to MY church

What Is Natural Church Development (NCD)?

- NCD is a roadmap to guide the growth and development of a congregation
- NCD describes the characteristics of a healthy congregation
- NCD provides diagnostic tools to measure the quality of a congregation
- NCD identifies which areas a congregation should work on first

What Does NCD Do?

- It reminds us that *God gives the growth.*
- It helps us focus on *principles rather than programs.*
- It provides a *regular "snapshot"* of the health of a congregation.
- It outlines a *process for improving quality.*
- It helps leaders focus on *essential growth values.*
- It provides concrete input for *developing or refining a vision.*
- It helps *direct limited resources* effectively.

Research shows that healthy congregations focus on improving in eight key areas:

1. Empowering Leadership
2. Gift-oriented Ministry
3. Passionate Spirituality
4. Functional Structures
5. Inspiring Worship
6. Holistic Small Groups
7. Need-oriented Evangelism
8. Loving Relationships

Sources

- New Testament Evangelism Conference by Bill Jacobs and Guy Swenson
- Natural Church Development by Christian Schwarz

For more information:

- Common Ground Christian Ministries <http://www.ntevangelism.org/>
- LifeResource Ministries <http://www.liferesource.org/>