



## The Keys to a Healthy Growing Church

By Pastor Ivan Leung

I've been reading the book of Acts and have noticed that the early Church did not have the modern facilities and resources as our churches today and that apostles didn't apply any new theories and methods yet the church grew continuously. Acts 6:1 pointed out problems that the church faced at that time: "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food." God is amazing and transformed the problems to key growth opportunities for the church. "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith". (Acts 6:7) Let us think about the five most important growth factors of the early church.

### 1. Good Structure

When the early church was faced with neglecting the needs of the widows, God blessed their spiritual

leaders with the wisdom to set up a good structure to handle the problem. Because there were people in the church that were willing to serve others, they established a healthy structure to resolve the church's immediate need. This allowed the church to expand their ministries without the worries of its people being neglected from care.

Prayer is the starting point of any healthy church growth, along with spiritual management to allow for structured expansion. God gave the responsibility of management to His people. When He created the world in six days, he ordered humans to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground". (Genesis 1:26) Therefore, the responsibility of church management is directly given by God to humans.

Jesus is a leader who is gifted in management. He led the crowds to sit in 50 to 100 rows to eliminate

missing certain people when distributing food, showing His amazing ability to efficiently manage large groups of people and achieve the goal in less time.

The Bible clearly points out how the church should function: "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way". (1 Corinthians 14:40) In order for the church to work in a procedural manner, it is crucial to establish the church bylaws, policies, and the relevant structures as a sound structure and it is an integral step to promoting church ministries.

### 2. Mature Leaders

Although it is important for the church to have healthy structure, it is more important to have mature leaders to run these structures because structures do not run on its own. "Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them". (Acts 6:3) God views the quality of each spiritual leader in an

important way. These seven people who are willing to serve were chosen by God and His people. They must have three specific qualities: 1. their lifestyle and character must be a good testimony to others; 2. they must be willing to be managed by the Holy Spirit; 3. they must have spiritual wisdom and rely on the Holy Spirit in all actions.

God is more concerned of who we are than what we can do because real service is a natural outflow of our spiritual maturity. This is why God has a very high standard for His spiritual leaders. In the Bible, God will not randomly choose a person to be a spiritual leader, but only a godly person who has demonstrated the spiritual maturity. Praise God for blessing us with ten elders. Elders play an integral part in the church as they are selected by church members in the Annual Membership Meeting to be spiritual leaders amongst the congregation. Other than elders, the church has forty deacons and they are appointed by the Board of Elders to lead the growth of church ministries. I thank God for each elder and deacon and lift them up to the Lord. They faithfully serve the Lord and work behind the scenes in areas that, although the congregation may not see, God will remember. They love

the Lord and love the church, joyfully working alongside with the pastoral staff to build up God's family. The seven deacons in the early church gladly took up service with the apostles and took up the responsibility of food issues so that apostles could focus on spreading the gospel. This is a good example of partnership in church growth.

### 3. Clear Mission

Apostles clearly understood the procedure of service: prayer comes first, next comes managing food distribution (Acts 6:4). God called them to a ministry focused in prayer and they faithfully served in this position. When the apostles had a clear mission - "Give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word", the church ministry steadily grew and the word of the Lord spread amongst the people. How does one know their mission in life? Missions are from visions and true visions come from God.

Visions are very important as the Bible says, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint". If the church lacks vision, then there will be no direction which will result in church ministries continuing without a purpose; therefore, visions can clearly set a purpose for the church and can bring motivation in the right

direction. Because of that, when the church has a clear vision and mission, the development of ministry work will also have clear direction.

Praise the Lord for blessing us with a vision and a mission: "our vision is to be a worshipping, growing, and loving community that reflects the beauty of Jesus Christ to transform our community and the world." This vision stretches out to our mission which "is to exalt God, equip the member, edify the church, and evangelize the world."

Because of this mission and vision, the Board of Elders set core values for our church. What are core values? Core values are key guidelines to help us make decisions in the church, reflect what is valued as important in the church, and help us think of the direction for the development of our church ministries.

Our church's core value is this: "Our church **WELCOMES** people from all walks of life to become members of God's family through Jesus Christ." We hope that more people come to know Jesus Christ, then we need to share the gospel unceasingly. We also need to mentor and equip disciples to become leaders so that new believers will continue to strive for spiritual

*Although each congregation may reach out to different language groups (English, Cantonese, or Mandarin) in different communities (Knight Street, Fraser Lands, or North Burnaby areas), what unites us together as a church is our common Vision, Mission, and Core Values.*

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a **worshipping, growing, and loving community** that **reflects the beauty of Jesus Christ** to **transform** our **community** and the **world**.



The vision logo is a visual reminder of our vision. The heart, rays, leaf and globe represent the love, worship, growth and community that flows from the work of Jesus on the cross.

maturity, follow God's will, worship the Lord, and serve with one another to build up the church.

#### 4. Serving in Unity

When apostles suggested a solution to a problem, everyone agreed to the leaders' suggestions as "this proposal pleased the whole group". (Acts 6:5) This is one of the expressions of unity. Based on the apostles' suggestion, they selected seven deacons who are Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch. These seven deacons have different backgrounds and personalities but they were willing to serve as one and address the issue of the neglected widows, taking extra care of them during meal times. Because they served as one, the church grew.

Therefore, unity is a key element that God blesses the church and is a good testimony in a society that emphasizes individualism. As we are living in the 21st century, we face great adversities. Many moral issues such as marriage and family concepts are against the biblical truth. The church must face these external adversities together. If the church is constantly concerned about internal conflicts, then how can we handle external adversities together? Therefore, we must be a loving and encouraging team so that we can reflect a good testimony and

achieve the fruitful ministry to glorify God. The twelve disciples and the seven deacons of the early church served in unity, setting an excellent example for all believers.

#### 5. Leading of the Holy Spirit

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". (Acts 1:8) This is an important verse in Acts as it clearly speaks the message: how the Holy Spirit empowers disciples to become powerful witnesses.

The early church was a church that was led by the Holy Spirit: it was the Holy Spirit who allowed each disciple to have God's power while sharing the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth; it was the Holy Spirit who told Philip to go to that chariot, stay near it, and lead the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ which allowed the Gospel to spread to Egypt; it was the Holy Spirit that told the Antioch church leaders during their fasting to "set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"; it was the Holy Spirit who prompted missions within the church which is why Paul started his missions ministry and built churches; it was the Holy Spirit who forbade Paul from doing missions work in Asia

and led him to Troas, giving him the vision of Macedonia which is why Paul started his ministry in Europe. This is all the Holy Spirit's work. The early church was willing to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the church will grow and expand according to the will of God.

God's work is not done by might or power, but by the Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). I pray that God blesses our church to be a spirit-driven church and not a program-driven church. Program-driven churches are filled with many activities and may be very popular but it is only a short term external effect without long lasting change. Spirit-driven churches are filled with visions and missions that will have a lasting impact on the growth of the church, bringing with it life changing impact in both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

The early church emphasized their growth on God's word and gladly accepted the Holy Spirit's guidance, working as one to serve and preach the gospel to others. "The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved". (Acts 2:47) May we follow the wonderful example of the early church so that our church can continue to grow in the Lord and be a blessing to others.

## Mission Statement

Our mission as a church is to  
**exalt God,**  
**equip the member,**  
**edify the church,**  
and **evangelize the world.**

## Core Values

Our church **WELCOMES** people from all walks of life to become members of God's family through Jesus Christ.

**W** Worshipping the Lord  
**E** Evangelizing the World  
**L** Loving the People  
**C** Cultivating the Life  
**O** Obeying the Word  
**M** Mobilizing the Church  
**E** Equipping the Saints  
**S** Strategizing the Plan

## Site to Site @ VCAC

### Highlights from Knight Street's Summer Children's "Day Knight Camp"

This year the Children's Ministry Committee decided not to hold VBS or Soccer Camp, but instead run three weeks of day camps. They opted for this to reach out to the community and to facilitate the busy schedules of parents, by providing a whole day in a safe and educational, yet engaging environment for their children to enjoy. After much planning and preparation, the first week of camp was launched and the kids enrolled were taught survival skills. On the first day of Camp the kids learned about healthy eating from a nutritionist. The next two days were spent learning and applying orienteering and camping skills at Stanley Park. On the fourth day the kids were taught self defense by a seventh degree black belt and first aid from a specialist from St. John's Ambulance. The week ended with a scavenger hunt and a low key water fight. By the second week the Day Knight Camp fever was high and the kids spent

their afternoons learning sports such as street hockey, soccer, ultimate and bowling. The week rounded off with an extreme water fight that left the kids soaking wet with delight. After a two day weekend break, week three had commenced and the kids were in for a wild ride. The kids began the final week with a lesson on planting and learned about the proper treatment of dogs from a SPCA representative. The next day the children enjoyed a little treat when "The Reptile Guy" came in and let his pets interact with the kids. The kids were allowed to touch and hold reptiles such as scorpions, snakes, lizards and frogs. Such a remarkable day could only be topped by a trip to the aquarium the next day. At the Vancouver Aquarium, not only did the kids get to see many interesting sea creatures they were lucky to enough to catch a show in the new 4D theatre, which allows viewers not only to see and hear, but also to smell and feel the

sensations of the sea. The next day the kids rode the public transit to Kitsilano Beach for a treasure hunt and an intense free for all water fight. The final day of Day Knight Camp came to a close with a planet earth talk and yet another exciting water fight. During the morning sessions for all weeks the kids answered jokes, sang songs, listened to Pastor Ruth teach bible lessons, created neat crafts designed by Karen Andersen and engaged in exciting and heart pumping activities with the Summer Children's Ministry Workers. Ending each week was a prize draw with the grand prize being a Super Soaker water gun. Much hard work, time and prayer was put into making Day Knight Camp happen, but it was only by God's grace that it was a success.

- Larissa James  
Summer Children's Ministry Worker

