

8 A Plan for 8 Multiplication

“Brother Eyo, you know how thrilled we’ve been about what God has been doing at Gane. Last week we shared our feelings with James, the pastor at Bentu. However, he just listened in silence and reacted strangely to our report. What did we do wrong? Should we not have shared what God is doing at Gane?”

Brother Eyo responded, “You were not wrong to share the victories God has given at Gane, but you must remember that not all churches have been established on the same, healthy, biblical principles that you used at Gane.”

Sometimes churches that have been established apart from the three “self” principles struggle for years before new leadership, new vision, and a fresh move of the Holy Spirit make it possible to break out of the old mold and experience life, health, and spiritual vitality.

Some of you reading this lesson may be pastoring or will pastor churches that are not growing and multiplying. Although it may be easier to build a good church from the beginning, it is also true that God wants every local church to be alive and working to win souls to Christ, and He has a plan that will make this possible. As you study this lesson let the Holy Spirit help you discover His plan for you to use so that your church may become a multiplying church.

lesson outline

Determining the Problem

Recognizing Spiritual Need

Planning for Change

Implementing Change

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Explain why a church may not be multiplying.
2. Identify the characteristics that are necessary to bring about spiritual renewal.
3. Identify the basic principles for changing a non-multiplying local church into a growing body of believers.
4. List four scriptural principles of evangelism today.

learning activities

1. Study the lesson in the same manner as you have done for previous lessons. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given, for they are important to a full understanding of the lesson. Answer all study questions and check your answers with those we have given.
2. Take the self-test and check your answer.
3. Answer the questions in Unit Student Report 3, then submit your answer sheet to your GU instructor.

key words

clue

persist

revival

corporate

renewal

violation

implement

resource

lesson development

DETERMINING THE PROBLEM

Objective 1. *Explain why a church may not be multiplying.*

If a church is not multiplying, the first step in seeking a solution is to find the cause. There may be various causes, but usually the basic reason is that the church was not founded on, or is not following, the self concepts. The concepts of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation are the important foundational principles you studied in Unit 2 of this course. There are several reasons why these principles may have been ignored or violated.

1. Reasons for no self-government. Perhaps without realizing it, the church planter may have an attitude that hinders the church's progress in becoming a multiplying church. Because he wants to help the church grow and be strong, he takes too much responsibility on himself and thus delays the church in the development of self government. The church planter may not wish to give up his authority as church leader. It may not be because he thinks he is important, but because he sincerely believes the church needs his help and he believes he can do the work much better than anyone else.

2. Reasons for no self-support. The church planter or mother church may continue to help the new church even though it could become self-supporting. As you studied in Lesson 5, there are dangers if the new church depends on financial help and workers from outside sources. Although the development may be slower, the church will be more permanently established and have a greater ministry when the resources are from within the church body.

3. Reasons for no self-propagation. The believers may not have learned their responsibility as the church body. Some people have the mistaken idea that evangelism, teaching, and prayer is the work of the pastor or a few church leaders. Part of this problem may be that the church planter is too impatient.

He wants to see the church grow. He wants quick results and does not have the patience to teach new believers. He must be willing to allow the new Christians to learn and develop at their own pace.

Application

- 1** Which reasons may hinder a church in becoming a multiplying church?
 - a)** The church planter is reluctant to give authority and responsibility to members of the church body.
 - b)** The mother church allows the daughter church to rely on its own resources as soon as possible.
 - c)** The church members believe it is the pastor's responsibility to evangelize the surrounding communities.
 - d)** Because he is more experienced, the church planter makes all decisions regarding the finances and governing of the church.
 - e)** The church planter does not fear slow growth if it allows the church body to assume its responsibilities, and the church does continue to grow.
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RECOGNIZING SPIRITUAL NEED

Objective 2. *Identify the characteristics that are necessary to bring about spiritual renewal.*

Unless a local church is growing, it is not fulfilling its purpose. In Lesson 1 you studied that the purpose of the church is to evangelize and teach. Obedience to this purpose results in continual growth.


As the church joins in prayer, the Holy Spirit will impress upon the people's hearts the need for spiritual renewal. Certain common characteristics must be seen in a church when it comes to realize the need to change into a multiplying church. We see an example of the characteristics of spiritual renewal in the nation of ancient Israel. Second Kings 22–23, 2 Chronicles 29–31, 34, and 35 give accounts of revivals during the

reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. In each case are five common characteristics as the people sought to please God:

1. The people felt a need to change. They recognized their disobedience to God. They realized their need to repent in order to serve Him. They desired greater blessing from God.
2. They sought to learn and to obey God's Word. The people listened to God's Word and began to understand what they should be doing in obedience to God.
3. The people repented for their unfaithfulness. They were truly sorry for their past failures and dedicated themselves to greater service to God in the future.
4. The people sacrificed to do the work of God. They sacrificed their time and money in obedient service to God.
5. The people were unified in spirit, worship, and service. They felt a duty to God and to each other. They experienced joy and God's blessing as a result of their unified efforts.

These same five characteristics will be a part of the change when a local church moves toward becoming a multiplying church.

Application

- 2** Which statements are TRUE concerning the characteristics of spiritual renewal?
- a)** A result of spiritual renewal is willingness to sacrifice to do God's work.
 - b)** Preaching that condemns sin is all that is needed to bring spiritual renewal.
 - c)** Accepting the truth of God's Word brings recognition of one's unfaithfulness to His commands.
 - d)** The church body experiences joy in unity and worship as a result of spiritual renewal.
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PLANNING FOR CHANGE

Objective 3. *Identify the basic principles for changing a non-multiplying local church into a growing body of believers.*

Each church has different needs and different problems, but there are basic principles to follow that will guide you into the Holy Spirit's plan for your church.

MAKE A PRAYER PLAN

No change for the better in a local church can be brought about by human ability alone. The Holy Spirit will guide you in each step toward making your church a growing, multiplying group of believers. Prayer is absolutely necessary to bring about any positive spiritual change in a church.

Jesus Christ is the head of every local church (Colossians 1:18). His agent for leading the church is the Holy Spirit. In prayer the Holy Spirit will teach you all you need to know for your service to the Lord (John 14:26). Empty yourself and your desires to the Lord in prayer. He alone can give you the details of a plan for a multiplying church. Persist faithfully in prayer, even though at first you may be praying alone. Others will join you in prayer as your life radiates the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pray specifically. Teach the believers to pray for specific needs. Pray for guidance to the areas that need new churches. Pray specifically about the number of new churches your church can start. Set regular times for the body of believers to come together for prayer. Usually when great church growth has occurred it has been preceded by believers joining in hours of daily fervent prayer.

SET GOALS

Pastors who lead multiplying churches know that along with prayer, setting goals is important. Specific prayer requires specific goals. Scripture supports the concept of setting goals. Jesus approached His goal, the Cross, step by step. He said that He must do the will of the One who sent Him (John 4:34). His

goal was always before Him because He “‘came to seek and to save what was lost’” (Luke 19:10). The apostle Paul was goal-directed. He wrote to the Philippians, “‘But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me’” (Philippians 3:13–14).

Application

3 Write a brief statement explaining the relationship of specific prayer and setting goals. Use your notebook for your answer.

Goals which are set before the church body will demonstrate needs and stimulate enthusiasm for the work of God. For goals to be useful to the believers, they must be stated so that everyone knows what the aim is and what must happen for the goal to be accomplished. A goal such as “preach the gospel to the lost” is too indefinite and lacks direction. The following are examples of goals set by churches that have grown and multiplied:

— Within the next two months, survey the surrounding communities to determine where new churches are needed.

— Start a new church within walking distance of every person in Soon Chum province.

— Start a new church every eight or ten miles in every direction half way to the neighboring churches.

— Every six weeks train a new group of leaders to help in new churches.

These churches reached their goals because they knew what their aim was and they knew when it was attained.

SHARE THE VISION WITH KEY LEADERS


As you continue to pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit in changing your church, share your concerns with key leaders who also feel a need for the church to move forward. At first,

do not share everything you want the church to become. Just share with them about a single need, asking them to pray about the matter. The first change needed may simply be that the people learn to love one another more. Or it may be a new area that is asking you to send lay leaders. Let these key leaders join you in regular prayer for this one area of need. Soon others will join in the prayer meetings. Encourage them, but concentrate on the key leaders and help their faith develop.

As faith increases the leaders will want to help meet the need and inspire others to do so too. Trust the Holy Spirit to lead them. Even if their ideas are different from yours, follow any plan they all agree upon, if possible. Be involved in the plan, but encourage them to take the responsibilities for leadership in the plan.

Application

4 In your notebook list three steps that will help a church to become a multiplying church and briefly explain the importance of each step.



IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

A church that is not multiplying needs spiritual renewal. How can we bring change where it is needed and do it in a biblical way? Change and spiritual renewal must be accomplished in such a way that the majority of the church body can agree on what needs to be done. This is the only way a church can go forward in unity as a body with Christ as the head. The problem in many non-multiplying churches is that the Christians really do not understand what the Bible teaches about the church. For a church to function as God intended, its members must be taught what the Bible teaches concerning the responsibilities of the church. Let us look again at the responsibilities, the church, and the New Testament principles that should be followed in carrying them out.

Evangelize the Unsaved

Objective 4. *List four scriptural principles of evangelism today.*

In Lesson 1 you studied the principles and purposes followed by the church as it was founded. The pattern the Holy Spirit gave the early church must be understood and practiced by the local church today. The principles the body of believers should follow in evangelism may be summarized as:

1. Every body of believers is responsible first to evangelize its own community (Acts 1:8). Teach the Christians from the Word to know the purpose of the apostles and to follow their example. As they understand the directives of the New Testament these purposes will become their purposes.

2. Believers need to evangelize the unsaved where they are in the world. Jesus' parables regarding the Kingdom commanded His disciples to "go to the street corners" (Matthew 22:9). The apostles preached where the believers were gathered (Acts 2:14, 46; 5:25, 42; 17:17). Christians must act on the knowledge that their responsibility does not end with inviting the unsaved to church.

3. The primary goal of evangelism in the community must be to win adults and therefore households. When adults are won there will be steady growth with a strong foundation (Acts 10; 16:31–33; 16:14–15; 1 Corinthians 1:16).

4. New believers must be quickly integrated into the church body. New Christians need to find their place within the family of believers (John 13:35; Acts 2:42; 9:31). And they need to be edified, which brings us to the next purpose of the church (Ephesians 4:12).

Application

5 In your notebook list from memory the four principles carried out by the church in evangelizing the unsaved. Read this section again if you need to refresh your memory.

6 Read your list again. Put an X in front of the principles that are being followed by your church.

Edify the Believers

You will remember from Lesson 1 that another purpose of the local church is to edify, or build up, the body of believers in spiritual knowledge and strength. A local church must learn from God's Word its responsibility for edification of the local body as well as the church universal. The responsibility to the church universal is a primary motivation for the church to become a multiplying church. What must the body of believers learn about edification?

1. Edification is brought about first by a basic knowledge and then by an in-depth knowledge of the Word of God. Without the means of modern communications how did the early church multiply at such a phenomenal rate? We have clues throughout the book of Acts. We see over and over again that the believers were taught the message of God. Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra to encourage the disciples in their faith. Paul spent a whole year teaching in Antioch, a year and six months in Corinth (Acts 18:11), and three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31).

The Word of God is a requirement for spiritual growth. It is by learning Bible doctrines that we begin the edifying process. Peter said, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

The apostles taught the converts face to face. Following this the young churches were taught further by means of the epistles. These letters were written to lead believers into deep knowledge of God's truth. The instruction in written form was permanent. It could be studied again and again and circulated among many churches. Ultimately, these divinely inspired letters provided us with the Word of God, which we can use today in the same way it was used in the early church.

Application

- 7** (Select the best completion.) The primary purpose of edification is that
- a)** believers may enjoy fellowship with one another.
 - b)** the church may be built up in spiritual strength and the knowledge of God.
 - c)** believers may be able to build a better building and attract more people.
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2. Believers must have experiences that will lead them beyond the knowledge level, and they must be spiritually equipped for Christian service. There is a danger that Christians will learn the great truths of God's Word but never move on to an active ministry that shows spiritual wisdom, awareness, and sensitivity to their position in Christ. How can Christians go beyond the knowledge level? Becoming Christian witnesses and being involved in evangelism ministry will take them to the application level. For Christians must not merely receive the truth; they must also have opportunities to minister to others and to win unbelievers to Christ.

Read again Christ's purpose for the church:

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 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11–13)

What is the purpose of teaching and preaching? To prepare God's people for works of service. Why? To build up the body of Christ. This body is not just one local church. The body of Christ is made up of local churches throughout the world. Therefore, the natural result of building up one church will be

the building of other churches. A church that is filled with the fervent love of God, love for His Word, and knowledge of His Word should also be zealous to take the message of His love to the lost world.

Application

- 8** Circle the statements that are TRUE regarding edification.
- a)** Edification of believers takes place primarily within the church.
 - b)** To be edified a Christian must go away from home and attend Bible school.
 - c)** Only years of memorizing Bible doctrines will bring about edification.
 - d)** A purpose of edification within the church is to enable believers to evangelize the lost.
 - e)** A person who is saved is also completely edified at the same time.
 - f)** Believers are edified through biblical teaching and a thorough study of Scripture.
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Believe for a Multiplying Church

In this lesson you have studied principles to help your church become a multiplying church. Although there is no set of rules that will work everywhere, you have learned common characteristics of churches which have become multiplying churches. Only the Holy Spirit can teach you what actual steps will make your church multiply. The time you spend in prayer to discover the Holy Spirit's plan for your church will help you become the kind of pastor who can lead a growing church.

Just as the Holy Spirit has a plan to overcome problems in other churches, He has a plan for your church too. As you go to the Lord in prayer, remember that the church belongs to Christ; therefore there are certain promises in His Word that you can claim for yourself and the church.

1. He promises to be with us always as we preach the gospel (Matthew 28:20).
2. He promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18).
3. He promised to be where believers gather (Matthew 18:20).
4. He will answer prayer (Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24).
5. Prayer is powerful and effective (James 5:16).
6. He loves and cares for the church (Ephesians 2:21–22; 5:25, 29).
7. The Holy Spirit will guide and teach (John 14:26).

If there is a key that will unlock the Holy Spirit’s plan for your church, it is your own willingness to claim God’s promises in prayer and to obey the voice of the Spirit as He leads you. Whenever and wherever great churches are founded and believers are planting new churches, there is great emphasis on private and corporate prayer.

Application

9 Read the following verses of Scripture and identify the promise you can claim for the church in each.

- a)** Matthew 21:22
- b)** Matthew 28:20
- c)** James 5:16
- d)** Matthew 16:18
- e)** John 14:26
- f)** Ephesians 5:25, 29



If you are a leader in a church that is not multiplying, then I am praying for you. I am asking God to help you believe that your church can become strong and that the Holy Spirit will reveal His plan to help your church grow and multiply.

self-test

In this self-test we will describe a church that is not multiplying. Apply the principles of this lesson to see how it can be helped.

PART ONE

The small town of Joya had one church that had been there for 20 years. It usually had an attendance of 50–80 people. The people used their poverty as an excuse for not giving to God’s work. They elected John to be their pastor and were happy that he was supported by a foreign organization. The church had a Sunday school but no other outreach evangelism. The members were not faithful teachers, so John taught the adult class and his wife taught the children. John dismissed the church board soon after he became pastor, because members were disinterested and he could do the work more efficiently.

SHORT ANSWER. Answer the following questions based on the scenario above.

1 The principle of self-support was violated in what two ways?

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2 A self-government principle was violated when

.....

3 How do we know the self-propagation principles were not followed?

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.....

4 At least two of the responsibilities to the church body that the believers had not learned were

.....
.....

PART TWO

John preached against the sin of selfishness, but the people resented his preaching. John began to preach about the joys of giving and God's blessings on those who gave. They resented this even more. In desperation, John rose early to pray. After a while several concerned members joined him. John was faithful in prayer and preaching. Then during one service the people heard about a man who had starved in order to save food for his family. The people began to weep. The Holy Spirit swept over all the church, convicting the people of sin and they repented. They wanted to learn and to obey God's Word. They began to give sacrificially to God's work.

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the letter of the correct answer based on Part Two of the scenario.

- 5** The Joya people began to experience spiritual renewal when they
- a)** elected a new pastor.
 - b)** realized their need to change and to repent for unfaithfulness.
 - c)** could not persuade more people to attend church.
- 6** The people will show their repentance in all of the following ways EXCEPT by
- a)** desiring to learn and to obey God's Word.
 - b)** sacrificing to do God's work.
 - c)** sending members to other towns to collect money for the poor.
 - d)** showing a spirit of unity, worship, and service.
- 7** To help believers become a multiplying church the pastor will
- a)** tell the people they should pray and go into all the world and preach the gospel.
 - b)** lead them in specific prayer plans to attain measurable goals agreed upon by the church.

TRUE-FALSE. Place a T in the blank space if the statement is TRUE. Write F if it is FALSE.

- ... **8** The first responsibility of a local church is to take the gospel to its own community.
- ... **9** The best way for believers to win the lost is to urge them to come to church to hear the gospel.
- ... **10** The evangelism of a community will have a stronger foundation if the emphasis is on winning adults to Christ.
- ... **11** The primary function of edification is to attract sinners to the church.
- ... **12** God's people are edified by Christ-centered preaching and a thorough study of Scripture.
- ... **13** The purpose of edification is to prepare believers for united service.
- ... **14** Reviewing and claiming God's promises is one way we can help the church to multiply.

Be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 3 and return Answer Sheet 3 to your GU instructor.

answers to study questions

- 5 1) Every body of believers is responsible first to evangelize its own community.
- 2 Believers should take the gospel to the unsaved wherever they are and not wait for the unsaved to come to church meetings.
- 3 A primary goal of evangelism must be to win adults.
- 4 New believers must be quickly integrated into the church body.
- 1
 - a) The church planter is reluctant to give authority and responsibility to members of the church body.
 - c) The church members believe it is the pastor's responsibility to evangelize the surrounding communities.
 - d) Because he is more experienced, the church planter makes all decisions regarding the finances and governing of the church.
- 6 Your answer
- 2
 - a True
 - b False
 - c True
 - d True
- 7
 - b) the church may be built up in spiritual strength and the knowledge of God.
- 3 Your answer should be similar to this: Setting specific goals will enable us to pray specifically.
- 8
 - a) True
 - b) False
 - c) False
 - d) True
 - e) False
 - f) True

- 4** Your answer should include in any order: a) Make a prayer plan. Through prayer the Holy Spirit will guide and bring spiritual change in the church. b) Set goals. One must have goals in order to know what to pray for, what to work for, and to know when the task has been accomplished. c) Share the vision with key leaders. The leaders of the church must work and pray together. Also, the vision helps leaders to see the need for change.
- 9**
- a)** Jesus promised that prayers will be answered.
 - b)** He promised to be with us always.
 - c)** That prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
 - d)** Jesus promised to build His church.
 - e)** The Holy Spirit will teach and guide.
 - f)** The Lord loves and cares for the church.

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