

“GROWING A CHURCH”

Jay Lockhart

Most churches want to grow. Most churches do not desire to lose ground or even stay where they are. The desire to grow is usually there, but the question is, how do you go about growing a church? I have observed that growing churches have at least three qualities in common, three stepping stones in their growth. I am convinced that one or even two of these characteristics will not suffice, but that all three must be present. What are they?

1. *An exact theology.* Growing churches believe something, know what they believe, and insist that it matters. For a hundred and fifty years we have been saying, “where the Scriptures speak, we want to speak.” How sad that as denominational churches lie in death because they believed little and taught little, some of our brethren are giving up the biblical position of our heritage as though what is believed is unimportant. When we insist on a “thus says the Lord”, we are not saying we should act as though we know all there is to know, or that we have arrived, or that we should take a hard line approach that makes issues where the Bible does not and builds walls over preferences and opinions. However, what we believe matters and it matters very much. Without settling this issue, a church will not grow.
2. *An excited membership.* When a church believes in, supports and gets excited about itself, it will hold the people and will reach out to help others. An excited

church is an evangelistic serving church and when you put correct theology with enthusiasm and couple that with outreach, you have the basis for growth.

3. *An enlightened leadership.* An enlightened leader knows the principles of leading others, knows how to involve others, and cares deeply about those he leads ... and they know he cares. With an exact theology, an excited membership, and an enlightened leadership, a church will be blessed by God and it will grow. We have the opportunity ... I hope we have the will.