

HOW TO MAKE THE CHURCH GROW (2)

Acts 4:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In less than two years the early church grew from well over 5,000 to the point where the number was said to have multiplied exceedingly Acts 6:7 and as suggested in a previous lesson there were definite reasons for such phenomenal growth
- B. In the previous lesson we observed that the church grew by teaching and manifesting (show, cause to shine or make known) the TRUTH Jhn 17:17 (2Tim 4:2) 2Cor 4:1-5
- C. Then suggested that this was accomplished by: Teaching only the Truth"; "Working at teaching the Truth"; Teaching Truth even though persecuted"; "Make Known the Truth by the way we live"; and "Make Known the Truth thru concern for others"
- D. Today I want to suggest some more ways for us to make church grow by looking at growth of church then.

DISCUSSION:

I. UNITY IN PRACTICE

- A. Jesus prayed for their unity Jhn 17:20,21
 1. They might be one as He and the Father are one
 2. They are one in: (a) purpose (b) deed (c) word
- B. Disciples were "of one heart and soul" Acts 4:32
 1. Persecution did not divide them from their purpose
 2. A threefold cord is not quickly broken Ecc 4:12
- C. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to be united 1Cor 1:10
- D. By remaining united they made known the Truth

II. FAITHFULNESS IN WORSHIP

- A. Continued steadfastly Acts 2:42
 1. Apostles doctrine (teaching)
 2. Fellowship (joint participation, sharing in the Teachings and benefits of being in Christ)
 3. Breaking of bread (Lord's Supper - bread same Word used in Matt 26:28 when Jesus instituted the Lord's supper)
 4. Prayers (talking to God)
- B. Commanded not to forsake assembly Heb 10:25 (abandon – desert gathering together in one place)
- C. People who love God and meet regularly to honor Him in worship will make Truth known in the community

III. CHARITY IN MISUNDERSTANDING

- A. Needed by church possibly more than any other one thing
 1. Not talking about compromising the Truth
 2. God and His teaching comes first Acts 5:29
- B. The church made up of human beings each having their own opinions and judgments
 1. Some in the early church thought the widows were being neglected Acts 6

2. A sympathetic attitude was displayed and this misunderstanding was worked out
 3. Apostles didn't leave word & serve tables Acts 6:2,4
- C. Paul expresses attitude we ought to have 2Tim 2:24
 1. Must not strive (quarrel - dispute - fight)
 2. Be gentle (as a nurse would be with a trying child, Being at ease when talking to others - mild)
 3. Apt to teach (able to teach)
 4. Forbearing (patience - enduring)
 5. In meekness (a soothing disposition)
 - D. Do we see anything to indicate we should "rake our brother over the coals" when there is some misunderstanding

IV. GENEROSITY IN GIVING

- A. Note attitude of early Christians in giving - I can't tell you a definite amount you ought to give to the Lord
 1. Had all things common Acts 2:44; 4:32
 - a. Didn't say "this is mine and you can't have it"
 - b. They didn't even consider it to be theirs
 2. Realize this was a special case and special need, but it does display their attitude toward giving
- B. Beyond their power they were willing 2Cor 8:1-5
 1. Begged Paul to take their gift, first gave themselves
 2. God loves a cheerful giver 2Cor 9:7
- C. Church grew rapidly because they were willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ 1Cor 16:1,2
- D. Enabled them to care for brethren in need and support preachers throughout world 2Cor 11:8

V. TRUTH AS ONLY DIVINE AUTHORITY

- A. Were willing to humble themselves to divine authority
 1. Did not devise creeds, have conventions, nor synods in order to establish authority
 2. Realized the Gospel had adequate power Rom 1:16
 3. Scripture would thoroughly furnish them 2Tim 3:16,17
- B. Way of man not in himself Jer 10:23
 1. God's ways higher than man's ways Isa 55:8,9
 2. We must be satisfied with God's way

CONCLUSION:

- A. The efforts of early disciples teaching and living in humble submission to divine authority, resulted in the greatest and almost unbelievable growth of the church in the first century
- B. If we will simply TEACH AND MANIFEST [show, cause to shine or make known by action Jhn 17:17 (2Tim 4:2) 2Cor 4:1-5] THE TRUTH, the church will continue to grow. Isa 55:11