

# Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

Volume 27 Issue 4

PO Box 892589, Temecula, CA 92589-2589

April 2015

## Teach Others to Love

Is love taught...or is it caught?  
Can a person become more loving?  
Can a church become more loving?

The answer to all these questions is, "Yes!" We can become more loving. In fact, Paul assumes this when, after finishing his great treatise on love in First Corinthians 13, he says: "Let love be your highest goal" (I Cor. 14:1 NLT). But, if we can learn to love, then why is it so many people aren't better

Teaching others to love is part of our role in making disciples.

lovers? For some, it may have been poor examples. Others have bad assumptions about what love is. Quite a few simply didn't have a teacher from which to learn. One of the most important contributions your church can make to members-and even non-members-is to teach them how to love.

"Love" is mentioned more than any other topic in the New Testament. Jesus taught on love more than anything else. And, in his "great commission," Christ told his followers to go and make disciples and then teach these new disciples "everything I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). That is, teach them to love.

Helping people learn to love-as in Christ's *agape* love-is quite possible. As you equip your saints for a life and ministry of loving, here are eight practical steps they can follow:

**STEP ONE:** *Make a Love Covenant with God.* A love covenant is a statement to God that you are personally willing and desirous to make loving the

priority in your life. A love covenant should have the same faithful intent that God has in his covenant to us: "Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken, nor my covenant of peace be removed" (Is. 54:10).

**STEP TWO:** *Identify Those Who Need Your Love.* There are people in your life that God wants to love-through you. It's helpful to make a list of these people who are your "love connections." They include: 1) *Family* (Ex. 20:12, Eph. 5:28, I Tim. 5:8), 2) *Friends* (Prov. 18:24, Ecc. 4:9-12, John 15:13-15), 3) *Acquaintances* (Mark 12:31, Rom. 13:10), 4) *Enemies* (see Mt. 5:44, Luke 6:27), and

**Check out Dr. McIntosh's new website for additional articles.**

New website address:

[www.churchgrowthnetwork.com](http://www.churchgrowthnetwork.com)

e-mail . . . [cgnet@earthlink.net](mailto:cgnet@earthlink.net)

write . . .

PO Box 892589  
Temecula, CA 92589

# Make a love covenant with God.

## As communication grows, love grows.

5) *Needy* (see Deut. 15:7, Ps. 41:1, Ps. 82:3, Mt. 19:21, Ga. 2:10)

**STEP THREE:** *Act First.* Often we wait for the other person to make the first move. Will he speak first? Will she call first? Will they invite us over? Don't wait for the other person. Always act as if the responsibility for the initiation and growth of a loving relationship depends on you. This is true for strengthening old loving relationships and initiating new ones.

**STEP FOUR:** *Communicate.* As communication grows, love grows. And the level at which we communicate affects the degree to which we can love: Level #1-the exchange of clichés; Level #2-the exchange of information; Level #3-the exchange of opinions; Level #4-the exchange of emotions.

**STEP FIVE:** *Empathize.* The word means: "Identification with, or vicariously experiencing the thoughts, feelings, or attitudes of another person." In a sense, you become that person. You see through their eyes. You experience what they experience. You feel the way they feel. As the old Native American saying goes: "Don't judge a man until you've walked in his moccasins."

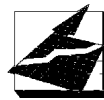
**STEP SIX:** *Identify a Love Opportunity.* It may be a physical need. It may be an emotional need, a relational need, or a spiritual need. Everyone has needs. As you spend time with a person, through good communication (Step 4) and empathy (Step 5), you will discover opportunities for loving actions. Then you can take the next step...

**STEP SEVEN:** *Respond with a Caring Gift.* A

good gift is a unique expression of love. Learning how to give gifts is a giant step toward learning how to love. A good gift is *meaningful* ... based on the needs of the person receiving it. A good gift is *sacrificial*...or it's just a convenience. A good gift is *unexpected*...rather than expected because of protocol. A good gift is *motivated by love*...unconditionally with no expectation of return.

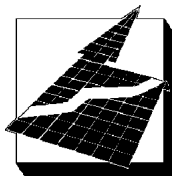
**STEP EIGHT:** *Share Yourself.* Sharing yourself is when love actions become a way of life to those in your love connections. Sharing yourself is loving another person as yourself (see Mt. 12:30-31). Sharing yourself is taking the first seven steps often enough with the people in your love connections that you actually *become* a loving person. You are Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas morning! You have discovered that love really is the answer, when it is shared...through sharing yourself.

For additional ideas on teaching people in your church to love, see *What Every Pastor Should Know* (Baker Books 2013) by Gary L. McIntosh and Charles Arn.



Adapted from *What Every Pastor Should Know* (Baker Books 2013) by Gary L. McIntosh and Charles Arn.

*Growth Points* is published twelve times a year. The subscription price is \$20 (Bank or World Money Order) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained. Formerly published under the title *Church Growth Network*. Copyrighted 2015 ISSN 1520-5096



# One Church Four Generations

Ministry Insights for Church Leaders

P.O. Box 892589 Temecula, CA 92589-2589

www.churchgrowthnetwork.com

---

## One Church Four Generations

Church leaders of the twenty-first century, perhaps more than at any time in history, must reach out to a variety of groups within the church. How can worship services be modified to attract young people without driving the older members away? Is it possible for a church to have an intergenerational ministry? How can churches keep the youngest members involved?

*One Church, Four Generations* gives thoughtful insight into the four generations found in churches today, exploring the qualities, values, and interests of each group in relation to the historical events and social trends that have shaped them. You'll find practical suggestions for types of ministry and worship styles that will draw each generation—from the oldest generation of Builders to the youngest crowd of Bridgers. Helpful tables offer summaries of generational characteristics, common needs and concerns, and ways to reach the unchurched.

### What others are saying:

"*One Church, Four Generations* is at once an encyclopedia, history, and CAT scan of ourselves and those around us—all in an exciting, readable, practical form. What a great resource to understand your parents, kids, yourself, and most of all, your church."

"This is essential reading. The emerging generation is particularly challenging to comprehend and to effectively engage. McIntosh provides insightful clues for discipling them."

—Daniel Reeves, President,  
Reeves Strategic Consultation

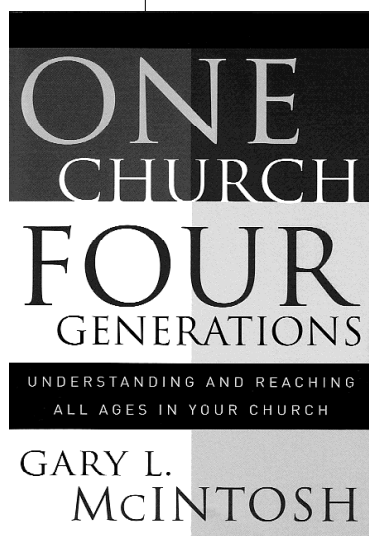
"I can think of no better introduction to generational differences than Gary McIntosh's helpful primer."

—Bob Whitesel, Editor,  
Strategies for Today's Leader

Why not order a copy for every member of your board and use *One Church, Four Generations* as a study guide for your church?

**Order today by calling toll free**

**1-877-506-3086**



---

Yes, send me \_\_\_\_\_ copy(s) of  
*One Church, Four Generations* at \$21.99 each  
(\$24.99 outside U.S.A. on U.S. Funds/Bank)  
Special discount for 10 or more books to the  
same address. CA residents add 8.00% tax.

(S/H : USA \$4.50 Canada \$5.50)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa or MC #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ 3-digit code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

---