

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XXV

December 2004

Number 5

2005 Lectureship Book

Do You Understand Church Growth?

Dedicated to the Elders and Members, South Florida Avenue Church of Christ

By Brian R. Kenyon

Church growth is an important subject. The survival and well-being of the church of Christ in this (and every succeeding) generation is dependent upon the church's understanding of Scriptural church growth. The church must grow if it is going to please God. Growth, however, may not always be measured by numbers. In fact, if numbers are the only goal, the growth will not be pleasing to God. This, of course, must not be taken to the other extreme. Thinking that the Lord desires *only* spiritual growth is also wrong. Ideally, the Lord wants his church to grow in both ways.

God wants the church to grow spiritually. Spiritual growth will occur when each member applies the beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-10) and the "Christian graces" (2 Pet. 1:5-7). These develop the inward person. To the degree that these spiritual qualities are present, the degree of growth, or maturity, is measured. When these spiritual qualities are absent, spiritual growth is impossible. The spiritual growth of a particular congregation is directly proportionate to the growth each member has achieved in these spiritual qualities. Peter exhorted the faithful to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

God also wants the church to grow numerically. This fact is illustrated well by the parable of the mustard seed. Although it is "the least of all seeds," the mustard seed, which is like "the

kingdom of heaven," grows to be the "greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (Mt. 13:31-32). The Great Commission also implies God's desire for numerical growth (Mt. 28:19-20). Making disciples of "all nations" by "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" and by "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" cannot be done without adding numbers to the church!

The reality is that spiritual growth and numerical growth occur hand in hand. In some situations, however, all the spirituality in the world will not penetrate the rebellion of certain people. Therefore, a body of God's people growing spiritually does not always guarantee that it will grow numerically. One cannot imagine, for example, Ezekiel making very many converts (cf. Ezek. 2:2-3, 6; 3:5-7), yet he grew spiritually. Especially would this be true in parts of the world, such as Muslim dominated areas, where true religion is violently opposed. In the United States of America, however, there are not many (if any) places like this, and one major reason why churches of Christ are not growing numerically is because they are not growing spiritually.

This lectureship book is not the typical "church growth" book. When many people think of a book about "church growth," they think of a

book dealing with statistics, methodologies, and/or step by step instructions on how to conduct a one-on-one Bible study. Although this book contains some statistics, reviews of methodologies, and information about one-on-one Bible studies, its main focus is upon Scriptural principles that lead to true growth versus worldly ideas that, at best, lead only to pseudo-growth. There are also practical studies that will help the church better appreciate church growth and the contribution each member can make toward it.

The majority of this book contains the oral presentations which will be delivered January 17-20, 2005. For all the topics, see the advertisement on the third page. Three speaker changes had to be made: (1) Brian Kenyon will be speaking on "Do We Understand What 'Fields White Unto Harvest' Require?" instead of Ed Smith; (2) Maurice Davis will be speaking on "Do We Understand the Growth of the Church in Antioch?" instead of Harold Redd; and (3) Gene Burgett will be speaking on "How Important Is the Proper Foundation for Growth?" instead of Harold Redd. These three changes, however, will not be reflected in the book.

The first part of the book focuses on basic necessities for understanding church growth. Among the chapters in this section are "Do We Understand the Duty to Support Faithful Efforts?" and "Do Overseers Need to Understand Church Growth?" The

second part presents challenges to church growth. Among the chapters in this section are "Do We Understand Failed Unity Proposals?," "Can We Have a Living Name But Be Dead?," "Are There Gatherings We Need to Refuse?," and "Does Everything We Promote Contribute to Church Growth?" The third part concerns practical areas of church growth. Among these chapters is "Do We Understand the Value of Printed Materials in Church Growth?"

The fourth part gives the afternoon forum topics. *Improper Manipulation* contains chapters on "Do Contests Promote Growth?," "Do Faulty Comparisons Hinder Growth?," and "Does Constantly Attacking the Church and Commending Sects Promote Growth?" *Proper Motivations* contains chapters on "Do We Love the Truth?," "Do We Know the Truth?," and "Are We Seeking the Lord's Approval?" *Examples to Follow* contains chapters on "Do We Appreciate the Need to Plant Congregations as Did Paul?," "Do We Appreciate the Need for Edification as Did Barnabas?," and "Do We Appreciate the Work of Watering as Did Apollos?" *Growth and Preaching* contains chapters on "Do We Understand the Need to Train Preachers?" and "Do Preachers Need to Prepare and Deliver Healthy Food?"

The remaining section of the book is an appendix, which contains articles that will not be part of the oral presentations of the lectureship, but which relate to church growth. Among these chapters are "Third Generation Struggles: The Need for Restoration," "Winterfest 2004: Parents Beware," "Reflections on Personal Work Resources," and reviews of the following three personal work resources: Wallace Maxwell's *Helping the Church Grow*; Jule Miller's *The Visualized Bible Study Series*, and Stephen Rogers' *The Gospel Made Simple*. Finally, this book contains an extensive index of words and subjects, which will greatly increase its research value.

Understanding Church Growth

While writing on this subject, Jackie M. Stearsman states, "Some have placed great interest in reaching the lost

and making sure they are immersed in obedience to the Lord. However, many who are left to fend for themselves soon become lost again. There will ever be a need for laborers in the vineyard of the Lord (Mt. 9:38). A baby who does not have adult care and supervision will not survive....some do not have the same degree of concern for babes in Christ who have no one to genuinely care for their spiritual well-being. We must cultivate the vision of Christ expressed in the following verse: 'But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd' (Mt. 9:36)."

Refusing Gatherings

James E. Rogers states, "While we want the church to grow, we must be careful to use only authorized methods to accomplish this. When numbers become the dominating factor, compromise is not far behind. Some in our day have adopted a union in diversity mentality to try to accomplish growth. This has resulted in swelling of numbers but not conversion of souls. Some of this has been accomplished through the use of so-called 'unity forums' and workshops. Some who have opposed these attempts to merge with error have been ridiculed and insulted. The question arises, 'Are there some meetings or gatherings that should be refused?' The answer is yes. We will discuss these matters in this study."

Printed Materials

Allen Webster, states from a wealth of experience in this field, "In a day when the church has more money than Solomon, more education than Moses, and more resources than David, some churches have fewer responses than Noah (he did save his family). Some churches with two to five hundred members did not baptize ten new converts last year (including the children of their members). We have the best transportation since Elijah's chariot of fire, the best communication technology since Pentecost, the best visuals since those seen at Belshazzar's feast (Dan. 5), but in some places we are having less success at church building than Sardis and Laodicea

(Rev. 3)...In a sense, the 'mailman' can be made a 'preacher man' by putting the gospel in his hands to carry to a community. His feet can leave a path of light as he walks from one box to another leaving information about the 'light of the world' (Jn. 8:12)."

Singing And Church Growth

While addressing this topic, one he truly enjoys, Tom Holland writes, "If evangelism is necessary for the message of salvation to reach the lost, then church growth is important because evangelism produces it. If edification of the body of Christ is vital to the spiritual life of the church, then church growth is important because it is the result of the church being built up in the most holy faith (Eph. 4:13-16). If church growth is important, then singing is necessary because singing is a significant factor in church growth. A church cannot be built on dead singing."

Conclusion

All who are associated with this lectureship trust that this book will help each reader to better understand The Book, and what it teaches about church growth. This book will make a valuable addition to any Christian's library. The books should be available in mid-December, in plenty of time for holiday gift giving. Why not order your copy, or copies, today?

The Harvesters

Published Monthly
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33803
(863) 683-4043

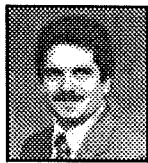
Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman, Director
Brian Kenyon, Associate Director
Gene Burgett, Public Relations Director
Board of Directors

Gordon Methvin, President	George K. French
Paul Thomhill, Vice President	Scott Gerhardt
J. H. Blackman, Jr., Secretary	Greg Littleton
Allen Gardner, Treasurer	E. Robert McAnally
Glenn Burgess	John D. Smitherman
Maurice Davis	Jackie M. Stearsman
	Ted Wheeler

TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969



Steve Atnip



Gene Burgett



Emmanuel Charles



Jimmy Clark



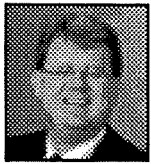
Keith B. Cozort



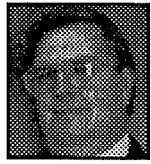
Bruce Daugherty



Eric Dawkins, Sr.



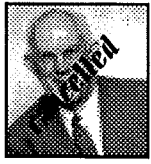
Allen Webster



Gary Summers



Jackie M. Stearsman



Ed Smith



Raymond Sieg



James E. Rogers



Ryan P. Roark



Steve Riley



Harold Redd



Edward Owusu-Ansah



Robert McAnally



Billy Lambert



Brian Kenyon

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33803 • (800) 320-9780

“Do You Understand Church Growth?”

30th Annual Bible Lectureship — January 17-20, 2005

Jackie M. Stearsman - Director

Monday, January 17th

9:00 Understanding Growth (Eph. 4:11-16) J. Stearsman
 9:40 Supporting Faithful Efforts Eric Dawkins, Sr.
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Preparing Fields White Unto Harvest Ed Smith
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Growth Hindering Manipulation
 1:30 Do Contests Promote Growth? Steve Atnip
 2:00 Faulty Growth Comparisons Don Hudson
 2:30 Attacking the Church, Yet Promoting Sects G. Summers
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Wolves Hinder Growth Ryan P. Roark
 7:45 Growth Difficulties in Third John Billy Lambert

Tuesday, January 18th

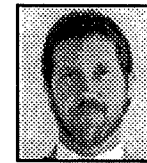
9:00 Failed Unity Proposals Billy Lambert
 9:40 Growth in Antioch Harold Redd
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Church Growth and Mail Outreach A. Webster
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Proper Growth Motivations
 1:30 Love the Truth Bruce Daugherty
 2:00 Know the Truth Steve Atnip
 2:30 The Lord's Approval (2 Cor. 10:18) M. Elledge
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Producing Fruit Implies Growth Keith B. Cozort
 7:45 A Living Name But Dead (Rev. 3:1) J. Clark

Wednesday, January 19th

9:00 Proper Foundation for Growth Harold Redd
 9:40 Elders and Church Growth Scott Gerhardt
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Alabama School of Biblical Emphasis J. Clark
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Growth Models to Follow
 1:30 Planting of Paul Bruce Daugherty
 2:00 Edifying of Barnabas William Howard
 2:30 Watering of Apollos Brian Kenyon
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Faulty Building Materials Emmanuel Charles
 7:45 External and Internal Problems Robert McAnally

Thursday, January 20th

9:00 Stabilizing Congregations in Ghana E. Owusu-Ansah
 9:40 Refusing Gatherings (Neh. 6:2) James E. Rogers
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Do All Programs Result in Growth? Raymond Sieg
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Growth and Preaching
 1:30 Importance of Preachers Barry Gilreath, Sr.
 2:00 Training Preachers Gene Burgett
 2:30 Preparing Healthy Diets Steve Riley
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Singing Songs of Church Growth Tom Holland
 7:45 How May Singing Promote Growth? Tom Holland



Mike Elledge



Scott Gerhardt



Barry Gilreath, Sr.



Tom Holland



William Howard



Don Hudson

Broadcast Live
on the Internet
at www.fsop.net

Book Prices

All Prices
Include Postage
Credit cards accepted

“Do You Understand Church Growth?” (‘05)	\$16.00
Do You Understand the Grace of God? (‘04).....	\$16.00
Do You Understand Fellowship? (‘03).....	\$16.00
Do You Understand Worship? (‘02)	\$15.00
Do You Understand Leadership (‘01)	\$14.00
Do You Understand Preaching? (‘00)	\$14.00

2000 - 2005 Books Available On CD! Call the Office for prices!

Gene Burgett Report

By the time this report reaches our readers the Thanksgiving holiday will be a memory and the end of the year as well as the new year holiday seasons will be a pressing concern. It is a busy time of year. At the Florida School of Preaching it is an especially active period as the semester ends December 17. Instructors have only a few weeks left to finish covering their material, give final exams, and turn in grades. When all of this is done the 2005 lectureship will be only one month away. I hope you have made plans to attend.

We have had several men inquire about the possibility of attending the Florida School of Preaching. Each prospect receives a copy of our catalog, an admission form, as well as material that will aid them in preparing a budget. Though we charge no tuition, each full-time student needs the funds necessary to meet normal cost-of-living expenses for the two years they attend. Churches or individuals interested in supporting a student may contact me or the school office for details.

A person recently asked me via email if I still do meeting work. Yes, I do. In fact, I recently finished a meeting at the Alachua church of Christ. However, even when I hold a meeting it is in connection with my work

with the Florida School of Preaching, thus I request that any payment be made in the form of a donation to the school.

Many of the churches of Christ in north central Florida participate in a second Sunday fellowship. The event is rotated among the various congregations and takes place around 3:00 in the afternoon. The event usually consists of a couple of speakers as well as a lot of great singing. It is a wonderful way to get to know brethren in the area, and it was my privilege to attend a recent fellowship in Alachua, Florida. I look forward to being a part of the next fellowship to be held in High Springs at the civic center.

As the end of the year draws near many of you are preparing your budgets for 2005. Please find a spot in your plans for the Florida School of Preaching. The work of training preachers is one worthy of your support. God has made preaching fundamental to the work of saving the lost, for "it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

Gene Burgett, burgett@atlantic.net
352-331-3195

Return Service Requested

WEB SITE: www.fsop.net/

E-MAIL: fsop@gte.net

FAX: 863-683-0750

PHONE (863) 683-4043 (800) 320-9780

LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lakeland, FL
PERMIT #235