

How to Grow a Church in the Twenty-first Century

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Introduction

I have now been an active participant in the Church Growth Movement for twenty-five years. As a young pastor serving in my first church in 1975, I discovered that the excellent training I received in seminary had not prepared me for all the challenges of pastoring a local church. My classes in Greek, Hebrew, church history, Christian education, apologetics, and theology had, of course, provided a seminal foundation for church ministry. However, I soon learned those disciplines did not offer assistance with such daily challenges as winning people to Christ, assimilating newcomers, dealing with power families, initiating change, and a host of other matters faced in ministry. In my search for answers to those challenges, I was drawn to the early writings of the Church Growth Movement. And, like numerous pastors and church leaders have discovered during the past quarter century, I found church growth theory and theology provided solid answers to the basic question *How do churches grow?*

It is my contention that church growth theory and theology, rightly understood, still provides the best answer to growing a church—even in the twenty-first century! Of course, those of us assembled at this meeting are aware that not everyone agrees with my contention. For example, Bill Hull wrote a chapter in

Power Religion titled, "Is the Church Growth Movement Really Working?" in which he answers, "Regretfully, I must answer no. . . the church growth movement does not produce lasting results, . . ." (Horton, et al. 1992:141-143). More recently, veteran missiologist James Engel stated in a *Christianity Today* article that ". . . we must acknowledge that the time has arrived when we are called by our Lord to move away from continued evangelistic mobilization and to build upon that existing Christian presence. In short, we must make disciples of these nations by making a renewed commitment to spiritual formation, not to numerical growth" (Engel 2000:58).

From my perspective, these individuals and others have misconstrued the essential nature of the Church Growth Movement. Since we are discussing *New Wineskins for Effective Ministry in the 21st Century* at this conference, I believe it is important to take a fresh look at the core principles of the Church Growth Movement under the title, *How to Grow a Church in the Twenty-first Century*.

A Formula

At the risk of oversimplification, my thesis is that Growing Churches in the twenty-first century will follow the formula $CG = HS (p \text{ factors})$. On the left side of the formula is the dependent variable CG that stands for Church Growth. A church's growth is dependent on the elements on the right side of the equal (=) sign. On the right side are all of the independent variables. Each of these factors may stand alone, but it is as they function together that they determine the potential, or lack of potential, for church growth in a local church. The Holy Spirit (H.S.) is the only constant in the formula. Never changing, the Holy Spirit is always ready to empower a church for effective ministry and growth. The ingredients that create the variations in a church's growth potential are the "P Factors." "P" stands for "Principle" and, while the P Factors mentioned in this paper may not be exhaustive, I believe they represent the core principles that will be the foundation of growing churches in the twenty-first century.

Factor #1: The Right Premise: God's Word

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will have a strong commitment to the authority of the Word of God.

Church growth theory and theology has always had at its core a belief in the authority of the Bible. Writing in 1973, Alan Tippett noted that, "McGavran is essentially a biblical missiologist. The basic presupposition of all his writing and debate is the authority of Scripture and his view of authority is evangelical" (Tippett 1973:20). Donald McGavran and Win Arn affirmed the importance of the authority of Scripture in church growth theory and theology when they wrote, "The first biblical principle Church Growth men emphasize is faithfulness to the plain meaning of the Bible, our authority" (McGavran and Arn 1977:26).

As we enter the twenty-first century, we are facing two dangers regarding the authority of Scripture. The first danger is the loss of belief in the authority of Scripture. While we in the Church Growth Movement allow for latitude in theological perspective, I believe we must admit that the weaker a church's position is regarding the authority of Scripture, the less likely it is to experience biblical church growth. Some churches and denominations that once held to a high view of biblical authority have now relegated the Bible to such a low position of authority that they no longer have any spiritual mandate for church growth. As an example, a number of years ago I was leading a seminar in Maryland on the topic of Friendship Evangelism. In the first session I made mention of the lostness of mankind and the need for salvation in Jesus Christ. During the morning coffee break, I overheard two pastors discussing their dislike of my reference to people as "lost." These pastors were serving churches in a denomination that has abandoned belief in the authority of Scripture. Not surprisingly, the great majority of the churches in that denomination are mired in church decline, due in part to a lack of spiritual authority for biblical church growth. In short, if we do not believe the biblical proposition that people are lost, then there is no need to find them. If there is no need to find them, there is no spiritual authority for church growth.

The second danger is the extension of the authority of Scrip-

ture beyond the biblical cannon to what some see as new revelation from God. It appears to me that recent church growth studies have weakened the authority of God's Word by allowing for an unexamined acceptance of prophecy as equal to, or nearly equal to, the Bible. It is my belief that an uncritical acceptance of prophecies, visions, words of knowledge, and other such experiences as authoritative, may result in erosion of the authority of God's written Word. I recognize that there is much to learn from all churches for effective church growth, but while engaged in our study it is essential that we remember to ". . . contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Biblical church growth in the twenty-first century will be found among churches that hold to a centrist position on the authority of Scripture, i.e., they neither abandon biblical authority nor add to it.

Factor #2: The Right Priority: Make Disciples

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will place a priority on making disciples.

While this may be preaching to the choir, I think it is crucial to affirm that God wants His church to grow. Allow me to mention a recent experience as anecdotal evidence of the need to keep this concept before us. This summer I attended a conference in Atlanta, Georgia. During the opening session, all in attendance took a moment to introduce themselves to the entire group. One of the pastors told the group, "I've been pastoring my church for three years. We're not growing, but we're a healthy church." When I heard this pastor's comment, I immediately turned to the person sitting next to me and asked, "Can a church be healthy if it doesn't grow?" He responded, "Don't go there!" However, I think we must go there. Is it really possible for a church to be healthy if it does not grow? In a few limited situations it may be possible, perhaps in less than five percent of churches by my calculations. Yet, I sincerely hope that even in those few situations where growth is not possible, a church would still have, as Charles Van Engen suggests, a "yearning" for growth. It may be somewhat simplistic, but a comparison of Christ's statement in

Matthew 16:18 with the question *Does God want His church to grow?* is revealing. Clearly, Jesus Christ (God) desires (want, will) His body (my church) to be built (grow).

In the great majority of church situations I find it difficult to think a church could honestly be labeled “healthy” if it was not growing. Not only did Jesus Christ categorically state that He would build His church, thereby sovereignly guaranteeing church growth, but He left us with a command to “make disciples,” thereby sovereignly giving us a part in church growth. By the way the disciples responded to Christ’s command, as described in the book of Acts, it is obvious they expected healthy churches to win people to Christ and assimilate new believers, resulting in the expansion of existing churches and the extension of daughter churches. Church growth is the point! We must be careful that we do not use the guise of church health, or any other supposedly new paradigm, as an excuse for non growth.

Making disciples implies a priority of finding the lost. The Father’s purpose of seeking and finding the lost is apparent in the life of Jesus Christ. The birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and ultimate return of Jesus Christ are all tied to the desire of the Father to find the lost and bring them into reconciliation with Himself. Church growth theory and theology derives its purpose from the life of Christ who came to “seek and save the lost” (Lk 19:10). Arthur Glasser writes,

The Gospels confront us again and again with the love of Christ for men. It was this love that ultimately led him to pour out His life a ransom for many. The crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord are inherent to the record of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And yet, the events surrounding his cross and empty tomb do not climax the gospel narratives. The climax is his issuance of the mandate to disciple the nations. And this mandate is to be obeyed. Jesus Christ expects us to give ourselves to the task of gathering the lost (Conn, et al. 1977:31).

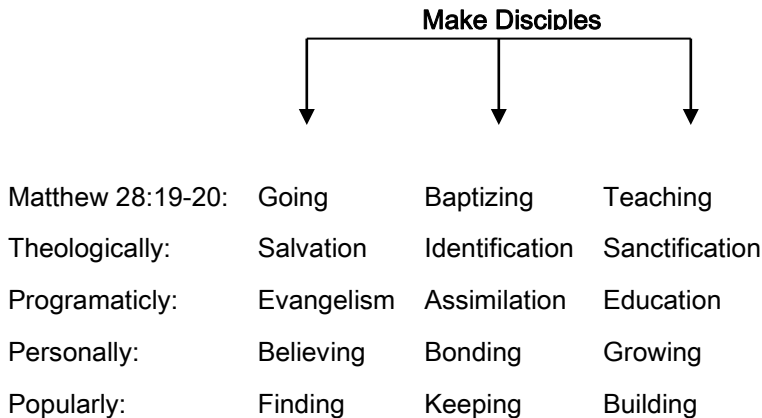
Biblical church growth in the twenty-first century will be found among churches that maintain the priority of Jesus Christ—

making disciples by seeking and saving the lost.

Factor #3: The Right Process: Discipleship

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will balance their disciple-making process around three elements: Finding, Keeping, and Building.

It appears to me that the Great Commission is often misunderstood. A good example is seen in the quote already noted by James Engel. Note again how he writes, "In short, we must make disciples of these nations by making a renewed commitment to spiritual formation, not to numerical growth" (Engel 2000:58). In making this statement, Engel reveals a misunderstanding of discipleship. Like others, Engel equates disciple making with the single aspect of edification of the believer. He appears to see evangelism and discipleship as two different aspects of ministry. However, this is a major misunderstanding. It is true, of course, that we are commanded in the Great Commission to "make disciples." But, what does the command "make disciples" entail? Fortunately for us, the Holy Spirit provides the answer by placing around this command three participles that tell us HOW to make disciples. The chart below pictures the relationship of these participles to the command.



As you can see from the chart, the three participles are the words going, baptizing, and teaching. Going refers to the action of winning unbelievers to Jesus Christ. Other words that can be

used interchangeably are salvation, evangelism, and believing. Baptizing refers to the action of becoming part of the community of faith. There is a two-fold identification in that the new believer is to identify with Christ (Ro 6:3-11) and to identify with a local church (Ac 2:41). Other words that could be used for this action are assimilation, incorporation, and bonding. Teaching refers to the action of spiritual development. Other words that could be used for this action are sanctification, education, and growth. Essential to a full understanding of the Great Commission is an awareness that ALL of these actions rightfully fall under the umbrella called discipleship. Inherent in discipleship is the idea of a process that moves from believing to bonding to growing. Of course, in actual ministry situations the exact order of the process may be interchanged. But, theologically and strategically, the order of process moves from going to baptizing to teaching. Biblical church growth in the twenty-first century will be found among churches that develop a process of discipleship that takes into consideration all three of these actions, rather than simply focusing on only one of them.

Factor #4: The Right Power: Prayer

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will focus on prayer as their source of power.

Some have criticized the Church Growth Movement for being too interested in numerical growth and leaving the Holy Spirit out of the picture. This was the main criticism put forth by Duane Litfin when he spoke at the American Society for Church Growth meeting in 1995. His concern was that the Church Growth Movement has adopted a "Persuader's Stance" that is based on a purely human dynamic which produces human results (McIntosh, et. al. 1995: 85-99). While this may be the perception of some of our critics, nothing could be further from the truth. Church growth theory and theology holds that there is no true church growth apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Donald McGavran affirmed such when he wrote,

The growth of the Church is always brought about by the action of the Holy Spirit. As in the New Testament

Church, so today, the Holy Spirit leads, convicts of sin, converts, builds up, selects missionaries and thrusts them out to ripened fields. The concern of Christians today must be to understand the workings of the Holy Spirit and to be open to His leading. We talk of factors producing readiness to accept the Saviour—but who produces the factors? It is largely the Holy Spirit of God. We but describe the way in which He acts. He upbuilds the Church, extends and nurtures it. Men are the channel through which He works (McGavran 1959:55).

Unfortunately, it is evident that some church growth writers have been remiss in not speaking more precisely concerning the necessity of the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit and our need to pray. While we have all assumed the need for the Spirit's power, we have not always communicated our assumptions well. In some cases our enthusiastic acceptance of pragmatic methods has left the impression among observers that church growth adherents care more about strategy than the Spirit. In an effort to amend this oversight, recent church growth research has focused on what Elmer Towns calls the "Spiritual Factors" of church growth. Peter Wagner and others have studied and written on numerous of these factors, and more is likely to be produced on this issue in the years to come. Jesus' acknowledgment that He would build His church points to the reality that God Himself is bringing growth to His church. The apostle Paul reminds us that God works through human agency to accomplish this purpose when he says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth" (1 Co 3:6). George Peters writes in *A Theology of Church Growth* that, ". . . church growth will always contain an element of mystery that defies all human penetration, analysis, and definition and that casts us back on the Head of the church in prayer, trustful waiting, and patient labors" (Peters 1981:49). I am reminded of how W.A. Criswell often spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit. Whenever someone from his church would ask an unanswerable theological question, he would say, "These things, all these things, belong to the imponderables of Almighty God" (Patterson 1987:237-238). Biblical church growth

in the twenty-first century will be found among churches that trust in the imponderable work of the Holy Spirit by placing prayer at the center of their ministry.

Factor #5: The Right Pastor: A Team Builder

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will have pastors who effectively build a network of teams.

Most of us here today are familiar with the first axiom of church growth: The pastor must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price for growth (Hoge and Roozen 1979:281). This axiom received popular exposure as one of Peter Wagner's "Seven Vital Signs." Vital Sign Number One is ". . . a pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyze the entire church into action for growth" (Wagner 1985:63). Research by Win Arn in the early 1980s found that a church growth pastor . . .

- relates well to people
- is a good communicator.
- has clear priorities.
- is goal-oriented.
- is self-motivated.
- is able to build a team.
- is open to change.
- has a solid family.
- is willing to take logical risks.
- is certain of a call to ministry.¹

As we enter the twenty-first century, the ability to build a team ranks as perhaps the primary skill needed by church growth pastors. Command-and-control leadership is beating a fast retreat. In its place are teaming, open communication, shared ownership, and flexibility. To be effective in the twenty-first century, pastors must decide to "make" ministers, rather than simply "be" a minister. They must see themselves as the "coach" of the team, rather than as the "owner" of the team. This emerging model for pastoral leadership is based on the apostolic style found in the first century church. For apostolic leadership to be realized, Reggie McNeal suggests that a pastor must be vi-

sionary, missional, empowering, reproducing, and entrepreneurial (Miller 1997:3). Regarding the characteristic of reproducing, McNeal writes, "Jesus had his Twelve. Paul had his Timothy, Luke, Silas, and John Mark. Modern apostolic leaders understand the need to develop leaders. The most effective church leaders of the future [read twenty-first century] will make leadership development a priority" (1997:3). I believe leadership development is best done in teams, especially during times of rapid change. In my book *Staff Your Church for Growth* I wrote, "Teams form the foundation of effective ministry in every age but especially during times of change. Moses used a team as the people relocated from Egypt to the Promised Land. Jesus used a team to found the church. Paul used a team to take the gospel to the ends of the gentile world" (McIntosh 2000:88). Biblical church growth in the twenty-first century will be led by team building pastors who are able to build a network of people who together will lead the church forward to fulfill Christ's purpose in the world.

Factor #6: The Right Philosophy: Cultural Relevance

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will relate to their communities in culturally relevant ways.

Bill Sullivan claims, "Spreading the gospel is becoming less and less a geographical problem. Increasingly it is a cultural challenge. There are few places where the church has not gone. But, there are many groups of people who have not heard the gospel in *ways that attract their attention*" (Sullivan 1992:1 italics mine). To reach post-modern pre-Christian people, twenty-first century churches will package the gospel message in the style, language, esthetics, and music of their target audience. Of course, the need to be culturally relevant is not a new issue. Writing sixteen years ago, Elmer Towns noted, ". . . As the culture changes and people manifest different needs, the church must update its techniques to accomplish the goal" (Towns 1984:51).

While we may agree with the need to be culturally relevant, we must ask the question, *Is it biblical to change our methods so they are culturally relevant?* A look at the way Jesus approached

people demonstrates that it is. The following is one example. By studying the gospel of John, we observe that Jesus ministered to Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman in two distinct ways. Culturally, Nicodemus was an elite Jew with formal training as a Pharisee. As an inquisitive, self-righteous teacher, he sought out Jesus to ask Him questions. The Samaritan woman was culturally a lower class God-fearer with an informal education. Having lived a life of sin, she was indifferent to Jesus, even surprised He would talk with her.

Did Jesus use the same approach with these distinctively different individuals from opposite cultural backgrounds? Not quite. Jesus carefully selected a unique approach to each one—an approach that was calculated to penetrate their specific cultural backgrounds. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in a formal, private setting. Their conversation centered around spiritual matters on the theme of being born again. Jesus revealed Himself as the Son of Man and a master teacher. His basic approach was an abstract theological discussion. As they concluded their conversation, Jesus offered spiritual birth to Nicodemus if he would believe. When Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman He took a different slant. He used a casual conversation in a public place. He spoke of physical matters, such as water. Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah and a prophet. His approach to the woman at the well was very concrete and personal. As they concluded their conversation, Jesus offered her living water.

Jesus engaged His culture by understanding it and selecting approaches that communicated effectively with people in its various segments. As Elmer Towns concludes, “This does not mean we change eternal ministry principles based on the Word of God. But it does mean we use old-fashioned principles in a contemporary manner” (Towns 9184:51). Biblical church growth in the twenty-first century will be experienced by churches that swim with the currents in matters of style, but stand like a rock on matters of principle.

Factor #7: The Right Plan: Target Focused

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will design min-

istry to reach a clearly defined people group.

After visiting several churches to discover clear principles of effective evangelism, Mark Galli concluded, “. . . each church I examined has decided that it cannot be all things to all people. In one way or another, each has determined its unique identity as well as whom it is able to reach” (Galli 1991:37). Since the result of trying to be all things to all people often ends in being nothing to everyone, churches that will experience growth in the twenty-first century will design their ministry on the principle that aiming at a clearly defined audience produces more faithfulness than aiming at a broader audience. Such churches will learn to think like the persons they want to reach. They will take the position that ministry is not about people inside the church as much as people outside of the church. They will ask questions like *What needs do they have that we can meet?* In order for this to happen, churches must take the time to get to know the people they are trying to reach. George Hunter reminds us that,

We are in no position to know the target population’s culture, values, and life-style, or their felt needs, driving motivation, and points of contact with Christians, or their images, hangups, barriers, and doubts regarding Christianity, or the language they understand and the response patterns that are natural to them, or where and when they may assemble to consider the Gospel—unless we ask them (Hunter 1993).

The diverse people groups in the United States make it even more certain that biblical church growth in the twenty-first century will be experienced by churches that pick a segment of people they want to reach and develop a ministry to reach that segment.

Factor #8: The Right Place: Receptive Areas

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will focus on receptive and responsive people.

Growing churches in the twenty-first century do not ignore Christ’s mission to go into “all the world” (Mt 28:19), but they do believe effective use of their resources demands that they care-

fully select those who will be most responsive to their presentation of the gospel. As Donald McGavran reminded us thirty years ago,

The receptivity and responsiveness of individuals waxes and wanes. No person is equally ready at all times to follow “the Way.” The young person reared in a Christian home is usually more ready to accept Jesus Christ at twelve than at twenty. The skeptic is often more willing to become a disciple after serious illness or loss than he was before. This variability of persons is so well known that it needs no further exposition (McGavran 1970:216).

Of course, Scripture demonstrates that there is to be a continual process of sowing, watering, and reaping. Paul illustrates this process well when he says, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Co 3:6, NASB). This process requires that churches of the twenty-first century not abandon less responsive people, but, as McGavran suggested, “occupy fields of low receptivity lightly” (p. 230). There is to be a continual planting and watering among all people—receptive, moderately receptive, and non receptive. While holding non-receptive people lightly, however, the majority of limited resources—people, time, money—must be directed to responsive people. Jesus directed us to place our emphasis on receptive people when He told the disciples, “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest” (Jn 4:35, NASB). The harvest will not always be ripe, but will quickly rot. Thus, the emphasis must always be placed on responsive people and areas.

From my experience, a majority of pastors and church leaders do not take the receptivity/resistance of people seriously. They continue to expend limited resources on non-productive methods targeted at non receptive people. As McGavran predicted, some responsive people of the modern era have now become less open to the gospel in the post modern twenty-first century. Newly responsive people need to be discovered and focused on in the twenty-first century. As Jesus pointed out, there are fields that are ripe; we just need to see them. Biblical

church growth in the twenty-first century will be experienced by churches that are able to see the people who are ripe for harvest and focus resources toward reaching them.

Factor #9: The Right Procedure: Simple Structure

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will simplify their organizational processes.

We live in a new time of church leadership and management. Churches in the twenty-first century cannot afford to focus on maintenance. Post-modern people expect results. If they do not see movement in the overall direction of a church's mission, people will move on to a ministry that appears to be accomplishing its purpose. Let me share one example. I have observed two churches for over a decade that are located in the same city in Southern California. A few years ago both of these churches discovered that young families and single parents in their city were receptive and could be reached through the means of a day care center. Just before that summer, a proposal was brought to the first church's board to begin a preschool as an outreach ministry to the young families and single parents near the church. The idea found acceptance with the church leaders who immediately began to investigate the possibility. After studying the idea for one month, an official decision was made to move forward with the project. During the summer, the challenge was presented to the congregation, financing raised, remodeling of the church facility completed, a small staff hired, supplies purchased, and advertising mailed to the community. The preschool opened the first week of September with twelve students.

At the same time, a similar proposal was brought to the board of the second church. The idea also found acceptance with the church leaders who decided to enter into a full investigation of the idea. A research committee was appointed that took fifteen months to study all the issues surrounding the project. After nearly a year and a half of study, the board voted not to move ahead with the project. Now I ask you, *Which of these two churches do you think is growing today?* If you guessed the first church, you are correct. Today that church boasts over 100 pre-

school students. Since the start up of the preschool, over fifty families have been introduced to Christ and the church. Approximately fifty percent of all the people who have joined that church testify that their first exposure to Christ was through the preschool. What about the second church? Today it has declined from a church of 300 worshipers to less than 50 people. The church leaders have the reputation of being indecisive. Alvin Toffler says, "Each age produces a form of organization appropriate to its own tempo (Toffler 1970:143). In the rapidly changing post modern age of the twenty-first century, biblical church growth will be experienced by churches that develop simple organizational structures that allow them to take quick advantage of ministry opportunities.

Factor #10: The Right People: Effective Ministers

Growing churches in the twenty-first century will be supported by lay servants who invest their lives in personal ministry.

Ten years ago George Barna found that effective churches have capable people who surrender their time to benefit their churches (Barna 1990:13). The apostle Paul said: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:11-12, NIV). Chuck Swindoll draws three insights from this passage. First, "there are sufficient gifts to sustain any size church." Second, "when the gifts are exercised, congregations grow up." Third, "maximum involvement leads to healthy growth" (1989:116-117). The concepts of spiritual gifts and lay ministry are not new ones. Yet, the great majority of churches I consult still struggle with implementing a workable plan to involve laity in personal ministry, and, from what I have seen, a great majority of churches continue to struggle with this issue. The problem is complex, but two aspects are almost always exhibited. First, pastors talk about lay ministry, but remain reluctant to release their people in ministry. Second, lay people say they want to serve, but remain unwilling to prioritize their time for ministry. Over the last few years, I have watched one

church plateau due to a pastor's unwillingness to let go of ministry. Another church had to cancel a highly effective ministry, due to the selfishness of people who were unwilling to become involved in serving their church through its children's program. Clearly, much remains to be accomplished in understanding how to empower and recruit persons in ministry in the twenty-first century. However, biblical church growth in the twenty-first century will be found in churches that discover ways to move people from the pew to ministry.

The Multiplication Effect

The potential for churches to experience growth in the twenty-first century will be directly related to the effective employment of these P Factors. Some churches in the twenty-first century will seem to explode in growth with what appears to be little effort. Other churches that appear to have potential will never get moving. One way to understand these variations of growth potential is by observing the effect of P Factor multiplication. As a church effectively builds on each P Factor, there is an empowering that takes place as P Factors intersect with each other. While the following is not a complete picture, it does serve as an illustration of the potential. If we assume that each P Factor has a numerical value of 2, then as each P Factor intersects with another, there is a multiplication effect such as $2 \times 2 = 4$, $4 \times 2 = 8$, $8 \times 2 = 16$, $16 \times 2 = 32$, and so on. As a church effectively builds on these P Factors, the impact on growth will be expanded dramatically. Each P Factor essentially empowers other P Factors to the point that growth explodes. If only one to five P Factors are effectively employed, there is negligible growth potential. Yet, as a church builds its ministry on six or more of the P Factors, a church's growth potential accelerates.

Summary and Conclusion

It is God's will that lost men and women be found, reconciled to Himself, and brought into responsible membership in Christian churches. Church growth theory and theology, rightly understood, still provides the best answer to fulfilling God's mission in

the twenty-first century. While it is granted that church growth is a complex issue, as churches submit to the Holy Spirit's power and faithfully employ the P Factors presented in this paper, their potential for growth is dramatic. It is my prayer that pastors and church leaders in the twenty-first century will faithfully invest in effective ministry by using these biblical church growth principles.

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NOTES

1. From the writer's personal files.