

Leading A Small Church

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"All great churches were at one time small."

Dan Reiland

"Don't be afraid of small beginnings. Remember, this whole thing started with a mouse."

Walt Disney

Leading and growing a small church to health and vitality is a Difficult process.

I. Typical Limitations in a Small Church

A. Limited People

People are your only appreciable asset!

Small churches are limited in Quantity and quality of people.

Principle: "Go with what you've got and God will give you more."

B. Limited Finances

Developing a boldness about giving and tithing from the pulpit and one to one particularly with your leaders, is a non-negotiable for growing a large church.

This boldness is based on four things:

1. Biblical Truth
2. Personal CONVICTIONS that result in practice
3. Personal Generosity
4. An understanding that people want to give to that which they Believe in.

C. Limited Facilities

There are many practical things you can do before you go into an expensive building program.

1. Go to double services and Sunday School.
2. Change from pews to chairs — less expensive and much more versatile.
3. Rent nearby buildings.
4. Remodel existing buildings.

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Skyline — moved the walls of the sanctuary out two feet on each side. Only two feet? This translated to over two hundred people per service. Three services meant accommodating an additional 600 people!

D. Limited Time

Rome wasn't built in a day and neither is a great church.

Small churches many times have Bivocational - part time pastors, No full-time staff, and very few Volunteers.

E. Limited Victories

"When you win, nothing hurts."

Joe Namath

Pastor's Goal: Experience one small victory every month.

F. Limited Vision

The size of the vision is based on the size of the leader, not the size of the church.

G. Limited Influence

Small churches often have limited influence, not because of the size of their church, but because they are ingrown.

H. Limited Expectations

The biggest difference between growing large churches and non-growing small churches is the Attitude of expectancy.

II. The Growth Journey of Your Church Will Include . . .

The Small Church Zone — Real ministry doesn't happen unless the pastor does it.

The Awkward Zone — The pastor must do ministry and equip people.

The Growth Zone — The equipped people minister and the pastor leads.

Breaking through the "Awkward Zone" takes . . .

1. TIME

2. Courage

To change yourself takes courage.

To change yourself and others takes GREAT courage!

3. CONVICTION

All great movements have been led by people with conviction.

4. Help From Other People

5. Leadership skills

The Good News is That God Is With You!

"Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!"
Ephesians 3:20-21

Not only is God with you, but He is at work within you. This is His Church made up of His people. You do your part and God will do His.

"When you have done all that you can, go to bed. God is still up."

Victor Hugo

III. Seven Ways to Lead Your Small Church Forward

A. Make sure your Attitude and Thinking is right.

Small isn't bad and large isn't good. The key is health which results in growth.

It's not all about numbers, but numbers always tell a story.

The three core elements of a healthy church are:

1. Prayer
2. EVANGELISM
3. Teaching AND Obeying the Word of God.

B. Make sure your Motives are right.

Four questions to reflect upon:

1. What discourages you the most?

A low attendance on Sunday

No one getting "saved" for a week

A low offering

2. What encourages you the most?

Everything calm and comfortable

More people involved in volunteer ministry

Everyone is happy with you

3. What keeps you awake at night?

Relationship problems

Great Commission problems

Financial problems

4. As a leader you prefer that people

Like you

Respect you

Honor you

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and plan your personal
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In each of these questions, the middle answer is the best indication of pure motives.

C. Understand what the process is NOT about.

It is not about . . .

1. Charismatic Leadership

"It is true that no one wants to follow a dull leader, but most of the 'best built' and 'built to last' churches are not built by charismatic leaders."

Built to Last by James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras

2. Great Preaching
3. More Church Services

D. Make sure your VISION is clear.

Do you thoroughly Know it?

Do you consistently Show it?

Do your leaders Own it?

Does your congregation Follow it?

E. IDENTIFY and GATHER three groups of people.

In each of these groups — five to seven people to begin with is all that is needed.

1. Instigators

The first group is your zealots. They are not influencers but they are fired up and eager to do whatever needs to be done.

2. Intercessors

These are your prayer warriors — people who genuinely pray and pray much. They really know how to get hold of God.

3. Influencers

F. Cultivate a culture of Volunteer ministry.

1. Identify your Personal ministry needs and the People who can help you.

2. Identify the Top ministries of the church and the Spiritual Gifts necessary to make those ministries successful.

3. Preach Lay Ministry sermons.