

Gaining a Vision for Growth

By Bill Scheidler

God's Heart for Growth

God's nature requires it.

God is Spirit, Light, Love and a Consuming Fire (All of these describe the outgoing nature of God to move out and expel darkness).

- God is **Spirit** (Jn. 4:24). God is effulgent, pervading, and impossible to contain.
- God is **Light** (I Jn. 1:5). God is ever penetrating, diffusive and dispelling darkness.
- God is **Love** (I Jn. 4:16, 18). God is always reaching out to include more and more as objects of His love.
- God is **Consuming Fire** (Heb. 12:29). God, like fire, is never satisfied, burns passionately and always hungers for more.

When God was dwelling alone He could have just stayed that way. He would have had fewer problems (Us Three and no more). His nature of love drove Him forward. Having minimal problems was not His goal.

God's Eternal Purpose (Gen. 1:26-28). To have a family. A man in His image, reflecting His character and heart that would grow to maturity and be able to come to a place of sharing the Father's work.

God's charge to Adam was, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill up the earth." God's vision was not limited to a small little family in a perfect little place.

God so loved the world—inclusive not exclusive.

- God desires many sons—not just a few quality ones. Quantity or Quality, God wants both.
- God desires every creature/all nations. The Gospel is for all.

This heart is seen in the following:

- God's challenge to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).
- God's challenge to Israel (Ex. 19:5-6).
- Solomon's prayer of dedication (I Kgs. 8:28-30, 41-42, 59-60).
- God desires that none would perish (II Pet. 2:9). We know that some will perish, but God's arms of love are desirous of everyone. We want arms that are as big as God's arms.

- God desires that cities and entire communities would be reached (like Samaria).

Man's Tendencies Regarding Growth

- Love for the Status Quo
- Love for Intimacy/Closeness
- Small is Better
- Hoarding vs. Sharing
- Stinginess vs. Generosity

Potential Tendencies in this Church

- Something nice about this size
- Nice People (for the most part)
- Still a good size to have church potlucks
- Know everybody
- Large enough to pay our pastor and our bills
- Good services
- Comfortable
- Minimal Problems

Perhaps we could stop here at this oasis and polish the doorknobs, spruce up the building and settle in for the long haul. We've done our part. We have made our sacrifices. It's enough.

That spirit didn't work for the early church and it will not work in the here and now.

The Apostles in the New Testament were motivated by God:

- They were caught up in the purposes of God.
- They knew God had acted in history.
- They knew that Christ had died for all mankind (Acts 2:39; 10:34-35; 15:13-18; I John 2:2; 4:14).
- They knew that apart from Christ all would be lost.
- They knew that man's only hope was in receiving Christ (the only way).
- Their love constrained them to keep pushing forward, to press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ (II Cor. 5:14).

Paul, A man with God's perspective

- He recognized that every church was surrounded by multitudes without God and without hope (Phil. 2:12-16).
- He commended churches for their efforts in evangelizing their communities and beyond their borders (Rom. 1:8; I Thess. 1:8).
- He encouraged the churches to abound (excel, go beyond the normal limits) in the work of the Lord (I Cor. 15:58).
- He makes it clear that his supreme mission was reaching the lost (I Cor. 1:17).

We must have the same heart of love.

We must be willing to get out of our comfort zone to see the harvest come in, be disciplined, trained and sent back into the harvest.

That is the purpose of the Church. The church is people, not an institution, not an organization. It is us. We are going to do this. Not angels, not our rich uncle, not the government, not some other church or organization, not some mass crusade, not TV or radio ministries and not the Holy Spirit. God has assigned this task to His people.

What will it cost?

The Cost of Growth

- Volunteer Spirit – Making yourself available in a donation of time and effort.
Here am I send me.
- Work/Sacrifice (Days of Harvest) – Making this a central focus of life.
- Personal Witness – Reaching out personally to the lost in your area of influence.
- Personal Discipleship – Being willing to work with new converts as they become Christians.
- Money
Buildings (Silos for the Grain)

Some Challenges on the Horizon for this Church

Building on the Miracles of the Past not Resting on Them.
Building a New Facility to House the Vision
Providing Room(s) for Growth.

WE CAN DO IT WITH THE HELP OF GOD!

Bob the Builder “Can we fix it?” Bob the Builder, “ Yes we can!”

Today, we are going to believe for:

- An adjustment in our hearts, to be as big a God’s heart.
- An enlargement of our personal vision, to include the entire community and beyond.
- The blessing of God to rest upon each member and each family in this congregation (jobs, raises, promotions, and unexpected blessings).
- A willing spirit/volunteer spirit to be put within us.
- A spirit of generosity (scattering/sowing) that would reflect the heart and nature of God (freely you have received, freely give).