



Global College of Ministry

EMPOWER

The Christian & Church Growth (Part Two)

The Lord Is at Work

“And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all”
(Acts 3:12, 16).


One day the mayor (leader) of a small town noticed two of his workers doing something strange. They were working steadily along the side of the road. One of the men was digging a hole in the ground, and the other filling it up again. After watching them dig and fill several holes this way, the mayor, somewhat confused, stopped the two workers and asked for an explanation.


“Well, sir,” replied the first man, “we work for the town planting trees, and usually there are three of us who work on this job. One digs the hole; one plants the tree, and one covers it up. But the man who plants the trees called in sick today, and we did not want to miss a day’s work, so here we are.”

How easy it is to fall into the habit of just being at church. We can become so programmed that like the tree planters, we totally lose sight of the meaning behind what we are doing. Just “doing church” is not enough.

Many churches are “heavy on knowledge and light on supernatural power.” (C. Peter Wagner). There should be a balance between the two.

We Are Working Together with God

 “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building” (1 Corinthians 3:6, 9).

 “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:19-20).

We Cannot Accomplish the Work without Him

“...For without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

The Lord Is Working in Us

- 📖 “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).
- 📖 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).
- 📖 “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20).

Jesus Wants to Work in Our Day

- 📖 “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you” (Acts 13:41).

Acts is a book of action. The early church lived in an atmosphere of anticipation. Each page of Acts reminds us that the Lord was at work. Today, as He promised, He continues the work that He started.

In the Gospels Jesus worked in His physical body. After His ascension and the Day of Pentecost, He began working through His spiritual body—the church. Throughout the Acts of Apostles, Jesus Christ was the real “worker.”

“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

The Lord continues to work in His end-time church. In fact, He wants to move in each service. Rev. R. M. Buie taught a tremendous lesson while visiting Ghana. It was entitled, “Pushing Beyond the Conventional Boundaries.” He stated that we should approach each service anticipating a demonstration of the Spirit and power. The highlights of Rev. Buie’s excellent teaching follow:

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished” (Acts 10:44-45).

Spiritual ministry pushes beyond a form, program, or ritual. It is the realization that Jesus comes to church to do a work.

Our work is to pray for a move of the Spirit before service time. We need to prepare our hearts for the Lord to work.

Ask God to take control of the service and have faith that He Will.

Thank Him for His visitation before it happens.

Plan for a move of the Spirit. It can happen at any time. It is not good to keep a rigid program for the service. Have a plan, but make it flexible. God should be welcome to move at any time.

Anticipate a move of the Spirit—at any time.

Remember, your actions communicate your expectation. Passive worship or leadership will produce a passive response.

We lead by following.

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Be sensitive to the move of the Spirit—at any time.

Follow after His Spirit, not the program or Order of Service. God wants everything done “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). A move of the Spirit is not an interference with the service. It is decent and in order. We want God to work! If we do not have time for God, we do not have time for anything. We can make time for God to move and still do other necessary things required in the service. It is important to lead the congregation into the move of the Spirit.

Respond to the move of the Spirit—at any time! As leaders, we should show a favorable reaction to God at work. We need to respond to the presence of the Lord. If not, He will leave without doing a work.

“But he passing through the midst of them went his way” (Luke 4:30).

Reap the benefits of the move of the Spirit—at any time. The saints are encouraged, edified and uplifted by the Spirit. The lost receive the gift of the Holy Ghost spontaneously. The sick are healed by the ministering power of God’s Spirit. The preacher is anointed by the Spirit to preach the Word.

When God does a work celebrate—rejoice, praise and thank God for the move of the Spirit.

Study Questions

1. How do many church programs compare with the tree planters? _____

2. What does C. Peter Wagner say about many churches? _____

Turning Little Churches into Big Churches

“And the word of God increased: and the number of the disciples multiplied” (Acts 6:7).

A postcard from the World Network of Prayer (UPCI) reads, “1996 was the most productive year in the history of our fellowship.” Sister Nona Freeman, a retired veteran missionary to Africa wrote an article entitled, *Jesus Christ-Still the Same*. In this faith provoking article she states, “The Word is a time-proven irrefutable fact. Whatever God has done through the ages, He can do it again, and more, much more than our finite minds can comprehend. He can stack up waters of the sea and make a dry highway through the flooded river, confuse enemies in darkness while giving His children light, pour a mighty river out of a rock, and rain bread from heaven, deliver a mass of helpless slaves from grievous bondage, and drown their enemies with one stroke. Name the need, and He can and will do it...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. His limitless power will do whatever we believe Him for. No exceptions. ...In our forty-one years in Africa.. we saw every miracle recorded in the Book of Acts happen in our services.”

God is moving mightily throughout the African Region. In one year alone 73,073 were baptized in Jesus’ name; 103,480 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in thousands of churches.

We are living in the most tremendous day in the history of the church. Like Daniel we must “set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting” (Daniel 9:3). Like Zechariah we must “Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain” (Zechariah 10:1). Like Hosea we must know “it is time to seek the LORD” (Hosea 10:12). We must accept the same challenge God gave to Jeremiah, “Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3).

C. Peter Wagner in his book *Prayer Shield*, stated, “the most massive growth of churches is found in Pentecostal/ Charismatic traditions.” Armed with this understanding, coupled with the statistics and verses given above, I wonder why we persist to believe God will not give us great church growth. Must our churches remain small? Could it be because of our doctrine and standards of holiness that our churches are not growing? Is it really Scriptural for the church to grow?

Churches remain small because we fail to exercise faith for growth. Once we have exercised faith, we must exercise our works and efforts. “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). A leadership principle expresses it another way, “Effort In, Results Out!”

Just because we know it is only God who can cause church growth does not give us an excuse to sit back and wait for it to happen. We must sow, plant, and then water the seed. It is after this effort that God will give us the results. If you do not want your church to grow, it will not grow. Each time you set a goal for your church to grow, you are making a statement of faith.

One man said there were three secrets to success. The first, work. The second, work. The third, work. Church growth is hard work.

Our doctrine or standards of holiness could not be considered as reasons for lack of church growth. Of course, if you are looking for an excuse, any excuse will do. People all over the world are hungry for the truth. They are searching for something original and life changing. The beginning of the Church is found in the Book of Acts. Even organizations following the Trinitarian tradition acknowledge the church was born in Acts 2. Our doctrine is clearly stated in Acts 2. This doctrine was strange to the Jews who were assembled in Jerusalem for the Pentecost. Surely the church would, and could not grow. Wrong. It did grow and 3,000 were added to the church on that day. They continued in the Apostles' doctrine, believing and spreading what Peter had given them.

In *Look Out! The Pentecostals Are Coming*, by C. Peter Wagner, there is an interesting review of the United Pentecostal Church of Columbia. He writes, "Some Pentecostals won't even want me to mention this third point. But it is true that by far the fastest growing church in Columbia is the United Pentecostal Church. The United Pentecostal Church is somewhat unorthodox because it baptizes, not in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but in the name of Jesus. Its nickname is 'Jesus only.' The United Pentecostal Church refuses to dot the i's and cross the t's of the Council of Nicea (the famous church council of 325 A. D. where the present doctrine of the trinity - three persons in one essence - was articulated and approved.) United Pentecostals, of course, don't agree. They preach salvation by the blood of Christ, and can testify of multitudes of transformed lives as signs of people being born again. They believe in the Holy Spirit, in baptism in the Spirit, and speaking in tongues. They consider themselves true Pentecostals, as their name implies. They are not Jehovah Witnesses who deny the deity of Christ. And if anyone doubts their spiritual power, they could simply point to a graph which compares their church growth to that of the next largest Pentecostal Church."

A book has been written by Dean Kelley called, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*. Again, Wagner in *Look Out! The Pentecostals are Coming* reveals UPCI opposes Christian involvement in organized sports, politics, labour unions, and are strict. Women do not cut their hair, and apparel must be up to rigid standards of modesty. Members do not attend dances or theaters, and consider television and secular music to be worldly. The United Pentecostal Church Manual says, "We warn all of our believers to abstain from any of these practices in the interest of spiritual growth and the soon coming of the Lord for His church."

Wagner records, "It would be easy to draw the conclusion that such standards would quickly render the United Pentecostal Church irrelevant to contemporary Colombian society.....It might well be, therefore, that the strictness of the United Pentecostals in Columbia is actually one of the causes of the fact that they are the largest and fastest growing church in the nation."

Study Questions

1. Comment about church growth in the African Region. _____

2. We are living in the most tremendous day in church history. What must we do to take advantage of this? _____

3. What did C. Peter Wagner say about the Pentecostal movement? _____

4. What is the leadership principle regarding “effort” used in this lesson? _____

5. What are three secrets to success? _____

6. Where is our basic fundamental doctrine found in the Bible? _____

7. Can our doctrine be a reason for a lack of church growth? Explain. _____

8. What does the UPCI believe according to C. Peter Wagner? _____

9. Some say that conservative (strong) standards of holiness is a reason for lack of church growth. Is this true in the case of the UPC of Columbia? _____

_____ Explain. _____

10. What are some of the standards of holiness of the UPCI? _____

Additional Notes

Higher Quality, Greater Quantity

“And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in numbers daily” (Acts 16:5).

“So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers”
(Acts 16:5 *NIV*).

The secret to successful church growth is found in Acts 9:31(*NIV*), “Then the church... enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

In each Scripture above the churches were “strengthened” and “grew.” It seems that they grew after they were strengthened. They had been taught, revived, and became focused on evangelism. As a result they “grew.”

It is God that gives growth to the church.

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

In the Book of Acts we find two types of growth in the church.

Quantity

First of all, the early church measured their growth numerically. On the Day of Pentecost 3000 souls were added to the 120. Later 5,000 believed. There was a growth in the number of believers (Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14; 6:7) and in the number of churches (Acts 16:5).

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

“And the believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5:14).

“And the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly” (Acts 6:7).

The minister needs to be an evangelist before he can become a teacher or a pastor. First, we must win the people. After that, we can pastor and teach them.

Quality

Secondly, the early church measured growth according to quality. The Apostle Paul often reported (or received reports from his assistants) concerning the spiritual status of the church. The leaders took special notice of how the believers did spiritually. They wanted to make sure that the believers moved from elementary (basic) to maturity (advanced) in the things concerning Christian understanding, doctrine, and righteous living.

A. J. Gordon said, “If perchance the church should attract men without at the same time transforming them; if she shall attach them to her membership without assimilating them to her life, she has only weakened herself by her increase and diminished herself by her addition.” (Michael Griffiths, *Get Your Act Together Cinderella: A Call to Today’s Church*)

The purpose of the five-fold ministry is to perfect the saints for the working of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12-13). It is imperative that we are involved in church planting. However, we are also in the church-perfecting business. This means that we look for growth and development in our church in many different ways. We are involved in “continuous improvement.” Our desire is to present a perfected church to the Lord.

“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27).

As a church, we need to commit ourselves to being the church God planned we should be. We should pray and fast to become what God wants us to be. The secret to accomplishing this is found in the following verses:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

Growth in numbers should always be accompanied by spiritual growth.

Many times we are not really growing, but getting spiritually fat. Instead of bringing people to maturity in Christ, we have many additions to the church family—just more spiritual babies. We continue to feed them milk, instead of going on to the meatier things of God. We teach our people the same things week after week (prayer, praises and worship, etc.).

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:1-2).

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is









a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:12-6:1).

People demonstrate spiritual childishness when they seek material things (homes, cars, money) first and spiritual things take second place. Material blessings are not wrong. However, we should first seek after the spiritual blessings.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

How Can We Grow?

Growth needs to be encouraged in the following areas:

-  The body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16).
-  Holiness (Ephesians 5:27).
-  Doctrinal understanding and discipleship (Colossians 1:28, 1 Corinthians 14:20, Hebrews 6:1-3).
-  Giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
-  Commitment to evangelism (Matthew 28:19).
-  Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7).
-  Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
-  Ability to be a witness (Acts 1:8).

Study Questions

1. What is the secret to successful church growth? _____

2. How are churches strengthened? _____

3. As a result of the churches being strengthened, what happened? _____

4. How did the early church measure growth? _____

5. What is the purpose of the five-fold ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12)? _____

6. What is the secret to becoming what God wants us to be? _____

Great Expectations

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all”
(Acts 4:33).

“This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity” (Psalms 118:23-25).

Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Our future is full of promise and potential. The Lord wants to do great things in us and through us. Let us rise to the occasion of becoming a great church impacted with higher quality and greater quantity.

Let's see what “great” means: “large in size or number, being beyond the average, mighty, grand, long continued; markedly superior in character, quality or skill.”

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2).

Much has been written about financial or economic prosperity. This lesson deals with ways that the Lord would like to prosper us spiritually—prosper our soul. The Lord wants to make His church spiritually prosperous by supplying great things.

Great Power

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

Great Grace

Read Acts 4:33; Genesis 6:8; Hebrews 13:25; 1 Peter 5:5; Revelation 22:21; Galatians 2:21; 2 Corinthians 9:14.

“Grace” is God's free gifts or actions taken to meet human needs. By grace we have salvation (Ephesians 2:7-8) The concept of grace expresses all that God chooses to do for us. We have free access to God's grace (Hebrews 4:14-16). Much has been said about “grace,” but the verse(s) above talks about “great grace.”

Great Fear

“And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things” (Acts 5:5).

“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied” (Acts 9:31).

Also read Proverbs 9:10; 10:27; 14:26; 14:27; 15:16; 15:33; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17.

Great Wonders

“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people” (Acts 6:8).

Also read Habakkuk 1:5; Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; Mark 16:17-18.

Great Faith

“When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matthew 8:10).

Also read Mark 2:5; Romans 1:17; 10:17; Colossians 2:7; Hebrews 11:1; 11:6.

Great Door

“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:9).

“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name” (Revelation 3:8).

Great Harvest

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38).

Great Peace

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalms 119:165).

Also read Proverbs 16:7; John 14:27; 16:33; Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15.

Great Love

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Also read 1 John 4:7-12; Matthew 22:37-40; John 3:16.

Great Works

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

Great Joy

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 4).

“For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:7-8).

Study Questions

1. What are ten of the great things that God has promised us?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

2. What is “grace”? _____

Bound to Grow

“But the word of God grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24).

Joyful Way Inc. is a youth ministry with emphasis on music and missions. They recently hosted a concert celebrating thirty years of ministry in Ghana, West Africa. Close to the end of the performance, a young man gave a ten-minute presentation. Throughout his narration of the ministry’s history, he repeatedly said, “A seed sown in good soil is bound to grow!”

Acts records the explosive growth of the church from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the world. This account of the church’s first thirty years detail not only its growth, but also its setbacks, victories, and progress. The seedling church was destined to be a powerful force in its world. Why? “A seed sown in good soil is bound to grow!”

C. Peter Wagner in *Your Church Can Grow* conducted a study on church growth in the Book of Acts. What happened when the seed was sown in good soil?

Peter spread the seed through preaching the Word. He concluded his message by instructing his listeners, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

It was evident that the Lord was working with them, confirming His Word. (See Mark 16:20.)

The early church determined to please their Lord, win souls for His kingdom, and to reach heaven.

Those converted continued in:

- Apostle’s doctrine
- Fellowship (membership, participation)
- Prayer
- Unity
- Praises and worship
- Giving
- Evangelism (Acts 2:42-47).

All of these components are essential and evident in growing, local churches. A church (or an individual) cannot get by with emphasizing only two or three of these and remain healthy and progressive.

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

A miracle at the Gate Beautiful caused jealousy among the Jewish leaders. They threw the two preachers into prison, but the seed planted in good soil was bound to grow.

“But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so that the number of believers totaled about five thousand men, not counting women and children” (Acts 4:4, *NLT*).

C. Peter Wagner concludes that there were at least five thousand women that also believed. If we estimate that each man and woman had one child, there were about 15,000 believers at that point.

The preachers were slapped around, threatened, and told not to preach, teach, or use the name of Jesus. They responded in prayer. God heard, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.

Leadership problems developed because the church grew so big the widows could not be ministered to properly.

The apostles had to make a decision. Should they wait on tables? Should they prioritize to enhance greater growth?

Their decision: They would continue to sow the seed of God’s Word. They knew that a seed sown in good soil is bound to grow.

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

The results: “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

Did you notice? The church growth in Acts started with addition, but then moved to multiplication.

Wagner estimates that the original 120 grew to around 25,000 people even before the fertile fields of Samaria and beyond were reached.

Persecution stormed in, and the disciples were scattered everywhere, sowing the seed of the Word. (See Acts 8:4.)

Philip the evangelist stepped on the scene and preached the gospel in traditionally despised Samaria.

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

Next, the church extended to the Gentiles. It began at Antioch; the first place believers were called “Christians.” The Church has been spreading ever since (Acts 11:26).

“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:21).

Paul and his friends were involved in three missionary journeys throughout the later portion of the Book of Acts. Their ministry birthed the global missions movement.

“And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe” (Acts 21:20).

The story of church growth in Acts ends with this testimony: “Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:31).

An Analysis of Church Growth in Acts

The seed (Word of God, gospel, doctrine of the kingdom) planted in fertile soil (hearts of men) caused the young church to grow. It grew as grain grows—seedling, stalk, and the full ear.

“But the word of God grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24).

How did the Word of God grow? It did not grow in size; a bigger and better Bible. It took root in ready soil and increased in its influence and control over the lives of believers. The Word grew and multiplied through being sown, and an ever-increasing number of people accepted the truth. That is multiplication.

God’s Word produces fruit.

“The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it” (Isaiah 55:10-11, *NLT*).

Stages of Church Growth

“For the soil made the seeds grow. First a leaf-blade pushed through, and later the wheat-heads formed and finally the grain ripened” (Mark 4:28, *TLB*).

The growth of the church (and of the Christian life) can be summarized in four stages.

1. Prepared Soil and Seed: Church planting precedes church growth. Good soil is bound to produce when it receives the seed. In its time the combination of the seed and soil will produce. Growth is gradual. We cannot make the seed grow, but God can. Sow the seed in good ground. It is bound to grow! God will do His work.

2. Blade: The beginning is small. The green, feeble tender seedling pokes its way through the soil. It needs special care—watering and protection from the winds and rain.

3. Stalk: The time in which the plant grows tall and strong.

4. Full Ear: The plant ripens and produces fruit. Good fruit is the product of good seed and good soil.

What happened when Isaac sowed in the land (Genesis 26:12)?

“That year Isaac’s crops were tremendous! He harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, for the LORD blessed him” (Genesis 26:12).

Like Isaac, we can reach our maximum potential and reap our greatest harvest when we sow in a fertile land. A seed planted in good soil is bound to grow.

Study Questions

1. What did the young man (in the Joyful Way Inc. concert) repeatedly say? _____

2. What were the concluding remarks that Peter used in his Acts 2 message? _____

3. What was the response from those listening to Peter’s message? _____

4. What did the believers continue doing in Acts 2:42-47? _____

5. How many men were in the church according to Acts 4:4? _____

6. This number did not include whom? _____

7. What estimate did C. Peter Wagner give concerning the church population at this point?

8. What decision did the apostles make when faced with the problem concerning feeding the widows? _____

9. What impact did this have on the size of the church? _____

10. C. Peter Wagner estimated the church increased to what size (Acts 6:7)? _____

11. What effect did persecution have on the early church? _____

12. “But the word of God grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24). How did the Word of God grow? _____

13. What are the four stages of church growth (as compared to Mark 4:28)? _____
