

Church Growth

-Prayer-

I got a chance to hang with Justin Manzey at the pastor's seminary in Fairmont and it was pretty cool. He had some great input and experiences. I loved some of his ideas and have appropriated them.

I really enjoyed having him here didn't you?

Note: Treasurer – KCRS – Kootenay Camp Retreat Society

Intro:

People have asked me how our church will grow.

Well it takes several things that we are going to discuss today. In fact, I would like to throw out some ideas today for you to percolate on.

Point 1: Unless it is God's will and the Holy Spirit is involved in it, the church won't grow.

Point 2: God chooses to use people in the majority of cases, to carry out his will.

Point 3: The Holy Spirit empowers us for witness and ministry so, if you are not baptised in the Holy Spirit that is something we need to seek and pray for.

Point 4: There are no spare parts so what are you supposed to do?

Point 5: We must be trained and prepared to receive those whom God will send into our care.

Point 6: Be patient, do not give up. (Galatians 6:9 – Let us not become weary in doing good; for at the proper time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up.)

Point 7: Stay awake, God is on the move and opportunities are about to abound.

Why prepare and not just stand on the corner and preach the ol' hell fire and brimstone?

We have to grow our relationships with the people around us and each other, we cannot be impatient. Think of it like this: If I were to have a young girl that I wanted to grow and be a woman and take on a woman's responsibilities and I stood over her and yelled at her Grow, Grow, Grow would that work? What if I stood on her feet and pulled her arms up and said Grow, I command you to Grow? Would that work? What if we locked her up in a room and said, we will let you come out

when you can do all the things, we expect from you to do? Would that work? Would we get an effective, highly trained woman with all the skills and attributes she needs to fulfill a role?

No, what I would get is a scared young girl with pulled muscles in her arms, full of neuroses and stress, with no social skills and a real persecution complex. In short, It would totally damage the young girl. It would destroy any potential that she might have. I would essentially cause her to hate the role for which she is destined.

How many times have churches brought people in from the street and thrust moral pronouncements in their face. Placed them into a senior church role because we needed a warm body in the seat regardless of calling or gift set? How many times do we as people continually place our time expectations on something that God is doing? How many people have been manipulated and broken because they were thrust into volunteer positions instead of

Think of a plant here. We can prepare the soil, we can plant the seed, we can water the plant, we can provide a nice bright environment, but only God can make it grow. If you try to stretch the plant you will pull it from the ground. If you punish it by removing water or sunlight you will stunt its growth.

We must do what we are called to do and let the Holy Spirit do the rest. Our Job is to Love, care for, and train people.

Think again of that little girl. Inside of her is everything that it takes for her to reproduce herself. God has provisioned her life with everything she needs for the future. She will be fruitful and reproduce, but not until the proper time. We need to feed, clothe and nurture that child.

The church is not an organization, it is an organism. We help people grow up and reproduce the love of Christ in others. Healthy churches reproduce healthy churches, healthy people reproduce healthy people.

We cannot place our expectation on new believers and in our zealousness crush them. We must love on them, be patient with them, show them God's grace and pray for their growth. We are not the ones responsible for growth, God is. Our role is to nurture.

If we provide a solid grounding in fertile soil, we sow the seed, let the Holy Spirit pour out living water upon them and let the light of Jesus shine upon them they will grow in God's time. We don't want to destroy the very thing we are trying to help grow.

Why? Because, now is the time when growth will begin to occur.

Are we ready? Do we know all that we need to know? Are we prepared to Worship God? Will we dedicate ourselves to reading and praying for the good work that is beginning? Will we seek out and equip ourselves with the mantle with which the Lord has given each of us in the body of Christ?

Let me just throw this out there:

Can we truly love all people, even the annoying ones? Can we embrace our community when many of the members tick us off?

Have you ever noticed that we judge other people by their actions, yet we judge ourselves by our intentions? Do we really know that the results declare the intention? Or are we assuming something about someone that may not be true?

As you ponder all these questions... I would like change gears at this point to share some ideas.

We haven't discussed any of these ideas in counsel, but here is a sample of some quick concepts or ideas off the top of my head for bringing people into our church and to enable revival in Salmo:

- Turn the parsonage into a coffee shop, with free coffee Sunday mornings. With a live feed of the worship service and message into the shop and play on a loop prior services throughout the week.
- Offer free or low cost music training to children in the community and ½ hour before the service starts have the children perform their music to their friends and family in the church with coffee at tables at the back afterward as we go into the service.
- Free pastoral counselling for addictions for those in the community who need it, here at the church, with part of the program being a discipleship class
- Many people can't afford a wedding so live common law. We could offer a free wedding ceremony, pastor and pot luck supper afterwards.
- Free pastoral marriage counselling at the church, with the culmination a marriage retreat
- Free memorial services including facility and pastor
- Tae Kwon Do classes – Christ Based Martial Arts
- Ministerial with other churches in the area

- Woman's infertility and problem pregnancy pastoral care and counselling
- Church in the park
- Child minding for single mom's
- Sunday night services
- Church CAFÉ nights and youth events and so on...

In short, there are a lot of things we could do... so I ask again - are we prepared? Do we want to be? Are we willing to do what it takes to stand behind our claim to be partners with Jesus in the redemption of Salmo?

Do you know what the process of our church should be?

Here is what I propose is the process for developing people that are coming into our church:

- 1) Salvation
- 2) Healing
- 3) Set Free
- 4) Discipleship
- 5) Equip
- 6) Empower
- 7) Serve

If you can learn to love the process, you will love what the process produces.

When people in the church are raised up, there is a fine line between responsibility and authority. Ultimately, the buck stops here. In this church it is my intention to provide an amount of authority to do a task equal to the responsibility of the task. Does this make sense? God has placed a plan in my heart and I want leaders not slaves. I will not give out authority without responsibility nor will I give out responsibility with no authority. When we give out authority with no responsibility, we create individuals who believe that they need to police everything.

God has told me to empower you. So, I desire to give out enough authority for you to fail or succeed as you develop in your ministry before the Lord. I do want to be able to support and catch you if you fall. That's my job - to grow you. I believe based on experience and revelation from God that people will only take ownership of what they are an active part of.

Praise God! You my friends; have taken stewardship of your church! I believe that it is because you now have a reason to take ownership, you are a part of God's plan for Salmo and you are needed, wanted and valued.

Trust is the building block of all relationships...

Do we trust each other? Do we trust what God is going to do in his church?

We need to remember that the main thing that God wants more than works or anything else is a relationship with us. All the works in faith that we do, stem out of that trust relationship. Christ came to restore that relationship. Theology and doctrine doesn't matter if you have no relationship. It's how you know God in your Spirit that determines the level of trust that you have in him.

You see if you look at the big picture of the church and what we are about, it all comes down to:

- We Worship God – Celebrate – Services & Prayer & Life
 - Invite and welcome
- We Love all People – Connect – Groups & Classes & Events
 - Groups – Prayer, Care, Share - In intimate settings (small grp., walks, coffee, etc.)
- We Embrace Community – Contribute – Tithe & Time & Talents
 - Be involved

A church is built on:

- People
- Processes
- Principles from the Word of God
- Presence of God

We need to know what our part is in the context of our role in the church:

Our Part

- Sow Seed
- Water
- Harvest

Holy Spirit:

- Draws
- Convicts
- Empowers
- Guides

- Reveals

God:

- Causes growth

It's our Job to:

- Bring people in to Believe - Evangelism
- Build people up to Belong - Discipleship
- Send people out to Serve - Ministry

Are you ready? Can you say in your heart?

We are a team. We are in relationship with God. We are in preparation for the harvest. We are going to make a difference here in Salmo. We are committed. We are willing.

- Prayer -