

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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Developing Leaders

One of the little known rules of church growth is sometimes called the Rule of Ten. This rule states that in normal situations a church will be ten times as large as the total number of its leaders. Another way to put this is a church typically has a ratio of 10:1, that is, ten people for every one leader. Thus, a church with ten leaders will have 100 worshipers; a church with 100 leaders will have 1,000 worshipers, and so forth. Here is why it works.

“As a rule, a church will have ten times the number of people that it has leaders.”

Leaders Have Followers

By definition leaders have followers. It is an accepted fact if people think they are leaders, but do not have any followers, the truth is they are not leaders. This being so, it can be assumed that as a church develops more leaders it will naturally add more followers. The math of church growth being: More Leaders = More Followers.

The average church, however, thinks the math works in reverse order: More Followers = More Leaders. Using this thinking, most churches do not even think about leadership development until they are surprised by a rapid influx of people. If growth catches a church by surprise, it may try to manage the growth with the same number of leaders, but this only works in the short-term before the leaders become overworked. and growth recedes back to the ratio of 10:1. Of course, growth may also spur a church to recruit more leaders, but the tendency is to keep relying on the tried and true leaders of the past.

Leaders Enough

One reason churches do not consider leadership development important is because they already have enough leaders to maintain their current size. Since the majority of churches are not experiencing numerical growth, the current number of leaders they have can usually handle the basic needs of the congregation. Hence, there is no felt need to develop new leaders.

However, if a church desires to grow, leadership development is a must. Unless a church maintains a ratio of one leader for every ten followers, growth will be stymied.

The point is, if you desire for your church to grow, leaders must precede followers.

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

New website address:

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Who is your apprentice?

For a church to grow, leaders must precede followers.

New Units

Church growth always happens through the development of new units. A new Sunday school class always attracts more new people than older classes do. New small groups always attract more new people than older small groups. New church plants always attract more new people than more established churches. Likewise, new leaders always attract more new people than former leaders!

The bottom line: Churches grow as they develop new leaders who then attract new followers.

Leadership Development

The best way for churches to grow is to first develop more leaders and, since leaders naturally have followers, the new leaders will attract more people.

Leadership development, therefore, is not a program but rather a strategy of multiplying new leaders. So, what is the best way to develop new leaders?

I believe the best answer was given by well-known church consultant Carl George a number of years ago. He would simply ask church leaders two questions. First, Who is your apprentice? Second, When did you last meet with him or her?

As simple as they sound, these two questions contain the genesis of a solid leadership development plan for any size church in any location in any denomination.

The first question asks, Who is your apprentice? Any church can begin to double its total number of leaders by just having each current leader find an apprentice. There is one catch. An apprentice must be selected from among people who are not presently in leadership. If ten leaders would just recruit ten apprentices to work alongside them, the leadership potential of a small church of 100 worshipers would double. There is another aspect, however, that cannot be forgotten.

The second question asks, When did you last meet with your apprentice? There must be regular engagement between a leader and an apprentice. In most cases a weekly or biweekly meeting is the best. There does not need to be any formal teaching as much as a mutual sharing of ministry and discussion between the leader and apprentice. It is on-the-job-training that makes for a solid leadership development strategy. So . . .

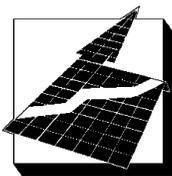
Who is YOUR apprentice?

When was the last time you met with him or her?



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Dr. Glen S. Martin is the pastor of Journey of Faith Church, Manhattan Beach, CA, and is a national speaker for numerous Christian organizations. He is an adjunct professor at several seminaries and a noted writer, author, and speaker.

Dr. Gary L. McIntosh is President of the McIntosh Church Growth Network and Professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, CA.

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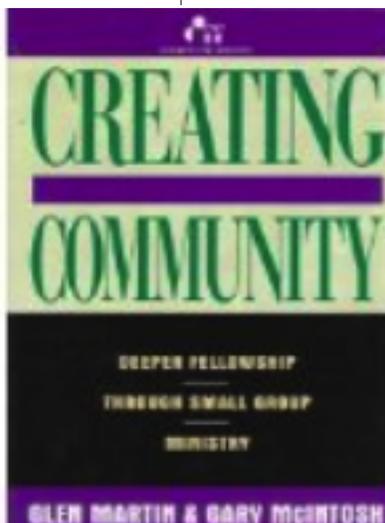
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