

## *How to Ride the Growth Waves*

There is nothing more exciting than seeing all of your hard work start to pay off! Witnessing salvations, increased attendance and spiritual commitments can be the greatest motivation for doing what we do. However, along with the excitement comes caution: growth can actually become a barrier to further growth if we aren't careful. Here are some suggestions:

### 1. Guard your heart from pride.

It is easy to become enamored with all the excitement growth brings, which is usually the point in which the enemy begins his work in our hearts.

#### ***Deuteronomy 8:12-14 (NIV)***

*<sup>12</sup> Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

Find ways to give credit to Jesus and what He is doing. Spend time praising Him in your daily devotions. When people mention the growth verbalize that it is the Lord at work, not you. Catch yourself when you feel tinges of pride.

#### ***Matthew 16:18 (NIV)***

*<sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

Our growth has to be grounded in the fact that it is the Lord who is causing these people to come. He is stirring their hearts before they've even stepped foot on our campus, and he continues to stir their hearts to seek and follow Him!

#### ***Acts 2:47 (NIV)***

*<sup>47</sup> ...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

### 2. Make engagement a top priority!

Remember that a crowd does not make a church! When a person comes to church for the first time, they usually will last around 3-6 months and then leave if they haven't engaged or entered the life of our church. Engagement is measured by committing to membership, a Growth Group or a ministry team. Once they engage in this way they tend to become more regular on Sundays and become involved in other areas of their faith for a long time. Our job doesn't end with a new person attending our services; it is just beginning! Our job as pastors is...

***Ephesians 4:12-13 (NIV)***

*<sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> 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.*

I believe the Lord directs people to the right church based on that church's willingness to shepherd and care for people. I also believe the opposite is true; that God avoids bringing people to certain churches if He knows they won't be cared for. So, growth can be an indication that the Lord knows our hearts are ready to engage His people.

3. Plan further ahead.

Just as a driver looks further down the road as the car increases in speed, we as leadership need to be increasing our vision and scope of planning the more our church grows. We have to become more proactive and less reactive. We have to have the answers before the questions are asked. We have to figure out solutions before the problems begin to arise.

***Proverbs 11:14 (NASB77)***

*<sup>14</sup> Where there is no guidance, the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.*

People draw security from their leaders who are assertive and clear. Strong leadership brings about peace among people.

***Proverbs 21:5 (NLT2)***

*<sup>5</sup> Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.*

We have to increase the span between the planning and the actual execution of an event, sermon or activity.

4. Take time to reflect and enjoy!

Growth is the payoff for hard work! When we see a new family pursue the Lord, accept Christ and get baptized it is definitely cause for a celebration for all the work that we do to help that family make those commitments!

***Luke 15:10 (NIV)***

*<sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

We know growth comes in seasons, which means we will also enter seasons of planting, stagnation, pruning, etc. While we are in the season of growth, take time to thank the Lord who is bringing the harvest and enjoy the fruit of your labor!!