
GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Pastoring a Growing Church

Leading a growing church is challenging for many reasons. One of the major ones is the reality that a pastor must change roles as the church becomes larger.

A Two-fold Problem

The problem is two-fold. First, many pastors do not realize they must change roles as the church grows larger. For example, smaller churches require a pastor who operates in the relational role of a caregiver. He is viewed as everyone's friend who, of course, knows everyone by name. As a church becomes medium-sized, the pastor's role must change to that of an administrator who takes care of the newly enlarged program. When a church becomes even larger, the pastor again must change roles to that of a leader who casts vision for the future, while managing an ever growing staff and complex ministry. Churches often have the potential to grow larger. However, the pastor keeps the church artificially small due to either a lack of knowledge on how to change or a lack of willingness to change roles.

Second, smaller congregations usually resist the change in a pastor's

role. They often interpret a change in role as abandoning them. For example, in a smaller church a pastor may maintain an open study policy. Members of the congregation are encouraged to drop into the pastor's office whenever they desire to talk or go to coffee. Then, as a church grows into medium-size, the pastor may change to an appointment only policy in an effort to control the demands on his time. People who have previously been able to walk into the pastor's office at any time are offended by having to make an appointment.

A Process for Role Change

Prioritize the use of time. As a church grows from smaller to medium-sized to larger, a pastor must take better control of his time. To get things done this means he will have to set boundaries, such as, office hours, limited time for counseling, protected time for study, etc.

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Educate the congregation on the pastor's changing role so that the people will gain understanding. Clear communication to the people, as to why he cannot be as available as he was in the past, is crucial. This fact has to be shared in multiply ways: sermons, private conversations, small gatherings, etc. As an example, I recall hearing one pastor say to the congregation from the pulpit, "You may be thinking 'Isn't it the pastor's job to visit us in the hospital?' Folks, it's just not possible. The church is too large for me to care for everyone." The pastor said this over and over through many different means until the people began to understand.

Replace the pastor with other leaders the people in the congregation can see. People don't like the idea of not seeing the main leader. As a lead pastor changes roles, the people must have other credible leaders step into visibility so they can get a meaningful audience with a person in authority. This is a fact that pastor's often overlook when seeking to change roles.

Note the pattern found in Exodus 18:13-27 as an example of how to go about doing this.

Step #1: Identify and clarify the problem (vs. 13-18).

Moses judged the people from morning to evening. He was the visible leader that everyone wanted to talk to about their specific problems. However, the work was overwhelming and people became frustrated. The problem was identified and clarified, and Moses realized he was doing too much.

Step #2: Ask others for help (v. 14).

It took another person to point out the problem and solution to Moses. Jethro began by asking questions (What are you doing? Why do you alone sit as judge?) in order to gain perspective and involve Moses in the process of problem identification. Note the major problem was that Moses viewed himself as indispensable.

Step #3: Outline a solution and plan (19-27).

Moses found the answer was to replace himself with credible leaders who were available to the people. He determined his own priorities (You must be the people's representative before God, v. 19); He established recruiting criteria (trustworthy men who fear God and hate dishonest gain, v. 21); He trained them (Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform, v. 20); He communicated the organizational structure (thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, v. 21); and He communicated their level of authority (The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves, v. 26).

Some of the keys to the growth and maturity of the nation of Israel as illustrated in this passage were God's favor on the people, the leader's recognition of his inability to do all the work, and the leader's willingness to recruit, train, and deploy a workforce that could meet the needs of the people.

In a very similar way, for lead pastors to change roles as a church grows larger, they must recognize God's favor found in the growth of His church, accept their own inability to do everything, and empower other leaders to take proper responsibility.

*NEW Doctor of Ministry
Cohort begins January 2019
Two-Week Residency on
May 20-31, 2019.
Growing and Multiplying
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NOTE: The last cohort filled up quickly. So don't delay in getting your application in for this next cohort.

WE LOVE TO SEE CHURCHES THRIVE AND REPRODUCE. NOTHING EXCITES US MORE THAN HELPING CHURCHES TO WIN PEOPLE TO CHRIST, CONNECTING THEM WITH FELLOW BELIEVERS AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO GROW TO MATURITY IN CHRIST. TALBOT CAN HELP.

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Cohort Schedule

FIRST RESIDENCY - UNDERSTANDING CHURCH GROWTH & OUTREACH

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SECOND RESIDENCY - HOW TO BUILD AND REBUILD A CHURCH

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planting strategies designed to encourage a thriving church, as well as ideas to turnaround a struggling church.

THIRD RESIDENCY - UNDERSTANDING AND ADAPTING TO CULTURE North America has changed and is changing. This residency will help you adapt to these changes. It begins by helping you understand the complexities and possibilities of ministry in our increasingly multi-ethnic society. And since our culture is increasingly post-modern, you will learn how to evangelize and minister among people who are absolutely convinced that there are no absolutes.

FACULTY-MENTORS

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Recruiting Basics

One key aspect of leading a church is recruiting people to serve Christ. It's important not to confuse recruiting with calling. Every Christian is called to minister. The only questions are how, where, when, or to whom, but not whether. On the other hand, recruitment is getting people who are already called to go to work.

Guidelines for Recruiting

1. Start with letting people know of your vision, goals, and plans. Then watch for those who are following or show interest in what you are doing.

2. Discover those who naturally lead. Observe others to see whom they like to quote, to joke about, to tell stories about, etc. Natural leaders have a natural following.

3. Look for evidence of their calling or interest. What are they saying they want to become? What courses are they signing up for in school? What books, blogs, or articles do they read?

4. Keep in mind the qualifications and personality strengths of the person who you desire to recruit.

For example . . .

- What level of work is required? Are you recruiting for an unskilled position or an executive type position?
- What personality traits are needed? Are you looking for someone who can work alone or someone to work on a team?
- What amount of experience is necessary? Are you looking for someone with lots of experience or someone who is new to the job?
- What length of commitment is important? Are you looking for someone to commit long-term or short-term? Are people afraid of commitment or are people ready to commit?
- What mix of giftedness is helpful? Are you looking for gifts of teaching, or administration, or serving, or caring, or giving, or leading, or ?

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5. Look for people who are already motivated. Don't spend time trying to motivate the unwilling to become willing workers. Simply work with as many willing people as you have.

6. Don't be overwhelmed by a person's education, background, appearance, or giftedness. Some people look better than they perform. Identify quantifiable ways to assess what they are producing in ministry.

7. Watch what people actually do; don't just listen to what they say. Time is on your side. See if they demonstrate commitment. Are they on time every week? Do they follow-through on what they say? Remember: it is easier to identify and recruit people to ministry than it is to unidentify and remove them from ministry.

8. Communicate the true picture of the job to be accomplished. Write out a specific ministry description. Tell them the training requirements. Let them know the cost in time and energy. Sharing the real challenges of the work will draw them to commitment.

9. Provide training for the work. Training comes in three different varieties: Formal, Informal, and Modeling. Formal training involves education classes or seminars. This is best done after a person has already been involved in ministry for awhile. Informal training takes place as a person does ministry, and then participates in group discussion or one-on-one conversations. Modeling takes place as people observe others doing ministry, and then reproduce what they see.

In most church situations it is best to use the modeling approach to training. Start by assigning a new recruit to someone already involved in ministry. Encourage them to shadow another person and observe what ministry is all about. Let them ask questions and make suggestions based on what they see. Gradually let them do more and more of the work until they are confident to do it alone. The overall goal is to have them succeed, enjoy the work, and want to continue. People usually have a greater thirst for training as they are involved in direct ministry.

10. Deploy people in ministry. When deploying new people in ministry, use four steps. First, let them watch others doing the particular ministry. Second, let them do the ministry together with someone more experienced. Third, let them do the ministry alone, while the more experienced person watches. Fourth, let them do the ministry with no one watching them.

11. Monitor each person's progress. Continue to give feedback as the person moves forward in ministry. Ask specific questions rather than just "How are things going?" The questions you ask are the measurements to which they'll seek to perform. Surprise them by showing up and watching them for twenty minutes. Then, the next day, compliment them on some aspect of their work.

12. Nurture new recruits so they'll feel appreciated. Continually talk about your vision and explain how their ministry contributes to its accomplishment. Ask their council for any changes in their area of ministry. and bring them into collegial meetings with others in similar roles.

Recruitment is an on-going process. Put some of these ideas into practice this week.

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